



University
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*How should we write the History of the
Holocaust?*

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How should we write the history of the Holocaust?¹

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Abstract:

Ever since the events of the Holocaust themselves, historians, some of whom, such as Emmanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto, documented events as they unfolded, have pondered the question of how to write historically about the genocide of the Jews. Their problem was that what was happening appeared to burst all known forms of experience, so that one could not simply draw on established narratives or stores of experience in order to describe, much less to understand the events. Since the end of the war, this problem of representation – what one can or should depict, and how one should go about it – is one that has primarily occupied filmmakers, novelists, poets, musicians and artists. Particularly since the remarkable discovery of new archival material in the former communist countries of eastern Europe, historians have been preoccupied with empirical research, filling in gaps in our knowledge of how the Holocaust took place in different regions of Europe, examining the roles played by the many Nazi institutions that were involved, and seeking to reconstruct the victims' responses to their persecution. This lecture will ask whether it is now time, in the wake of this outpouring of empirical research, to revisit the question of historical representation, and will try and account for the fact that, although the historiography of the Holocaust is massive and varied, it remains somewhat conventional in terms of historical approaches. I will end with a plea for greater risk-taking on the part of historians when trying to represent a set of events that, it is often observed, broke asunder established frameworks of understanding.

Dictatorships, wars, and cruelty drive whole countries to madness. My theory is that the human species was crazy from the very first and that civilization and culture are only enhancing man's insanity. Well, but you want the facts.

—Isaac Bashevis Singer²

Ever since the events of the Holocaust themselves, historians, some of whom, such as Emmanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto, documented events as they unfolded, have pondered the question of how best to write historically about the genocide of the Jews. This lecture will not be a narrative of a particular moment in the Holocaust, nor a reflection on the ways in which the emotive power of the Holocaust informs

contemporary concerns. I hope that you will bear with me as I discuss what might seem an arcane matter: that is, historical representation. Rather than provide a straightforward answer to the question, “How should we write the history of the Holocaust?” I want to invite you to consider the proposition that the question is worth pondering. I want to suggest that we need to think about how historians write their studies, because we cannot have direct access to the past. How historians shape or construct the past for us, providing texts that act as substitutes for the past, should therefore be a matter of concern for us. Even though filmmakers have far more influence on popular awareness of the Holocaust than historians, historians are still regarded as the guardians of historical truth, their works the place to go to find out what happened in the past. It makes sense, therefore, for us to pay attention to how historians go about constructing the past in the present.

Twenty years ago, Saul Friedländer published his edited volume, *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the “Final Solution.”* The book has become justly famous not as the first but as the most stimulating collection of essays on the problem of how to represent an event which seems to outstrip the ability of language or art to do so. As Hannah Arendt wrote of the Holocaust, “For those engaged in the quest for meaning and understanding, what is frightening is not that it is something new, but that it has brought to light the ruin of our categories of thought and standards of judgment.”³ This was a problem that exercised many scholars at a time (the late 1980s and early 1990s) when debates over postmodernism and its impact on the humanities were at their height. Friedländer’s book basically turned on Hayden White’s claims, in his well-known works *Metahistory* (1973), *Tropics of Discourse* (1978), and *The Content of the Form* (1987), that there were no grounds to be found in the historical record itself for construing the meaning of the past one way or another. In the charged atmosphere of the time, this claim was widely misunderstood to mean that White—who also advocated a rediscovery of the sublime in history, despite its association with Fascism—was an extreme relativist who had no defense against Holocaust denial. If one narrative of the past was as good as any other, then one might as well say that truth is no more than the force of prevalent opinion.⁴ In the face of the inevitable attack on this position (which

reasonable person would not attack it?), many were satisfied when White appeared to back down somewhat and to suggest in his chapter in *Probing the Limits of Representation* that an appeal to the facts themselves would, in the case of the Holocaust, prevent a narrative of the events being written in, say, the comic or pastoral mode.⁵

White, however, did not think that, in Martin Jay's words, he "undercuts what is most powerful in his celebrated critique of naïve historical realism."⁶ In other words, he still held to his view that one cannot look to the historical record in order to reveal the meaning of the past.⁷ Meanings are given through aesthetic and moral choices by historians in the present. With reference to such major events as revolutions and wars, Jay argued that there is "virtually no historical content that is linguistically unmediated and utterly bereft of meaning, waiting around for the later historian to emplot it in arbitrary ways."⁸ That is quite so, but White does not think that the narrative emplotments constructed by historians are arbitrary. He also admits that the narratives historians tell about the past can be altered by the evidence; for all that, there are more meanings available to historians in the present than there are constraints placed upon potential narratives by the linguistic content and mediation of events. The range of possible narratives—of "true stories" to use Paul Veyne's famous term⁹—is exceptionally wide, if not unlimited, so that the historian's narrative freedom is not confined by some dictate in the sources. In any case, with respect to the Holocaust, the range of possible narratives far exceeds those that have been produced, for, as I will discuss below, Holocaust historiography, for all its size and sophistication, remains dominated by a more or less positivist—that is to say, untheorized empiricist—historical method.¹⁰

Although few historians have engaged directly with White on the level of theory or philosophy of history,¹¹ his claims have come to inform accepted historical practice. Holocaust historiography is something of an exception, as we will see, even though (or precisely because) it is in the field of Holocaust history (or more precisely, with respect to the phenomenon of Holocaust denial) that his ideas have been most hotly debated. There are many ways in which the historical record can be engaged with, because the meanings we give to the past are not provided for us, ready-made, by the past itself, but are forged through the creative act of writing history. But this emphasis on the

“creative” or “poetic” does not contradict a rigorous reliance on the evidence. White himself never suggested, contrary to some of his bowdlerizers, that one is justified in inventing the past if that is what people want to hear. “Events happen,” wrote White, but “facts are constituted by linguistic description.”¹² But events and facts, even as White defines them, are not unrelated! As Allan Megill explicates: if the historical text is itself “a ‘fictive’ creation,” that does not mean that “‘there is no *there there*’; it is an assertion that the historian makes (but not out of nothing) the particular historical objects presented in her work.”¹³ Many different meanings emerge out of the historical record, without having to worry that anyone doubts that “the event” occurred in the first place. As Robert Berkhofer, talking of history in general, noted, “historians must authorize new forms of representation without creating new rules of historical practice about what constitutes proper history itself.”¹⁴

In this lecture, I do not want to address questions of speculative philosophy of history; that is to say, I will not engage with the question of the “forces” of history, or whether History (upper case) has an inner meaning or direction independent from the meanings given to it by human beings.¹⁵ Instead, I will engage with historical theory (I use that term as synonymous with what is usually and inappropriately called “analytic philosophy of history”¹⁶) on two levels. The first is a somewhat pedestrian level—that is not meant pejoratively—of historical method, that is, the practical steps historians take to acquire and to criticize sources, and then to produce a synthetic account or narrative of the past in which these processes are combined and implicitly inform the account. The second is a more “high-level” consideration of methodology, that is to say, theoretical reflections on the nature of method and on the “schools” of history (social, economic, intellectual, cultural, diplomatic, and so on). The aim in this second level of analysis is not simply to consider which practical issues of method best ensure historical rigor, but to step back and ask how historical method per se and particular historical approaches or schools advance our understanding of the Holocaust. These two levels of analysis are described by Jörn Rüsen as “object theory” and “meta-theory”; they distinguish theoretical statements about what happened in the past (such as the changes that people experience over time) from theoretical statements about the nature of historical studies. Rüsen notes that the historian’s aim in thinking theoretically should be

“to make the principles on which their practical work rests so transparent and conscious that they can carry out their work more effectively. It will enable them to prove, defend, develop, and better their argument in a way which will decisively place their practical work on a higher level than would be the case without this knowledge.”¹⁷

This distinction between “method” and “methodology” is neatly drawn solely for explanatory purposes. In practice, the two blur into one another, because even the most practically-minded guide to method (teaching source criticism to graduate students, for example) necessarily involves some theoretical concepts, whether or not the author or tutor is aware of them or can articulate them. This lecture is then a discussion of historical theory, which aims to show how, in the case of the Holocaust, historical method and methodology come up against severe challenges by virtue of the material under consideration and as a result of the ways in which the Holocaust has widely been understood to impugn many basic tenets of western civilization, including those central to historical scholarship: impartiality, objectivity, progress, clarity of meaning, scholarly rigor. As Friedlander pointed out in his introduction to *Probing the Limits of Representation*, “it is precisely the ‘Final Solution’ which allows postmodernist thinking to question the validity of any totalizing view of history, of any reference to a definable metadiscourse, thus opening the way for a multiplicity of equally valid approaches.”¹⁸ In fact, the Holocaust does not present special difficulties of historical representation – the same epistemological difficulties apply to all historical descriptions. But these difficulties present themselves with especial clarity in the case of the Holocaust. This realization, as Alon Confino notes, “opens up new ways of understanding the Holocaust. It entails a shift in historical sensibility from conceiving of the Holocaust not only in terms of the limits of representation but also—because of generational, professional, interpretative and cultural changes—in terms of the possibilities and promises of historical representation.”¹⁹

So, on the one hand this lecture concerns historical theory, a consideration of historical method and historical methodology. On the other hand, I want specifically to address the Holocaust and how these theoretical issues affect the historical study of it, and vice-versa. What is curious, as I discuss below, is that there has been so much interest in questions of Holocaust representation, but that the vast majority of these

studies have been undertaken in the fields of the visual arts, museum studies, film studies or literature.²⁰ Very few historians have taken up the questions raised by Friedländer's volume, even though the Holocaust, in Rüsen's words, "represents a 'borderline event,' the importance of which consists in its transgression of the level of the subject matter of historical thinking and reaching into the core of the mental procedures of historical thinking itself."²¹ Thus, my first aim is to revive interest amongst historians and those who read their work in theoretical issues of Holocaust representation, not on the level of speculative philosophy of history but in a way that is hopefully relevant to what historians consider their everyday practice. I will not focus explicitly on questions of the status of truth in history or on the limits of representation, but on the possibilities of different methodology and approaches, for example culture, memory, testimony, or ecology, as well as questions raised by comparative genocide studies. To explain what this means, I will first briefly set out what is meant by historical method and then show how what effects theoretical discussions of method have on the particular field of Holocaust history.

On Historical Method

"Method makes the historian," claimed Lord Acton, and his precepts for rigorous historical inquiry still form the basis of a historian's training. For Acton the critical method required self-abnegation and the scholar's devotion to time-consuming labor, yet in essence "method is only the reduplication of common sense, and is best acquired by observing its use by the ablest men in every variety of intellectual employment," as he put it in his 1895 inaugural lecture at Cambridge. Correct method in the study of history, far more than erudition, "strengthens, straightens, and extends the mind." Historians today might not choose to argue in terms quite so redolent of dead white bourgeois males, but in reality Acton's statements are not that far removed from what is still the basis of the historical discipline. The tripartite combination of an exhaustive search for relevant material (heuristics), a rigorous process of appraising the material for its use as historical evidence (source critique), and producing a formal written statement

that synthesizes this material into a dispassionate, coherent narrative (interpretation) is the procedure that budding historians are expected to master.

And quite reasonably so. Knowing where to look or how to find sources is obviously a *sine qua non* of writing history. Subjecting source material to criticism is also fundamental. Not ignoring sources even though they threaten the validity of one's hypothesis is the acme of professionalism.²² Popular historians can weave this material into compelling narratives, but good history in the scholarly sense can also mean discussing the evidence in a way that places more emphasis on analysis than story-telling, even if Roger Chartier is right to stress that "history is always narration, even when it claims to be rid of the narrative" because its "mode of comprehension remains dependent on procedures and operations that assure the emplotment of the actions represented."²³ Still, there might be more to history-writing than this. Historical method is only the starting point, the procedure that distinguishes history from fiction and which provides a community of scholars with basic operating principles on which all can agree. It says nothing about the construction of historical texts and how textual constructions should be interpreted. It cannot explain why a novel that is based on substantial historical research, such as Jonathan Littell's *The Kindly Ones*, might be considered more insightful about Holocaust perpetrators than most of the historical research on the subject.²⁴ The idea that "In historical representation, we never deal with the past; we deal with historical texts as propositions that replace the past" is one that was not on Acton's agenda.²⁵ It is the third element of historical method—the construction of the historical text—that requires further elucidation.

Many criticisms of Acton's definition of method were proposed over the twentieth century. Some historians sought to place history on a more scientific footing than even Acton thought possible, from his successor, J. B. Bury, whose 1902 inaugural lecture was entitled "The Science of History," to Carl Hempel's notion of the "covering law model," an attempt to provide generalizable, causal models of past human behavior.²⁶ Others showed that by expanding the repertoire of what constituted an appropriate subject for historiography, traditional source criticism became harder to do and needed to be supplemented by more ingenious methods derived from cognate fields, such as sociology or anthropology, not to mention statistics or climatology. The *Annales*

historians, in particular, with their devotion to the *longue durée* and to *histoire totale*, seriously dented the notion of the historian acting as a neutral conduit for the archival material, even as they too promoted a “scientific” ideal, seeking to remove, at least in the *Annales*’ earlier incarnations, the whiff of narrative and thus of artifice from their writings.²⁷

More recently, the criticisms have become even harder to answer. In the wake of structuralism, post-structuralism, and deconstruction, historians started to pay more attention to the contingent nature of their sources, and to the fact that even the most reliable of sources was no more than a surviving trace from the infinite possible number of such remnants. “The illusion of integral reconstitution,” writes Veyne hyperbolically but not uninstructionally, “comes from the fact that the documents, which provide us with the answers, also dictate the questions to us; in that way they not only leave us in ignorance of many things, but they also leave us ignorant of the fact that we are ignorant.”²⁸ The expansion of the very notion of a “source” first by the *Annales* historians and then in cultural history, so that historians now write histories of the body, of the emotions, or of sexuality, means that even Veyne’s highly critical stance must be updated, for not only what is written down can be a historical source. Besides, what should historians make of events such as genocide, whose monstrousness consists partly in their “destruction of the archive,” that is, the attempt to render their occurrence incomprehensible?²⁹ Perhaps the problem, as Constantin Fasolt writes, was not that too little was being asked of history, but too much: “Expecting history to reach the reality of the past is to allow oneself to be seduced by a mirage arising not from the past but from a historical imagination run amok.”³⁰ The “noble dream” of “writing up” the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* began to recede from historians’ realm of expectations.³¹ Historians started to resort to “defenses” in order, as they saw it, to “save” history as a discipline from the onslaught of irresponsible relativists.³²

However, none of those theoretical criticisms means that the past the historian writes is not in some way related to what happened, even if it cannot represent the totality of the past and even if language constructs the past rather than opening a window on to it. Otherwise, there would be no difference between history and fiction.³³ History, as Ankersmit notes, is “a continuous experiment with language; an experiment

in relating language to the world.”³⁴ And, as the “linguistic turn” made clear, “the fact that there may be different ‘languages’ for speaking about historical reality is no less an argument in favour of historical relativism than the fact that we can describe the world in English, French, German, or Japanese.”³⁵ There are many ways of representing the same past. Here is where method remains important. What Kevin Passmore describes as “the method of hypothesis formulation and testing—the hypothetic-deductive method—favoured by many equally conventional historians actually combines acceptance of the unlimited interpretative possibilities open to historians with the recognition that all interpretations are not equally valid.”³⁶ What historians now aim to achieve is a “satisfactory incompleteness” or “substitute” for the past on the one hand, and the establishment of criteria for judging the success of other historians’ interpretations on the other. Acton’s dictum about method remains germane, even if the dream of an “ultimate history” has disappeared, that is to say, even if the ends to which that method is put are now conceived differently.

That said, after all the debates about history and theory in the context of postmodernism, it is obvious that Acton’s historical method can hardly be accepted unaltered. Some historians may still operate on that basis, in the belief that any consideration of theory distracts them from their “real” work of narrating the past (as opposed to explaining regular and general phenomena, which characterizes the natural sciences). But this is a caricature most likely to appear in the writings of history’s detractors. The majority of historians today do pay attention to theoretical questions, of both the “object-theoretical” and “meta-theoretical” sort. Although few historians actively research and write about methodology, that does not mean they operate in the methodological darkness. Source research is presupposed by historical-philosophical theorizing, as Rüsen observes, for otherwise there would be nothing to theorize about.³⁷ “Postmodernism and narrativism,” Ankersmit writes, “thus must be amended in such a way that the historian’s intuitive ability to represent a past reality in and by his narrative is respected.”³⁸ In the context of Holocaust history, most historians are acutely aware of the difficulties they face in representing the Holocaust. They know that the language they (necessarily) use may obscure or occult the past as much as reveal it,³⁹ even if they might be uncomfortable with Hayden White’s assertion that “even the most

rigorously objective and determinedly 'clear' and literal language cannot do justice to the Holocaust without recourse to myth, poetry, and 'literary' writing."⁴⁰ It is perhaps for that reason that, paradoxically, the field of Holocaust history is dominated by an approach that Lord Acton would more clearly recognise as akin to his own than almost any other area of historical inquiry today. Holocaust history is "self-policed" for methodological consistency and convention, perhaps out of fear of overstepping the bounds of decency or "using" the Holocaust as the subject for inappropriate experimental narrative,⁴¹ perhaps just because much basic factual knowledge still remains to be uncovered. It is for the same reason that more searching questions need to be asked, to make the methodological unease that all Holocaust historians recognise and experience have a greater impact on the historiography of the Holocaust.

It goes without saying that the interpretive questions and analytical frameworks that have dominated Holocaust historiography have changed over time, the most famous being the debate between "intentionalists" and "functionalists" that has given way in the last decade or so to the "return of ideology." These changes do not occur without meta-theoretical reflection on the aims and purposes of historical study or on the most appropriate methods for achieving them, appropriateness being determined by the perspectives and aims of the historians concerned at any given time. Method is intimately related to historiography.⁴² For example, Saul Friedländer's many theoretical writings from the 1980s and 1990s helped him construct the complex narrative of his two-volume *Nazi Germany and the Jews*; Christopher Browning's empirical work on testimonies from the Starachowice labor camp led him to a position in which he challenges, from a strictly empirical standpoint, the traditional reluctance amongst Holocaust historians to use survivor testimony, which they perceive as unreliable.⁴³ Nevertheless, the history of the Holocaust tends to be written from a traditional understanding of historical methodology, with the result that the field, massive though it is, is methodologically quite staid (on both the levels of methodology described earlier). This in turn means that there is a certain sense of predictability about what is produced, so that even given the changes in focus of the last decades, the overall interpretive framework has changed very little.⁴⁴ As Confino says, the interpretive leitmotifs of Holocaust historiography—ideology, race, context and war/radicalization—are no

longer sources of historiographical innovation in quite the same way as they once were: “As the Holocaust shocks us less than a generation ago, so the specific rendition of these notions seems to have become less challenging. The historiography will change, as all historiographies do, new approaches will emerge, new interpretations be put forward.”⁴⁵ It is time to reflect on Holocaust historiography from a methodological point of view. How can the story we tell about the Holocaust be told anew?⁴⁶

On the Holocaust and Historical Methodology

There is a danger when using the Holocaust as the basis for theoretical discussions that the “horror behind the words,” as Friedländer put it, might be forgotten. Besides, if it was true in the early 1990s that the “present memory of Nazism and its crimes is directly influenced by global intellectual shifts intrinsically linked to the questions raised” in Friedländer’s volume (Friedländer meant debates about postmodernism), then in the context of ubiquitous representations and official commemorations of the Holocaust that now prevail in the western world, theoretical questions about what we are doing and how we go about representing the Holocaust are no less important now. Indeed, they are more important, not just because “Holocaust consciousness” has become remarkably pervasive, even in countries like Britain and Spain where such awareness lagged well behind other European countries,⁴⁷ but because, sadly, much of what passes for Holocaust representation today, in art, film, fiction, education, children’s literature and so on contributes to a banalization and infantilization of the subject matter and of those who consume it. Nazism and the Holocaust in contemporary culture have gone way beyond the limits that gave rise to Saul Friedländer’s fears in the 1980s, when he wrote *Reflections of Nazism*.⁴⁸ Today, supposedly with the aim of challenging us to maintain the memory of the Holocaust, we are inundated with Holocaust kitsch, from virtual candle lighting on commemorative websites to exploitative artworks where death camp imagery is employed for its “shock” value.⁴⁹ I would prefer to think about how historians can respond in innovative but responsible ways to the horror of the Holocaust.

This question is no less relevant today than it was in the heyday of debates over postmodernism, and thus *Probing the Limits of Representation* can itself now be historicized. Those debates have died away to a large extent, but it would be a mistake to conclude, as seems to be implied by the predominance of empirical work, that the historians “won” the debate. Far from it, in fact. First, there are many sorts of historians, and many of the theoretical suppositions of postmodernism (broadly understood) have become part of historians’ everyday sensibility, especially cultural and intellectual historians, for whom attending to textual construction and representation is second nature. Second, merely brushing something aside is not the same as having dealt with it head on. But in the case of the historiography of the Holocaust things are more complicated. Debates about postmodernism often turned on the Holocaust because it is “an event at the limits,” and both those who favoured postmodern approaches and those who saw the need to “defend” history used the Holocaust as a kind of “trump card.”⁵⁰ Yet amongst Holocaust historians, as opposed to historical theorists, theory barely intruded and the research that was done in the years after 1990 was overwhelmingly empirical. This empiricism was facilitated by the huge wave of newly-accessible archival material that emerged from the formerly communist countries of Eastern Europe, and it has revolutionized our understanding of the unfolding of the Holocaust at a local level, especially in Eastern Europe, and the relationships between the networks of perpetrators who carried it out, from the vast RSHA apparatus to the level of local administration.⁵¹ But the fact that theory appeared at best only implicitly was not a sign that the problems raised by Friedländer had gone away, but merely that historians were too busy with new archival material to find time for other matters – in Ankersmit’s terms, they were so busy with the first level of *historische Sinnbildung*, the recording of true statements about the past, that they neglected the two other levels of narrative representation (the organization of knowledge, i.e., the true statements about the past) and historical experience.⁵²

Thus it seems that there is an inverse correlation between the closeness of an event to “the limits” and the willingness of historians to engage theoretically with it, when the reverse ought to be true: precisely the “events at the limit” should be the ones that engender discussion about how historians do what they do. Following the

empirical achievements of the last twenty years, which has seen an extraordinary accumulation of factual detail on the Holocaust, this book's presupposition is that, with major culminating works by Browning, Friedländer, and Longerich now available, as well as the huge changes in perspective engendered by genocide studies, postcolonial studies, and world history, the time has come for a return to theoretical reflection on the nature of Holocaust historiography.⁵³ Twenty years ago Dominick LaCapra wrote that the study of the Holocaust "may help us to reconsider the requirements of historiography in general."⁵⁴ That challenge remains to be taken up. And over a century ago, Lord Acton said that "there is far more fear of drowning than of drought" where historical sources are concerned; today's problem is therefore not one of access to material but of what to do with it and how to make it generate meaning, a particularly thorny problem for a topic—the Holocaust—that fundamentally challenges the very notion of meaning in history, both for those who experienced it and for those of us who seek to try and write its history.

Not everyone sees the need for this sort of inquiry. Donald Bloxham, for example, writes that Holocaust historiography has of late "sustained a standard of sobriety and nuance" that he thinks is lacking in the broader discipline of "Holocaust studies", in which over-production has had a negative impact on quality: "Bolstered by a now well-known cohort of comparatively junior German scholars," Bloxham writes, "as well as longer-established figures like Christopher Browning, Holocaust history is a vibrant field."⁵⁵ This claim is easily verified, for high-quality historical research on the Holocaust is being published at a rapid rate, from works on the ghettos to individual country or regional studies, to studies of the looting of Jewish property, among many others that could be cited.⁵⁶

Yet if these studies can be lauded for their historical rigor and sobriety, this is largely because they share a common methodology.⁵⁷ They are driven first and foremost by an empiricism that places most of the focus on the first two facets of Acton's method (heuristics and source critique) and far less on the third (interpretation). Historical approaches that seek to investigate aspects of the human past that are less easily proven empirically, such as symbolically-laden ritual violence or "collective memory," are much less common in Holocaust historiography than in other areas of historical study. This is

less the case for American Holocaust scholarship than for German, as Frank Bajohr has noted, commenting on the works of younger German historians:

Clearly, in Germany, dealing with this subject matter is no way to advance careers. The reason is not simply because the history of the “Third Reich” still triggers defensive reflexes among academics. It also arises from the methodological conservatism of empirical research into Nazism, not infrequently characterized by a morally charged, pernickety concentration on facts, while theoretical foundations—even those of minimal or middling scope—are often frowned upon.⁵⁸

This is not a new problem. In 1947, Columbia literature professor Emery Neff criticized German historians for their excessive devotion to fact-finding, which “had prevented Theodor Mommsen from writing more than one good book and kept Acton from writing one at all.”⁵⁹ And it is certainly true that the most obvious characteristic of German PhD or *Habilitation* (postdoctoral) dissertations written on the Holocaust—even where they have had a justifiably significant impact on our understanding of the Holocaust, as in some very noteworthy cases—is their massive attention to factual detail at the expense of interpretation. But if German scholarship is the most obvious manifestation of this phenomenon, it is hardly absent from Holocaust history in general.

In other words, whilst the intersection of Holocaust history and historical theory of the 1980s and early 1990s led many to regard the Holocaust as the harbinger of postmodernism, the latter has not really had much impact on historical research into the Holocaust other than in the feeling of a changed sensibility. The “discipline” of history, in Karyn Ball’s sense, remains in place. It is still necessary, according to Ball, to investigate “the nexus of scientific, aesthetic, moral, and rhetorical ideals that scholars in different fields invoke as they defend an ‘appropriate’ (rigorous and ethical) approach to the Holocaust.” When Ball talks of “disciplining the Holocaust,” she refers to “efforts to secure its moral and historical significance for ‘us’ against potential trivializations over time.” For Ball, the logic of “discipline” is shown most clearly in historians’ “voluble” reaction to Daniel Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (1996). Objecting to his

ressentiment, historians rejected Goldhagen's challenge to their "reliance on logical criteria to define appropriate Holocaust historiography." But Ball regards "Goldhagen's 'undignified' resentment as an understandable response to a genocide that destroyed families, communities, and future generations." The vehemence of the historians' response exposes, she thinks, "the depth of academics' investment in the protocol of restraint, which is inextricably bound up with the epistemological idea of rigor that governs professional scholarship as a mode of rational behavior."⁶⁰ Indeed, she goes so far as to claim that "Goldhagen's impropriety is a symptom of a posttraumatic anxiety among members of a vulnerable group, the rage of the betrayed minority clamouring at the gates of a self-entitled majority that aided or turned its back on murder. Traumatic events challenge historians to open these gates by divesting themselves of a scientific equanimity that is barbaric in the face of genocide."⁶¹ Questions of ethics, memory, and experience all inform historical research, along with empiricism. There is no such thing as just "doing history," especially on a topic as politically and emotionally charged as the Holocaust.

Ball's findings are not novel. The impact of, *inter alia*, Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, Berel Lang, Lawrence Langer, Dominick LaCapra, Moishe Postone, Dan Diner and many others has been profound. But their impact has been less on the practice of history than on debates in "Holocaust Studies" on the representation of the Holocaust in mediums such as film, art, and literature. Thus, even if in the case of Goldhagen there were many good reasons why historians rejected his arguments apart from his impropriety, Ball's recent book represents a brave attempt to reinvigorate debates about Holocaust history's relationship to historical theory. In philosophy of history, too, debates have been less lively than they were in the 1980s and 1990s. If there is continued interest in the work of White, LaCapra, Ankersmit et al amongst philosophers of history, this is not true of historians at large.⁶² And among Holocaust historians a feeling seems to prevail that turning one's attention to theoretical matters is a distraction from the "real" work of writing history, somehow a waste of valuable time that could be spent recovering the as-yet unknown facts of the Holocaust. Yet this makes no sense; one cannot have one without the other.

Even away from theory, the repertoire of historical methods remains limited when it comes to the Holocaust, in comparison with other major events. Perhaps the most important exception concerns the historiography of the Holocaust's victims. Since its inception, cultural history—understood less as the study of symbolic meaning-production in the past than as the study of “culture” in a more Arnoldian sense as most “precious” qualities and characteristics of any society—has informed the history of the Jews under Nazi occupation, especially in Israeli history writing. However, in the anthropologically-inflected sense of attempting to discover the ways in which past actors sought to give meaning to their lives through symbol, ritual, and narrative, the literature is in its infancy.⁶³ This attempt to recover the meanings that people in the past gave to their lives and the events around them should not be confused with White's arguments about the historian creating meaning in the present. There is, however, no paradox: cultural history is subject to the same epistemological problems as any other field of history writing, with the historical text acting as a substitute for the past itself, and the recovery of meanings in the past does not mean that historians are not at the same time creating meanings in the present. Equally, just because cultural history involves the search for past meanings – by no means an uncomplicated affair, for the sources are often opaque at best – does not exclude it from the assertion that the fundamental importance of the “historical operation” is its role in meaning-creation in the present.

Within the broad arena of cultural history, there is one theme that stands out in the literature: memory. Commensurate with the “memory boom” that has been such a striking characteristic of western societies (but not only western) in the last two decades or so, Holocaust historiography has seen a turn to memory as a dominant paradigm.⁶⁴ The work of Alon Confino, Peter Fritzsche, Wulf Kansteiner, and others has set up memory as central to understanding the Holocaust, even though, as Confino tellingly notes (in a comment that is of a piece with Bajohr's analysis of German history-writing), there has been no work on German memories during the Third Reich, nothing that would help to connect Nazism to the ways of life of Germans that might help us understand how Nazism as both break and continuity with German mores, norms, and prejudices could have taken over so effectively.⁶⁵ Again, the bulk of this work has been done either on the memory of the Holocaust in postwar Europe or the U.S.—including

many very fine historical studies⁶⁶—or is conducted by literary or cultural scholars whose work—on commemoration and artistic carriers of memory⁶⁷—has not permeated into the historical study of the Holocaust itself (that is, explaining the Holocaust as an event rather than analysing how people responded to it after 1945).⁶⁸ The same is true of testimony, as Zoë Waxman indicates. A sophisticated theoretical literature on testimony now exists,⁶⁹ but when Saul Friedländer made use of “the voices of the victims” in his two-volume *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, most Holocaust historians considered this to be a major advance. Cultural history has had great impact on historical research in general, but remarkably not on the study of the Holocaust.⁷⁰

The other area that has made some impact on Holocaust history is gender studies. Although the resistance to asking questions about women and the Holocaust that was so striking in the 1980s and early 1990s has subsided, so that gender has become more or less part of the mainstream. However, the questions that are asked remain somewhat constrained, with debates still centred on the role of women as “carers and sharers” and whether women were better equipped to survive than men. Those who raise questions of “non-standard” female behavior have a harder time getting their voices heard, although it is no longer the case—as with female perpetrators—that we are so shocked by women who do not conform to cultural norms.

But if the shaking of historically-determined female roles has been beneficial, in certain respects it gives rise to more awkward questions. By “unmasking” female behaviour that is considered “deviant,” do we perhaps engage in an “inadvertent complicity” with sexual perversity? Can it be that, as Ball asks, “a feminist scholarly agenda calling for attention to the gendered and sexual differentiation of historical experiences colludes with this will in sexualizing the untold and therefore ‘secret’ horrors of the Holocaust”?⁷¹ These sorts of questions are only beginning to be addressed, and until Holocaust historians start to write family histories and to address the role of Jewish masculinity and fatherhood in the Holocaust, will be impossible to answer fully.

One of the most notable development in Holocaust history is the growth of interest in Holocaust historiography. This is not just a generational matter, now that the grandchildren of the perpetrators and survivors are themselves taking responsibility for

writing the history of the events; it is also a question of how to historicize the Holocaust without losing a sense of its moral enormity—returning us to Friedländer’s debate with Broszat—and a response to arguments that silence reigned in the postwar period where the Holocaust was concerned. Although one cannot gainsay the difference between the first thirty years after World War II and the following thirty years which saw the gradual rise of “Holocaust consciousness” and the incorporation of Holocaust memory into the official commemorative calendar across the world, it is also correct that the difference is not an absolute one. Early historians of Holocaust, although largely independent and outside the university setting, made significant strides in developing the field, often building on work that had been done before and during the war itself. However, this revival of interest in historiographical concerns is driven more by a desire to get a handle on the massive literature and its sub-disciplines than out of theoretical-methodological concerns.⁷² These historiographical studies still reveal the typical historian’s tendency to “wrap up” the problem, even when explicit warnings against doing so are provided as part of the nature of the historical text.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the developing discipline of comparative genocide studies. Whilst on the one hand, the sometime-popular notion of the uniqueness of the Holocaust no longer gets a hearing (at least in academic circles), the concept of uniqueness still exists, and still sneaks in via the backdoor. A poisonous rhetoric surrounds genocide studies, with some historians accusing others of having ulterior motives in their claim that the Holocaust can and should be seen in a world-historical context. Omer Bartov, for example, recently attacked Donald Bloxham for placing the Holocaust in the context of European history from the late nineteenth century. Bartov writes that: ‘By alleging its overwhelming presence in public discourse, a tortuous link is made between the genocide of the Jews and the legitimacy of the State of Israel’ and says that he is ‘not convinced that writing about many genocides instead of just one is a moral statement; but I am sure that it precludes empathy.’⁷³ In my opinion, the serious historians who are at the forefront of genocide studies are as sensitive to the specificities of the Holocaust’s history and its victims as are those who do not share their interpretive aims. Why should it be that there is only one way to study any subject? Bartov now believes that the Holocaust can only be studied on the basis of local

microstudies, a conclusion he has reached after conducting his own detailed research on the inter-ethnic relations of the people of Buczacz, Ukraine. But if there is one clear message emerging from my focus on how we should the history of the Holocaust, it is that we should do so in as many ways as possible. The anxiety that comparative genocide studies appears to provoke is not merely a response to its methodological innovativeness—after all, the idea of placing events in wide contexts is as old as the historical discipline itself, and is certainly fashionable again in contemporary world and transnational history—but reveals the fact the Holocaust is policed and self-policed by historians who, for perhaps understandable reasons, worry that others do not care to the same extent that they do. The question of propriety and authenticity is key here, and is a topic that requires more theoretical elucidation.

Clearly, the Holocaust remains a challenge to historical methodology. Frank Ankersmit, in an important essay on *White*, asks at one point: “is not the historical discipline, when considered as a whole, the interior monologue of contemporary Western civilization about a past from which it originated? ... Is historical culture not how our civilization, so to speak, ‘writes itself’ in the style of the middle voice?” In this sense, our attempt to “write ourselves” by writing history means that “history functions as the mirror of the radically alien in which we can begin to recognize our own cultural identity.” Historical reality is then not “a positivist given” but “a permanent challenge to the historical discipline as a whole.”⁷⁴ The Holocaust is paradigmatic of the challenge within a challenge: it challenges history writing to provide a methodological basis that would do more than merely record facts and it exemplifies the problematic described by Ankersmit of what sort of civilization we want to “write” for ourselves in a world in which Auschwitz is a reality.

Notes

¹ A version of this lecture will be published as the introduction to *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

² Words spoken by Leon Bardeles in Isaac Bashevis Singer's story "A Tale of Two Sisters," in Singer, *The Collected Stories* (New York, 1996), 460. I am very grateful to Donald Bloxham, Alon Confino, Mark Donnelly, Becky Jinks, and Dirk Moses for their comments on an earlier version of this text.

³ Hannah Arendt, "Understanding and Politics (The Difficulties of Understanding)," in *Essays in Understanding 1930-1954: Uncollected and Unpublished Works by Hannah Arendt*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York, 1994), 318. See also Ravit Reichman, "The Myth of Old Forms: On the Unknowable and Representation," in *Theoretical Interpretations of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (Amsterdam, 2001), 27-53.

⁴ See Robert Eaglestone, *Postmodernism and Holocaust Denial* (Cambridge, U.K., 2001) and, more generally, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Belief and Resistance: Dynamics of Contemporary Intellectual Controversy* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), 28-31. Herrnstein Smith's brilliant book is perhaps the best way to understand "constructivist" epistemology.

⁵ Hayden White, "Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth," in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"*, ed. Saul Friedlander (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 37-53.

⁶ Martin Jay, "Of Plots, Witnesses, and Judgments," in *Probing the Limits of Representation*, ed. Friedlander, 97.

⁷ As he has maintained since, as, for example, in his exchange with Dirk Moses: A. Dirk Moses, "Hayden White, Traumatic Nationalism, and the Public Role of History"; Hayden

White, "The Public Relevance of Historical Studies: A Reply to Dirk Moses," *History and Theory* 44 (2005): 311-322 and 333-338.

⁸ Jay, "Of Plots, Witnesses, and Judgments," 99.

⁹ Paul Veyne, *Writing History: Essay on Epistemology* (Manchester, 1984).

¹⁰ See Wulf Kansteiner, "Mad History Disease Contained: Postmodern Excess Management Advice from the UK," *History and Theory* 39, no. 2 (2000): 218-229.

¹¹ An exception is Alex Callinicos, *Theories and Narratives: Reflections on the Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, 1995).

¹² Hayden White, "'Figuring the Nature of the Times Deceased': Literary Theory and Historical Writing," in *The Future of Literary Theory*, ed. Ralph Cohen (New York, 1989), 34-35.

¹³ Allan Megill, *Historical Knowledge, Historical Error: A Contemporary Guide to Practice* (Chicago, 2007), 186.

¹⁴ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *Beyond the Great Story: History as Text and Discourse* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), 283.

¹⁵ See Dan Stone, *Constructing the Holocaust: A Study in Historiography* (London, 2003), esp. ch1.

¹⁶ See Mark Day, *The Philosophy of History: An Introduction* (London, 2008).

¹⁷ Jörn Rüsen, *History: Narration-Interpretation-Orientations* (New York, 2005), 78.

¹⁸ Friedlander, "Introduction," in *Probing the Limits of Representation*, ed. Friedlander, 5.

¹⁹ Alon Confino, "A World Without Jews: Interpreting the Holocaust," *German History* 27, no. 4 (2009): 534.

²⁰ For example: Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis, 2000); Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer, *Between Witness and Testimony: The Holocaust and the Limits of Representation* (Albany, 2001); Paul Eisenstein, *Traumatic Encounters: Holocaust Representation and the Hegelian Subject* (Albany, 2003); Gary Weissman, *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust* (Ithaca, 2004); Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford, 2004); Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (Urbana, 2007).

²¹ Rüsen, *History*, 190. For examples, see: Moishe Postone and Eric Santner, ed., *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century* (Chicago, 2003); Dominick LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (Ithaca, 1994); LaCapra, *History and Memory after Auschwitz* (Ithaca, 1998); LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, 2001); Omer Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation* (New York, 1996); Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide, and Modern Identity* (New York, 2000); Dan Diner, *Beyond the Conceivable: Studies on Germany, Nazism, and the Holocaust* (Berkeley, 2000).

²² Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca, 2001).

²³ Roger Chartier, "On the Relation of Philosophy and History," in his *Cultural History: Between Practices and Representations* (Cambridge, 1988), 62.

²⁴ Jonathan Littell, *The Kindly Ones* (London, 2009). On Littell, see Susan Rubin Suleiman, "When the Perpetrator Becomes a Reliable Witness of the Holocaust: On Jonathan Littell's *Les bienveillantes*," *New German Critique* 106 (2009): 1-19.

²⁵ Robert Braun, "The Banality of Goodness: The Problem of Evil and Good in Representations of the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in Hungary Fifty Years Later*, ed. Randolph L. Braham and Attila Pók (New York, 1997), 623. Cf. F. R. Ankersmit, "Historical Representation," *History and Theory* 27, no. 3 (1988): 205-228; Ankersmit, "Reply to Professor Zagorin," *History and Theory* 29, no. 3 (1990): 291: "we can say that the absence of the past, that provokes all writing of history, has been compensated for by the presence of narrative substances."

²⁶ J. B. Bury, "The Science of History," in *The Varieties of History: From Voltaire to the Present*, ed. Fritz Stern (London, 1970), 210-223; Carl G. Hempel, "Reasons and Covering Laws in Historical Explanation," in *The Philosophy of History*, ed. Patrick Gardiner (Oxford, 1974), 90-105.

²⁷ François Furet, "Beyond the *Annales*," *Journal of Modern History* 55 (1983): 389-410; Lynn Hunt, "French History in the Last Twenty Years: The Rise and Fall of the *Annales* Paradigm," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21 (1986): 209-224; Hans Kellner, "Disorderly Conduct: Braudel's Mediterranean Satire (A Review of Reviews)," in his *Language and Historical Representation: Getting the Story Crooked* (Madison, 1989), 153-187; Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1984), 207-217. Ricoeur notes (214-215) that even economic history, as in volume three of Braudel's *History of the Mediterranean*, "lends itself to a plot when an initial term and a final term are chosen, and these are provided by categories other than conjunctural history itself, which, in principle, is endless, unlimited in the strict sense."

²⁸ Veyne, *Writing History*, 13.

²⁹ Marc Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion* (New York, 2009), 11: "The genocidal will, in other words, is that which wants to abolish the fact in and through the very act that establishes the fact." Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (Manchester, 1988). On the Holocaust as "a negation of narrative frameworks", see Ernst van Alphen, *Caught By History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory* (Stanford, 1997), 53-55.

³⁰ Constantin Fasolt, *The Limits of History* (Chicago, 2004), 40.

³¹ Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge, 1988).

³² Richard Evans, *In Defence of History* (London, 1997); Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York, 1994).

³³ Ann Curthoys and John Docker, *Is History Fiction?* (Sydney, 2006).

³⁴ Frank R. Ankersmit, "Language and Historical Experience," in *Meaning and Representation in History*, ed. Jörn Rüsen (New York, 2006), 149.

³⁵ F. R. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford, 2001), 36.

³⁶ Kevin Passmore, "Poststructuralism and History," in *Writing History: Theory and Practice*, ed. Stefan Berger, Heiko Feldner, and Kevin Passmore (London, 2003), 132-133.

³⁷ Rüsen, *History*, 90.

³⁸ Frank R. Ankersmit, "The Three Levels of 'Sinnbildung' in Historical Writing," in *Meaning and Representation in History*, ed. Rüsen, p. 110. Ankersmit's proposal for achieving this goal of transcending "the debate between modernism and postmodernism" is to use the notion of "experience."

³⁹ Gabrielle Spiegel, "History and Post-Modernism," *Past and Present* 135 (1992): 194-208.

⁴⁰ Hayden White, "Figural Realism in Witness Literature," *Parallax* 10, no. 1 (2004): 118. See also White, "Introduction: Historical Fiction, Fictional History, and Historical Reality," *Rethinking History* 9, nos. 2-3 (2005): 149.

⁴¹ Cf. Saul Friedländer, "On the Representation of the Shoah in Present-Day Western Culture," in *Remembering for the Future*, ed. Yehuda Bauer (Oxford, 1989), vol. 3, 3097.

⁴² Rüsen, *History*, 83.

⁴³ Wulf Kansteiner, "Success, Truth, and Modernism in Holocaust Historiography: Reading Saul Friedländer Thirty-Five Years after the Publication of *Metahistory*," *History and Theory*, Theme Issue 47 (2009): 29-53; Christian Wiese and Paul Betts, ed., *Years of Persecution, Years of Extermination: Saul Friedländer and the Future of Holocaust Studies* (New York, 2010); Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, 2003); Browning, *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave-Labor Camp* (New York, 2010).

⁴⁴ I am aware that this is a gross generalization. See my *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford, 2010) for more detailed discussion.

⁴⁵ Confino, "A World Without Jews," 547.

⁴⁶ Confino, "A World Without Jews," 556-557. Cf. Berkhofer, *Beyond the Great Story*, 280.

⁴⁷ Andy Pearce, "The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Contemporary Britain, 1979-2001," *Holocaust Studies* 14, no. 2 (2008): 71-94.

⁴⁸ Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (New York, 1984); Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, "The Normalization of Memory: Saul Friedländer's *Reflections of Nazism* Twenty Years Later," in *Lessons and Legacies, Vol. VII: The Holocaust in International Perspective*, ed. Dagmar Herzog (Evanston, 2006), 400-410.

⁴⁹ But cf. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation*, 186-188.

⁵⁰ See Michael Dintenfass, "Truth's Other: Ethics, the History of the Holocaust, and Historiographical Theory after the Linguistic Turn," *History and Theory* 39, no. 1 (2000): 1-20. Dintenfass writes (4) that "Instead of the theorization of the event that would make evident its qualifications as the litmus test of historiographical theory, we find the invocation of the Holocaust functioning as an incantation with which the adherents of history as faithful reconstruction attempt to ward off the demons of the linguistic turn" and (5) that "I find the language with which Appleby *et al.*, Evans, Himmelfarb, and Bartov constitute the Holocaust as the touchstone of postmodernist historiographical theory richly revealing of the repressed moral dimension of historical inquiry." See also my chapter below and Richard Carter-White, "Auschwitz, Ethics, and Testimony: Exposure to the Disaster," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 27 (2009): 682-699.

⁵¹ Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, chs 2 and 3. On the importance of local municipalities, see Wolf Gruner, "The History of the Holocaust: Multiple Actors, Diverse Motives, Contradictory Developments and Disparate (Re)actions," in *Years of Persecution/Years of Extermination*, eds. Wiese and Betts, 323-341.

⁵² Ankersmit, "The Three Levels of 'Sinnbildung' in Historical Writing."

⁵³ Christopher R. Browning with Jürgen Matthäus, *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942* (London, 2004); Saul Friedländer, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945* (London, 2007); Peter Longerich, *Holocaust: The Nazi Persecution and Murder of the Jews* (Oxford, 2010); A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York, 2007); Dan Stone, ed., *The Historiography of Genocide* (Houndmills, 2008); Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (Oxford, 2010).

⁵⁴ Dominick LaCapra, "Representing the Holocaust: Reflections on the Historians' Debate," in *Probing the Limits of Representation*, ed. Friedlander, 110. See also Jörn Rüsen, "Humanism in Response to the Holocaust – Destruction or Innovation?," *Postcolonial Studies* 11, no. 2 (2008): 191-200. Or, as Gil Anidjar puts it, rather more provocatively: "Instead of placing the discipline of history under interrogation – minimally, as a significant actor in the production of the modern (and totalitarian) state – the Holocaust serves to buttress undisturbed notions of history and of historical methods." Anidjar, "Against History," afterword to Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion*, 189 n80.

⁵⁵ Donald Bloxham, "Modernity and Genocide," *European History Quarterly* 38, no. 2 (2008): 301.

⁵⁶ For example: Sara Bender, *The Jews of Białystok During World War II and the Holocaust* (Waltham, 2009); Barbara Epstein, *The Minsk Ghetto, 1941-1943: Jewish Resistance and Soviet Internationalism* (Berkeley, 2008); Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Rediscovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto* (London, 2009); Barbara Engelking and Jacek Leociak, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City* (New Haven, 2009);

Martin Dean, *Robbing the Jews: The Confiscation of Jewish Property in the Holocaust, 1933-1945* (Cambridge, U.K., 2008); Anton Weiss-Wendt, *Murder Without Hatred: Estonians and the Holocaust* (Syracuse, 2009), Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln, 2009), Alan E. Steinweis, *Kristallnacht 1938* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).

⁵⁷ Cf. Amos Goldberg, "One from Four: On What Jaeckel, Hilberg, and Goldhagen Have in Common and What is Unique about Christopher Browning," *Yalkut Moreshet* 3 (2005): 55-86; Federico Finchelstein, "The Holocaust Canon: Rereading Raul Hilberg," *New German Critique* 96 (2005): 1-47.

⁵⁸ Frank Bajohr, "Robbery, Ideology, and Realpolitik: Some Critical Remarks," *Yad Vashem Studies* 35, no. 1 (2007): 179-180.

⁵⁹ Richard T. Vann, "Turning Linguistic: History and Theory and *History and Theory*, 1960-1975," in *A New Philosophy of History*, ed. Frank Ankersmit and Hans Kellner (London, 1995), 42, citing Neff, *The Poetry of History* (New York, 1947), 193.

⁶⁰ Karyn Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust* (Albany, 2008), 8.

⁶¹ Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust*, 43-44.

⁶² See Frank Ankersmit, Ewa Domańska, and Hans Kellner, ed., *Re-figuring Hayden White* (Stanford, 2009).

⁶³ For a discussion of cultural history in this sense, see Roger Chartier, "Intellectual History and the History of *Mentalités*: A Dual Re-evaluation," in his *Cultural History*, 19-52.

⁶⁴ See my essays on this theme: "Beyond the Mnemosyne Institute: The Future of Memory after the Age of Commemoration," in *The Future of Memory*, ed. Rick Crownshaw, Jane Kilby, and Antony Rowland (New York, 2010), 17-36; "Genocide and

Memory," in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, ed. Bloxham and Moses, 102-119; "Memory Wars in the 'New Europe,'" in *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, ed. Dan Stone (Oxford, 2011).

⁶⁵ Confino, "A World Without Jews." For further detail, see Confino's forthcoming books, *Foundational Pasts* and, especially, *A World without Jews*.

⁶⁶ Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA, 1997); Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley, 2001); Peter Reichel, *Politik der Erinnerung: Gedächtnisorte im Streit um die nationalsozialistische Vergangenheit* (Munich, 1995); Habbo Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild: Fotografien des Holocaust in der deutschen Erinnerungskultur* (Hamburg, 2001); Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, *Munich and Memory: Architecture, Monuments, and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (Berkeley, 2000); Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche, ed., *The Work of Memory: New Directions in the Study of German Society and Culture* (Urbana, 2002); Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* (Athens, OH, 2005); Jonathan Huener, *Auschwitz, Poland, and the Politics of Commemoration, 1945-1979* (Athens, OH, 2003); Neil Gregor, *Haunted City: Nuremberg and the Nazi Past* (London, 2008). It is no surprise that many of the leading theorists of memory, especially in relation to mourning and trauma, such as Assmann, Rüsen, and Koselleck, are German or work on German history. See also Burkhard Liebsch, "Trauer als Gewissen der Geschichte?," in *Trauer und Geschichte*, ed. Burkhard Liebsch and Jörn Rüsen (Cologne, 2001), 15-62.

⁶⁷ Eelco Runia, "Burying the Dead, Creating the Past," *History and Theory* 46 (2007): 313-325; James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New

Haven, 1993); Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York, 1995); Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA, 2002); Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory: France and Germany since 1989* (New York, 2005); Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France* (Ithaca, 1999), and many others.

⁶⁸ For example: Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA, 1997); Ernst Van Alphen, *Caught By History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature, and Theory* (Stanford, 1997); David Bathrick, Brad Prager, and Michael D. Richardson, ed., *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (Rochester, NY, 2008).

⁶⁹ Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York, 1992); Lawrence L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven, 1991); Zoë Vania Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford, 2006); Alexandra Garbarini, *Numbered Days: Diaries and the Holocaust* (New Haven, 2006); Jane Kilby and Antony Rowland, ed., *The Future of Testimony* (Bloomington, forthcoming).

⁷⁰ I privilege cultural history here not because it differs epistemologically from more familiar methodologies, such as political history, but because it does not.

⁷¹ Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust*, 195. Cf. Carolyn J. Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy after the Holocaust* (Ithaca, 2004), esp. ch I.

⁷² Notably: Dan Stone, ed., *The Historiography of the Holocaust* (New York, 2004); Moshe Zimmermann, ed., *On Germans and Jews under the Nazi Regime: Essays by Three*

Generations of Historians (Jerusalem, 2006); David Bankier and Dan Michman, ed., *Holocaust Historiography in Context* (Jerusalem, 2008); Peter Hayes and John K. Roth, ed., *Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies* (Oxford, 2010). Betts and Wiese, ed., *Years of Persecution/Years of Extermination* is partly devoted to theoretical questions. See also Tom Lawson, *Debates on the Holocaust* (Manchester, 2010), and Jean-Marc Dreyfuss and Daniel Langton, eds., *Writing the Holocaust* (London, 2010).

⁷³ See the forum on Bloxham's *The Final Solution: A Genocide* in *Journal of Genocide Research* 13, 1&2 (2011).

⁷⁴ F. R. Ankersmit, "Hayden White's Appeal to the Historians," in *Historical Representation*, 259, 261.

