Metonymy and trauma: re-presenting death in the literature of W. G. Sebald

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METONYMY & TRAUMA

RE-PRESENTING DEATH IN THE LITERATURE OF W. G. SEBALD

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Novel: Fragments of a Former Moon

The novel Fragments of a Former Moon (FFM) invokes the paradoxical earlier death of the still-living protagonist. The unmarried German woman is told that her skeletal remains have been discovered in Israel, thirty-eight years since her body was interred in 1967. This absurd premise raises issues of representing death in contemporary culture; death's destabilising effect on the individual's textual representation; post-Enlightenment dissolution of the modern rational self; and problems of mimetic post-Holocaust representation. Using W G Sebald's fiction as a point of departure, FFM's photographic illustrations connote modes of textual representation that disrupt the autobiographical self, invoking mortality and its a-temporal (representational) displacement. As with Sebald's recurring references to the Holocaust, FFM depicts a psychologically unstable protagonist seeking to recover repressed memories of an absent past.

Research dissertation: Metonymy & Trauma: Re-presenting Death in the Literature of W. G. Sebald

The dissertation centres on the effect of metonymy in the rhetoric of textually-constructed identity and its contemporary representation in the face of death. I concentrate on the effect of Holocaust trauma on representation and memory, relating trauma theory to the metonymy of W G Sebald's fiction, and situating representations of the traumatised self within the institution of modern bureaucracy. Using Ronald Schleifer's theory of metonymy I explore the rhetorical process by which Sebald seeks to depict the unrepresentable within Holocaust history, arguing that Sebald's correlation of text with image evokes problems of Holocaust discourse because it re-presents the past while recognising inadequacies within conventional narrative. Photography's function as an indexical trace of the past grounds my account of Sebald's use of imagery in questioning conventional forms of representation. I argue that Sebald construes the institutionalised constitution of the modern self through civic architecture, emphasising the metonymical associations of contemporary Western life and death. I maintain ultimately that the ethically displaced modern self typifies a culture capable of committing – and simultaneously repressing the representation – of technologised mass genocide: Sebald's texts critique modern society by apprehending modes of intersubjective memory and narrative responsibility through acknowledgement of the arbitrary, indexical capacity of metonymical representation. ■

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Acknowledgments

REPRESENTING DEATH: AN INTRODUCTION

The thematic point of departure for both the research dissertation and the fictional component of this thesis (*Fragments of a Former Moon*: hereafter *FFM*), is the literature of W G Sebald. The dissertation seeks to develop Sebald's concerns with the effect of state institutions on the individual, with the relationship between morality and aesthetics (in the attempt to represent the unrepresentable) and, more generally, with the representation of, and responses to, death. Each of these issues is embodied within the project of this dissertation in seeking to ethically, aesthetically, and historically authenticate the constitution of modern subjectivity in a fictional, written subject. I read the incorporeality of the written self as a consequence of the relationship of death and bureaucracy, articulating the incorporeal self through the mechanics of narrative displacement, the motif of architecture, and the relations of text to photographic imagery. By considering the theme of death and the effect of bureaucracy on subjectivity, I seek to emphasise their conjunctive resonance in Holocaust representation. The Holocaust poses a specific problem of representation for post-war theorists and writers; it is the paradigmatic example of the crisis of representation in Western Culture. I suggest that the use of metonymy in W G Sebald's narratives constitutes a persuasive attempt to resolve this problem.

What makes Sebald's work particularly relevant to this dissertation's attempt to explain the relations between the representations of death and the function of modern bureaucracy is its inter-generic form: its mix of autobiography, travel-writing, literary biography, art history, and Holocaust fiction.[1] For this reason, Holocaust and trauma theorist Cathy Caruth will be useful in reading Sebald's work, as she employs an

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[1] See Mark R McCulloh, *Understanding W G Sebald*, 2003: 24. McCulloh refers to Sebald's blend of "essay, explication, and fiction" and asks "What does one make of a writer who alternately digresses on biographies, criticises architecture, laments tragic loss, hallucinates, reports speech, investigates animal species, solves crimes, exposes deceptions, and extols the beauty of landscapes?" (24). For collected essays by W G Sebald, see Sebald *On The Natural History of Destruction: With Essays on Alfred Andersch, Jean Amery and Peter Weiss*, Anthea Bell (transl.), 2003; and Sebald *Campo Santo*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 2005. Delia Falconer ("Positive Potential of Melancholy" (Review): *The Sydney Morning Herald*: 24, 30 April-1 May, 2005) emphasises the thematic correlations between Sebald's academic writing and his fiction. Carolin Duttlinger observes that recent consideration of photography in literary and aesthetic theory has led to "a more associative, discursive style of argument which problematises the boundaries netween 'theory' and 'literature'", and that Sebald's fiction develops these approaches, exhibiting documentary and theoretical aspects while still belonging to the genre of literature. See Duttlinger "Traumatic Photographs: Remembrance and the Technical Media in W G Sebald's *Austerlitz*" in Long and Whitehead (eds.) *W G Sebald: A Critical Companion*, 2004: 155.

interdisciplinary approach that applies psychoanalysis to literary theory and history; an approach that I explore in the following chapters to establish significant links between ethics, aesthetics, mortality, memory, and the writing subject.

In the dissertation I seek to unite these themes under cultural theorist Ronald Schleifer's rubric of metonymy, which I argue is constitutive of the rhetoric of much modern discourse. As with the broad gamut of Schleifer's writings on the subject of death and metonymy, both components of this thesis attempt to draw together (in the manner of Frankfurt School philosopher Theodor Adorno's constellation of unrelated ideas) a set of disparate concepts and themes, with the purpose of re-conceiving contemporary textual representations regarding death in modern culture. True to the nature of the postmodern project, this thesis is both a renunciation and a continuation of the Enlightenment tenets of modernism; it attempts to "explore [modernity's] contradictions and contingencies, its tensions and internal resistances".[2]

As a means of dealing with the issue of Holocaust representation, I find it useful to invoke the motif of death, as it is not only a literal instance of bodily transience, but it metaphorically functions as an instance of representational uncertainty. Sebald's fiction regularly references death.[3] I see Sebald's elegiacal invocations of death as metaphors

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[2] Andreas Huyssen *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*, 1986: 217. As Anthony J Cascardi has observed, "the contemporary critique of the Enlightenment originates from within the Enlightenment itself and must be understood as a consequence or continuation of the Enlightenment, and not as a rejection of its critical program." See Cascardi *Consequences of Enlightenment*, 1999: 49.

[3] For instance, the four short stories of *The Emigrants* concern the deaths of the main characters, while within each story digressive narrative accounts of relatives and friends lost to the past (for example, the account of the extended family of Ambros Adelwarth, 67-75), and often to the Holocaust (for instance, see the long account of the letters of Max Ferber's deceased mother, Luiza Lanzberg, redolent with the knowledge of her own imminent death, 193-218). The photographs accompanying these accounts often portray people the reader realises must now be dead. Such photographs obliquely reference their deaths by means of the doubled temporality peculiar to photography, in which past presence signifies a contemporary absence (see discussion in the chapter on photography, below). Often the textual references to death are an allegorical part of the narrative, as in *The Rings of Saturn* with the account of Gracchus the Huntsman (164-6), or with the narrator's account of a Herring fisheries documentary (52-8) and a Nazi sericulture documentary (291-4). The Sericulture film forms part of a greater metaphor used in both *The Rings of Saturn* and *The Emigrants*, of life and death as a woven web, culminating in *The Emigrants* (235-7) in a described but absent photograph (part of the Genewein collection: see Ulrich Baer *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*, 2002: 128-78) of three Jewish women likely to have died in Auschwitz. The women are weaving cloth in the Litzmannstadt ghetto in Lödz. They are likened to the three Greco-roman Parcae, or Fates, "Nona, Decuma, and Morta, the daughters of night, with spindle, scissors and thread." (237). This is a favoured motif in Sebald's fiction, as it closely binds death (and life) not only with the doubly-temporal concept of fate, the notion that all living things harbour within their constructed condition the nature of their demise, but with the function of textual creation, signified by the

for the crisis of representation referred to in Holocaust discourse. The impossibility of representing death parallels the impossibility of the Enlightenment hope of representing and comprehending the totality of the phenomenological world. Furthermore, the Enlightenment apprehension of mortality in modern society resembles Enlightenment conceptions of what is and is not morally comprehensible and, thus, representable.

I will elaborate on the problem of post-Holocaust representation in anticipation of chapter one (*Death & the Text*). The crisis of representation, often postulated in the wake of the Holocaust, poses difficulties for literature that attempts to depict the event, or to portray the moral and aesthetic problems the Holocaust has engendered. Aesthetic theorist Ernst van Alphen contends that the factual precision inherent in systematised processes of contemporary historical research precludes an effective apprehension of the Holocaust.[4] Van Alphen suggests that contemporary historical practice, instead of merely denying the past, "rather protects us from the past, keeps it at a distance."[5] The language used in the discipline of history implies a distanced expert surveyor of facts, inducing in the reader a perspective similar to that of the "administrator of extermination", whereby "interest is fixed on an administrative

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process of weaving. The absence of death as representation is often depicted by exaggerating the sense of representational mediation, by which the reader's apprehends, for instance, the printed book illustration of a photograph of a printed illustration in a book of a photograph (see the photograph of the Archduke Ferdinand's blood-soaked uniform in *The Rings of Saturn*: 95; or the photographic reproduction of the plaster-cast of a character's hand in the first story of *Vertigo*: 21). This device gives the impression of the indexical corroboration of reality, on the one hand, and on the other, in its attempt to reference reality, only succeeds in depicting reality's constant recession into representation and the past. Sebald's Photographs often signify the literal absence of death, as with the depiction of the Archduke Ferdinand's uniform absent the corpse (*The Rings of Saturn* [*TRS*]: 95), or the photograph beginning the story Paul Bereyter, which appears to depict the site of Bereyter's suicide (*The Emigrants* [*TE*]: 27). Sometimes the action of referencing death's absence is emphasised, as with the two-page photograph in *Austerlitz* of the Terezin fortress archive of prisoners' files (396-7). Photographic depictions of death are sometimes explicit, as with the photograph of covered bodies in a copse near Bergen-Belsen (*TE*: 61-2), a grainy, indistinct photograph of hanged bodies (*TRS*: 97), an enormous pile of dead herring (*TRS*: 54), a corpse exposed for anatomical study (*TRS*: 16), an archaeological site of excavated human remains (A: 185), pinned butterflies or a dead moth (A: 118, 133); or death is depicted by direct implication in photographs of reliquaries, memorials, cemeteries or gravestones (*TRS*: 87, 123, 260: *TE*: 222-5: A: 166, 320-1, 324, 361, 409: V: 18, 123, 182).

[4] van Alphen relies on the arguments of historian Saul Friedlander. See Ernst Van Alphen *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Literature, Art and Theory*, 1997: 33-37.

[5] Ernst van Alphen "Interdisciplinary Cultural Analysis Today: Thinking about Art in History" Musner and Lutter (eds.) *The Contemporary Study of Culture*, 1999, 191-203: at 200.

process, an activity of building and transportation, words used for record keeping."[6] According to this epistemological model, the act of the contemporary historian becomes a return to the logic of the Holocaust, the historian and/or the reader fulfilling the detached role typical of the Nazi administrator of mass genocide.[7] Van Alphen suggests that history is locked into this detached means of recording the past because it is textually and representationally unreflexive. He regards textual-reflexivity – in its capacity to acknowledge the "incomparable nature of the Holocaust"[8] – as a necessary means of overcoming historical detachment. Van Alphen's argument is consistent with Sebald's narrative perspective, which impugns the capacity of historical representation to allow an empathetic comprehension of the horrors of the past. Furthermore, van Alphen's emphasis on the systematisation and clinical distance of contemporary historical practice is useful to the argument of this dissertation which focuses on the nature of representation in terms of modern bureaucracy, an institutional structure typified by systematisation, procedure, and clinical distance.

In contrast to these bureaucratic systems, van Alphen suggests that art and aesthetic theory are disciplines capable of avoiding historical detachment.[9] I contend, however, that it is not only aesthetics, but also the interdisciplinary application of psychological and rhetorical modes of study that offer an alternative to historical detachment. This is a relatively orthodox argument. However, by joining trauma theory to Ronald Schleifer's metonymical interpretation of contemporary society, I seek to extend the boundaries of Sebald scholarship by identifying a model of representation that characterises both Sebald's work and many contemporary representations of death and the Holocaust.

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[6] Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History, and the Extermination of Jews*, Johns Hopkins Press, 1987: cited by van Alphen, *ibid.*

[7] *Ibid.*

[8] Van Alphen *op. cit.* 1997: 33.

[9] Ernst van Alphen *Caught by History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Literature, Art and Theory*, 1997: 33-37.

The debate over the problem of post-Holocaust representation has developed from Adorno's infamous claim, now rendered an "academic truism"[10] in Holocaust narrative discourse, that

> [c]ultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture
> and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes
> even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.[11]

Van Alphen argues that Adorno's claim has been misused to maintain the separation between the positivism of historical research and the imaginative orientation of novelistic fiction.[12] This conventional opposition favours historical positivism and fails to recognise the role of aesthetic expression.

Following from this argument, I will suggest that – by the rhetorical modes of parecnasis, prosopoeia, and metonymy, Adorno's non-linear concept of the constellation, and Caruth's non-teleological construction of trauma theory – W G Sebald's literature advances the project of an aesthetic re-appropriation of history. By consciously acknowledging the subjective fallibility of narrative, Sebald enables a re-creation and re-apprehension of the vicissitudes of the past, paradigmatically present here in terms of the Holocaust. As such Sebald re-creates not only those horrific past events that have proved difficult to represent by means of positivistic history, but also the memories of those who survived them. Similarly, van Alphen recommends the importance of aesthetic experience in the face of Adorno's separation of historical positivism and narrative imagination. By demonstrating the past to the reader in the form of re-presentation and re-enactment, van Alphen establishes what he calls a

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[10] Michael Rothberg Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation, 2000: 25.

[11] Theodor W Adorno "Cultural Criticism and Society," *Prisms*, Samuel and Shierry Weber (transl.) 1981 (1967): 34.

[12] Ernst van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 10, 100. See also at 18-19, 94 and Chapter 4, "Deadly Historians: Christian Boltanski's Intervention in Holocaust Historiography". See also Andrea *Liss Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust*, 1998: 18-19: Liss also makes the observation that Adorno tempered and clarified his first statement, and explains that Adorno's concern was for Holocaust representations that "sanitise" and displace the horror of the event. Liss relates this concern to the ability of contemporary Holocaust museums to effectively represent the Holocaust. She recognises that regardless of such attempts, "to assume to represent the enormity and incommensurability of the Shoah will always be a horrible if not disrespectful reduction of the realities." (19). See also Marita Sturken "Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography and the Holocaust. (Review)", *Afterimage*, May-June 1999 v26 16 p.10 (3). And see Adorno *op. cit.* 1981: 34.

"Holocaust effect",[13] considered briefly below and comprehensively in chapter two (section 6).

Van Alphen regards the Holocaust effect as a "negative mode of touching the past".[14] I argue that Schleifer formulates a concept of the negative materiality of death that in significant ways resembles van Alphen's theory of modern representation. Schleifer works from the premise that modern representations of death rely on a conception of mortality as a state that is neither material nor non-material: what he terms "negative materiality".[15] Using the representation of death as an archetype for modern modes of representation, Schleifer argues that negative materiality is typified by the metonymical process of relating random, spacially or temporally contiguous events. That is, the simultaneously arbitrary and contiguously determined character of metonymy aptly describes the negative materiality of death and modern representation. We shall see that Schleifer's use of metonymy offers an insight into Sebald's narrative mode of representation. In conjunction with trauma theory, Schleifer's metonymical model forms the basis for resolving the textual and representational problems addressed in Sebald's fiction.

Consideration of Ernst van Alphen's notion of a Holocaust effect raises possible solutions to the problem of post-Holocaust representation. Van Alphen uses the term in opposition to the concept of a transparent representation of, or "*reference*" (his italics) to the Holocaust. He emphasises two aspects of the Holocaust effect: first, the need to *re-enact*, rather than to merely *represent* an aspect of the Holocaust, replacing the function of narrative or textual presentation with a more direct, performative experience of an aspect of the Holocaust[16] (Christian Boltanski's *Réserve* installation, described below, typifies this approach). Secondly – and, crucially, for Sebald's writing – is the need to recognise that because of the traumatic moral and subjective excesses of genocide, the Holocaust retains an incommensurable representational narrative aspect. Van Alphen

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[13] Ernst van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 10, 100.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 31-35. See futher discussion below in the section entitled *Negative Materiality as Non-Representation.*

[16] Ernst van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 10.

suggests that the extent to which the Holocaust is reliably represented is realisable only to the extent that this recognition is maintained. It is for this reason that van Alphen celebrates the artworks of Christian Boltanski[17] and Armando,[18] which acknowledge the incommensurability of Holocaust narrative. For example, in a museum exhibition by Boltanski, visitors were required to walk over discarded piles of used coats and assorted clothing, giving them the feeling of being implicated in the genocide implied by the installation.[19] Andrea Liss refers to the disturbing "metonymic play" of the exhibit.[20] This notion of metonymy (whereby an object is represented by another object to which it is contextually congruous), will play a key role in this thesis and is dealt with comprehensively in chapters one and six. Liss locates the exhibit's metonymical element in the overt displacement of meaning from absent bodies to the clothes those bodies might have worn. Boltanski himself stated that the installation "was like walking on bodies".[21]

Liss' discussion infers an increasing reliance on aesthetic re-enactment in both historical exhibitions and in Boltanski's exhibitions. Both modes attempt to elicit an experiential response from the viewer-as-participant, and seek to re-instantiate the past as a present event. It is this re-presentation as re-enactment that Van Alphen proffers as a means of resolving, if only partially, the incommensurability of Holocaust representation.[22]

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[17] van Alphen *op. cit.* 1997: Ch. 4, 93-121: "Christian Boltanski's Intervention in Holocaust Historiography".

[18] "Armando" constitutes the full name of the artist. See van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: Ch. 5, 123-145: "Touching Death: Armando's Quest for an Indexical Language".

[19] The exhibit was the 1989 installation: *Réserve*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel. See Andrea Liss *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust*, 1998: 80.

[20] Andrea Liss *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust*, 1998: 80.

[21] See Liss, *op. cit.* 1998: 80. Liss explains that the metonymical play of walking over clothing is complicated by the lack of authenticity regarding Boltanski's exhibitions: unlike the exhibition of shoes at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Liss observes that the clothing was not recognised as having been the possession of Holocaust victims. While the anonymity of the used clothing of Boltanski's installation may be associated with the silent anonymity of Holocaust victims, it is nonetheless in some respects a long way removed from historical exhibitions, which insist on the authentication of exhibits as actual Holocaust objects, as surviving relics of the event (Liss, *op. cit.* 1998: 81-2). Liss points out the exceptions to this rule of authenticity: where museums are unable to secure original fragments, facsimiles are used; and where the original fragments are too confronting (Liss discusses the instance of a lock of a Birkenau victim's hair possessed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, ultimately only displayed in a photograph).

[22] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 100.

My dissertation seeks to link these problems of post-war representation to the instability, transience and artefactuality of both the text and the written (textual) self. This instability is typified by Sebald's repeated use of visual illustrations to subvert rather than to support the printed word mimetically. The instability existing between the text and image demonstrates Adorno's contention that post-Holocaust poetry is problematic. I argue that this instability is incorporated into Sebald's fiction in two corresponding ways: first, the continuing attempt to aesthetically represent the unrepresentable, and secondly, the ethical imperative to represent the impossibility of such representations; playing out the scene of the failure of representation. To fulfill these apparently antithetical aims, Sebald employs a doubling mechanism whereby the process of representation is itself represented.

Regarding the first point, Sebald's inter-relation of image and word is an attempt – in the face of Adorno's dictum – to represent the unrepresentable. Ostensible corroboration of the text by a photograph[23] is undermined by temporal and referential slippage between the textual and the visual reference. While most of Sebald's images are patently mimetic, their intra-textual reference to other images and to the narrative context is displaced and "obscured"[24] (especially in the English translations) by the exclusion of captions and by the temporal alternation between the narrative present and the antiquated past represented in the photographs.[25] George Kouvaros has explained that this doubled temporality typifies traumatic narratives and, in Sebald's fiction, "unsettles its relationship to the past."[26] Sebald exemplifies this temporal synchrony between two disparate and unconnected times through the interpellation of images in his fiction. Except for Sebald's first foray into fictional literature (the three long prose poems comprising *Nach der Natur*),[27] all of his fiction incorporates

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[23] Long, *op. cit.* 2003: 121.

[24] George Kouvaros "Images that remember us: photography and memory in *Austerlitz*", *Textual Practice*, Vol. 19(1), 173-193, 2005: 182.

[25] George Kouvaros, *ibid.*

[26] George Kouvaros, *op. cit.* 184.

[27] *Nach der Natur. Ein Elementargedicht*, First published in Nördlingen, Germany by Greno Verlagsgesellschaft, m. b. H. 1988; Published in English as *After Nature*, Michael Hamburger (transl.) Penguin Books, London, 2003.

photographic images in much the same way as Andre Breton's *Nadia*,[28] or Roland Barthes' much later *Camera Lucida*.[29] It explores the many connections between identity, art, history, travel, autobiography and death. The significance of the visual image and its relationship to death and to the written text will be addressed in chapter two.

Secondly (in relation to Adorno's dictum), Sebald's writing functions as a demonstration of the impossibility of representation: silence in the face of morally inexplicable experiences of mass genocide; repression and dissociation of memory in trauma; cultural and political silence in the face of wartime complicity; and, unavoidably, the impossibility of indexical representation, of witnessing the condition of death.

Sebald's interpellation of images within the text is reinforced by his use of textual imagery to either metaphorically or metonymically refer to the Holocaust. While Sebald uses non-conventional metaphorical conceits such as the sense of submersion in *Vertigo* (extended into an apocalyptic deluge motif of a midland town drowned in the waters of a dam in *Austerlitz*[30]) he also relies on the conventional metaphorical language of symbolic Holocaust imagery, of clichéd, displaced reminders: piles of shoes, chimneys, train-tracks.[31] They are displaced from the reality of the situation and function as

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[28] Andre Breton *Nadja*, Richard Howard (transl.) Mark Polizzotti (intro.) 1999; Andre Breton *Nadja*, 1963(1928).

[29] Roland Barthes *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 1981.

[30] W G Sebald, *Austerlitz*, Anthea Bell (transl.), 2001: 70-2. See also: W G Sebald *Vertigo*, 1999: 63: In *Vertigo* the motif of submersion is usually connected with the narrator's sense of overwhelming loss of morality and meaning in modern western life. Such an excess of meaningless stimuli provokes in the narrator a literal *Vertigo*, a feeling of instability: "a mounting sense of panic" (63): "That, then, I thought on such occasions, is the new ocean. Ceaselessly, in great surges, the waves roll in over the length and breadth of our cities, rising higher and higher ... For some time now I have been convinced that it is out of this din that the life is being born which will come after us and will spell our gradual destruction, just as we have gradually been destroying what was there long before us." (63). While inadvertently dining in the cheap restaurant staffed by murderous looking waiters, decorated with a sea theme, Sebald notes: "The sense of being wholly surrounded by water was rendered complete by a sea piece ... it showed a ship, on the crest of a turquoise wave crowned with snow-white foam, about to plunge into the yawning depths that gaped beneath her bows. Plainly this was the moment immediately before a disaster." (77). Submersion, and hence drowning, is also an obvious metaphor for death. For an account of the metaphor of submersion, specifically that of drowning, in relation to death and postmodern fiction, sees Stewart, *Death Sentences: Styles of Dying in British Fiction*, 1984: 317.

[31] In discussing Dan Pagis' mythical poem "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car", Clendinnen observes "[t]hat same mythical potency has come to infuse normally banal words – 'oven', 'chimney', 'smoke', 'hair'- when those words are invoked anywhere within the broad range of the Holocaust context." (186) See Inga Clendinnen *Reading the Holocaust*, 1998: 186.

metaphorical reminders: the shoes are not the shoes of Holocaust victims: the chimneys are the industrial chimneys of Manchester, the train tracks are not the site of mass deportation but the site of a suicide in post-war France. What we see in these and other instances of Sebald's photographs is a re-appraisal of the proof-laden empiricism of authentic Holocaust imagery, and its displacement into the recollective processes of its survivors. No relic from the past exists to confront the survivor and the reader, only images that re-awaken latent memories. Instead of positivistic history whereby authenticated documentation is presented to the reader and the subject as fact there exists a process of recognising one thing as another, of seeing a Manchester industrial chimney as an Auschwitz chimney.

In this regard the textual and visual imagery in Sebald's novels function to re-map forgotten memories or to re-inscribe the lost memories of others. Rather than mapping an actual past they are a rediscovery of formerly lost memories in the familiarity of the present. However, the function of Sebald's narrator protagonists is one of indexically re-connecting with the trauma of past events by visiting the sites at which they occurred or returning to their narrative occurrence in textual form. It is in this regard that the function of metonymy becomes more relevant to the fiction of Sebald than the paradigm of metaphorical resemblance. Discrete instances of metonymy exist within Sebald's texts, such as the contiguous association in *Austerlitz* (outlined in chapter six, section 3) between moths and the neighbouring cemetery from which they fly. However, I argue that it is fundamentally a structural role that metonymy plays in Sebald's texts. The associations which Sebald's narrator-protagonists draw from the worlds through which they travel, are only possible on the basis of an immediate proximity to buildings, objects and texts that hold an indexical relationship to the past. The associative, non-mimetic and negatively material trope of metonymy constitutes a means of recognizing the radical horror of past trauma as continuing within the banal present.

The disjunction between metonymy and metaphor in Sebald's texts is thus uncharacteristic of conventional fiction. It is my contention, therefore, that the

incongruity between metaphor and metonymy in Sebald's texts (evoked by means of self-narrativisation and representation of the self in the face of death) evinces aspects (and flaws) of Enlightenment ethics and aesthetics. In other words, Sebald's literature enables apprehension of the (often repressed) connections between the Holocaust and present-day forms of institutionalised behaviour.[32] By portraying the Holocaust through analogy and the textual inclusion of photographs, his fiction often attempts to overcome Adorno's representational crisis by rendering such connections between the historical specificity of the Holocaust and the global phenomenon of institutionalism. And yet such forms of representation must by their nature only partially succeed. In the same way that incommensurable aspects of the Holocaust ensure an element of the unrepresentable, death also remains unrepresentable. While for Sebald death is that ironical point of certainty from which his characters often derive their strength to remember, to overcome silence and to create, it is also a function of oblivion. Sebald's many references to oblivion acknowledge the failure to represent a concatenation of ethical, political and aesthetic structures comprising the biological fact of death in modern society.

This dissertation defines the post-Holocaust role of textual representation as one of recognising and exploring its own limitations. I therefore seek to delineate the possible space that *re-presentation* might provide for subjective memory in its (unavoidably institutionalised) response to death. The following six chapters seek to explore the several aspects implicit in this task, as summarised below.

Chapter one (*Death & the Text*) begins with a consideration of the textual creation of subjectivity and its implicit relation to representations of death. Defining the ambiguous representation of death as both an absence and a presence, I argue that the modern mortal subject is definitively constituted in terms of temporal and spatial dislocation. As such, I suggest that Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma and Ronald Schleifer and Siegfried Kracauer's metonymical accounts of modern society are

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[32] As Sebald has observed: "how far is it from the point where we find ourselves today back to the late eighteenth century, when the hope that mankind could improve and learn was inscribed in handsomely formed letters in our philosophical firmament?" See Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 211.

particularly relevant to defining modern subjectivity. The trope of metonymy is introduced in the final two sections of this chapter (sections 5 and 6), and informs much of the subsequent argument of the dissertation, culminating in the final chapter, *Metonymy: a New Representation.*

Chapter two (*Death, the Image, & the Text*) traces Sebald's contribution to Holocaust representation in terms of the problematic relation of visual images to text. An interrogation of the relation between word and image raises the non-linear temporality of photography and thereby suggests photography's consonance with trauma theory. The debate concerning photography's mimetic and indexical realism will be shown to have particular relevance to the function of Holocaust literature. This chapter attempts to resolve the problems of historical and fictional representation of, and after, the Holocaust. It discusses the problems of constituting Holocaust narrative by means of both realistic and figurative modes of representation, comparing Holocaust historian Michael Rothberg's didactic model of the "concentrationary universe" with van Alphen's "Holocaust effect", an aesthetic and affective model of historical re-enactment.

In chapter three (*Writing Trauma*) the issue of mimetic doubling further explores the indexical nature of metonymical relations. It discusses how the temporally destablilising effect of photography introduces the issue of chronological doubling and rupture that is crucial to the function of trauma theory. Trauma theorist Cathy Caruth provides the grounding for a consideration of non-linear narrative and its relation to Sebald's fiction. Her concept of the implicit belatedness of traumatic representation enables the paradoxical recognition of the embodiment of death in life, and the concurrent encompassing of life within death.

Chapter four (*The Architecture of Traumatic Memory*) continues the theme of trauma, turning to a consideration of an enduring theme in Sebald's fiction: trauma's effect of subjective displacement in terms of architectural space. This chapter examines architecture's ability to represent institutional and mnemonic connections between history and the present. Such connections are established by the indexical relation

between the body of the narrator and the built landscape, suggesting that modern subjectivity is constituted by temporal and spatial disjunction as much as by continuity. Not only the relation between narrator and landscape, but also the role of architecture as an active witness is central to Sebald's fiction. Lastly, architecture's capacity to represent the bureaucratic institution introduces the relationship between the subject and the state, to be considered in chapter five.

In Chapter five (*The Bureaucratic Institution & Death*) the architectural displacement of the subject is explored in relation to the increasingly global institution of bureaucracy. In representational and spatial terms, bureaucracy functions as an inter-subjective mediation between the individual subject and the modern, technologised world. Through consideration of the sociological concepts of goal displacement (the replacement of bureaucratic ends with means) and the bureaucratic mediation of action, I argue that the displacement of representation – both politically and aesthetically – distances the individual subject from ethically constituted representations of death.

Chapter six (*Metonymy: a New Representation*) elaborates on the function of metonymy and its operation in Sebald's texts. It consolidates earlier discussion of the relation of metaphor and metonymy to repression, and establishes a link between trauma theory and Schleifer's rhetorical approach. It will be a contention of this thesis that the function of post-Holocaust literature has to some degree incorporated Adorno's proscription against writing poetry after Auschwitz in its increased experimentation with the metonymical, as distinct from the metaphorical implications of narrative. Both Schleifer's and van Alphen's accounts stress the paradoxical recognition of the failure of representation at the same time as its on-going necessity. It is this problem – the need to depict the horrors of the past in spite of the fallibility of representation – that establishes a simultaneously aesthetic and ethical post-Holocaust narrative crisis.

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Chapter One

DEATH & THE TEXT

This chapter explores the contradictions arising from textual representation in the context of death. It begins with a close reading of an inter-textual excerpt from Sebald's *The Emigrants* and works towards a consideration of the proximity of trauma theory to Ronald Schleifer's notion of metonymy in the final two sections. This movement – from the textual reflexivity of Sebald's fiction to an account of metonymical representation – follows my overall argument regarding Sebald's attempt to address the post-Holocaust crisis of representation. In this chapter I argue that the alternation between presence and absence (between life and death, reader and protagonist) is implicit in Sebald's fiction. This co-existence of alternate conditions constitutes Sebald's thematic depiction of the problem of representation, and comprises two distinct dichotomies. The first dichotomy derives from contemporary functions of representing death, which (I suggest) constitute both the denial and the instigation of textual self identity. The second dichotomization occurs between absence and presence – both textual and temporal – in representations of the mortal self. The first section in this chapter (*Citing Death*) outlines the two dichotomies, relating their temporally destabilising effect directly to Sebald's fiction and to Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject body. The second section (*Reading Death*) considers absence and presence in terms of Elizabeth Bronfen's concept of represented death as temporally destabilizing. It introduces Siegfried Kracauer and Ernst Bloch's consideration of the representational repression of death, and Franz Kafka's account of the effect of modern communication technology on creating spatial and temporal subjectivities.

The penultimate section introduces Roland Schleifer's notion of negative materiality to develop themes of temporal and existential instability present in Sebald's representations of death. Just as I emphasise the ready alternation between absence and presence in defining representations of death, Schleifer's theory relies on rendering insignificant the differentiation between positive and negative definitions of materiality (discussed in the fourth section). Discussion of Schleifer's theory paves the way for an introduction to the indexical/textual alternation characteristic of metonymical representation. The final section of this chapter (*Absence & Presence: Synthesising Trauma*

& Rhetoric) uses the alternation between absence and presence to provide a means of drawing the two prevailing theoretical mainstays of this thesis (trauma theory and Schleifer's conception of the negative materiality of metonymy) into a common frame of reference. While the co-existence of absence and presence offers a useful umbrella for metonymy and trauma, it raises the need to consider the relation between metaphor and metonymy. I begin defining the relationship between metaphor and metonymy in the final two sections of this chapter, and conclude the discussion in the final chapter.

Citing Death

Writing is a means of prevailing over death while simultaneously admitting the author's and the reader's mortality. As Francoise Dastur has argued,

> [i]t is *in existing* that we are witnesses of death – even and especially when we take up a stand against it, and 'work' to conquer it, employing all the means at our disposal to overcome it. Language, the primary and most powerful of these means, is also the one that most radically reveals our finitude.[33]

Death is both confronted and submitted to through language. But language also provides the means by which we bear witness to our and others' endurance in the face of death. In considering mortality in the fairy tale of *Snow White*, Elizabeth Bronfen observes that "any image of death contains as one of its signifiers the observer's survival, much like the signature the dwarfs have placed on Snow White's coffin."[34] The concept of death implicitly representing the observer's continued life will be considered again later in the discussion of trauma theory.[35] Both Bronfen and Dastur

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[33] Francoise Dastur *Death: An Essay on Finitude*, John Llewelyn (transl.), 1994: 81. See also Peter Brooks *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative*, 1993: 7: "Mortality may be that against which all discourse denies itself, as protest or as attempted recovery and preservation of the human spirit, but it puts a stark biological limit to human constructions." And see also Simon Critchley, *Very Little ... Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy, Literature*, 1997: 67. In discussing Kafka's perspective of death, Critchley quotes Maurice Blanchot's *L'espace Littéraire*, Gallimard, Paris, 1955: 111, and its English translation (*The Space of Literature*, (transl. Ann Smock) University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1982: 93.): "*Write to be able to die – Die to be able to write*".

[34] Elisabeth Bronfen *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*, 1992: 102.

[35] Trauma theory complicates the function of witnessing in textual representations of death. While on the one hand Bronfen's concept constitutes the living reader as witness of the death of the Other, Garrett Stewart emphasises death as a void that cannot be represented in terms of witnessing because only the living are able to provide testimony. Stewart argues that in fiction "death as narrative moment must be approximated by a verbal

recognise the extent to which death is realised textually. Dastur's notion of language as a means of opposing and submitting to death reveals the contradictory position that textual representation holds relative to mortality. This contradiction is arguably a part of literature's development since the advent of secularism and materialism and the concomitant rise of the novel. Dastur defines text as a perspective and a format ready to conceive of death as an integral aspect of subjective construction.[36] Garrett Stewart, a theorist of death in British literature, locates the advent of this contradictory narrative structure in Romanticism, which "forced death's hand as not only the agent of identity's negation but at the same time its guarantor of being."[37] Modernist fiction has emphasised the subjective and internal border, rather than the (Romantic) social or psychological border between construction of self and the Other,[38] defining mortality of the self as "a structural crisis for point-of-view narration as well as for the problem of human subjectivity it is conceived to investigate".[39] For Stewart, postmodern literature has in turn emphasised the textual representation of death as "the test of narrative's final transit – a transition not so much to insentience as to sheer sentence."[40] This hyper-textual development has, I would argue, reconceived death in terms similar to the contradictory construction of Dastur, as both the denial and the instigation of *textual* self identity. The consequence is an acknowledgement of representation as the means with which subjectivity is rendered simultaneously present and absent.

This seemingly contradictory textual construction of the self is apparent in Sebald's narratives. For Sebald the textual self is defined by recognition of the death of others and, consequently, by anticipation of the death of oneself. While the Sebaldian narrator typically recognises the death of others, it is often an unknown other and an unknown

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style charged with elusive evocation in lieu of evidence, not just in the lack of such testimony but in the very space of its absence." See Garrett Stewart, *op. cit.* 1984: 4.

[36] Stewart, *op. cit.* 1984: 8. Stewart defines this transformation to a secular, material emphasis on death itself from the preceding religious emphasis on the afterlife as a re-evaluation of death as "an end in itself", as "a phenomenon of selfhood to be looked *to* rather than through." (8: my italics). Stewart situates this transition at the advent of neo-romanticism, as typified by the works of Keats and Shelley.

[37] Stewart, *op. cit.* 1984: 9.

[38] Stewart, *op. cit.* 1984: 50.

[39] *Ibid.*

[40] *Ibid.*

death. The only certainty is the generality of death. Like the three weavers described at the end of *The Emigrants*, their identity is not known, and the narrator attributes to them the names of the Three Fates "Nona, Decuma and Morta".[41]

Another instance of the unknown dead other and its inextricable relation to the textual self occur in the story of "Max Ferber".[42] The narrator Sebald visits the locked Jewish Graveyard of Kissingen in search of background family details to the life of Luisa Lanzberg. In the evagatory manner typical of Sebald's fiction the narrator is waylaid by the "shock recognition"[43] of the gravestone of Maier Stern, inscribed with the same birth-date (18th May) as his own. Maier Stern exists merely as a name, an unknown identity that, through the textual and temporal connection of birth-dates, establishes a metonymical relation between the narrator and the long dead Jewish Germans memorialized in the Kissingen cemetery. Its introductory mention leads to another gravestone, narratively replicating the meandering perspective of the narrator. The second gravestone furthers the textual relation with the narrator. It is emblazoned with the sign of an ink quill, presumably depicting the professional or private occupation of the deceased. It causes the narrator to visualise the deceased woman hunched over her writing.[44] For Sebald (the narrator), the mental image of the writer causes an empathetic synchrony between the present and the normally unrecoverable past interconnected by the act of writing. While for Ferber this image enables him to recall hitherto lost aspects of his own identity, for the narrator, Sebald, it enables him to acknowledge compassionately the losses of others. The narrator

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[41] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, 1996: 237.

[42] Sebald, *op. cit.* 1996.

[43] *Ibid*: 224.

[44] The hunched posture is a recurrent motif in the story "Max Ferber" associated with the trauma of recollecting repressed memories, a motif I will return to in the discussion of metonymy and trauma in the final chapter. For both the character, Ferber, and the primary narrator ("Sebald"), the image of huddling over a written work-in-progress induces in the viewer a reflexive sense of himself. For Ferber, the pain of a slipped disc and his subsequent crooked posture, recalls a photographic image of himself as a child, hunched over a school writing desk.

imagined her pen in hand, all by herself, bent with bated breath over her work;
and now, as I write these lines, it feels as if *I* had lost her, and as if *I* could not get
over the loss despite the many years that have passed since her departure.[45]

Although this passage refers to the non-specific death of the unknown Friederike Halbliebe, it functions metonymically for the specific death the narrator is searching for details of: that of Ferber's mother, Luisa Lanzberg. Both Lanzberg and Halbliebe were writers, hunched over their work. Metonymical substitution does not, however, cease there. On realising the connection of Halbliebe with Lanzberg, the reader can grant the further substitution of Ferber for the narrator by means of the formula "as if *I*". Again, the narrative relies explicitly on an unknown identity: it is not specified here who the subject incapable of recovering from loss is. Specifically, and in terms of the narrative "Max Ferber", however, the "*I*" – for whom the narrator stands as proxy – is most pertinently the character of Ferber. It is Ferber who, through the trauma of loss, is incapable of reading or properly remembering his mother's memoirs.

There is a further substitution to be made. Ultimately, the narrator's textually-founded empathy with the dead subject anticipates recognition of his own death. The phrase "as I write these lines" links the actions of the narrator-as-writer to the past actions of the dead subject-as-writer, establishing an uneasy textual contiguity between the living and the dead. But just as the narrator ("Sebald") and the dead subject (Halbliebe/Lanzberg) are radically separated by generations in time, the image of the writing subject (Halbliebe) and the voyeuristic empathy of loss ("as if *I*") occur at different times.[46] That is, the mental image of the writing subject occurs at the graveside, while the feeling of loss occurs later, in the process of writing. This temporal separation of experience from the perceived sense of loss anticipates the latent pattern of traumatised memory (considered in chapter three, *Writing Trauma*). For Sebald it is the function of textuality, of writing, that causes the narrator's empathic substitution to occur. More

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[45] Sebald's italics. *Ibid.* 224-5.

[46] A further temporal separation is implicit in the reader's textual complicity, which re-casts the present of the author-narrator into the present of reading. The temporal occurrence of the moment in "as I write these lines" is split between production and consumption, between the writing and the reading participant. For further discussion refer to the next section Reading Death, and fn. 83.

significantly, however, it is the alternation between two separate times in the narrator's estimation (between experience and writing) that attributes a synchronic reality to his visualisation of an unknown dead writer, several generations removed. The effect is one of plausible temporal consonance between the narrator and the dead.

By no means are all of Sebald's dead subjects unknown. Where a character's identity is known, the narrative concentrates on his or her life without explicit reference to their fate. An explicit explanation as to their death remains absent. Instead, an understated, ironical acknowledgement of that character's fate permeates each account with outwardly innocuous but implicitly unnerving references to the Holocaust. The section devoted to the life of Max Ferber's deceased mother is an example of this.[47] The memoirs Luisa Lanzberg writes during the "hopeless situation"[48] of being unable to secure a visa to leave Germany (1939-41) hint at the impending shadow of the concentration camps and the knowledge of her own likely death. Luisa makes many ironical references indicative of her doomed perspective. A photograph depicts her aunt, "the most beautiful girl for miles around [as] a real Germania",[49] indicating the increasing anti-Semitism that ultimately will cause the deaths of her and the members of her family. She sardonically questions whether "thanks" is the appropriate sentiment for her recovery from a potentially fatal infection in 1917,[50] intimating that the death to which she now travels is not necessarily an event for which she would want to have been saved. A more gruesome allusion to the Holocaust concerns her childhood fascination with the tale of "Paulinchen, the girl who went up in flames"[51] and the plan to fireproof dresses in zinc chloride. The situation of Luisa's ironic realisation of her own death is transferable (as a mode of narrative prolepsis) to the narrator's and the reader's future deaths. The specificity of Luisa's identity enables the reader and the narrator to establish an empathetic connection with her past situation. Narrative

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[47] *Ibid*: 193-218. See also fn. 3.
[48] *Ibid*: 193.
[49] *Ibid*.
[50] *Ibid*: 216.
[51] *Ibid*: 200.

witnesses to Luisa's situation can infer their own death in generalised terms. For Sebald, the irony lies in the detail.

The elegiacal tone of the memoirs readily returns to questions of the nature of time in its relation to the narrator's life. While (ironically) Luisa once believed in "a completely new world, even lovelier than that of childhood",[52] her younger years "seem in retrospect to have marked the first step on a path that grew narrower day by day and led inevitably to the point I have now arrived at."[53] The theme of an irreversible, fateful path to destruction is a constant in Sebald's fiction. Here, couched in the moving present tense of the narrative it couples with the photographic image's uncanny ability to destabilise the viewer's present with a competing "present" derived from the past. The reader is forced to recognise that, as with the people in the photographs accompanying her memoirs, Luisa Lanzberg is dead. Her present-tense recognition of her destruction corresponds disturbingly with the reader's hindsight. This model of narrating a past perspective with the hindsight of the present closely resembles Bernstein's pejorative term of "backshadowing",[54] which attributes the knowledge of hindsight to participants of past events and judges their decisions accordingly. However, Sebald's hindsight never offers Luisa an alternative path not taken. By using the present tense of the first-person address, the "point I have now arrived at" is simultaneously both the narrator's and the reader's perspective, forcing the reader into the impossible situation of the narrator in anticipating death. The transferable narrative perspective in the English translations of Sebald's fiction – *sans* diacritical marks indicating dialogue – contributes to the sense of a historical present doubling up with the present of the contemporary reader. In this instance Luisa's narrative is recounted

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[52] *Ibid*: 208.

[53] *Ibid.* Two further instances occur on page 207. The first concerns her observance of stag beetles: "At times it looks as if something has shocked them, physically, and it seems as if they have fainted. They lie there motionless, and it seems as if the world has stopped. Only when you hold your own breath do they return from death to life, only then does time begin to pass again. Time. What was all that? How slowly the days passed then!" The return from death to life is reflected in the name of Luisa's father: Lazarus, and it is implicit in the notion of an observer's (or reader's) empathy ("only when you hold your own breath") as a textual prerequisite for raising the dead.

[54] Michael Andre Bernstein "Victims-in-Waiting: Backshadowing and the Representation of European Jewry", *New Literary History*, 29: 625-651, 1998.

by Sebald's narrator, whose interpretation of the memoirs constitutes what is printed. Both "Sebald", the primary narrator, and "Luisa", the secondary narrator, are indicated by the first-person "I". We as readers are forced to realise not only that Luisa is dead, but that, in a proleptic and synchronic historical and textual sense, she *presently* anticipates death, just as we do. All that remain are the forever abortive attempts to represent death, connoted by Luisa as "a single empty space, stretching out into the twilight of late afternoon, criss-crossed by the tracks of ice-skaters long vanished."[55] Here the textual instigation of self identity is necessarily undermined by its absence in death.

It is at this point that we can return to the contradictory structure of narrative identity as both an instigation and destruction of self, just as it is a recognition and negation of death. The Lanzberg section is not merely elegiacal. In its poetic acknowledgement of sublime moments of beauty, Luisa's bittersweet paean for her past life constitutes a denial of death. It is a written denial that survives to re-create her present within the present of the narrator and the reader. She recollects that "our childhood in Steinach … often seems as if it had been open-ended in time, in every direction – indeed, as if it were still going on, right into these lines I am now writing."[56] Luisa's written incantation of time as haunting "the lines I am now writing" establishes a reader's future present in the same way that the narrator's earlier phrase describes the dead writer Halbliebe ("as I write these lines"). Both instances re-situate the dead writer within the narrative present, re-asserting her textual presence in spite of – because of – temporal and bodily absence.

Sebald depicts Luisa Lanzberg's memoirs within a repeating present temporality of the writer. The phrase "as I write these lines" reminds us that representation is the only association the living have with death.[57] Textual, iconographic and narrative depictions of death constitute our apprehension of mortality. Much of our knowledge derives

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[55] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, 1996: 218.

[56] *Ibid*: 207.

[57] See Critchley, *op. cit*. 1997: 73. In terms of the textual absence of death, see Stewart, *op. cit*. 1984: 4: "Death for the self exists only as non-existence, is not a topic so much as a voiding event, has no vocabulary native to it, would leave us mute before its impenetrable fact."

from people who are dead; we wrestle with concepts and ideals proposed by dead people; we read the literature written by, and view the photographs taken by (and taken of) the dead. We live with the knowledge that others preceded us and know that we will be succeeded by further generations. However, it is debatable whether our relationship with the dead is a definition of distinction, or an ethical and existential impediment. Dastur suggests that the particularly human recognition of mortality detracts from the fully lived existence; that

> [w]hat goes against nature in human existence is precisely that it is not a life that is absolutely alive, but a life that includes in itself a relationship with the world of the dead.[58]

Knowledge of death and of the dead for Dastur is thus a pivotal element in humankind's appreciation and construction of death. But to what extent do empathy, knowledge and imagination enable an understanding not merely of the work of those who are dead, but of the nature of mortality? At this point, I'd like to introduce Julia Kristeva's work. As a contrast to Dastur's approach, which sees life with the dead as an inescapable human burden, Kristeva questions the absolute claim of death. She questions whether the condemned, forgiven individual might establish a sufficiently empathetic ethical acknowledgement of his or her own anticipated demise; whether death would be incorporated fully into their life and, in a sense, rendered inert. Although in describing Dostöevsky's writing she qualifies this affective attempt to overcome death with the consequent burden of melancholia and the inability to mourn, she suggests that it is this paradoxical condition that motivates the ethically inspired text.[59] Kristeva represents death as a construction derived from the conjunction of cognition and text, linking death with the author's imagination, and attributing "an already imagined death, a lived death" with the motivational force of narrative.[60]

Kristeva's idea of the *corps propre* is pertinent here in terms of an unattainable bodily form that exists only as an ideal, an abstraction. This pure body is postulated in

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[58] Dastur, *op. cit.* 1994: 15.

[59] Julia Kristeva *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, Leon S Roudiez (transl.) 1989: 195.

[60] Kristeva, *ibid.*

opposition to the abject, mortal body. Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield note of Kristeva's *corps propre* that, because it is always and only ever an ideal, the loss of it is never actual.[61] This competition between a perfect ideal and the fragility of the human body creates a dynamic of desire and loss in the exchange between the body and the world, establishing the body's surface as a border across which subjectivity and identity is contested. Kristeva's notion of self-abjection describes a fear of loss of self, of becoming a silenced subject and thus an object denied access to language.[62] It is immediately apparent that the concept of the individual body as the point at which language and power is contested is a useful one with which to consider the subject who, in the instance of my novel *FFM* and Sebald's fiction, is both bodiless and textually-constituted. Kristeva's process of contriving a loss of self in seeking to explain the constitution of modern subjectivity is strikingly similar to the predicament of the nominally dead subject in *FFM*, and raises the need to address the issue of the textual construction of self in the face of death.

Using the first-person pronoun, both Sebald's fiction and my novel *FFM* immediately denote the construction of "I", of the self, and all of the physiognomical and social addenda that the subject "I" entails. That the subject narrator of *FFM* witnesses the declaration of her past death brings to the fore an absence of the mortal self from history just as – illustrated in the example of Luisa Lanzberg, above – it textually re-inscribes that mortality in the narrative present. The narrating "I" is a rhetorical trope, constituted by the first-person pronoun: its absence in death implies the loss of a writing subject and, *in extremis*, the notion of a totally dissipated subjectivity. It has been argued, however (in a hermeneutical mediation of Barthes' stance to which Schleifer would be sympathetic), that the narrated "I" ought not be regarded as strictly and only a linguistic fabrication. Instead, the "I – which, as Kierkegaard stressed, is essentially a process of becoming and thus never fully *is* … constitutes itself in and by means of

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[61] *Ibid.*

[62] Patrick Fuery and Nick Mansfield *Cultural Studies and the New Humanities*, Ch. 6 (From Interpretation to Interaction) "The Skin of the Text: The Body and Horror", 1997: 88.

language, by … narrating itself."[63] The nexus of fiction and death therefore converge in the autobiographical subject "I" as a figure constructed simultaneously from both nothingness and bodily materiality, an alternation between textual presence and temporal absence.

Reading Death

While it has been suggested that the "consciousness of death [has] breathed life into human history",[64] I extend this argument to maintain that the threat of impending mortality breathes life into the constitution of the textual subject. Reading implies the unavoidably social and embodied context of the author and reader at the same time that it implies his or her death. While this appears paradoxical, it is precisely the representational emphasis on the effect of death on the individual, embodied subject – the subject's physical dissolution and absence – that preserves the body as represented subject. A similar paradox pertains in the Franciscan notion of the sinning corporeal form, the ideal of *contemptus mundi*. In this ideal, contempt for the world and the flesh denies the bodily form, but the significance of bodily denial leads to a preoccupation with corporeality and, ultimately, to the occlusion of contempt for the carceral and the mundane. This paradoxically resulted in the Renaissance celebration of the human body.[65] Ethical condemnation of the body did not erase it, but resulted in its later ethical and aesthetic centrality: the representational, written constitution of the embodied subject.

However, writing is a qualified celebration, limited not merely by the finitude of death but by the uncertainties inherent in creating a writing self. As one critic has observed,

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[63] G B Madison *The Hermeneutics of Modernity: Figures and Themes*, 1988: 164. A similar consideration of death's effect on the bodily and textually constructed self occurs in Jean Louis Schefer's *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts by Jean Louis Schefer*, especially Ch. 3, "Thanatography/Skiagraphy", 1995. Schefer explores "how the figure of death "splits" representation, or […] how death can be figured only at the interstices of the body and in the body's articulations with other objects […and] links that tenuous figuration with the practice of writing." Paul Smith (ed. Transl.): 31.

[64] Zygmunt Bauman *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 1997: 163.

[65] Andrew Graham-Dixon *Renaissance*, 1999: 21: "But although he mortified the flesh and denied his own body, St Francis also, paradoxically, put the body, suffering and agonised though it was, centre stage. The intense physicality of so much western art, its morbidity and its eros, may be traced in some degree back to his example."

individual subjectivity is undermined by our modern rhetorical context, a context I would typify as constituted by temporal and spatial dislocation in which meaning inheres as much with the reader as with the author:

> It not only remains unclear if the ghosts are producing the words or the words the ghosts, but finally this ambiguity frustrates the conventional rhetorics of selfhood, causality, and agency, illustrating the preconditions of subjective self-realization.[66]

The result is indeterminacy of authorship, of whether it is the autonomous individual or the dislocating context of modernity that is "producing the words". What is significant is the potential realisation of a reflexively-constituted individual subject capable of surviving traditional notions of the self by recognising the "ghosts" of modern dislocation. Although uncertain, modern subjectivity arises from the recognition of a disjunction between the writing self and the text. For Breton an "imperceptible world of phantasms"[67] – born out of the contemporary disjunction of narrative time and space – is interposed between the autobiographical and the textual subject. It is a disjunction caused by the destabilising effect of trauma as much as by the mass-reproduction of representations and the consequent loss of a standard of authenticity within contemporary society. The significance of an objective world of materiality in the reception of a subject's thought and the importance of attributing a representation by means of a signature, a mark of both authenticity and subjectivity, are both upheld and undermined by the recognition of representational and temporal recursion. In other words, contemporary society's preoccupation with first-person narrative corresponds with a representational and historical reflexivity (combined in the autobiographical narrative's reliance on memory) that emphasises the foundations of modern subjectivity, thereby realising both the fragility and constancy of subjective interpretation. The problem of representing the self within time is implicit in the autobiographical intent of first-person narrative. Just as history's connection with the

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[66] Johnson, *op. cit.*1999, 347-370: 365.

[67] "[b]etween my thought, such as it appears in what material people have been able to read that has my signature affixed to it, and me, which the true nature of my thought involves in something but precisely what I do not yet know, there is a world, an imperceptible world of phantasms." Andre Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism", (Preface), see: *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, Richard Seavers and Helen R Lane (transl.) University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1972, cited in Johnson, *op. cit.* 1999, 347-370: 348.

individual remains equivocal, the reader cannot cleanly reconcile the "I" of the present with the fictions of a past self. Paul Jay has noted of Augustine's work that autobiography functions

> as an allegory of the self-reflexive writer's problematic efforts to bridge the distance between past and present – between himself and his own textual representation of himself.[68]

With regard to both Sebald's fiction and my novel *FFM*, it is this intersection of writing the self and writing history that situates the protagonist's attempts to accommodate his or her own death within a meaningful scheme of things.[69] At first glance, Bronfen relies on the conventional separation of embodied materiality ("the order of the body") and the written self ("the order of the text"):

> the corpse is immediately reinscribed in textuality, replaced by messages abstracted from the body, by narratives … These representations leave the dead woman uncannily hovering between the order of the body, the sheer materiality of the corpse, and the order of the text, between the Otherness that death implies (Lacan's real, disrupting the stability of the symbolic order) and the construction of the self implied by autobiography, as this reconfirms the narcissistically informed imaginary register of the dead woman and finds a recipient in the imagination of her survivors.[70]

However, Bronfen emphasises here what I argue is central to Sebald's and Schleifer's projects, namely the dismantling of the self that is caused by both death and the text. Bronfen subverts the apparent opposition of embodied physicality and textual immateriality by emphasising the constructed fallibility of both states. The physical is read as bodily corruption and thus the "Other", irreconcilable with the conscious self, while the written, autobiographical self is cast as a fictional "construction" that is maintained by the author and the readers who survive her. As a consequence, although death and textuality appear as dichotomies, Bronfen implicitly aligns the two themes

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[68] Paul Jay *Being in the Text: Self-Representation from Wordsworth to Roland Barthes*, 1984: 31.
[69] To cite a similar observation by Sebald, "Ghosts and writers meet in their concern for the past – their own and that of those who were once dear to them." See Sebald "Dream Textures: A Brief Note on Nabokov", (146-55) in Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 149.
[70] Bronfen, *op. cit.* 1992: 152.

under the common rubric of the fabrication of the self. By doing so she suggests that the point at which death and textuality are reconciled is the locus of the reading, writing subject, the point at which representation of the subject dissolves into the representation of mortal absence.

Bronfen draws a parallel between the dead body and the process of representation. She suggests that since both image and corpse disrupt the viewer's immanent perspective, the process of representation and the presence of the dead body "suspend stable categories of reference and position in time and space. The cadaverous presence is such that it simultaneously occupies two places, the here and the nowhere."[71] Death and the visual image challenge the material particularity of time and location by presenting conditions unaffected by either space or time. Images traverse time by referring inevitably to two separate presents, described by Barthes' notion of an "anterior future". For the purposes of this thesis Barthes' concept is best explained by Carolin Duttlinger, who describes it in terms that wed the language of photography with that of trauma:

> [t]he traumatic character of the photograph is associated with the conjunction of
> two temporal structures: first, the irredeemably past character of the photograph
> which radically separates it from the viewer and his present context; and secondly,
> the arrested moment preceding a catastrophe which will forever be preserved in
> its anticipation.[72]

This parallel relation is present in the idea that both death and representation function as the presentation of an absence, either due to time or space. As an example, representations often outlast the period and the persons they depict, and are thus left to represent a subject who is no longer living. Sarah Kofman defines this analogical

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[71] Bronfen, *et. al. op. cit.* 1988: 12.

[72] Carolin Duttlinger "Traumatic Photographs: Remembrance and the Technical Media in W G Sebald's *Austerlitz*" in Long and Whitehead (eds.) *W G Sebald: A Critical Companion*, 2004: 165. Duttlinger quotes the relevant passage from Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, 1984: 96, discussed by Barthes in the context of his notion of the punctum, which he develops in definition at this point, from an insightful subjectively determined detail of a photograph that arrests the viewer, to the notion of a punctum as a representation of time-past. In the discussed photograph of Lewis Payne in his cell awaiting execution, Barthes observes "the punctum is: he is going to die." After which Duttlinger begins to quote Barthes: "I read at the same time: This will be and this has been; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future…"

relationship between death and representation in terms of the "revenant",[73] the returning ghost of someone long-absent. Because art as *re-presentation* denotes an absent object, stands for it as a signifier, it simultaneously "is and is not"[74] that absent object. This analogy of death and the image results in an uneasy doubling of represented absences, of subjects present to the viewer only as (prosopopeic) masks of the once living. The immanence of the dead body substantiates the individual self on the one hand, while on the other the body's function as a representation signifies the concept of death. The effect is one of presenting the incommensurable aspect of death *as* the mundane: "[t]hus the chiasmatic relation: the corpse as uncanny image/the image uncannily as corpse."[75]

In a situation in which the heroine is both dead and not dead, her identity undergoes a continual displacement between death and the textual representation of death enduring in the written word, which constitutes a continuation, a type of life. A continual disjunction and alternation occurs between death and the representation of death. Like Schleifer's negative materiality in rhetoric, which defeats meaning, the heroine's identity as both dead and not dead is an indicator of the "material indifference" of the modern world that displaces all meaning. As with Kafka's disembodiment of the conscious self from the other, this contrived displacement renders her a ghost, alternating between states of materiality and non-materiality, between indexical reality and representation.

Kafka recognises the physical independence of writing from its author as the beginning of an escalating trend in distanced communication, which, like telephone, radio, and

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[73] Bronfen, *et. al. op. cit.*1988: 12 "Introduction" (The authors refer to Kofman's *Mélancolie de l'art*, Galilée, Paris, 1985).

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.* The notion of the uncanny derives from Freud's concept of the unheimlich as an opposition to and function of the Heimlich (the "homely" or familiar). As elaborated in "The Uncanny": "Heimlich is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, unheimlich. Unheimlich is…a sub-species of Heimlich" (226). The relation of the uncanny to the canny, like Schleifer's relation of metonymy to synecdoche (and hence the relation of death to life), and postmodernism's relation to modernism, is one of simultaneously being both integral and oppositional, both a continuation and a break with its antecedent. It is a relation that violates positive materialist logic and Aristotle's principle of non-contradiction with a plausibly Heraclitean model of fluxive identity, of is- and is-not. See Freud *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, James Strachey (transl.) Vol XVII (1917-19) 217-56, The Hogarth Press, London, 1955. For a further definition of "uncanny", see fn. 332.

present-day electronic mail, spatially dissociates the author from his or her words.[76] This physical dissociation effects the disembodiment of the conscious self from its relation to the other. Kafka states that writing letters "means to denude oneself before the ghosts, something for which they greedily wait."[77] Nonetheless, it is through the textual medium of writing that he recognises this modern condition of physical disembodiment. The fictional component of this thesis seeks to relate Kafka's ghostly disembodiment and re-connection of geographically displaced communicants with the similarly displacing effect that text and images have on the past. Like the technology of handwritten communication, the mass-producing technology of photography, print, and the new media of mobile and computer communication, establish 'disembodied' histories.

While the disembodied or bodiless pasts are made corporeally present in my novel *FFM* in the protagonist's skeletal remains, they retain an incorporeal presence through the detached voices of others she meets. The speech of these characters is always mediated by the narrator protagonist's perspective. Kafka refers to correspondence by letter and telephone as intercourse not only with "the ghost of one's recipient but also with one's own ghost, which develops between the lines of the letter one is writing and even more so in a series of letters where one letter corroborates the other and can refer to it as a witness."[78] Rather than functioning as a brute object of corroboration, Kafka's notion of witnessing anthropomorphises the letter. The function of a witness is not simply composed within language, but requires bodily transposition from one immanent, temporal location to another, as if in perceiving a past event the body performs an indexical act, the traces of which can be read from it in the present. In other words, the witness is constituted "in the context of bodily presence – having been there to being here now".[79] In Kafka's example the body is constituted by the letter, so that the witness' role of perceiving an event, and transferring it bodily to

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[76] See Harold Bloom *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages*, 1994: 452.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] *Ibid.*

[79] Joseba Zulaika "Excessive Witnessing: The Ethical as Temptation" in (eds.) Douglass & Vogler, *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*, 2003: 96.

another temporal or spatial context, has been displaced into the mechanised, but nonetheless open, structuring of the text. It is between the lines of a letter's text that Kafka finds space for an embodied presence. As the above example demonstrates, Kafka's writing evinces a concern that the narrator's existence has suffered displacement, both bodily and contextually. Ronald Schleifer similarly argues that the abundances of modern capitalist society cause a dispersal of desire by means of devices of the modern age, like the telephone, which have caused "non-transcendental disembodiments of solid goods, experiences, and even understanding."[80] In writing of Proust's account of a telephone call to his grandmother, Schleifer observes that the spatial and temporal dislocation undermines the stability that Enlightenment logic expects.[81] Proust's account of his ailing grandmother's voice as if it were already from a time and place belonging to death and the past, "alone, and attached no longer to a body which I was never more to see",[82] bears the hallmarks of temporal and spatial displacement commonly observed in portrait photography from Marcel Proust's time, in which present, future and past become unstable due to the coexistence of bodily absence and represented presence of the dead (or in Proust's melodramatic case, dying) individual.

Although the topic of mortality in writing raises Roland Barthes' notion of the Death of the Author,[83] this thesis concentrates on the inverse of Barthes' proclamation, emphasising the narrative construction and interpretation (the *authoring*) of death. Regardless of the redundancy of Barthes' writer, the construction of meaning by interpretation persists. Writers and readers of narratives of death define a space for subjective interpretation: it is the space between modern textual creation and

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[80] Ronald Schleifer *Modernism and Time: The Logic of Abundance in Literature, Science, and Culture*, 1880-1930, 2000: 122.

[81] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 134.

[82] Marcel Proust *Remembrance of Things Past*, Vol 1, C K Scott Moncrieff (transl.) Random House, New York, 1934: 810 (quoted in: Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 134).

[83] Roland Barthes "The Death of the Author" in Roland Barthes *Image – Music – Text*, Stephen Heath (ed. and transl.) 1984. Barthes argues that the complex totality of textual interpretation occurs only in the reader, and hence "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." (148). Barthes observes that "[T]he removal of the Author…utterly transforms the modern text (…the text is henceforth read and made in such a way that at all its levels the author is absent)." (145).

consumption that is characterised by Kafka's disembodied ghosts, as the absences between lines, whether in a letter or by telephone, in which the slippages of meaning occur. It is these same spaces, constituted by the dislocating technology of the modern world, that inform Schleifer's material recognition of death's non-presence, particularly his sense of death as not a concept but a conspicuous absence, a materially negative term.[84]

W G Sebald's short story "Dr Selwyn" in *The Emigrants* considers themes of temporal displacement and death relevant to the fictional component of my thesis. The narrator relates to the reader a tale told to him by Dr Selwyn, of his climbing companion lost a generation earlier in the Aare Glacier in the Swiss Alps. Years later the narrator inadvertently discovers a newspaper article detailing the recovery of the remains of Dr Selwyn's climbing partner from a glacier, seventy-two years after his disappearance: "And so they are ever returning to us, the dead."[85] An ambiguity exists as to whether it is "us" or "they" who are dead. The dead in Sebald's fiction constitute both the past (the dead, who are "ever returning to us") and our own future mortality ("us, the dead"), drawing history and the present into an uneasy realm of inter-textual subjectivity.

Although the narrative "Dr Selwyn" is within the bounds of factual possibility, it is the unlikelihood of its occurrence and the coincidental recognition by the narrator-protagonist that I am interested in here – its themes of the transient non-linear process of time in relation to the reading, remembering, mortal individual. Often in Sebald's fiction the disjunction of time attributes a fantastic and surreal existence to the mundane, an effect that speaks of Sebald's debt to Kafka. By considering the abnormal as if it were expected and normal, and the normal as if it were perverse, both Sebald

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[84] Schleifer typifies this negative representation of death by reference to Philip Larkin's "Aubade", in which modern, non-transcendent death is "[t]he anaesthetic from which none come round." See Ronald Schleifer *Rhetoric and Death: The Language of Modernism and Postmodern Discourse Theory*, 1990: 7. For Larkin's poem, see M H Abrams; Stephen Greenblatt (eds.) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature 7th Ed. Volume 2*, 2000: "Aubade" (1977): 2570-71.

[85] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, 1996: 23.

and Kafka have established *sur*real, but somehow true worlds within our own. As noted by Ernst Bloch,

> [w]hether every shining of the dream lantern into the realm of shades is sheer fantasy and as such appears indiscriminate depends again on the conceptual definition and demarcation of the real which has been arrived at.[86]

Bloch's interest with the radical margins of reality and truth mirror Adorno's concern with what he termed the "radicalizing potential of modernist aesthetic experience … the manner in which what are apparently the most marginal and fortuitous features of cultural artefacts reveal their most profound and often unacknowledged truths."[87] It is Sebald's attempt to reveal profundity in what appears to be inessential and mundane that will be considered in my later discussion in terms of the rhetoric of modernity.

Echoing Sebald's writing, I narrate my novel FFM in the first-person, attempting the blurring of fact with fiction that Sebald so easily manages by deliberately making little differentiation between himself and the narrator. The proximity of Sebald's narrator and protagonist is always close:

> Since [Sebald] writes in the first person singular and proceeds in each case from a situation which can be verified in terms of his own life, there is a deliberately high level of identity between author and narrator, who is also reader, decipherer, and reporter of others' texts.[88]

The figurative incorporation of the protagonist and hence the reader into the object of study reflects the artist's immortalizing intent. Hippocrates' *ars longa, vita brevi* ("art is enduring, life is short") typifies the artist's attempt to save "the living from death, and

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[86] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (transl.) 1986: 1108 (written 1938-47, first published Das Prinzip Hoffnung 1959).

[87] Peter Dews "Adorno, Potstructuralism and the Critique of Identity," Ch. 1: 1-21, in Andrew Benjamin (ed.) *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, 1989: 1.

[88] See Arthur Williams "The Elusive First Person Plural: Real Absences in Reiner Kunze, Bernd-Dieter Huge, and W G Sebald," in: Williams, Parkes, Preece (eds.) *'Whose Story?' – Continuities in contemporary German-language literature*, 1998: 85-113, at 86. Where my novel *FFM* departs radically from Sebald's fiction is in the choice of a female narrator-protagonist. This immediately signals a separation of identity between author and narrator that is not present in Sebald's novels. Sebald's narrator is in many ways (birth date, name, academic occupation, age, etc) identical to Sebald the author.

death from oblivion."[89] An intriguing instance of figurative incorporation of the artist into the work of art occurs in a tradition including Donatello, Giorgione and Caravaggio. In Caravaggio's sculpture the severed head at the feet of David (from the biblical legend of David and Goliath) is a self-portrait of the artist.[90] Figurative incorporation becomes a signature of the artist's awareness of the illusion of self-identity and the certainty of death. In this way "death steps in between the living appearance, picture and image."[91] The heroine's reconfiguration as a corpse is similarly the narrator's self-portrait, recognising and tilting against mortality; as corpse and as first-person narrator the heroine occupies the contradictory space defined by text.[92]

Negative Materiality as Non-Representation

Sebald's narrative alternation of the mortal protagonist between temporal absence and textual presence is aptly conveyed by the contemporary notion of death as a non-signifier. It is death's lack of meaning that informs hermeneutic theorist Ronald Schleifer's reliance on materiality and non-materiality to draw a distinction between the pre-modern and the modern. For Schleifer, materiality equates with pre-modernity, while non-materiality defines modernity. Non-materiality, or negative materiality, thus defines the rhetorical structure of modernism. He explains that nineteenth century logical positivism and realism were founded on a positive materiality, whereas modernist rhetoric relied on a notion of materiality as negatively constituted. He demonstrates this with Wittgenstein's contention that "whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."[93] Wittgenstein's statement alternates between actuality and idealism, between "is" and "ought". Rather than merely suggesting that it is meaningless to indulge discourse regarding the inexplicable, the statement constitutes

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[89] Jeanette Zwingenberger *The Shadow of Death in the Work of Hans Holbein the Younger*, 1999: 140.

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Ibid.* 145.

[92] The notion of death stepping between the text and the reader will be significant later regarding the function of trauma and photography. Stewart, *op. cit.* 1984: 339: "any first person in fiction is always caught halfway between an autonomous "I" and the murderous impulse of all art to enshrine identity in permanence."

[93] While Schleifer derives the use of Wittgenstein from Paul Engelmann (cited in Alan Janik and Stephen Toulmin *Wittgenstein's Vienna*, Touchstone, New York, 1973: 191), I cite Wittgenstein's original statement, quoted in Robert Audi, (ed.) *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1995: 857.

an imperative censure of specific discourse that attempts to elucidate the unknown. In so doing, Wittgenstein's statement locates the juncture between negative and positive materiality by insisting that what *ought* to be so can be so if repressive measures are taken: an event or object which subtends but cannot be physically demonstrated ought never be mentioned. The positive material basis of nineteenth-century realist conceptions (that everything worth recognising is materially verifiable) is undermined by the modernist inclination toward rhetorical tropes that give voice to, or at least to seek an apprehension of "unintelligible materiality",[94] of negative materiality. Schleifer argues that this modernist model of negative materiality detaches the possibility of a signified meaning from death in the same way that currency in modern society has been detached from its "use value" or from any natural or physical standard.[95] But, more importantly, modern discourse apportions equal significance, or lack of significance, to both the non-material or negative state of death, and the "positive" material state of existing things in the world. The result is a loss of an evaluative standard by which to distinguish materiality from non-materiality:

> within the modernist discourse of "simulation," rather than the referential realism
> of an earlier age – death itself loses its traditional power of meaning and is
> transformed to a kind of material indifference resonating within social and
> discursive life.[96]

It is this material indifference that informs the modern inability to attribute concrete meaning to the function of death. Whereas a pre-modern perception of death once enabled the possibility of death's material presence, the material indifference of modernity and post-modernity ensures that this is no longer possible. Death constitutes an absence, not merely in a material sense, but in its function within contemporary discourse. In this regard, death is a non-event. It is not perceived, because it cannot be perceived, and as such defies the transcriptive attempts of language. As one commentator has remarked:

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[94] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 31.
[95] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 34.
[96] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 35.

> One cannot imagine one's own death. Death marks the limit of imagination. Death is a seal on which no image, no design, is imprinted. Nothing is inscribed on it.[97]

While the positive materialism of the 19th century was non-metaphysical, reductivist, and reliant on the commodification of labour value,[98] modernism recognised the radical trajectory of capitalism in eventually forsaking all real means of value. Schleifer distinguishes a first industrial revolution, reliant on the production of basic, material goods (clothing, building materials, agricultural product, and the infrastructure required to transport it), from a later, second revolution at the end of the nineteenth century that witnessed the move from an industrial to a financial economy.[99] Real estate, industrial goods and labour were no longer the basis for determining value; instead, the brief rise and fall of the gold standard (1880-1914) coincided closely with the last attempts to link monetary value to real property. Schleifer uses Jean Baudrillard's distinction between production and simulation, a movement from a mimetic reliance on the objective world to a mode of representation divorced from the real, to typify this movement from positive to negative materiality.[100]

Schleifer sees a correspondence between contemporary apprehensions of death and the nature of rhetoric; both invoke the concept of "negative materiality," of not differentiating between materiality and non-materiality. He provides an example in the practice of phonology, which, in categorising phonemes, recognises an absence of voice in the same way as a sound made by a voice.[101] That is, both silence and sound are notational units; discrete silences are recognised as part of the significatory regime comprising audible vocal signals. I would suggest that another significant instance of

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[97] John Sallis, *Echoes After Heidegger*, 1990: 132. Death as absence constitutes a textual as much as an imaginative limit, one that has persisted in literature "as a semantically unoccupied zone of utterance, at once linguistic horizon and void." See Stewart, *op. cit.* 1984: 4-5: nb. Also, "the radical abstraction death is pure construct, pure language." (4). Stewart cites Hegel's reference to death as "that 'single, expressionless syllable.'" (citing G W F Hegel *The Phenomenology of Mind*, rev. ed. J B Baillie (transl.) Allen & Unwin, London, 1931, p. 605).

[98] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 29.

[99] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 40-43.

[100] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 31. For Baudillard's discussion of the movement from production to simulation, see: Jean Baudrillard *Selected Writings*, (transl.) Sheila Faria Glaser, 1994: 170; and for a discussion of this concept's implications, see: Jean Baudrillard "The Precession of Simulacra" Chapter 1 in *Simulacra & Simulation* Sheila Faria Glaser (transl.) 1994 (1981).

[101] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 32.

this is the Hindu-Arabic cipher, the numeral signifier zero ("0"), which in its contextual placement as the space of an absence enables the denominational representation of a specific, quantifiable presence.[102] In an article discussing the depiction of moral limits to representing the final solution, Berel Lang identifies the representationally problematic status of the enunciated negative "no". Like the Hindu-Arabic cipher "0", "no" inhabits a space that is representationally both present and absent. Lang claims that although "no" is considered an adverb that defines "how" an event happens, this categorization is not totally convincing.[103] Rather, a "flat denial" suggests the need for "a category that is also flat or one-dimensional – so single-minded that it may not, strictly speaking, be a part of speech or representational at all."[104] Lang is grappling with the difficulty of representing absence. Her proposed category of non-representation in the case of "no" defines the alternatingly present and absent status of Schleifer's negative materiality.

Schleifer considers death in terms of a representation of non-representation, what he refers to as "the nothingness and pure non-sense of a materiality beyond meaning-effects."[105] Jacques Derrida's considers death in a similar way to Schleifer's notion of negative materiality. Derrida's definition of mortality as a state beyond meaning is entrenched in the discourse of modernity:

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[102] Crosby draws a correlation between the reception into Europe of zero and the necessity of having to record increasing volumes and transactions of commercial goods. The nascence of zero in Europe is tied to an ordering, quantitative conception of the world in terms of both space and time. I would suggest that this quantitative conception foresees Schleifer's positive materiality. Crosby describes the Arabic introduction of the concept of "zero" into medieval Europe, observing that several centuries were required before zero was properly accepted, and traces the etymology of "cipher" (meaning "code") back to mystical connotations of the number "0". See Alfred W Crosby *The Measure of Reality: Quantification and Western Society*, 1250-1600, 1997: 114.

[103] While Lang only refers to "no" as an adverb, it is also used adjectivally to denote the absence of objects or events.

[104] Lang, *op. cit.* 1992: 301.

[105] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 7: "I am not trying to make a "theme" of death, to follow the ways that death becomes a subject, a preoccupation, something to be understood and narrated by language. In fact, in much that follows, the idea of death may seem lost, on the margin, an unfocussed blur…I am most concerned with the relationship of power and meaning with a "sense" of death that developed in the modernist era in terms of a material apprehension or conception, what I am calling a conception of negative materiality." See also at 150.

> Death is at once healing and impotence; an ambiguity that perhaps indicates
> another dimension of meaning than the one whereby death is thought according
> to the alternative being/non-being. Ambiguity: enigma.[106]

In a similar way to Derrida and Levinas, I would suggest that Schleifer also seeks in the ambiguity of modern conceptions of death the possibility of insights into alternative means of understanding modern existence. Death is, in Schleifer's view, a peculiarly contemporary concern, something organizational theorist Gibson Burrell regards not as a general and historically unchanging predicament, but as the consequence of "modern forms of embodiment".[107] Embodiment in modernity is constituted in an archtypically modern way, by means of representation. The result is explicable in Baudrillard's notion of the hyperreal, of the displacement of the real into the simulated, a model that builds on the concept of alienation.[108] I would suggest that applying Schleifer's textual materially negative notion of death (the representation of non-representation) to Burrell's social conception of death (the result of modern forms of embodiment), establishes a useful functioning definition of modernity as a condition of *dis*embodiment. Representation, whether in the re-articulation of a voice or reproduction of an image over telephone or television, or in the chemically fixed medium of a photograph, renders the corporeal form absent. Modern forms of embodiment are disembodied.

A contemporary preoccupation with mortality might then reflect the function of modern existence as a condition of disembodiment, rather than a simple concern with the brute fact of death. It is this preoccupation with mortality as a disembodying, negative form of representation that renders the idea of death and its articulation (its representation) a fundamental concern to modern discourse. The radical extent of this trajectory is Derrida's statement that "[r]epresentation is death … death is (only)

[106] Jacques Derrida *Adieu To Emmanuel Levinas*, Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (transl.) Werner Hamacher and David E Wellbery (eds.) Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1999: n.27: 131 (citing Emmanuel Levinas *Dieu, la morte et le temps*, 123).
[107] Gibson Burrell *Pandemonium: Towards a Retro-Organization Theory*, 1997: 152 (quoting C. Shilling, The Body and Social Theory, Sage, London, 1993: 177).
[108] See: Jean Baudrillard, *op. cit.* 1994: 170.

representation."[109] The statement is metonymical, transferring signification from death to the neighbouring visual and textual language that represents death. While Derrida's contention holds much in common with Simon Critchley's notion of death as prosopopeic representation (see below, in this section), it simultaneously broadens and narrows the scope of mortality. On the one hand it claims that death is everything that representation entails, and on the other that death is nothing more than the non-material artifice of representation. The contemporary recognition of a correspondence, indeed a synonymous relation between representation and death is arguably metonymical in structure, enabling the realisation of death in its neighbour: the textual or visual representation of death. The association of the object of representation (whether text, re-enactment, or image) with the process of representation itself completes a metonymical correspondence that, when specifically concerned with identity, constitutes the trope of prosopopeia. An illustrative example of the function of prosopopeia (of attributing a face to something unrepresentable) occurs in *The Emigrants*. The story of "Max Ferber" describes an ageing Jewish artist from Manchester who lost his family and his formative identity in the Holocaust. Ferber dedicates his time to "portrait studies,"[110] regularly re-worked charcoal palimpsests developing out of a process of annihilation and re-creation that would wreck the drawing surface and weary the sitter. It is not a great leap to discern in Ferber's drawings the attempt to locate self identity within his attempts to represent death. The narrator senses that each portrait "had evolved from a long line of grey, ancestral faces, rendered unto ash but still there, as ghostly presences, on the harried paper."[111] The effect is one of constructing a face as a means of attributing an identity to something unknown. Even though each drawing is "a portrait of great vividness",[112] the result is not one of mimetic correspondence with reality, but of a representation of what lies

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[109] Jacques Derrida *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass (transl. Intro.) 1978: 227.
[110] Sebald, *op. cit. The Emigrants*, 1997: 161.
[111] *Ibid*: 162.
[112] *Ibid*.

behind representation: a long line of ghostly presences preceding the current image. Ferber describes the faces in his drawings as "ultimately unknowable".[113]

As actual experience of death requires ceasing to live, and thus ceasing to be able to represent or narrate, Critchley considers the representation of death as the only relation we can have to it.[114] This is reminiscent of Maurice Blanchot's model of death as a state that is beyond our conception; which forms an "absolute singularity, whose very idiom absolves itself from language,"[115] and leads to the notion of death as an indefinitely postponed condition, a threat that never arrives.[116] It is possible to see an early corollary of the notion of death as something beyond our conception in the Epicurean ideal of the experiential void of death. Epicurus maintained that since the condition of death cannot be experienced, it holds no rational meaning for the living.[117] From a strictly positivistic perspective, the notion that the condition of death is not constituted by experience would lead to the inference that it is constituted only by absence. Although Blanchot's deferment of death as a threat that never arrives draws from an Epicurean and existential conception of one's own state of death as unknowable, it undermines the Epicurean stance with the reinstatement of the threat of death inherent in the recognition of the death of others as much as of oneself. A similar paradoxical slippage exists in Critchley's notion of death as the anthropomorphizing of an absent event. He explains that representations of death are figurative; they assume a form where no form exists. In his words, "representations of death are *misrepresentations*, or rather they are representations of an absence."[118] It is useful here to compare Critchley's account of death as a misrepresentation with Schleifer's conception of death in terms of rhetorical tropes. Both theorists conceive of death in terms of rhetorical

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[113] *Ibid.*

[114] Critchley, *op. cit.* 1997: 73.

[115] Hent de Vries "'Lapsu Absolu": Notes on Maurice Blanchot's *The Instant of My Death*" in *Yale French Studies* 93 (The Place of Maurice Blanchot) Thomas Pepper (ed.) 1998: 32.

[116] Vries, *op. cit.* 1998: 35.

[117] Whitney J Oates *The Stoic and Epicurean Philosophers*, 1940: 31 ["Letter to Menoeceus"]: "Death, the most terrifying of all ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead." Oates offers an interpretation of Epicurus' statement as one of his "Principal Doctrines" [Ch. IV, at 38]: "Death is nothing to us: for that which is dissolved is without sensation; and that which lacks sensation is nothing to us."

[118] Critchley, *op. cit.* [Critchley's italics] 1997: 73.

tropes, as figurative misrepresentation, as metaphorical displacements of meaning. While Schleifer uses metonymy to differentiate contemporary from early modern perceptions of death, Critchley relies on the more specific (metonymic) trope of prosopopeia, the function of personifying something that is absent; it literally means to "make a face".[119] He describes prosopopeia, in the instance of a death mask, as "a form which indicates the failure of presence, a face which withdraws behind the form which presents it."[120] "Withdraws" succinctly conveys the notion of a constantly receding entity, one that is negatively defined precisely because it cannot be apprehended in a material way. Recognition of death in this sense is not merely delayed but indefinitely deferred. Critchley explains that by materially representing death's absence with the form of a mask, the trope of prosopopeia defines the unavoidable "inadequacy" of our relation to death, what he terms the "ungraspable facticity of dying".[121] To better understand the modern rhetorical representation of death as a negative materiality, details of Schleifer's metonymical construction of death need to be considered.

Metonymy, Modernity & Death: Ronald Schleifer

In its hermeneutical unwillingness to recognise cause and effect, the process by which Schleifer relates death to modernist rhetoric is subtle. Schleifer has sought to explicate the nature of death by analogical reference to the tropes of metonymy and synecdoche.[122] By associating the function of metonymy with modernity, Schleifer seeks to differentiate contemporary conceptions of death from earlier conceptions, which he typifies in terms of synecdochical and metaphorical representation. The rhetorical trope of synecdoche presents something by reference to one of its parts, or vice-versa. As examples: a compassionate advocate can be referred to as a "bleeding heart"; a tax relying not on property, but on the levy of a set fee on each member of the population has been termed a "poll tax", referring to an individual only by their head. Schleifer describes synecdoche as a process that often essentialises, reducing the

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[119] Critchley, *ibid.*
[120] Critchley, *ibid.*
[121] Critchley, *op. cit.* 1997: 82.
[122] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990.

object of reference to a characteristic relevant to the meaning of that representation.[123] In other words, synecdoche functions according to the premise that an indissoluble core exists within each object, an inviolable inner meaning that defines it. The part/whole relation of synecdoche creates an inherent hierarchy that attributes greater significance to one or the other element. Synecdoche exhibits aspects characteristic of both metaphor and metonymy. The essentialising, hierarchising aspect of synecdoche is characteristic of metaphor's paradigmatic function. Nonetheless, its classification as a sub-set of metonymy is due to its process of shifting meaning relative to a signifier, rather than drawing a relation by reference to similarity, as is the purpose of metaphor. Metonymy, however, remains indiscriminate in its relation of one object to another. Schleifer differentiates the essentialising movement of synecdoche from metonymy. He does this because metonymy relies on definition not by reference to one of its parts, but by reference to something accidentally related to it. Unlike synecdoche, metonymy does not therefore rely on depth of meaning, but on a surface relation. Rather than turning inwards to an essential characteristic, metonymy is a process of displacement to an object related by associations of proximity or of happenstance. Another way of describing the nature of the surface/depth differentiation of metonymy and synecdoche is by reference to the inclusion of material detail. By essentialising an object's representation (e.g. by referring to the larger whole of a group of violinists in an orchestra as simply *strings*[124]) synecdoche strips away the majority of details that also might describe the object, standing in for the "mass of observed detail which would have been there in actuality."[125] The only significant aspect becomes that referred to by the synecdoche ("strings"); all else becomes redundant. In this regard synecdoche condenses and essentialises the object it refers to. Metonymy, on the other hand, has the appearance of material indifference that is nonetheless dependent on material relations. It is often motivated by what is *inessential* or arbitrary in material detail. Rather

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[123] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 4-5. See also Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 185-6.

[124] Louis Goossens "Metaphtonomy: The Interaction of Metaphor and Metonymy in Figurative Expressions for Linguistic Action", 159-74 in Louis Goossens, *et. al. By Word of Mouth: Metaphor, Metonymy and Linguistic Action in a Cognitive Perspective*, 1995: 160.

[125] David Lodge *The Modes of Modern Writing: Metaphor, Metonymy, and the Typology of Modern Literature*, 1977: 93 & n. (Lodge quotes E B Greenwood in 'Critical Forum', *Essays in Criticism* XII July 1962: 341-2).

than referring synecdochically to the violin section of an orchestra as "strings", a metonym might refer to the violin section as "concertos", due to the great number of concertos devoted to the violin. It is an association of contiguity typified by linguist Roman Jakobson's observation of aphasics substituting, for instance, 'table' for 'lamp'.[126] While Jakobson's theory of metonymy is further discussed below, it is necessary at this point to have flagged the relevance of *inessential* detail in considering Sebald's employment of metonymy in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

As examples of metonymy, drinking alcohol is metonymically referred to as turning to "the bottle"; authority in the UK originates not from a specific group of people allocated specific powers (the prime minister or the "cabinet", also a metonym), but from "10 Downing Street" or "Whitehall"; and a white-collar worker becomes a "suit".[127] In each of these instances the metonym relies on commonplace associations that occur with sufficient frequency to become general linguistic currency. The terms cabinet, desk, bureau,[128] and bank are each instances of metonymical displacement that have become common linguistic coinage. Each of the furniture examples mentioned is a displacement of the organization or function of an administrative or financial broker to the physical furnishings at which administration is conducted. At their most basic level each of these instances is an example of substituting *furnishing* for *official role*, which could be reduced to instances of *instrument* for *purpose*, or *container* for *contained*.

Unlike metaphor, which is able to link contextually distant objects (proximally, temporally, or otherwise) that bear similar characteristics or appearances, metonymy represents something by reference to objects contiguous to it, often by spatial or historical association. Schleifer builds on the work of Jakobson,[129] who distinguished

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[126] Jakobson, *op. cit.* 1987: 105.

[127] While these are examples derived from the author's common experience, the selection has been influenced by the examples offered by Schleifer: see Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 4. Schleifer's operating definition of metonymy is "the figure of speech that substitutes something that is contiguous to whatever is being figured for that thing itself: in this way, the king can be called the "crown," a presidential statement a "White House" statement." (4). See also Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 185-6. I rely also on the definition provided by Abdul Al-Sharafi, of "a process of representation in which one word or concept or object stands for another by contiguity or causality." See Al-Sharafi, *Textual Metonymy: A Semiotic Approach*, 2004: 1.

[128] For the etymology of "bureau" particularly, see Albrow, *Bureaucracy*, 1970: 17; and Burrell, *op. cit.* 1997.

[129] See Jakobson, *op. cit.* 1987: Ch. 8.

metaphor from metonymy. Jakobson defined metaphor as a linguistically substitutive[130] function of the comparison of similar characteristics in objects. He described metonymy, on the other hand, as a trope that adjoins contextually congruous objects regardless of their similarity. As one cognitive theorist has explained, "We do not understand things only because they are *similar* to one another but also because they stand *next to* each other.[131] Both Schleifer and Jakobson's schemes associate the trope of metaphor with antecedent (pre-modern), characteristically poetic literary forms that rely on allegory and meta-levels of meaning.[132]

Schleifer's practice of associating particular rhetorical tropes (specifically synecdoche and metonymy) to historically specific literary or cultural movements derives directly from Jakobson. Jakobson categorised Tolstoy's late 19th century realist prose (for instance) as metonymical, as opposed to the prose of the romantics and symbolists, and differentiated the "patently metaphorical attitude" of the surrealist artists from the metonymy and synecdoche of cubism.[133]

The reasoning by which Schleifer analogically associates death with metonymy is intriguing and complex. Schleifer begins by explaining that Jakobson's theory subsumes synecdoche within metonymy, in opposition to metaphor.[134] Jakobson's

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[130] See entry to William R Richardson "Lacan" in Critchley and Schroeder (eds.) *A Companion To Continental Philosophy*, 1998: 522.

[131] Al-Sharafi, *op. cit.* 2004: 39.

[132] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 4, 133-4. Schleifer explains that Jakobson aligns metonymy with the "syntagmatic axis" in linguistic meaning, which specifies congruous relations, while metaphor constitutes the "paradigmatic axis" in which "substitution" or "selection" between different language sets occurs. For an introduction to Jakobson's rhetorical axes and their relation to metaphor, metonymy and synecdoche, see: Richard Bradford *Roman Jakobson: Life, Language, Art*, especially Part I, "The Poetic Function", 1994: 9-23. See also Jakobson, *op. cit.* 1987: 111.

[133] *Ibid.* Jakobson's rhetorical differentiation was between metaphor, which he characterised as symbolic, imitative and allusive, and metonymy, which emphasised association through proximal congruity. He regarded synecdoche, in its apparently arbitrary condensation of the whole to a part, as a sub-set of metonymy. See also in the same volume: "On Realism in Art" Ch. 1: 25. It is a common standpoint to regard the synecdochical aspects of part-for-whole, and vice-versa, as a sub-set of metonymy. See Elizabeth Grosz *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists*, 1989: 23. Although Jakobson associated the poetical attributes of metaphor with surrealism, the implications of this thesis would qualify surrealism's association with metaphor, suggesting surrealism's coincidental and metonymical elements and linking the movement with Schleifer's conception of contemporary culture's metonymical basis.

[134] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 186. See also Goossens, *op. cit.* 1995: 161. Goossens recognises that hierarchies within and between each linguistic category of rhetoric poses complex problems, suggesting that "the boundary lines between [rhetorical] domains are often fuzzy, which is one of the reasons why metaphor and metonymy may interpenetrate." See also Antonio Barcelona "Introduction: The Cognitive Theory of Metaphor and

combined figure of metonymy and synecdoche reductively dispenses with the "temporal" side of metonymy in aligning it with synecdoche, but emphasises that temporal aspect when opposing it to the a-temporal figure of metaphor.[135] Essentialising metonymy and metaphor accordingly as *temporal* and *non-temporal* has precise relevance to Sebald's writing project, and will be discussed below in relation to Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin's notion of meaning production by use of the concept of the constellation. Schleifer explains Jakobson's view that synecdoche analogically and a-temporally describes meaning in language, which necessitates that meaning as a whole subsumes the totality of its parts. Metonymy, however, does not comply with this structural model of linguistics. By evincing both temporal and a-temporal elements, metonymy "cannot be reduced to its place within an ordered whole",[136] leading Schleifer to conclude that metonymy occupies an "alternating" space that partially and simultaneously conforms with and subverts the function of synecdoche.[137] In this regard, metonymy for Schleifer exhibits both metonymical and synecdochical characteristics: it is both randomizing and essentialising.

Similar to Schleifer's inter-contextual interpretation of metonymy, semiotician Abdul Al-Sharifi deals with the inability to confine metonymy to a compliant rhetorical space by accommodating rhetorical linguistics within a cognitive paradigm.[138] Rather than attempting to situate rhetorical ambiguity within an extra-linguistic framework, however, Schleifer prefers to implement metonymy's post-structural ambiguity to function as an analogy for modern representations of death. He does this by reference to metonymy's alternating function as both a synecdochical "part" and a metonymical

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Metonymy", 1-28, in Antonio Barcelona (ed.) *Metaphor and Metonymy at the Crossroads: A Cognitive Perspective*, 2000: 10. Barcelona discusses the various categories of interaction between metaphor and metonymy, recognising Goossen's theory (from Lakoff and Turner 1989: 104-106) that the two tropes overlap. Barcelona's edited monograph contains a number of other invaluable articles considering the relationship between the two tropes.

[135] Genette followed Jakobson in this distinction. To quote Ellison: "metaphor, according to Genette … is the pole of simultaneity, memory association as "frozen time" and ecstatic immobility; whereas metonymy, the mode of diachronic juxtaposition, is the pole of narration." See Ellison, *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny*, 2001: 136.

[136] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 186.

[137] Schleifer, *ibid.*

[138] Al-Sharafi, *op. cit.* 2004. To resolve the complexity of these linguistic categories, Al Sharafi incorporates rhetoric within a cognitive meta-contextual paradigm.

"other" of language. I will explain what Schleifer means by *part* and *other* in the following account of how metonymy relates to modern conceptions of death.

Schleifer makes two connections between the rhetorical trope of metonymy and death. First, he draws a parallel between the relationship of metonymy and synecdoche (which, as described above, is and is not a sub-set of metonymy) and the relationship of death to life. Death, he explains is, on the one hand, a function of life, and as such constitutes a synecdochical part of life. On the other hand, death constitutes the ending of life, and so functions as a metonymical displacement from life to another state, to a contiguous entity.[139]

Secondly, Schleifer pairs the two rhetorical tropes with prevailing forms of contemporary signification. He connects synecdoche with the hierarchical, symbolical, essentialising function he relates to pre-modern signification, and to which he attributes concern with "depth" of meaning. Conversely, metonymy is given to the random, non-hierarchised, "surface" meaning of circumstantial displacement. Rather than metaphorically establish order through the relation of similar things (pre-modernity), or synecdochically essentialise a signified meaning (modernity), the metonymy typifying the negative materiality of contemporary western culture (postmodernity) creates arbitrary relations that are, as Svetlana Boym observes, "accidental, contiguous, chaotic, and uncontrollable".[140] It is this notion of a contemporary, metonymically defined age that Schleifer uses to explain the contemporary understanding of death as something deprived of transcendental meaning: a negatively material condition that presents itself within modern society by means of a similar process to the way metonymy presents itself within rhetoric. That is, Death appears to simultaneously operate as neither entirely a part of life, nor as wholly extraneous to it. To use Schleifer's explanation:

> These two aspects of death – a "part" and an "other" – are themselves not
> reducible to a hierarchic (which is to say a synecdochic) relationship: death is not

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[139] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 6, 82.
[140] Svetlana Boym *Death in Quotation Marks: Cultural Myths of the Modern Poet*, 1991: 63.

> "essentially" a part of life or "essentially" the negation of life. Rather, both of
> these senses are included, non-opposably, within "death."[141]

The close linkage of metonymy and negative materiality in Schleifer's approach takes on Adorno's project of negative material criticism,[142] and very closely resembles Siegfried Kracauer's conception of photography as a mélange of surface relations deliberately unmoored from the depth of historical meaning.[143] Like Adorno's project, which radically continued the Enlightenment project by questioning contradiction, both Kracauer and Schleifer offer models of cultural and textual theory that seek to explain the paradoxical elements of modern text and culture. It is arguable that from Jakobson onward there has been a gradual re-conception of the significance of metonymical representation to all cultural systems, and particularly to an understanding of modern textual regimes.[144] Metonymy is an evasive trope to define; it resists reduction to metaphor or synecdoche because of its ineradicably *contextual* structure within language.[145] It is this compositional dependence on context that will render it particularly applicable in this thesis not merely to reading death, but to reading the reproduced visual image, and the revisited site of trauma.

Although Schleifer emphasises the randomness of metonymical relation, he recognises that to essentialise it as such would be a synecdochical act, a "negative principle of

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[141] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 6.

[142] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 29. Schleifer relies on Huyssen (*op. cit.*, in particular, Ch. 2: "Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner", 1986: 39-40). Huyssen discusses Adorno's conception of "phantasmagoria" a term Adorno uses to describe the covering-up of traces of labour and construction in Wagner's opera,, thereby alienating labour from the work of art. As a consequence, the artwork "simulates a false totality" that constitutes a reality of its own making. The function of negative materiality intrudes at the point that the phantasmagoria is established as a material object. Since relying on human labour as the standard of values in capital culture, all human values become commodities, and thus material. All objects, artefactual or otherwise, are constituted by a materiality that confounds human comprehension and "resists meaning." The significance of metonymy occurs where each material object "takes its place within a seemingly random and contingent aggregate of 'things" resistant to meaning. (Schleifer: 29). As for the representation of death in this scheme, Schleifer notes that amidst the "accidental metonymic phenomenal data of experience…death is a simulacrum, phantasmagoric, yet absolutely there, black and empty: it both is and is not. In this is the resonance of negative materialism." (66).

[143] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 50-1.

[144] As an example, see the cognitive/linguistic synthesis of metonymy by Al-Sharafi, *op. cit.* 2004.

[145] Al-Sharafi, *op. cit.* 2004: 39: "Metonymy is realistic, it is referential and it is contextually relevant, and this is what makes it a concept of powerful interpretive force."

inclusion"[146] that fails to realise its alternating, a-structural process within language. As a consequence, metonymy for Schleifer is "both arbitrary and motivated."[147] He explains that metonymical motivation is a necessary element in the ability of language to refer to objects in the world, whereas metonymy's arbitrary nature speaks synecdochically (as a part of discourse) to its material defiance of meaning: what he refers to as the "surface of discourse".[148]

Paul de Man observes that the conventional sub-categorization of synecdoche within metonymy describes its "ambivalent zone",[149] its mediating function between metaphor and metonymy. Such an understanding for de Man derives from his assessment that a strict categorization of tropes is counterproductive, since "tropes are transformational systems rather than grids".[150] De Man emphasises the inseparable functions of metonymy and metaphor, a point that will be considered in the following section regarding the rhetorical role of repression.

Absence & Presence: Synthesising Trauma & Rhetoric

Metonymy establishes a model of alternation between materiality and material indifference that describes the representational alternation between the two conditions of death and life. The congruity of one state to another enables the literal displacement of life into death without the need for metaphysical reference. Schleifer explains that

> I am trying to describe the modernist discovery of the material nonsense out of which signification is constructed in language and, analogous to this, a modernist recognition of death without transcendental meaning, without signification beyond itself, simply, materially, and unavoidably *there*. Such an idea of death … is a form of radical metonymy.[151]

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[146] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 6.
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] *Ibid.* The semiotician Al-Sharafi also recognises metonymy's role as both motivated and arbitrary: see Al-Sharafi, *op. cit.* 2004: 169.
[149] Paul de Man *Allegories of Reading*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1979: p. 63n., cited in *Ibid.*
[150] *Ibid.*
[151] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 9.

Schleifer's analogical correlation of the rhetoric of modernism with death relies on the indifference of materiality and non-materiality. The displacement from life into death occurs seamlessly because each condition is considered as an entity capable of accommodating a displaced signifier. In other words, his analogy functions by means of the loss of differentiation between presence and absence. Like the function of a cipher, both presence and absence are representationally significant. Schleifer suggests that the rhetorical functions of "parataxis and elision" inform the representation of death "indirectly" as a "haunting" (in Benjamin's terms) of the border between physicality and signification, "between historical event and semiotic understanding", between the presentation and re-presentation indicated by *Vorstellung* and *Darstellung*.[152] This "haunting" offers an alternative insight into van Alphen's model of re-enactment, a deliberate inhabitation of the gap between representation and reality. Trauma theory similarly occupies the space between presentation and representation. It is the recognition of absence as a signifier, and the possibility of movement between the two conditions of absence and presence, that defines the crucial movement in trauma theory, which seeks to access absent, unconscious, repressed or dissociated knowledge. In Caruth's understanding, trauma exists as a function of unacknowledged experience, of knowledge that is not apprehended.[153] In this regard knowledge is simultaneously present and absent. Trauma thus constitutes a temporal alternation between absence and presence, its temporal non-linearity invoking Freud's concept of *Nachträglichkeit*, or "afterwardsness".[154]

The alternation between absence and presence (between repression and recall) evident in trauma theory finds an immediate link in the work of Jakobson, who correlated rhetoric with processes of memory. Jakobson's linguistic extrapolations regarding memory loss in aphasics derived in part from Freud's account of the movement of the

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[152] Schleifer, *op. cit*. 1993: 315. Schleifer refers to Benjamin's "The Origin of German Tragic Drama" in *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt (ed. intro.) Harry Zohn (transl.) Schocken Books, New York 1969: 166. See also the introduction to Bronfen and Goodwin's *Death and Representation*, ("Sign, Psyche, Text": 10) for discussion of the term *Vorstellung*.

[153] Cathy Caruth *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, 1996: 62.

[154] Anne Whitehead, Trauma Fiction, 2004: 6 (Whitehead's translation). For an alternative and more immediately understandable translation, see Rothberg, "deferred action or after-effect", *op. cit*. 2000: 23-4:

repressed unconscious to consciousness in semiotic terms of "displacement" and "condensation".[155] Jacques Lacan's use of Jakobson to describe metaphor and metonymy explains the significant link between death, metonymical representation, and absence. Lacan differentiates the metonymical from metaphorical forms of representation in terms of metaphor's repressive function.[156] Unlike Lacan's metonymy (constituted by "two signifiers equally actualised"), metaphor obscures one signifier:

> It flashes between two signifiers one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the occulted signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) connexion with the rest of the chain.[157]

Metaphor is a relationship of signifiers by similarity and subsequent concealment, rendering one signifier "occulted". Elizabeth Grosz explains this as a process by which one term "represents while covering over or silencing the other."[158]

Grosz and Lacan perceive metaphor as repressive, while Kracauer regards the very metonymical de-contextualization of images in contemporary society (which he refers to as a "general inventory" – see below) as the consequence of attempts to repress the fear of death. To rely on the mechanism of repression as a means of distinguishing the two tropes renders their function significant in terms of repression's alternating capacity (like Schleifer's metonymical alternation between materiality and non-materiality) as a signifier of both presence and absence. The alternate association of repression with either metaphor on the one hand, or metonymy on the other, and the capacity of metonymy in particular to offer a representational traduction between material and non-material states will be resolved in the final chapter, which reconsiders the function of metonymy in Sebald's fiction.

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[155] Jakobson, *op. cit.* 1987: 113. Here Jakobson differentiates Freud's metonymic terms from Freud's metaphorical terms of "identification and symbolism". See also Grosz, *op. cit.* 1989: 23.

[156] Grosz, *op. cit.* 1989: 24.

[157] Jacques Lacan *Écrits: A Selection*, esp. Ch. 5: "The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud", (146-78) 1977: 157.

[158] "This process of rendering the signifier latent by covering over it with another signifier similar to it is, Lacan claims, a diagram of the process of repression, the burial of one term under another." Grosz, *op. cit.* 1989: 24.

[158] Lacan, *op. cit.* 1977: 157.

Having introduced the role of metonymy as a flexible trope connoting both material presence and material indifference, the second half of this chapter has built on the earlier consideration of the corpse as signifier and indexical trace of temporal and spatial ambiguity. While this chapter has concentrated on textual imagery of death, the next chapter demonstrates the extent to which visual images extend the role of metonymy and material indifference in Sebald's fiction.

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Chapter Two

DEATH, THE IMAGE & THE TEXT

Just as chapter one considered modern forms of representation in terms of alternating dichotomies (absence/presence; materiality/non-materiality, repression/recognition), the first section in this chapter returns to the ambiguous oscillation between presence and absence in terms of abjection and bodily subjectivity. The second section, *Text and Image*, suggests the inextricable relationship of visual illustration and the word in texts that foreground the function of representation. The second section also considers the ambiguities of presence and absence in relation to Bronfen's portrayal of the corpse as alternatingly static and unstable. I draw a parallel between Bronfen's depiction of the corpse and Schleifer's metonymical account of death as both part and other. I suggest that Schleifer and Bronfen re-contextualise the body's destruction and reconstruction rhetorically as a mnemetic narrative device. The ensuing section (*"With Blinded Eyes": Barthes & Bodily Displacement*) applies the notion of the body-as-textual-memory to a close reading of a passage from Sebald's *Vertigo* as an introduction to the significance of the reader-as-witness in Sebald's writing. It develops the function of the witness in discussing the narratively problematised relation of text and imagery, introducing the temporally destabilising effect of photography. The next section concentrates on the peculiar effect of photography – especially the photography of trauma – in doubling temporality. The following section entitled *Traumatic Realism or Holocaust Effect? Authenticity and Aesthetics in Textual Representation* outlines debate (and discusses the ethical dimension) surrounding attempts to realistically depict Holocaust events in fiction, and suggests the applicability of theories of textual narrative to the visual field. In anticipation of chapter three's discussion of trauma theory, the remaining two sections in this chapter re-cast the issues of photography and textual representation within the terms of this project, namely: repression and metonymy.

The Image of the Corpse

> The image decomposes, decays - or, more particularly, because of the crucial
> implications of the body's image, it can be said to corpse. And this is not
> morbidity, but the normal state of perception.[159]

The connections drawn between death and the photographic image, while often
complex and ambiguous, constitute a discourse in their own right. In an attempt to
clarify the textual-visual theories of Lacan, Blanchot, and Kristeva, Peter Schwenger
suggests that death imagery "surpasses"[160] representation by portraying something that
we can never see. In an argument reminiscent of Lang's re-categorization of "No", he
suggests that the image of the corpse constitutes a profound state of perception devoid
of classification: a state of silence that recedes from language and sight, but is
nonetheless indicated, hinted at, by word and image.[161] Like Kristeva's account of the
constant vacillation between the abject and the static self, the connection between
death and the image essentially describes the point at which the divide between subject
and object, between "I" and the world, begins to evaporate. This argument resembles
Grosz' description of the abject as a state in which the presence of the corpse exceeds
the boundaries of subjective definition. The corpse as signifier shifts temporal as well as
subjective borders. By correlating the death of the present Other with the future death
of the self, it marks a material, indexical reference as if it were a memory of the future:

> The corpse is a concretisation of the subject's inevitable future. It is intolerable
> because, in representing the very border between life and death, it shifts this limit
> or boundary into the heart of life itself. The corpse signifies the *supervalence* of the
> body, the body's corporeal recalcitrance to will or consciousness. The cadaver
> poses a danger to the ego in questioning its solidity, stability and self-certainty.[162]

As a significant concept in Kristeva's work, the abject functions as the limit of meaning
in relation to the mortal body.[163] The point of abjection, of the loss of "I" and of

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[159] Peter Schwenger "Corpsing the Image," *Critical Inquiry*, 26 Spring 2000, 395-413: 413.

[160] Schwenger, *op. cit.* 2000: 408.

[161] *Ibid.*

[162] Grosz, *op. cit.* 1989. (Grosz' italics) Chapter 3 "Julia Kristeva: Abjection, motherhood and love": 75.

[163] Kristeva refers to the function of the abject as something preceding the individuation inherent in language: as a "pre-signal other [which] preserves what existed in the archaism of pre-objectal relationship [sic], in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be". Kristeva, *op. cit.* 1982: 10.

meaning, occurs in death just as it occurs in the process of representation, in the attempt to visualise the absent subject. To quote Kristeva:

> In that compelling, raw, insolvent thing in the morgue's full sunlight, in that thing that no longer matches and therefore no longer signifies anything, I behold the breaking down of a world that has erased its borders.[164]

Kristeva observes that in dealing with the notion of the death drive, Freud transferred his interest from psychology to externalised expressions of the imagination. His consideration of cultural artifacts revealed for him a "representation of death anxiety."[165] Kristeva's account of the fear of death in terms of the "loss of integrity of the body",[166] is explicable in terms of Lacan's notion of a split subject. While Kristeva has argued that Freud recognised the significance of imagery in the attempt to convey conceptions of death,[167] Freud is regarded as having relinquished his early reliance on the photographic process as a metaphor for the function of trauma.[168] Although Kristeva asserts the necessity of an unconscious apprehension of the death drive, what is important here is her consideration of it as "that non-representative spacing of representation that is not the *sign* but the *index* of the death drive."[169] This preference for the "non-representative" indexical space rather than an iconographic or symbolic sign is apposite to Schleifer's rendering of the inherent non-representability of death, in terms of negative materiality, and Critchley's use of prosopopeia as a mask for the

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[164] Kristeva, *op. cit.* 1982: 4. An immediate parallel exists between *FFM* and Kristeva's concern with the Holocaust's effect on the morality and perception of death. Kristeva writes of the abject body as corpse in terms of its destruction of identity and order, as "death infecting life" [4].

[165] Kristeva, *op. cit.* 1989: 26.

[166] *Ibid.*

[167] *Ibid.*

[168] Baer contends that Freud "disavowed" the insights that photographic metaphors offered to the function of trauma. See Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 40. See also Sarah Kofman *Camera Obscura: Of Ideology*, Ch. 2 "Freud: The Photographic Apparatus", 21-28, 1998: 28. Kofman also suggests that Freud held an ambivalent appreciation of the metaphor of the psyche as photographic negative, preferring ultimately the theory of the death drive. Contra Baer, Kofman argues that the photographic negative metaphor is not dialectical, and nor is it a process of bringing repressed memory to light: "To pass for darkness to light is not, then, to rediscover a meaning already there, it is to construct a meaning which has never existed as such. There are limits to repetition inasmuch as full meaning has never been present. Repetition is originary." Kofman observes the metaphor is one of substitution rather than of memory recovery: a process of hypothetical construction of the past. Kofman's view resembles Sontag's suggestion that photographic images are less aids to the recovery of memory as "an invention of it or a replacement." (Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 165).

[169] My italics. Kristeva, *op. cit.* 1989: 27.

absence of death. In each instance death problematises conventional notions of representation: death is simply the depiction of no presence. For Kristeva death is located in "the *dissociation of form* itself, when form is distorted, abstracted, disfigured, hollowed out".[170] The following chapters, however, will do more than simply explore Schleifer's concept of death's material non-presence. I seek to explain the recognisably (and alternatingly) impossible and necessary attempt to provide an *indexical, realistic* representation of death, even while death continues to function as absent signifier. I then draw a parallel between the representation of death and the close association of realistic and allegorical Holocaust representation in both image and text by means of the indexical function of metonymy.

Although since WWII images of the Holocaust have abounded, a prevailing feeling has existed that in realisation of such horror only silence is appropriate.[171] The (often intellectualised) guilt of complicity has informed the postwar concept of *apocalypse*, which Kristeva notes is etymologically a discovery privileging sight, resulting in "a wealth of images and a holding back of words."[172] She observes that the path of postwar literature is an isolative turn back to language, away from politics, and because of this is ultimately non-demonstrative and uninspiring, representing a world of political and moral silence in words, the alternative of which is imagery. There is an undeniable truth in the notion that imagery is a means of overcoming political and cultural repression in Holocaust representation, and this project considers in some depth the capacity of language to repress as much as reveal. However, it is also part of the project of this research dissertation to consider the manner in which imagery, and particularly the photographic process, possesses the capacity to repress knowledge of reality, death, and the past.

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[170] My italics. Kristeva, *op. cit.* 1989: 27.

[171] Kristeva, *op. cit.*1989: 223-4. For an account of the history of photographic representation of the Holocaust in the printed media, see Barbie Zelizer *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye*, 1998. As regards ethics and its representation, Zelizer argues that the media's constant recontextualization of images without sufficient recognition of their original use enables the reader to generalise, "inadvertently creating a breach between representation and responsibility" (239).

[172] Kristeva, *op. cit.* 1989: 224.

Text and Image

In *Surrealism and the Book,* Rene Hubert emphasises the necessity of considering not only the printed word but also the pictorial image as a text. This argument not only ascribes to Derrida's recognition of the objective world as constituted by textuality,[173] it also enables a reading of within-text illustration as a form of textual interpretation of the printed word narrative: a commentary on the text that he associates with the perspective of a translator, and which constitutes a "meta-text".[174] Hubert's approach of interpreting all signifying forms as competing texts offers a conception of the surrealist book as welcoming of multiple interpretations. This approach avoids homogeneity of meaning and maintains a complex relationship of competing and autonomous texts. In other words, it establishes "reciprocity of production and viewing".[175] He notes that the interface between image and word creates an exchange that alters both forms.[176]

Hubert sees the relation of word and image in conventional illustrated literature as conscribed by traditional mimetic norms and productive of homogeneous meaning. Similarly, Jonathan Long describes the conventional use of photographic illustration as a strictly mimetic attempt to represent the world without conscious recognition of the opacity of the representative medium. For Long, such illustrations "assume a 'naive' reader for whom the images refer to a reality that is ontologically prior to the text that frames them."[177]

Hubert defines the relation of surrealist texts to photographic illustration as undermining traditional mimetic expectations by questioning the relationship between

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[173] "[E]verything that is exterior in relation to the book, everything that is negative as concerns the book, is produced within the book … the book is not in the world, but the world is in the book." See Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 1978: 76.

[174] Renee Riese Hubert, *Surrealism and the Book*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1988: 20, 22-3.

[175] Hubert, *op. cit*. Ch. 8: "Displacement of Narrative," 1988: 23.

[176] Hubert, *op. cit*. 1988: 20. Hubert identifies surrealism's opposition to linear narrative, and its interest in paradox and subversion with a Hegelian model of dialectical change (at 25). The connection is a useful one for the purpose of this thesis, drawing together the Surrealist movement's interest in integrating the unconscious and the conscious states. See Peter Nicholls *Modernisms: A Literary Guide*, Ch. 12 (279-302) "Death and Desire: The Surrealist Adventure", 1995.

[177] Long, *op. cit*. 2003: 118.

word and image. He explains that while photography raises issues of "resemblance and identity, of reality versus shadow"[178] that are not dealt with by mimetic models of transparent representation, Surrealism has sought to obviate or resolve these oppositions by undermining them. Hubert refers to Breton's non-teleological placement of photographs in the text of *Nadja* not as corroborating or elaborating the text, but of creating a "corrosive effect" in the relation between text and image.[179] While many of Sebald's images are mimetic representations of the text, some hold an ambiguous relation to the narrative,[180] or subtly contradict it. Sebald's description of the realistic etchings of artist Jan Peter Tripp aptly conveys the method Sebald himself uses in his choice and presentation of photographic illustrations:

> The photographic material that is their starting point is carefully modified. The mechanical sharpness/vagueness relationship is suspended, additions are made, and reductions. Something is shifted to another place, emphasized, foreshortened or minimally dislocated … and at times those happy errors occur from which unexpectedly the system of a representation opposed to reality can result.[181]

Not only is Sebald's emphasis on reality intended to challenge the conventions underlying its representation, it is the nature of those conventions, their very textuality,

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[178] Hubert, *op. cit.* 1988: 259.

[179] Hubert, *op. cit.* 1988: 260.

[180] For explicit disparities between photograph and text, see Long, *op. cit.* 2003: 133-4. Long discusses examples from *Die Ausgewanderten*, including the photograph opening the first story, "Paul Bereyter" (I refer to the English translation: 27). Long observes that while the narrator's later reconstruction of the title character Bereyter's suicide describes his short-sightedness and his consequent inability to concisely distinguish objects at a distance (29), the photograph reverses Bereyter's perspective, blurring the foreground. Likewise, few of the elements present in the described view are present in the photograph. He also refers to the image purportedly representing a train journey in "Max Aurach" (In the English translation, "Max Ferber", at 179), which holds very little specific detail at all. Long explains the apparent lack of meaning of such images with the argument that the apparently meaningless images in Sebald's texts ("images that ostensibly elude the grasp of the interpreter": 134) make intra-reflexive references to one another (134). It is arguable that the Turner-esque expressionistic abstraction of this image does not merely make intra-reflexive reference to other images, but to the textual significance of the artist Max Ferber's attempt to represent the unrepresentable. In other words, although the image does not meaningfully contribute to the specific part of the text it is supposed to mimetically represent, it nonetheless references an underlying theme of the narrative. Long's approach to Sebald's use of photographic illustration avoids the aspects of doubled temporality indispensable to trauma theory and my consideration of Sebald's use of trauma theory. Rather than concentrate on explicit contradictions between photograph and text, it is the purpose of this thesis to articulate textual-visual disparity in terms of temporality and subjective memory. For discussion of these concepts, see George Kouvaros "Images that remember us: photography and memory in *Austerlitz*", *Textual Practice*, Vol. 19(1), 173-193, 2005.

[181] Sebald and Tripp, "As Day and Night, Chalk and Cheese: On the Pictures of Jan Peter Tripp", in Sebald and Tripp, Unrecounted: 33 Texts and 33 Etchings, Michael Hamburger (transl.), 2004: 84.

that superficially and glaringly inhabit Sebald's images. Similarly, Hubert observes that the photographs in Breton's *Nadja* often depict textually inscribed objects: pages from books, advertisements, etc, and as such make clearly intertextual references.[182] In the same way as Sebald's illustrations, Breton's intertextual images respond to the text-as-word with the content of his photographs as much as by the context of the layout. In appearance the effect is of a recursive inter-layering, whereby the linguistic is encapsulated by the visual image and the visual image is enveloped by the words of the text.

This recursive alternation between text and image is adopted by Elizabeth Bronfen to describe the ambiguous context of the visible corpse as a signifier of two differing aspects. On the one hand it specifically represents the once-existent self, while on the other it more generally depicts the negating condition of death. I suggest that these two aspects are present in an alternation between text and image that references the constant movement between indexical and interpretational paradigms, between stasis and flux. It is impossible to avoid Bronfen's interpretation of the visible corpse in temporal terms, as a "*period* of instability".[183] Her categorization of the corpse as simultaneously unstable and static is reminiscent of Schleifer's account of death in metonymical terms as both temporal and a-temporal; both "part" and "other" (this point is considered in much greater detail below). It is also significant in recognising the proximity of image and word in her alternate conception of death in *writerly* terms as "translation"[184] and in *visual* terms as a movement from "the visible society of the living into the invisible society of the dead."[185] Whether visual or textual, the relation of death to representation is for Bronfen (as it is for Schleifer) a point of estrangement precisely because it is a point of textual and bodily contradiction: it is both graspable and ungraspable; both unstable and fixed; both an unavoidable fact and a presence realised only as representation:

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[182] Hubert, *op. cit.* 1988: 261.

[183] (My italics) Bronfen, *op. cit.* 1992: 103.

[184] *Ibid.*

[185] *Ibid.*

> Strangeness emerges because the corpse, resembling the deceased person, is in a sense doubled. It has no relation to the world in which it appears except that of an image, of a shadow, constantly present behind the living form even as this living form is about to transform into a shadow … Behind its resemblance is the inaccessible, ungraspable notion of death, the fixity of the corpse and the image, unstable because it does not pose, does not establish any relation to the world … This dangerous though fascinating interzone [of the displayed embalmed corpse] must cease.[186]

Bronfen's decisive moral injunction against the physical display of death demonstrates the extent to which the corpse as image occupies a problematic status in contemporary society. But it appears to be equally formidable in its effect on textual representation; her perspective offers a useful insight into the relationship between the linguistic and the visual text in circumstances where narrative is shadowed by mortality:

> The emphasis on the visibility of a 'preserved' body, as signifier for an arrested and eternalized moment countering all moments of mutability, suggests that the eternal stasis of the displayed body is used by the narrative as a moment where narrative, in its conjunction with temporality and change, can be cut off.[187]

By situating the uncertainty of time's flux externally to the narrative process, Bronfen allows narrative the ability to determine its own movement. She establishes narrative conditions that accentuate a static image in which the unchanging, a-temporal appearance of the embalmed body denies the effect of time and corruption. In other words, the instrumental role of Bronfen's narrative enables it to cause temporal ellipsis, or to terminate itself. Narrative focus on imagery of mortal stasis is, in Bronfen's assumption, capable of halting itself. And yet the language of Bronfen's narrative is telling. Narrative is "cut off", as if it were electrical mains requiring to be shut down. But the term as easily and more relevantly connotes bodily dismemberment, breaking with the ostensibly "preserved" image of the timeless embalmed corpse and

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[186] Bronfen, *op. cit.* 1992: 104.
[187] Bronfen, *op. cit.* 1992: 102. See also 103.

substituting a mutilated image indicative of time's volatility even where narrative is dead.[188]

Bronfen's use of mutilation as a narrative tool emphasises the attempt to derive meaning from flux. In the convergence of language, imagery, and the body we can return to the function of memory as the subjective, bodily attempt to maintain narrative meaning. Ross Gibson observes that the term "memory" derives etymologically from *membrum*, ("a limb"), and is related to the verb "to record", signifying the action of returning something to the heart.[189] Metaphorically relating memory to the process of editing film, Gibson emphasises the function of dis-membering and re-membering, of forgetting and re-assembling images of the past as integral to memory's process of creating meaning.[190] In a figurative sense the repression or absence of memory equates with the repression or absence of the body. As a representation of an absence, the image of the dead body suggests that alternation between material reality and fiction, between the fabricated structure of memory and the contingent (written) structure of the mortal subject. In order to more fully understand the narrative rhetoric of bodily dismemberment as a process of memory and meaning creation, I will now closely interrogate an excerpt from Sebald's fiction.

"With Blinded Eyes": Barthes & Bodily Displacement

Sebald's narratives often make no direct reference to the photographic illustrations inserted throughout, and rarely provide captions. Although the lack of captions can be regarded as establishing a textual dominance in which illustrations are embedded in the text and sublimated to the written word,[191] the lack of direct reference to the images also creates a degree of ambiguity in the relation between the visual image and the written word, resulting simultaneously in identification and dissociation of meaning.[192]

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[188] See also at fn. 458.

[189] Gibson emphasises the somatic basis of memory within language. See Gibson "Remembrance + Realisation" in Ross Gibson (ed.) remembrance + the moving image, 2003: 4.

[190] *Ibid*: 4-5.

[191] Jefferson Hunter *Image and Word: The Interaction of Twentieth-Century Photographs and Texts*, 1987: 14.

[192] Kouvaros, *op. cit.* 2005: 182. It is worth noting here also that Kouvaros discusses the authenticating, indexical function of Sebald's images in "affirming the materiality of the world" while concurrently referencing the

Although distinct captions are almost never provided, the German texts occasionally centre one line or phrase in a passage that occurs above or beneath a photograph. Unlike Barthes' captions in *Camera Lucida*, which repeat sections of the author's text in quotation marks beneath each chosen photograph, the German originals of Sebald's fiction playfully enlist parts of the text-proper with the function of oblique captions. For example, in "All'estero", the second story in *Schwindel. Gefühle*, Sebald includes in this text a postcard illustration of the Cimitero di Staglieno, in Genoa. Like many of Sebald's illustrations, the reproduction of this cemetery scene is interjected syntactically within the text, in this case within a long sentence describing the narrator's recollection of details of the postcard. The last four words of the sentence, which occur immediately beneath the postcard, are centred and separated from the ensuing text, a layout that attributes to them the appearance of a caption. The sentence states that the architectural details of the cemetery "seemed so familiar to me that I could easily have found my way around that site blindfolded."[193] ("ist mir derart vertraut, daß ich leicht mit verbundenen *Augen dort herumgehen könnte*").[194] In the German text the displacement and isolation of the last four words ("*Augen dort herumgehen könnte*": "Eyes could go about there") beneath the postcard has a similar effect of dissociating the eyes (*Augen*) from the rest of the sentence, and by implication, from the body of the narrator. Rather than forming part of the phrase signifying "blindfolded" (*mit verbundenen Augen*: "with bound eyes"), the eyes have been dissociated from their blinds, and now, if willing, "could go about [the cemetery]",[195] independent of the text or the body to which they belong.

In the description of the cemetery, blindness and the clarity of vision alternate as radical alternatives in two competing images. On image portrays the narrator's blinded wandering among the colonnades of the cemetery, while the alternative image depicts

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failure of representation of that materiality: of an "encounter with a material realm that is both insistent yet just out of reach" (182). See also Long, *op. cit.* 2003: 119. Long observes that for Sebald "photography no longer forms part of the paratextual apparatus, but is integrated into the fabric of the narrative." I would suggest that this integration is achieved in part by the omission of captions.

[193] Taken from Sebald, *Vertigo*, 1999: 123.

[194] My italics. Sebald, *Schwindel. Gefühle*, 1994: 145.

[195] My translation.

the narrator-protagonist's obsessive visual scrutiny of the postcard, implied by the detached phrase in which eyes might go about (*herumgehen*) in the image. The interposition of the image of the postcard between the words *verbundenen* and *Augen* in the layout establishes a textual play that offers the reader the possibility of different interpretations; a constant alternation is established between the possibilities of sight and blindness, between repetition and absence. If the passage is read as uninterrupted text, the narrator is capable but sightless; if the caption-phrase below the illustration of the postcard is read as isolated from the text, the interpretation of eyes going about in the site of the picture offer either a synecdochical meaning, in which the eyes as a part of the narrator's body represent the entire narrator, who is thus sighted and able to scrutinise the photograph, or the literal implication that the eyes are disembodied from the narrator.

While the narrative context implies that it is the narrator's body and eyes that are referred to, the isolation of part of the text as a caption-phrase emphasises the more general implication open to the reader of any text: that the eyes and body are those of the reader. Displacement in this sense not only affects the narrator-protagonist within the text, but also extends from the specifics of the narrator-protagonist's situation to implicate the reader at a general level.

The function of disembodiment closely resembles the metaphor of memory as an embodied act, of remembering as a process of dis-memberment and re-memberment.[196] Sebald's synecdochical displacement and embodiment of eyes within the cemetery postcard parallels the embodiment of memory with the anthropomorphic witnessing function of Kafka's disembodiment and re-embodiment in the witnessing role of a letter (discussed earlier). For Kafka and Sebald, disembodiment prevails, emphasising the textual mediation of our lives and the past to the extent that texts intercede for the reading and narrating self. Embodiment becomes re-inscribed as a textual phenomenon. In the passages of both Kafka's and Sebald's writing the text is not a static, determinable medium. Instead it evinces the attributes of human agency, of

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[196] Gibson "Remembrance + Realisation" in Ross Gibson (ed.) *remembrance + the moving image*, 2003: 4.

wandering, seeing, surviving as disembodied ghosts between the lines. Just as Kafka's letters are witnesses, the eyes in Sebald's text are attributed with the bodily ability to explore, to experience that other place physically as an index, as an embodied witness.

While the *verbundennen Augen* example is typical of a number of untranslatable text-image puns present in Sebald's German texts, the English translations by Michael Hulse and Anthea Bell[197] dispense with almost all of these. Literary biographer Mark McCulloh observes that the English translations are generally more severe, less ironical.[198] He offers the example from "Beyle, oder das mercke-würdige Faktum der Liebe" ("Beyle, or Love is a Madness Most Discreet"),[199] in which unconventional layout divides an image over two pages, placing the upper portion of an image at the base of the prior page. Beneath the image on the second page, a phrase of the narrative, "wie ein Untergehender" ("like one meeting his doom") is isolated and centred underneath the image as a caption in the same way as the example of "*Augen dort herumgehen könnte*", discussed above. McCulloh explains that the phrase in German retains the more literal meaning "like one going down", which enables Sebald to create the textual-visual pun in which the reader's eyes traverse the text and the image from the top to the bottom of the page, "like one going down". The phrase also references a theme prevalent in Sebald's fiction, of *Katabasis*, of a hero's "going down" into the underworld typical of classical epic.[200] McCulloh explains how in English this meaning is lost, and so the pun and the unusual visual layout have been discarded.[201] Although McCulloh's critique does not deal with reasons for Sebald's use of visual-textual puns, I would hazard that Sebald's foregrounding of textual formatting reminds the reader of his or her own situation as an interpreting, reading subject. I would argue that in the

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[197] Michael Hulse translated Sebald's first three novels, *Vertigo* (1999), *The Rings of Saturn* (1998), and *The Emigrants* (1996). Anthea Bell translated *Austerlitz* (2001), *On The Natrual History of Destruction* (2003), and *Campo Santo* (2005). Michael Hamburger translated *Unrecounted* (2004) and *After Nature* (2003).

[198] McCulloh, *op. cit.* 2003: 87.

[199] From Sebald, *Schwindel. Gefühle*, 1994.

[200] The relevance of *Katabasis* to Sebald's fiction is raised by Russell J A Kilbourn, who observes its "increasingly specific significance in the post-Holocaust context in which Sebald writes." See Kilbourn, Russell J A "Architecture and Cinema: The Representation of Memory in W G Sebald's *Austerlitz*" in Long, J J & Whitehead, Anne (eds.) *W G Sebald: A CriticalCompanion*, 2004: 141-2.

[201] McCulloh, *op. cit.* 2003: 87.

German original the reader is reminded of the physical manner in which one reads; ie, downwards, and, implicated in the visual-textual pun, is absorbed into the narrative. To state Sebald's case more bluntly, the entropic slide into death is reproduced, re-enacted in the process of reading.

However, some text-image puns have been retained in the English translations. The story of Paul Bereyter in *The Emigrants* reproduces a photograph from Bereyter's album.[202] It includes a line of text that Bereyter had written under the photograph in his album, stating: "as Paul wrote under this photograph, [at which point the photograph is inserted into the text] one was, as the crow flies, about 2000 km away – but from where?" What Paul Bereyter had written in his album under the photograph is replicated in *The Emigrants* in the same way, beneath the reproduction of that photograph. The text of the narrative mirrors the document from which it was taken, creating for the reader a recursive, meta-textual ambiguity that draws attention to the mimetic function of the written word and the visual image. Like the pun of "wie ein Untergehender", there is a doubling of content by form: the instances of writing beneath a specific photograph and falling to one's doom are re-remembered or played out in the format of the text.[203] By replicating the action of downward-reading in the depiction of a memorial to the dead, the layout of the text re-enacts its content: the depiction of combatants, soon to meet their downfall, is re-enacted in the downward movement of the reader's attention. The textual play occurs in realising this concurrence of form and content in the phrase "wie ein Untergehender".

But the concurrence of form and content suggests further significance. Noam Elcott explains that the repetition of content as textual form in reproducing Bereyter's written words as part of the text mimics the "dual temporality" of photography explained by Roland Barthes. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes makes his famous dictum regarding the

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[202] This example is discussed by Noam M Elcott, in "Tattered Snapshots and Castaway Tongues: An Essay at Layout and Translation with W G Sebald", *The Germanic Review*, 79, No. 3, Summer, 2004: 217-18.

[203] In the context of Sebald's fortuitous coincidences, John Zilcosky suggests that content resembles reader behaviour in the narrator's random, fragmentary and haphazard reading habits: that "reading Sebald is like 'Sebald' reading". See Zilcosky "Sebald's Uncanny Travels: The Impossibility of Getting Lost" in Long, *et. al.* (eds.) 2004: 118.

peculiar temporal and mimetic doubling that occurs in photography with the observation that

> [*T*]*his will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future…[204]

For Barthes the photograph not only dislocates the viewer in time, it reminds the viewer of the subject's and his or her own mortality. By connecting Sebald's textual layout with the temporal doubling of the photograph, Elcott recognises that the relationship between word and image in Sebald's fiction is not conventionally documentary and transparently mimetic, but mutually temporally disruptive.

However, Elcott argues that Sebald questions Barthes' notion of death as the unchanging basis of a photograph's doubled temporality. Elcott cites an argument by Sebald about Barthes suggesting that although violence is a certainty, the wartime uncertainty of a specific death's occurrence preserves its ambiguity, so that it remains "untimely".[205] For Elcott, Sebald is concerned to demonstrate that "actual violence – not hypothetical death – is at stake."[206] In other words, Elcott argues that although Sebald relies on Barthes' doubling effect to access the uncanny, he seeks to disrupt Barthes' certainty which is founded on the already dead photographic subject. I agree with Elcott's account of Sebald, which results in an emphasis on historical violence rather than on presumed death, preserving the temporal disjunction pivotal to Sebald's work. Violence is the natural entropic consequence of Sebald's world.

Nonetheless, the underlying consequence and promise of death remains a significant and unavoidable feature of Sebald's fiction. Although the mess and ambiguity of

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[204] Barthes, *op. cit.* 1981: 96. It is worth noting here Sebald's exception to Barthes' model of photography as an index of death. Sebald emphasises the conceptual over the indexical function in photography [which he terms "the *residue* of a life perpetually perishing" – my italics], claiming that "[w]hat distinguishes art from such undertaker's business is that life's closeness to death is its theme, not its addiction. It confronts the extinction of the visible world in an interminable series of reproductions by the deconstruction of phenomenal forms." This "interminable series of reproductions" is exactly the metonymical deconstruction present in Kracauer's notion of the photographic archive, discussed in the final two sections of this chapter. See Sebald and Tripp, *op. cit.* 2004: 84.

[205] Elcott, *op. cit.* 2004: 218.

[206] *Ibid.*

history necessitates that "we do not know exactly what has been, and the death we surmise is untimely",[207] Elcott's opposition of violence to death is unnecessary. Sebald's alteration of Barthes' dictum dispenses with Barthes' certainty and reintroduces violence and the untimely, but it is invariably an untimely and violent *death* that Sebald refers to.[208] The significant point of opposition here is not between violence and death, but between the hypothetical and the actual (between representation and reality), and both Sebald and Elcott seek to remind us that the actual often remains obdurately indeterminate.

Bearing this in mind, I return to the "wie ein Untergehender" pun that McCulloh discusses. The argument here connects two elements. The first is Elcott's observation that the double temporality of photography is re-enacted in the double temporality of the textual-image pun. The second is my extension of McCulloh's discussion to emphasise that the downward-reading action of the image re-enacts the action of the reader. Once the double temporality (connoting death and violence) and the reader's actions are joined, the reader is implicated as a witnessing participant[209] in this re-presentational doubling of the entropic slide into death, included within the subsuming context of Beyle's disillusioned response to the tawdry representation of the Battle of Marengo, "alone with himself, like one meeting his doom."[210]

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[207] Elcott, *op. cit.* 2004: 118.

[208] *Ibid.* "Barthes's conjecture is doubly true [doppelt wahr]; for we do not know what became of this general store owner – only that he almost certainly [mit sicherheit fast] met an untimely and violent death." Elcott's own translation is quoted from W G Sebald "Westwärts-Ostwärts: Aporien deutschsprachiger Ghettogesprichten." in *Unheimliche Heimat: Essays zur österreichischen Literatur*, Residenz, Salzburg, 1991, 40-64: 63-4.

[209] For an alternative account of the process of witnessing as a form of proxy, see Susan Gubar, *Poetry After Auschwitz: Remembering What One Never Knew*, 2003: 23-4. In emphasising the specious attempt of courts to exclude hearsay and regard distant memories as unproblematic, and (obversely) observing that no-one's appreciation of the extent and horror of the Holocaust is founded solely on direct experience, Gubar cites the necessity of according due significance to the practice of artists and readers in attempting to imagine the circumstances and experiences of the time. As she explains, "proxy-witnessing" involves relaying or imaginatively interpreting documentation that exists, or might have existed. See also my application of van Alphen's notion of re-enactment to the debate surrounding Michael Rothberg's notion of "Holocaust realism", fns. 234, 255.

[210] Sebald, *Vertigo*, 1999: 18.

The Trauma of Photography

Sebald's implication of the reader as witness in a process of representational doubling is relevant to my argument in defining the function of trauma in photography. Rather than only depicting Barthes' "death in the future", Ulrich Baer suggests that photography also operates as a model of trauma. Both photography and trauma "dispel the illusory certainty that what is seen is what can be known."[211] Before continuing with Baer's model of photography as trauma, I will elucidate his statement regarding knowing and seeing. Holocaust theorist Susan Gubar employs the useful term "antimorphosis" as a variant of "anamorphosis" to describe the process of critical reading that acknowledges Baer's dictum. She argues that what is seen does not equate with what is known. Gubar explains that anamorphosis is a process of perspectivally malforming an image so that it is only properly apprehended from a specific vantage point (Hans Holbein's portrait *The Ambassadors* offers a clear example of this).[212] Antimorphosis, however, continues to problematise our perspective of the past.[213] As Gubar states, antimorphosis "trains us to realize the urgency of keeping in the mind's eye what cannot possibly be presented to us on the page or in the picture."[214] The result, Gubar claims, is a textual depiction of a representational dilemma deriving from competing desires. The first is the desire for the indexical authenticity of the photographic image, while the second is recognition of the photographic image's lack of authority as a truthful representative medium.[215] Just as Sebald's oblique approach to the Holocaust favours the problems of Holocaust representation as a subject over that of the Holocaust *per se*, Gubar recognizes that authors, artists and photographers are better able to represent interpretations "if not directly about the Shoah, about representations of the Shoah."[216]

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[211] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 229.

[212] For a discussion of Holbein's use of anamorphosis, see Zwingenberger, *op. cit.* 1999.

[213] It "balks reformed or resolved perception" Gubar, *op. cit.* 2003: 100.

[214] *Ibid.*

[215] *Ibid.*

[216] *Ibid.*

Baer explains that the mechanical photographic process, by which the captured event is not realised and comprehended until it is developed, is structurally analogous to the belated function of trauma, in which a traumatic event, although witnessed, is not comprehended until a later time.[217] In his words, "each photograph, by virtue of the medium, inevitably turns the viewer into a latecomer at the depicted site."[218] This is very much the position of Sebald's narrator. Although the narrator often *returns* to a site, in the sense of visiting a place known by textual, photographic or familial reference, he is always temporally displaced from the events that drew him there. Baer relies on Cathy Caruth's model of trauma as a temporal break between perceiving and comprehending, creating a paradoxical situation in which the witness "experiences" the traumatic event at a time that is distanced from the traumatic occurrence.[219] The result is an apprehension of the Holocaust "as an event that constitutes a rift in the belief that what is seen is what is known."[220] He explains that it is not coincidence that the theory of trauma arose at a time when photography began to be used for evidentiary purposes, as was the case with Freud's early models of trauma, which were couched in terms of photography.[221] This model of belated experience poses a crisis in conventional models of representation that rely on an implicit temporal and spatial correlation between witness and event.[222]

In an attempt to enlighten our understanding of trauma, Baer seeks to avoid the dilemma of determining whether photography is inherently indexical in its "reality effect",[223] or prevailingly artefactual. Instead, he claims to use both models to avoid absolute reliance on either conventional historicist modes of interpretation by reference to social context, or solely on the affect created by a photograph's content.[224] In a sense, Baer's project applies a Derridean strategy of deconstructing or de-privileging

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[217] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 8-11. This will be discussed later in this section in relation to Caruth's model of trauma.
[218] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 181.
[219] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 9-10. Baer quotes Caruth in terms of "repetitive seeing": see Caruth, "Traumatic Awakenings", in de Vries and Weber (eds.) *Violence, Identity and Self-Determination*, 1997: 208.
[220] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 121.
[221] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 14.
[222] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 10.
[223] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 11.
[224] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 12.

the prevailing acceptance that the photograph is an objective and direct medium of reality, that "what is seen is what is known."[225] What is seen is not equivalent to objective knowledge. By searching through photographs the viewer can uncover instances of opposition to the photographer's objective intent: in the photograph of a rack of ties being sold from a fence surrounding the Lódz Ghetto, the mostly-hidden face of a Jewish internee is discovered staring back from the farther side.[226] That a contemporary viewer can find such hidden referents, in a photograph that has otherwise been dismissed by historians and survivors as overwhelmingly intent on presenting an image of absolute authoritarian control, demonstrates Baer's thesis that traumatic knowledge can be temporally displaced. Temporality is not merely doubled but re-constructed, re-enacted in the experience of the viewer and the isolated, photographic capturing of the event.

Another example of the traumatic doubling of temporality occurs in an account of Hungarian artist Péter Forgács' work. Fiona Trigg observes Forgács' practice of re-interpretation in editing wartime home movie footage that resembles the Lódz Ghetto photographic exhibition discussed by Baer.[227] Forgács' re-contextualizing of amateur film scenes against a reserved sound-score emphasises a sense of loss, while a variably altered film speed centres on subjects' specific movements or expressions. The effect is one of witnessing something in a past event that was not present to its original author, thus denying the author's objective intent and offering a new experience of that event. The result is a re-enactment that correlates the present time of re-experience with the originally-depicted time of the event. Moreover, Forgács achieves this doubling of temporality by using metonymical models of contextualization paralleling Sebald's narrative and visual associations. One of Forgács' exhibits (*Bourgeois Dictionaries*) relates

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[225] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 182.

[226] Baer, *op. cit.* 2002: 128-178, specifically Ch. 4 "Revision, Animation, Rescue: Color Photographs from the Lód´z Ghetto and Dariusz Jablonski's *Fotoamator*". The selection of photographs of the Litzmannstadt ghetto in Lödz that comprise the content of Jablonski's *Fotoamator* were taken by an Austrian accountant named Genewein. A description of some of Genewein's photographs also appears in the final pages of Sebald's *The Emigrants*: 235-7.

[227] Fiona Trigg "Péter Forgács: Bourgeois Dictionaries / Meanwhile Somewhere ... 1940-1943", 71-3 in Ross Gibson (ed.) *op. cit.* 2003: 71-3.

film stills by alphabetical contiguity ("C as in Courtyard, Cyclamen, Communism").[228] His exhibition of nine amateur films makes ostensibly unrelated thematic associations within each film through the inclusion of images "linked by visual or visceral connections rather than causal ones ... families drinking wine are interwoven with scenes which show near-starving children queuing for bread".[229] The strategy emphasises the fragile margin that exists between "private and official histories ... between narrative and chaos."[230] This reference to the plurality and relativity of historical narrative denotes a temporal non-linearity reminiscent of Barthes' temporal doubling. It thereby invokes the fluxive, a-temporal process of memory relative to the visual image. The following section discusses literary instances in which trauma is intimately bound up with representation and repression. Language is anything but simply indexical, aptly expressing the hypocrisy, complicity and deception that Barthes' and Baer's theories of photography work to uncover. The reader is left asking whether the representational media of text and image are equally capable of realistic presentation, and, more significantly, the extent to which each are capable of critiquing the prospect of realistic representation. It is the function of authenticity and the concomitant critique of indexical authenticity in both text and image that I consider in the following section.

Traumatic Realism or Holocaust Effect? Authenticity and Aesthetics in Textual Representation

Aesthetic theorist Ernst van Alphen recognises that fiction uses a combination of realism and allegory as a means of representing the aporia of the Holocaust.[231] He suggests that within Holocaust literature realism performs a role distinct from that in other genres of realist fiction. Rather than attempting to present the world

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[228] *Ibid*: 72.

[229] *Ibid.*

[230] *Ibid.*

[231] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 34. Van Alphen cites Saul Friedlander *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution",* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 1992: 17: "A common denominator appears: the exclusion of straight, documentary realism, but the use of some sort of allusive or distanced realism. Reality is there, in its starkness, but perceived through a filter: that of memory (distance in time), that of spatial displacement, that of some sort of narrative margin which leaves the unsayable unsaid."

transparently, realism anchors an allegorical depiction to the world, reminding the reader of the object of representation even as it emphasises the means and effect of the process of representation.[232] It is the process of representation that also informs Michael Rothberg's attempts to provide a more complex account of the function of realism in Holocaust literature. He explains that, rather than merely representing reality, the tactical use of realism in literature performs two functions. What he terms "traumatic realism" offers a method of understanding an event that is to a great extent unrepresentable, but it is also concerned with demonstrating that method of apprehension.[233] Rothberg emphasises the reflexive aspect of Holocaust representation as a means of gesturing towards events that no witnesses survived to record,[234] or towards those events which in their extremity are not able to be transcribed adequately into language. He differentiates each function according to whether they merely present knowledge, on the one hand, or provide instruction in how to apprehend that knowledge, on the other. Rothberg identifies the limits of realist representation in attempting to bridge the vast gap between the mundane and the horrific, between "extremity and normality",[235] that defines concentration camp existence.

Rothberg offers the concept of "traumatic realism" to resolve debate over the role of realism in Holocaust literature. He explains that conventional historical realism is normally portrayed first, in Marxian terms, as a movement from the photographic surface of detail to the apprehension of a dialectical depth in the economic relations of society (which he discusses via Lukács).[236] This distinguishes a surface appreciation of the appearance of reality from an understanding of the distortion to reality apparent in the contradictions in the Marxist model between base and superstructure. Secondly, he defines reality in the "democratic" terms of Auerbach's concept of the political movement of minorities jostling to be included in the grand narratives of historical

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[232] *Ibid.*

[233] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 103.

[234] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 152-156.

[235] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 105.

[236] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 109-11. The model of depth and surface relations will again be relevant when discussing Kracauer's conception of photography (below).

continuity.[237] He relies on the work of Christopher Prendergast to argue that because history is regarded in both Georg Lukács and Erich Auerbach's models as a totalizing form, such conventional historical realism does not recognise the arbitrariness of criteria by which certain details are expanded with dialectical or political depth. Rothberg describes the choices by which criteria are regarded as significant or arbitrary as (to an extent) arbitrary in themselves. He cites the need to establish a model capable of considering "the criteria by which the writer decides, and which enable the reader to accept, that one set of selections and combinations is representative, while another is random or arbitrary."[238] Rothberg reasons that since the choice of what is and is not relevant to a realistic depiction is always reliant on idiosyncratic social and psychological determinants, a sense of realism is to a large degree maintained by consensual literary conventions between narrator and reader.[239] The solution to the apparent inability to construct a literature capable of incorporating a genuinely realistic mode of authentication is, for Rothberg, answerable with the concept of the "concentrationary universe",[240] a continuing recognition that the border between the extremity of genocide and the banality of everyday experience transects all aspects of the post-war world.[241]

Rothberg's notion of a new form of "traumatic realism" emphasises the need to situate the process of representation within the aegis of trauma. Although he emphasises belatedness and a-temporality over the impossibility of direct reference, Rothberg emphasises the need for Holocaust realism to convey the non-linear processes that enable the "absence of the real" to "make itself felt" within the mundane.[242] I would suggest that including Dominick LaCapra's function of the witness-as-survivor

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[237] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 112.

[238] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 112-13.

[239] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 113.

[240] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 128-32.

[241] Rothberg's concept of the concentrationary universe owes some pedigree to Marcuse's defence of the necessity for the hypothetical and the radical in philosophical discourse which, Marcuse claims, requires the need for philosophy to recognise that the world of the mundane and the larger political context of "concentration camps … nuclear cities … brainwashing and massacres [a world that is often] forgotten or repressed or unknown" are related. See Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, 1968: 147.

[242] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 140.

(discussed below) into Rothberg's model of extremity-within-reality (Rothberg's "concentrationary universe") would assist Rothberg's model of traumatic realism in performing the function it seeks to realise: that of drawing the unrepresentable into the conscious light of the everyday. As Rothberg explains, traumatic realism

> is an attempt not to reflect the traumatic event mimetically but to *produce* it as an object of knowledge and to *transform* its readers so that they are forced to acknowledge their relationship to posttraumatic culture.[243]

Rothberg's emphasis on producing knowledge approximates van Alphen's model of attempting to comprehend the Holocaust by re-enacting an aspect of it: what van Alphen refers to as a "Holocaust effect".[244] Precisely because of the perceived significance of affect in comprehending the incomprehensible, van Alphen proposes a model of reader and viewer engagement that transcends the conventional model to the extent that it steps wholly outside the theatre of textually-restrained response.

While Rothberg acknowledges the relation between his notion of producing knowledge and LaCapra's emphasis on the process of acting out a repressed event (of "working through" the past in order to come to terms with a traumatic event[245]), he regards van Alphen's "very different … rather provocative perspective" of re-enactment as ultimately "absurd and dangerous".[246] He argues this for two reasons: first, because van Alphen's perspective extends LaCapra's survivor-oriented concept of "acting out" trauma for psychoanalytically therapeutic reasons so as to incorporate those of us who are not the victims of atrocity. Secondly, he argues that van Alphen "seeks to bypass the problem of representation" by substituting re-enacted "experience" in its stead.[247] From an appraisal of van Alphen, it is apparent that most of what Rothberg asserts is indeed the case; van Alphen does seek to involve the viewer in an affective way.[248]

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[243] *Ibid.* Rothberg's italics.

[244] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 10.

[245] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 82.

[246] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 277-8n. 13.

[247] *Ibid.*

[248] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 37: "Other responsibilities that are poignantly imposed on us involve the working through of the traumatic intrusion of an unimaginable reality, and the foregrounding of the cracks and tears that are concealed by the coherence of the stories being told." (My italics).

However, I would qualify Rothberg's insistence that van Alphen seeks to avoid problems of representation by simply substituting re-enactment. Van Alphen differentiates trauma experience from memory, arguing (by mobilising Caruth's notion of belated experience of trauma) that the belated re-enactment of a traumatic event by a survivor constitutes experience. As such, trauma is not a representation, which he equates with memory, but a re-enactment, an experienced act. As he states, in trauma experience, "reality and representation are inseparable ... : the representation *is* the event."[249] I would suggest that van Alphen's model is effective precisely because it is dangerous. The hazard of the witness identifying too closely with the survivor raises issues of the purpose and form of Holocaust history, and points to debates over authenticity and deception, such as that surrounding the Wilkomirski scandal.[250] However, van Alphen's project does not seek to avoid the problems of representation. Rather, he attempts to define forms of representation that escape conventional modes of emplotment. He recognises the hazard of his venture, of his "confrontation with Nazism or the Holocaust by means of a reenactment".[251] He argues that because of the gradual loss of those with direct memories of the Holocaust, and due to the fallibility of historical narrative emplotment to encompass the incomprehensible, "[w]e will not respond to a re-presentation of the historical event, but to a presentation or performance of it."[252] The basis of Rothberg's concern lies not in van Alphen's model, but in his own anxiety over the lack of a reliable model of realistic representation capable of prescribing the requirements of historical authentication in Holocaust literature. Conversely, van Alphen regards realism as an over-valued rhetoric that fiction writers employ tactically, in the same way that historians use rhetoric different to that of fiction writers.[253]

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[249] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 36. van Alphen's italics.

[250] For discussion of Bruno Dössekker's autobiographical fabrication of his past as a child concentration camp internee, see: Anne Whitehead, *Trauma Fiction*, Ch. 2 "Telling Tales: trauma and testimony in Binjamin Wilkomirski's Fragments" Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2004: 30-47; and see also Gary Weissman *Fantasies of Witnessing: Postwar Efforts to Experience the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2004: 212-15.

[251] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 11.

[252] *Ibid.*

[253] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 20.

I would argue that the extent to which van Alphen conflates the perspective of the viewer with that of the survivor is exactly the extent to which the viewer develops an affective understanding of survivor testimony. Van Alphen seeks to engage directly with the problem of transferring to successive generations those aspects of the Holocaust that cannot be represented by conventional historical means. Rothberg depicts his model of a pedagogical production of knowledge as a median between the competing extremes of aesthetic and epistemological absolutism[254] that inform debate surrounding Holocaust representation. While his reaffirmation of the necessity of realism in depicting the Shoah is invaluable, I would suggest that, in view of the ever-increasing historical and social distance between the Shoah and the present, denying the viewer the experiential effects of van Alphen's model is unwise. Van Alphen himself has recognised the problems of conflating the theory of survivor trauma with viewer aesthetics, claiming that, unlike his aesthetically-derived project of re-enactment, the alternative insistence upon distanced representation (closer to Rothberg's mediated perspective) relies too readily on the conventional principles of representation underpinning "nostalgia, or even neo-Nazism".[255]

Rothberg and van Alphen's reliance on ethics to justify their aesthetic theories finds a forerunner in Adorno's negative materialism. Adorno's cultural criticism is also evident in M W Jackson's application of Hannah Arendt's aesthetically based ethical theory of "reflective judgement" to Holocaust morality. In an essay applying contemporary moral philosophy to the situation of Oskar Schindler, Jackson cites the inadequacy of Enlightenment principles of universalisable rules, such as Kant's deontological categorical imperative. Instead, he emphasises Nicomachean ethics and Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theory, which was founded on reflective judgement:

> A reflective judgement is made without a universal. Such a judgement is made
> when we find, say, an *objet d'art* beautiful or a taste at the table pleasing. This kind

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[254] Rothberg, *op. cit.* 2000: 102, 140.
[255] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 11.

> of judgement is reflective precisely because it is based on a direct experience …
> Judgement requires the context of narrative.[256]

I argue that it is the necessity of the aesthetic, contextual experience and corresponding immanent judgement that informs the morality of van Alphen's work. Moreover, it is an ethical role defined by the metonymically contextual modes of apprehension characteristic of the contemporary world and typified by Sebald's narrative. For those of us who comprise the crowds of museum-going Holocaust voyeurs, van Alphen's Holocaust effect is a present reality already in use in modern Holocaust museums. As an example, the 1987 installation, *In Memory: a Bird in the Hand*, incorporated a photograph of inmates forced to face a wall while awaiting further indignities. The photograph is only perceptible to the museum viewer through a peephole in the museum wall, which of necessity forces the viewer into a pose identical to the concentration camp inmates. The contrived circumstances of the exhibit place the viewer inadvertently in a compromised and confronting situation that demands an affective response. As Andrea Liss observes, the artists of *In Memory* "create encounters between the viewer and photographs in which the images are not allowed to be taken for granted."[257] This conforms to Rothberg's principle of both presenting realistic information *and* instruction on how that information ought to be perceived. Like van Alphen's principle of re-enactment, it induces observers to re-enact, and thus acquaint themselves, morally and existentially, with the subject of the photograph.

Repression, Photography, & Memory

Schleifer relates the trope of metonymical displacement to the destabilising and arbitrary relation of images in modern society. It has been suggested that this destabilizing effect is attributable in no small way to the process of photography "as a

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[256] M. W. Jackson "Oskar Schindler and Moral Theory", Ch. 15, 158-165 in Almond and Hill (eds.) *Applied Philosophy: Morals and Metaphysics in Contemporary Debate*, 1991: 164.

[257] Suzanne Hellmuth and Jock Reynolds *In Memory: A Bird in the Hand*, 1987 installation project, created for the Avant-Garde Arts Festival in Graz, Austria, discussed in: Liss *op. cit.*1998: 87-8.

nearly indiscriminate producer of images."[258] It is the notion of a lack of discrimination within a plethora of photographic detail, the inability to distinguish one piece of knowledge or one detail from another that, Siegfried Kracauer argues, is a crucial part of the modern repression of death.

Photography has regularly been connected with the theme of death in modern aesthetic and cultural theory. Kracauer's Weimar writings portray photography as a process that empties the past of contextual meaning, replacing a tradition of subjective memory, private and oral history with a public surreality that no longer associates images with the past, but only with other images. This loss of oral and familial historical context is a dialectical process culminating in the alienation of human consciousness from nature.[259] With the gradual loss of personal historical context, the photographic portrait comes to depict everything that is not essential and truthful regarding an individual,[260] resulting in an opposition between memory and the photographic project. By dispensing with the contextual anchors of memory, the modern project of photography seeks to repress the memory of mortality. As Kracauer observes:

> The camera can also capture the figures of beautiful girls and young gentlemen.
> That the world devours them is a sign of the *fear of death*. What the photographers
> by their sheer accumulation attempt to banish is the recollection of death, which is
> part and parcel of every memory image.[261]

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[258] Andy Grundberg "The Crisis of the Real: Photography and Postmodernism", in Younger (ed.) *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography: 1983-89*, 1991: 364-385, at 384. Benjamin's seminal essay on art in the age of mechanical reproduction makes this point. See Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Hannah Arendt (ed. intro.) Harry Zohn (transl.) 1969. One must bear in mind the distinction to be made between the destabilising effect of photography and its contribution, along with mass production of the mirror, to the "democratization of the portrait" and the consequent emphasis on distinctive individual identity. See Brooks, *op. cit*. 1993: 25. See also Ch. 2 and at 257, discussing the effect of photographic mass reproduction in changing the private body into "a subject of everyday public discourse".

[259] Kracauer, *op. cit*. 1995: 59-60. See also Gubar, op. cit. 2003: 110 – Gubar relates the practice of ekphrasis to the ability of the witness to render the context of a photograph meaningful, of someone who "can assuage the blank misgivings the picture arouses, sustaining our attention in a more than cursory manner, much as the ecphrastic poem itself does. Only those who experienced the pictured places and peoples of the past can make the photograph meaningful in the present."

[260] "what appears in the photograph is not the person but the sum of what can be subtracted from him or her. The photograph annihilates the person by portraying him or her, and were person and portrayal to converge, the person would cease to exist." Kracauer, *op. cit*. 1995: 57.

[261] Kracauer, *op. cit*. 1995: 59. (Italics in original).

For Kracauer the great proliferation of photographs is the result of the world's attempts to deny death's claim on the individual by eradicating the memory of it. However, although the memory of death might be repressed, death remains undeterred, so that even as the modern world attempts to repress the memory of death, "in reality it has succumbed to it."[262] Regarding the repression of the apprehension of death, Ernst Bloch observes that "(t)he wish is simply to hear and see nothing of it, even when the end is here. Thus fear at least shrinks, becomes flat, like so much else."[263] Bloch's anodyne flattening of the fear of death through denial or repression deadens the pain of recognising mortality.

Kracauer criticises the modern world's attempt to hide the memory of death beneath a vast accumulation of arbitrary, de-historicised photographic detail. Like Bloch's willed ignorance, this is a process of dealing not with death as a cause, but with its symptom: the fear of death. Bloch and Kracauer consider the fear of death only in terms of the impliedly unwise solution of repressing that fear. Bloch notices the intention to shrink and render the fear of death flat, while Kracauer sees the mass inventory of arbitrary detail in photography as a means of denying the individual specificities and personal histories that remind the viewer of death. Like Rothberg's notion of conventional history as flat, Kracauer's metonymical relations between inventory photographs denies contextual historical depth.

Kracauer condemns conflating the apprehension of death with the event of death itself. And yet the distinction does not remain stable. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, Schleifer draws a parallel between the negative materiality of death and Larkin's death as a euphemistic anaesthetic: an anaesthetic that, like the ambivalent structure of

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[262] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 59.

[263] Bloch, *op. cit.* 1986: 105. The denial of mortality is often considered a response to fear of death, with the function of denial (or repression) being to avoid entirely or to mitigate death's implications: "It is the knowledge that one's own life is getting shorter that heightens the awareness that one day we have to die. In our world the acceptance of this certitude is apparently to be hidden in order to diminish its sincerity and inevitability." See: Burkard Sievers "The Diabolization of Death: some thoughts on the obsolescence of mortality in organization theory and practice," Ch. 8, in *The theory and philosophy of organizations: Critical issues and new perspectives*, Hassard and Pym (eds.) 1990: 132. The flattening of the fear of death parallels Berel Lang's description of the negative function No as a "flat denial" that in its absolutist singularity might evade the limits of speech and representation. See: Lang, *op. cit.* 1992: 301.

Derrida's Pharmakon (both a medicine and a poison) cures as it kills.[264] For Schleifer this anaesthetic represents the peculiarly modern suspicion that, for contemporary existence, "neither speech nor silence makes much difference": that language is "haunted, metonymically, by nonsense as well as by meaning".[265] The accounts of fear-repression by Bloch and Kracauer parallel Phillip Larkin's anaesthetic: they fulfill a palliative function.[266] It is significant that Bloch and Kracauer describe models of denying death that closely resemble Larkin's depiction of death itself: it is as if repression and the object of repression have merged. It is this idea of death as a negative materiality in both representation and actuality that explains the doubling effect of the representation of death, of death as representation. Schleifer's model of modern death as an absent signifier, a negative sense rather than an actual event, accounts for this apparent conflation of death with its repression. The representation of death as an absence informs the event or condition of death, so that, like Critchley's trope of prosopopeia, the palliative of a human mask both represses and defines an absence.

Burkhard Sievers, a contemporary commentator on organizational theory, recognises like Kracauer that denial of the fear of death functions at a societal level:

> Underlying the enormous amount of segregation, fragmentation, and splitting in our organizations lies the fundamental split we in Western societies make between life and death.[267]

And yet Sievers' model of denial emphasises schizophrenic division rather than the homogeneous effect of Kracauer's displacement of death through the "sheer accumulation" of archival material. To an extent this different emphasis is explicable in terms of the theoretical underpinnings informing each model. Sievers' model relies on the psychoanalytical tradition, which seeks to redress contradictions between the conscious and the unconscious, and so derives from a motive of curing the

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[264] Walter Brogan "Plato's Pharmakon: Between Two Repetitions" Chapter 1 ("Plato") in Hugh J Silverman (ed.) *Derrida and Deconstruction*, 1989: 7-23.

[265] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 8.

[266] See footnote 84.

[267] Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 132.

fragmentation of individual self-identity. Sievers then displaces the psychoanalytical model of the split self onto the split society. The contradictions present in Kracauer's Hegelian/Marxist model are dialectical, and as such represent parts of an inevitable stage in humankind's synthetic resolution of history and consciousness. While the Marxist model relies on inherent contradictions as the motive force of dialectical change, the ultimate utopian (or for Kracauer, dystopian) result is explicable in terms of a post-capitalist hegemony of the present, absent of contradiction between humankind and nature, humankind and history. Although the dialectical element of Kracauer's model is structural, its metonymical component, explicable in terms of Schleifer's alternation between materiality and negative materiality, constitutes a meta-paradigmatic, post-structural interpretation apposite to the preoccupying themes of this thesis, namely, the fragmentation of textual subjectivity, memory, and time. Kracauer's "general archive" of photographs itself constitutes a virtual, rather than an actual space, alternating between the material reality it explains and the representational absence, devoid of familial or social context, that it connotes.

The Inventory: Sontag & Kracauer

Susan Sontag has observed that photographs are lasting reminders of our gradual physical decline. Rather than locating death in memory, Sontag suggests that "[p]hotography is the inventory of mortality."[268] Sontag's linking of mortality and the photograph is instructive in defining her and Kracauer's conceptions of the inventory and archiving, and helps to explain their perception of photography in terms of Schleifer's model of metonymy. In discussing photographic records as a "museum" (cited above), Sontag often describes photography not as narrative, an act of chronicling or of bearing witness, but as an "inventory", a catalogue or schedule of artefacts that comprise a collection. Kracauer also uses the term "inventory", in relation to "warehousing" and "archiving", to designate modern society's use of photography as an alternative to the specificity of subjective memory. He expounds a dialectical model

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[268] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 70.

that resembles and precedes Baudrillard's notion of the hyperreal, in which all photographs, "the general inventory of a nature that cannot be further reduced",[269] substitute for knowledge of any historical and subjective context, to the extent that reality secedes to the provisional. For Kracauer, "[t]he photographic archive assembles in effigy the last elements of a nature alienated from meaning."[270] He considers the inter-relation of each photograph amidst the plethora of images that substitute for knowledge or meaning in the media in terms of their *contiguity*.[271] In other words, the relationship of a photograph to the world or to another image is interchangeable with any other; it is not contingent upon any extraneous historical or subjective datum. This notion of photography also corresponds closely with Schleifer's conception of metonymy as an indicator of the surface-relation of objects in the modern world. Meaning is determined arbitrarily, by reference to proximity or to the contingency of association. For Kracauer an inventory is the consequence of a de-contextualising process resulting in the loss of a contingent reality. The personal, familial and oral narrative that comprises the historical reality of a given photograph is lost when the generations attributing meaning to that photograph die and the photograph is displaced into a collection incapable of attributing personal or specific context to it. The consequence is Kracauer's inventory, Schleifer's metonymical modern world bereft of historical significance.

The most explicit literal example of Kracauer's metonymical inventory in Sebald's fiction occurs towards the end of *Austerlitz*. The secondary narrator, Jacques Austerlitz, recounts his experiences of visits to the new *Bibliothèque National* in Paris, in terms of overwhelming impersonality and control of information to the extent that it is depersonalised and de-historicised. Austerlitz recalls a "whispered conversation"[272] regarding the library's "dissolution, in line with the inexorable spread of processed data,

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[269] Kracauer, *op. cit.*1995: 61. For Baudrillard on the hyperreal, see: Baudrillard, *op. cit.*1994: 6: Baudrillard discusses the stages of representation, from reflection; to masking and alientating from nature; to masking the absence of any meaningful reality; to complete alienation from reality, in which the image "is its own pure simulacrum." (6).

[270] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 62.

[271] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 58.

[272] Sebald, *Austerlitz*, 2001: 398.

of our capacity to remember".[273] He describes its mechanisms of internal control as an "official manifestation of the increasingly importunate urge to break with everything which still has some living connection to the past."[274] For Austerlitz the personal and historical contingencies of the past are suppressed, a point he makes clear with the story of the *Bibliothèque National* building's construction on the site where wartime warehouses once stored the furniture and belongings of forty thousand ransacked Jewish homes. The wartime expulsion of Jewish people from Paris was a devastating project that de-contextualised the personal and familial narratives attaching to possessions and engaged the labour of thousands in categorizing and sorting seized material. The narrator observes that people today suppress any memory of what happened to the majority of seized valuables, "for the fact is that the whole affair is buried in the most literal sense beneath the foundations of our pharaonic president's Grande Bibliothèque."[275] In Kracauer's reasoning, forsaking contextual knowledge of the past enables the repression of the fear of death. It is the process of decontextualisation that renders images, objects, and artifacts prevailingly metonymical in their constitution.

Another instance of the metonymical nature of Sebald's inventories occurs when Austerlitz visits Terezìn (named Theresienstadt by the Nazis and used as a marshalling concentration camp during the war). Amongst descriptions and authenticating photographs of architectural sites that uncannily reference the absence of the atrocities that once occurred in the garrison town, Austerlitz describes one of the shop windows of the "Antikos Bazaar", a junk store display of domestic articles "composed entirely at random".[276] He is transfixed by the many objects in the store,

> as if one of them or their relationship with each other must provide an
> unequivocal answer to the many questions I found it impossible to ask in my
> mind. What was the meaning of the festive white tablecloth hanging over the back

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[273] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 398.

[274] *Ibid.*

[275] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 403.

[276] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 274.

of the ottoman …? What secret lay behind the three brass mortars of different

sizes, which had about them the suggestion of an oracular utterance [?].[277]

Although the narrator attempts to divine meaning in each object or in "their relationship with each other", that meaning remains obscured. Austerlitz' intention is to impose form on the otherwise unstructured flux of Sebald's catastrophic history.[278] This intention has been explained in subjective and linguistic terms as "the desire for metaphoric totality, for the instant of full meaning."[279] The desire for completeness in narrative and subjective identity equates with the rhetorical function of metaphor, of "self-metaphorization: the coming to be identical with oneself".[280] This is opposed to the alternative, unending contextual association of metonymy. In discussing the underlying violence of language in defining subjectivity, Tony Jackson relies on Lacan's notion of desire to explain the contradictory effect of language as both destructive and creative. As he states:

[t]he use of instruments of Symbolic violence always reopens the very wound the

subject wants to close. The metonymic suturing always tears apart the metaphoric

closure it sews up.[281]

This alternation between the effects of metaphor and metonymy describes the structure of identity creation through language in *Austerlitz*. In its association of violence and language, it resembles the function of writing and reading trauma, of the subjective attempt to constitute the self through a linguistic reconstruction of reality. A question remains, however, as to whether the function of trauma is the obverse of Lacan's desire for wholeness, relying (as argued in this thesis) on the metonymical association of separate temporalities and on the displaced experience of re-enactment. In Austerlitz'

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[277] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 274-5.

[278] Long *op. cit.* 2003: 137: Long refers to the narrator-character of *Die Ausgewanderten* searching for "something stable and constant in the face of such historical pessimism." (137). Also relevant here is Long's model of the inter-relatedness of images, his process of "reflexive reference", which enables "patterns of repetition to emerge that go beyond mere coincidence and hint at a hidden, almost magical order behind the ostensible chaos of history and entropy of matter." (137).

[279] Tony E Jackson *The Subject of Modernism: Narrative Alterations in the Fiction of Eliot, Conrad, Woolf, and Joyce*, 1995: 116.

[280] Jackson, *op. cit.* 1995: 120.

[281] *Ibid.* It is significant to note the use of bodily references in the metaphors of injury and surgery: in this regard language already conscribes subjectivity.

case, the metaphorical desire for closure competes with the desire to experience and comprehend his absent past, something that is only possible while the present remains open to change. As Jackson writes in relation to Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, the "recalled, unclosed plots [of the narrative … enable] an anticipated return of the repressed, incomplete past."[282] Rather than seeking closure, Austerlitz tries to uncover a hidden significance that might result from the arbitrary relation of one object to another. Although his path leads ultimately to the possibility of subjective destruction, signified by Austerlitz' departure from the narrative and his consequent absence at the end of the novel, it also offers the possibility of experiencing a past presently denied to him. It is not mere coincidence that the Antikos Bazaar description is succeeded by an account of the Terezìn Ghetto Museum. This description darkly contrasts "the model of a world made by reason and regulated in all conceivable respects"[283] with the Bazaar's random collation of domestic oddments. Two pages are devoted to detailing the Bazaar's catalogue of items in the store, including a stuffed squirrel.[284] The squirrel is part of an ongoing reference to the arbitrary hoarding proclivity that motivates the construction of collections, archives and libraries without concern for the informational and historical context of that knowledge (a "mythical" pair of squirrels are imagined by Austerlitz as the inhabitants of the pine copse arboretum situated within the *Bibliothèque National*).[285]

Not only is the narrator's inquiring gaze disappointed in his attempt to divine a meaning from the junk-store objects, the text and two accompanying images illustrating the narrative concentrate on the reflection of present reality and the narrator himself, superimposed on the window-view of historical objects. In narrating the effect of the window's reflection of trees across the square, Austerlitz makes it seem as if the objects in the window had "grown quite naturally into the black branches of the lime trees".[286] The attempt to find meaning in the inter-relation of arbitrary objects reminds the

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[282] Jackson, *op. cit.* 1995: 123.
[283] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 280.
[284] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 275.
[285] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 392.
[286] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 274.

reader of the need for the contextual reality of the present, represented by the natural world of the lime trees interposed upon the narrator's view. In the second picture the indistinct reflection of the photographer is visible in the store window, self-reflexively appearing to lie amidst the view of arrayed objects. The narrator explains that the survival of these objects, which inexplicably "outlived their former owners",[287] has led to their contemporary inclusion in an image that now incorporates his own face. He describes the photograph as if it were a representation external to the linear, discrete occurrence of time. For the narrator each ornament is "stranded"[288] in a timeless state that is "perpetuated but forever just occurring".[289] In other words, divested of either the past or the present, the de-contextualised objects are no longer capable of signifying their original familial historical meanings, but are instead only able to connote what is now unrepresentable: what is "not revealed to the observer".[290] It is the concept of remaining unrevealed to the viewer that is important to the narrator's emphasis on the visual dimension in this passage. The earlier reference to the stuffed squirrel's dead stare, "its beady button eye implacably fixed on me",[291] anticipates the notion of something remaining unrevealed, even as it is observed. The process of observing without understanding, of apprehending an event but being unable to process it, invokes Baer's and Caruth's model of trauma. The reflection of Austerlitz implies that the objects can only be represented when implicated within a narrativising framework, but that the narrative nonetheless remains insufficient to situate the narrator, who remains "barely perceptible"[292] in the window. At the same time it is a visualised narrative framework, constituted by photographic corroboration as something observed, even though the significance remains repressed. Although Theresienstadt constitutes the significant unifying piece of information, it uneasily remains repressed as a site of catastrophe and death, unable to draw together the disparate domestic oddments, but silently visible in faded labels, and in the ghostly reflections of the

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[287] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 277.

[288] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 277.

[289] *Ibid.*

[290] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 276.

[291] *Ibid.*

[292] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 277.

present world behind the narrator. Having lost familial and historical context, this random 'inventory' of assorted objects signifies incapacity of apprehension, an inability to recall.

Although Sontag often uses the term "inventory" more broadly to denote an appraisal,[293] her typification of surrealist photography as a generalizing action[294] coincides with Kracauer's concept of a "general inventory",[295] and hence with Schleifer's metonymical model. These three theorists account for knowledge in contemporary western society as constituted by accidental relation rather than by significance. Sontag differentiates the inventory from the function of collecting, which she regards (in photography) as a form of "surrealist approbation"[296] that destroys the past and recreates a new present reality.[297] For Sontag, surrealism's process is "an easy irony that democratises all evidence, that equates its scatter of evidence with history."[298] This scatter of evidence that destroys the past is very much the concern Kracauer expresses regarding an archive of collected images, categorised arbitrarily and detached from the moorings of historical narrative.[299] In a similar description to Kracauer's arbitrary inventory, Sontag describes photography as a process of "duplication of the world [that] fragments continuities and feeds the pieces into an interminable dossier".[300] It is a description that emphasises the controlling capacity of photography

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[293] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 59: "Any inventory of America is inevitably anti-scientific…" 66; "The scientists make an inventory of the world; the moralists concentrate on hard cases."

[294] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 74. Sontag describes surrealism as "the art of generalizing the grotesque and then discovering nuances (and charms) in that."

[295] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 61.

[296] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 77.

[297] *Ibid*; and see at 82, where Sontag denigrates American photography for reducing its goals. It does not seek to change the world, or even to understand it (she claims here to borrow Marx's reproach of philosophy), but instead, "[p]hotographers, operating within the terms of the surrealist sensibility, suggest the vanity of even trying to understand the world and instead propose that we collect it."

[298] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 75.

[299] It is worth noting Sontag's observation that a modern literary industry in the recycling of old photographs exists: "A photograph is only a fragment, and with the passage of time its moorings come unstuck." See Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 71. This is sometimes the case with Sebald's photographic illustrations, an indeterminate number of which are re-contextualised. Sebald stated that photographs "act as a token of authenticity - but they can be deduced, forged or purloined. And of course that in turn throws up one of the central problems of fiction writing, which is that of legitimacy". See: Toby Green "The Questionable Business of Writing," (Interview with W G Sebald) amazon.co.uk.booksIN*TE*RVIEW, http://www.amazon.co.uk/.: 5.

[300] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 156.

and sheds light on Kracauer's conception of the inventory as an attempt to control the representation and perception of death.

Since its inception, photography has commonly been regarded as a transparent and accurate means of representing the objective world.[301] Contemporary accounts of photography persist with this perception: Baudrillard maintains that the "instantaneity" of the photograph is far more compelling than realist literature.[302] Roland Barthes saw the photograph as possessing a content that is characteristically indissociable from the object it represents.[303] Sontag explains that the photograph is not simply representation, but "it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask."[304] This proximity to reality is often regarded as a function of photography's indexical nature.[305] An example of the emphasis of photography's indexical relationship to reality is to be found in Elizabeth Edwards' recent monograph on anthropological photography.[306] Although Edwards explains that the meaning of a photograph is dependent upon its cultural and textual context,[307] she stresses that modern social preconceptions firmly bind photographs to "the real world" because of the analogical photographical process of chemically realising reflected light as an

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[301] One might refer to Sontag's description of photographs as "unpremeditated slices of the world" in Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 69. Marianne Hirsch questions Barthes' emphasis of the indexical referent, balancing it against cultural mediation, and questioning whether "a too direct and material connection to the past" as a result of the indexical nature of photographs unnecessarily reduces later generations' appreciation of loss. See Marianne Hirsch *Narrative Frames: photography, narrative and postmemory*, 1997: 6 and 248. See also Nicholas Zurbrugg "Baudrillard, Barthes, Burroughs, and 'Absolute Photography" Ch. 12 in Jean Baudrillard, *Art and Artefact*, Nicholas Zurbrugg (ed.) 1997: 162: "What seems to fascinate Baudrillard, Barthes, and Burroughs most of all in photography is its sense of unambiguous reality and immediacy…". See also Baer *op. cit.*2002: 2: "In the photograph, time itself seems to have been carved up and ferried, unscathed, into the viewer's present".

[302] Jean Baudrillard "The Art of Disappearance" Ch. 3 in Jean Baudrillard, *Art and Artefact*, Nicholas Zurbrugg (ed.) 1997: 28.

[303] Barthes, *op. cit.* 1981: 5.

[304] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 154.

[305] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 154: "a photo is not only an image…an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask."

[306] Elizabeth Edwards, *Raw Histories: Photographs, Anthropology and Museums*, 2001:8-9.

[307] See also Roger Hull "Emplacement, Displacement, and the Fate of Photographs", in Younger (ed.) *Multiple Views: Logan Grant Essays on Photography: 1983-89*, 1991: 170. In differentiating between the popular, reproduced mass culture of anonymous photographs and the more stable, "arrested" (191) high art culture typified by the photography of Alfred Steiglitz, he observes that "(A) photograph…is drastically dependent upon how it is positioned in its immediate format and in its larger contexts. Successful positioning, or emplacement, results in the artificial…situation of a photograph stabilized within the structure that later becomes the recognized history of photography." Hull goes on to explain that displacement leads to greater likelihood of the photograph's alteration and "anonymity".

indexical image.[308] Edwards seeks to explain the apparent contradiction of cultural relativity and transparent objective representation by reference to a "pattern of expectancy inappropriate to the true nature of a medium".[309] It is significant to note that Baer also seeks to traduce the radical distinction between indexical reality and subjective relativity by reference to the ability of expectation to alter perspective. According to Edwards the medium of photography possesses a reality that belies its appearance, and that modern culture in its expectation subverts. Edwards relies on a model of mutual reinforcement between photograph and viewer, whereby photographs encourage the viewer to expect that their appearance mirrors reality, and the viewer continues to find reality in photographic representation. As Sontag observes, photographs "trade simultaneously"[310] on their status as both cultural artefacts and their appearance as indexical traces of the real world.[311] Photographs are not inherently realistic, but give the appearance of realism, of indexical representation of the real. As another theorist has observed:

> of all the representational arts, [photography] seems to hold out the best hope for
> the possibility of a total representation. It inspires an extra level of belief because
> its inherent superrealism conceals the omissions and abstractions by which we
> recognise the fictions of art.[312]

For the purposes of this thesis I would suggest that the indexical nature of photography is explicable in terms of metonymy. In two important regards the indexical equates with the metonymical: both conditions require congruity, and neither condition requires faithful mimetic representation. Rather, the authentic capacity of photography and metonymy is deictic, suggesting direct reference to the physical

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[308] Edwards, *op. cit.* 2001:8-9.
[309] *Ibid.*
[310] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 69.
[311] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 69: "Photographs are, of course, artifacts. But their appeal is that they also seem, in a world littered with photographic relics, to have the status of found objects – unpremeditated slices of the world. Thus they trade simultaneously on the prestige of art and the magic of the real."
[312] Judy Fiskin "Borges, Stryker, Evans: The Sorrows of Representation", in Younger (ed.) *op. cit.* 1991: 247-269, at 252.

world.[313] While the photograph often appears to refer to the world in the iconographic sense of resembling the subject it represents, its *contiguity* with that subject constitutes a relationship defined strictly by its mechanical and physical association with reality: in this case, the imprint of light onto chemically sensitive paper.

To use a representationally extreme example of the indexical: the nest of a bird bears an indexical relation to the animal that built it. The nest's proportions, size and composition in no way resemble the bird, but the nest nonetheless is specific to that particular bird: it is an imprint of that bird. While the nest is an imprint molded to the animal's specifications (lending it not a representational, but a referential aspect)[314] it is also molded to the animal itself, and as such bears a non-representational, indexical relation to the bird. Because an indexical relationship to the subject is existential, it does not of necessity include a representational aspect: the indexical is the result of being temporally and spatially adjacent to, and affected by, a subject. This parity between metonymical and indexical reference lends to photographic illustration a peculiar appositeness in directing the reader/viewer toward Schleifer's notion of the arbitrary, metonymical mode of modern representation.

Siegfried Kracauer distinguishes the apparent transparency of photographic realism from what he regards as the truth inhering in memory. [315] He accounts for surviving memories in terms of an essential truth that defines the object of a recollection because of its historical or aesthetic context. He refers to these surviving memories as

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[313] Long, *op. cit.* 2003: 127. Long's paper explains Sebald's use of photography in terms of the necessity of its being situated within a familial and narrative context. Long recognises the significance of metonymy as an indexical function in photography, observing that "(P)hotographs frequently function as a goad to narration, acting indexically as a metonymic trace of the past that needs to be provided with a temporal context in order to 'make sense'."

[314] See discussion of C S Peirce's infamous tripartite division of representation into the three categories of icon, index and symbol in Alphen, Ernst van "Touching Death", Ch. 1 (29-50) in Bronfen and Goodwin, (eds.) *op. cit.*1993: 31-2. Van Alphen uses the typical example of a footprint, which is "in touch" with the animal who caused it. While the symbol is an arbitrary, artificially determined sign, and an icon is a sign possessing a similar feature to that which it represents, an index "refers" (at 32; Van Alphen's italics) to the physical presence of the object that created it, whether by temporal, causal, or physically contiguous relation. See also Long, *op. cit.*2003: 120-21. Long refers to useful discussion by Kaja Silverman "The Subject of Semiotics", 1983: 14-25. Jakobson refers to Peirce: see Jakobson, *op. cit.* 1987: 414-20, 468.

[315] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 47-63.

"monograms".[316] For Kracauer, a photograph's spatial arrangement presents a swathe of information that remains un-processed and unremembered because it is not attached to an essential or significant "truth" related to the object. As a consequence, photography of itself is insufficient to the task of remembering the past; personal narrative context is required to sustain the relevance of specific details in an image. Because most photographic detail remains unattached to any memory, much of the information in a photograph, the sheer volume of dissociated details, is not only unnecessary but also ultimately concealing. As Kracauer observes, in a photograph, "a person's history is buried as if under a layer of snow."[317]

Berger observes that while images are seen in modern society as an account of how an object was perceived at a particular time and place, and by a particular person, the first and most basic function of images was to re-present or to "conjure up" absent objects.[318] Disturbingly, it is this function of referring to absent objects that is arguably prevalent in the theory of both surrealist and Holocaust representation. It is not only in reference to absent objects that surrealism is relevant to Sebald's fiction. Surrealism is also relevant in the sense of metonymical, arbitrary relations, the "scatter of evidence"[319] Sontag refers to.

If the aesthetic difficulties of Holocaust representation owe as much to the surrealist enterprise as to trauma theory and photography's reliance on the appearance of authentic, experienced reality, how, then, does the function of authenticity relate to the surrealist project? Holocaust theory, trauma theory, and surrealist photography deal with the paradox of representing absence and loss, of articulating the unsaid. Of attempts to represent the unrepresentable, I would argue that trauma and witness discourse often seek to replicate the perceived authenticity of photography in witness

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[316] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 55: "In inverse proportion to photographs, memory images enlarge themselves into monograms of remembered life. The photograph is the sediment which has settled from the monogram, and from year to year its semiotic value decreases."

[317] Kracauer, *op. cit.* 1995: 51.

[318] John Berger *Ways of Seeing*, 1972: 10.

[319] Sontag, *op. cit.* 1977: 75.

literature,[320] and that it is this perceived similarity of genres, of the (anticipated) indexical nature of the photograph and the (expected) indexical truth-content of witness literature that often conjoins the two modes of representation in Holocaust literature and the writing of trauma. It is to the writing of trauma and its significance to Sebald's fiction that I turn to in the following chapter.

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[320] Vogler argues with the help of Helen Vendler's The Breaking of Style, that, contrary to the views of Langer, Forché, and Felman, the breaking of poetic form is not necessarily indexical evidence of the direct experience of trauma or madness. See Thomas A Vogler, "Poetic Witness: Writing the Real", Chapter 6, in (eds.) Ana Douglass & D Vogler *Witness and Memory: The Discourse of Trauma*, 2003: 195-6.

Chapter Three

WRITING TRAUMA

For the purposes of considering trauma it might at first seem worthwhile to distinguish between the harrowing events on which memories are based, on the one hand, and the subsequent memories and memory processes deriving from those events, on the other. Emphasising traumatic events as solely causative of the characters' psychological and bodily malaise raises moral and political questions that Sebald's fiction often condenses into the metaphor of vertigo (discussed more fully in the section *Vertigo: the Body & Architecture*, in chapter four). However, the motif of vertigo, of a traumatised bodily response to past events, is explicable in terms of trauma theory. While Sebald's novels do question morality, they do so within a non-structural aesthetic framework antithetical to conceptions of conventional history and causation. His narratives question history to the extent that it is the presentation or re-presentation, the recovered memories and witnessing of the Shoah, rather than the event itself, that is at stake. Sebald has attempted to recover the past by means of recovering lost parts of the present subjective self. Coupled with his commentary on society's and history's inability to cope with post-war trauma and post-war morality, his project has been first and foremost an attempt to recover what has often been regarded as unrecoverable, not only in personal but in historical, ethical and aesthetic terms.

Sebald's prevailing mode of Holocaust representation relies upon the metonymical trope of displacement, from one to another different but temporally or spatially congruent object or state. It is also arguably linguistically equivalent to conventional psychoanalytical models of traumatic memory repression, which are commonly seen to manifest themselves in symptoms of physical and psychological stress relating to a past traumatic event. However, I would suggest an alternative to defining repression strictly in symptomatic terms of causation. That is, as an effect caused by a pathogen, a traumatic event. Repression is instead explicable as a process of relocation, of displacement: what I refer to as the "subjective congruity" of a narrator-witness with the past. While trauma theory distinguishes between the traumatic event witnessed by the survivor (a violent or disturbing event that traumatises the witness) and the recursion or re-enactment of that event, it also develops non-linear chronological and

epistemological affinities that in some ways undermine any absolute distinction between experience and memory, or between experience and representation. The function of repression as a psychological mechanism is invoked both as a means of coping with that traumatic experience, and as the inability of the survivor to effectively apprehend that traumatic event. Does the individual's consciousness practise a form of violence upon itself by rendering certain memories inaccessible, by actively displacing them to a subconscious level? In this sense repression traumatises those memories or the consciousness responsible for them. Or is the mechanism of repression a benign and necessary means of coping with traumatic experience? Caruth argues that trauma involves a process not of dealing with the traumatic event *per se*, but of attempting to cope with the inability to properly experience or account for that event in the first instance. As she states, "[t]he shock … is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience".[321] Before considering trauma as a process of displacement, however, it is necessary to outline some of the concepts informing trauma theory, and its relevance to literature and history. A useful place to begin is with a review of the critical work of Cathy Caruth, particularly with reference to her influential monograph, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*.[322]

Caruth: Unclaimed Experience & Lacan's Real

Freud and Caruth's willingness to conceive of politics and history with the same models used to describe the human psyche is useful for interpreting Sebald's project, which similarly seeks to infuse the political and the historical with literary and personal memory. Caruth seeks to develop the connections between literature and the psychoanalytical theory of trauma. She accounts for the relevance of trauma theory to the study of literature by referring to Freud's use of literary structures as a means of defining trauma and psychoanalysis. She suggests that Freud uses literary modes because "literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between

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[321] Cathy Caruth *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*, 1996: 62.

[322] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996.

knowing and not knowing."[323] Caruth's main contribution to the theory of trauma is the notion of its intrinsic relation to delay, such that trauma derives as much from later awakenings to repeated memories of a traumatic event as from the event itself. That is, trauma becomes a process of repetition that seeks to meet a past event forever missed. In so doing Caruth establishes a paradoxical state in trauma resembling the "belated" process of history, by which unwitnessed events of the past are repeatedly narrated in an attempt to recover them.[324] Caruth elevates the function of not knowing as a necessary process of survival, as a means of retaining later histories, and of attempting to apprehend what is ethically or humanly impossible to understand, thus seeking to establish a new, ethically-founded model of history. Such a model elicits the understanding of witnesses, readers and listeners through delineating what it is not consciously aware of, and through the reader's willingness to apprehend that which is not known. The traumatic dream amounts to an "impossible history"[325] in its a-chronic or synchronic concatenation of known and unknown pasts, of a lived-through, but repeatedly re-experienced, or yet-to-be experienced event. As Caruth notes:

> For history to be a history of trauma means that it is referential precisely to the extent that it is not fully perceived as it occurs; or to put it somewhat differently, that a history can be grasped only in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence.[326]

Or again, as she observes in relation to the shock of the threat of death,

> [t]he shock of the mind's relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience, the fact that, not being experienced *in time*, it has not yet been fully known.[327]

This interest in the relation of knowing and not knowing is exactly Sebald's interest in Holocaust history. Sebald's novels treat the silence surrounding the Holocaust rather than the Holocaust itself, as if the event remains in many ways unknown, unable to be assimilated. It is this acknowledgement of the unknowable in Holocaust representation

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[323] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 3.

[324] Cathy Caruth (ed.) "Trauma and Experience (Introduction)", *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 1995: 8.

[325] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1995: 5.

[326] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 19.

[327] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 62.

that enables Sebald's fiction to avoid the problem Adorno formulated of the difficulties, if not impossibilities, of post-Holocaust representation. Sebald regularly refers not directly to the Holocaust, but to the traumatic experience of its survivors who uncover their repressed pasts as if experiencing them for the first time. In this way the traumatic event defers experience. Caruth explains:

> [t]rauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on.[328]

And so, for Caruth as much as for Sebald's characters, it is the effect of not remembering that is as much a matter of concern for the survivor as the originating traumatic event.

Caruth suggests that an underlying concern of Lacan and Freud inheres in the indissociable double narrative of the horror of the traumatic event and the equally desperate trauma of continuing to survive it.[329] It is instructive to expand Caruth's model of the survivor's narrative here in terms of a recent study of the effect of trauma writing on Lacan's concept of the "real".[330] The real for Lacan referred not to reality, but to any phenomena that cannot be depicted or known, such as the Other, or death.[331] Van Boheemen-Saaf explains that when confronted with Joyce's writings, Lacan altered his notion of the "real". Although Lacan originally conceived the real as a metaphysical and unattainable motivating force of all representation, after his exposure to Joyce's writings on trauma he grounded the real within the temporal world of representation, linking the symbolic, the imaginary, and the historical. Van Boheemen-Saaf argues that the reason for Lacan's embedding of the real (the traumatic, the

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[328] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 4.

[329] "between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival." Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 7.

[330] Christine van Boheemen-Saaf *Joyce, Derrida, Lacan, and the Trauma of History: Reading, narrative and postcolonialism*, 1999: 8.

[331] van Boheemen-Saaf, *op. cit.* 1999: 8. It is worth noting here that in discussing Lacan's formulation of the ethical relation to the experience of death-in-life, Caruth in *UE* uses the general definition of "real" in referring to the "simple reality of the external world" (99) as well as Lacan's specific determination of the term. See "Traumatic Awakenings" in *Unclaimed Experience*, 90-112, particularly "Encountering the Real", p 99.

"experience of death-in-life")[332] within immanent representational form, is due to the language of modern writers of trauma (typified by James Joyce and Paul Celan), which Lacan realised is imbued with a recognition of the real. Such texts realise an absence of representation. In Van Boheemen-Saaf's words, trauma texts

> re-enact an occurrence of an act of violence which affects symbolization itself,
> and add to history a new dimension, a spot of numbness or failure of articulation,
> which becomes an unconscious *within* discourse …[333]

Boheemen-Saaf's contention is that a momentous dialectical transformation of something transcendent into an immanent and graspable reality has occurred; the "inscription" of an unattainable and unrepresentable element of Lacan's real (which, for the purposes of this and Boheemen-Saaf's thesis, is the "experience of death-in-life") into a form that can be represented. While it appears absurd to uphold the logical constancy of a thesis that seeks to incorporate both a metaphysical and an immanent, relativistic enterprise, it is worth noting that Boheemen-Saaf recognises this dilemma, because she approaches both disciplines from a historical vantage that seeks to demonstrate a paradigmatic shift from Heideggerian metaphysics to Derridean and Lacanian ethics.[334] This shift is deemed possible by Boheemen-Saaf because the language of trauma is, as Caruth recalls, a double narrative of both remembering and surviving death. The paradoxical situation might be conceived in terms of enduring the death of the Other,[335] engendering a narrative that binds bodily experience, bodily trauma, to the witness of an un-narratable, Lacanian real. In an ethical sense, then, the survivor as witness is confronted by the paradoxical situation of having to "respond to

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[332] van Boheemen-Saaf, *op. cit.* 1999: 8. Significantly, a monograph discussing the nature of the uncanny in European literature describes the *unheimlich* as "the domain of death-in-life, a ghostly non-place in which the aesthetic and the ethical cross into each other's territories and disrupt the boundaries separating one sphere from the other." See Ellison, *op. cit.* 2001: 133 [and, for its relation to metonymical displacement and temporal diachrony, 144.] See also fn. 75.

[333] *Ibid.*

[334] van Boheemen-Saaf, *op. cit.* 1999: 9-10. For a consideration of the ethical relation to death in Derrida, see: Jacques Derrida *The Gift of Death*, David Willis (transl.) 1995: 41: "It is from the site of death as the place of my irreplaceability, that is, of my singularity, that I feel called to responsibility."

[335] See Emmanuel Levinas *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, Ch. 10, "Peace and Proximity" Adriaan T Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (eds.) 1996: 169.

an impossibility"[336] of attempting to represent the silent, absent figure of death. This ethical paradox coincides with the condition of death, which although nameable exists negatively: while resolutely significant it remains non-signifying.

Caruth's double narrative constitutes a constant mutuality, an "inextricability of the story of one's life from the story of a death".[337] This continuing effect of death upon life is for Caruth evidence of the closeness of trauma theory to the function of history, in which the telling of a past event is reiterated. In Caruth's account, however, it is not mere remembrance, but *experience* of the traumatic event that occurs at a point deferred from the inception of the trauma, suggesting a synchronic model of time that dissolves or "resituates" the boundaries between experience and representation. The survivor is unable to fully or properly perceive or understand the event in its occurrence, and is subconsciously forced into experiencing the event through literalistic hallucinations in an attempt to establish meaning. Caruth relates this synchronic attempt to establish meaning with the function of history:

> Through the notion of trauma … we can understand that a rethinking of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not.[338]

Caruth's interpretation of trauma theory is, at its most profound, a study of the places where knowledge does not exist; of how and where those unconscious realms, those spaces of not knowing, touch the knowledges and lives of human history. As such it is not merely an account of trauma psychoanalysis, but rather an attempt to see history through literature, and in consequence modern aesthetics and ethics, in ways that more readily navigate the ethical and representational difficulties of contemporary representation.[339]

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[336] de Vries, *op. cit.* 1998: 44.

[337] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 8.

[338] Caruth, *op. cit.* (Caruth's italics) 1996: 11.

[339] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 10-11. Caruth refers to poststructuralism's extreme cultural relativity having led to "political and ethical paralysis." (10). Caruth's understanding of literature as an ethical resolution to the representational crises of history accords with Sebald's depiction of literature. Although Sebald acknowledges

But Caruth recognises not only psychoanalysis' use to literature in the general relation between what might be personally known and unknown, but also in the relevance of trauma at the historical level. Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* does not consider Jewish and biblical history merely as analogues for the human psyche. He considers history and the personal as concomitant and as explicable by reference to the same models of change and apprehension through repetition, of departure and return. As Caruth recognises,

> the theory of trauma, as a historical experience of a survival exceeding the grasp
> of one who survives, engages a notion of history exceeding individual bounds.[340]

The usefulness of trauma theory lies in its presentation of an alternative model to that of conventional epistemological models of history that ensure distinct borders between historical reality and knowledge deriving from it. If trauma theory does not offer the ability to perceive the unperceivable, at least it operates by including, by locating and seeking to take account of the inassimilable, the unrepresentable. This notion is evident in Caruth's language. Rather than only describing trauma in terms of what a subject knows or does not know, she defines trauma as "precisely to be possessed by an image or event."[341] I am caught by Caruth's notion here, that it is not the subject who possesses knowledge, but rather an occurrence that possesses the subject. She explains that trauma is not wish-repression or a perversion of reality, but the intrusion of a past event, the recursion of an experience upon the individual.[342] This deterministic model of consciousness attributes to history an element that is not consciously perceptible to the individual witness, survivor or narrator: an individual might be possessed by an event, while the event might remain forever unable to be fully apprehended by the subject.

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the necessity of historical scholarship to truth in modern literature (see Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 114), he considers literature a medium capable of ethical understanding that surpasses history and theory. As he states, "[t]here are many forms of writing; only in literature, however, can there be an attempt at restitution over and above the mere recital of facts and over and above scholarship." See Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 215.

[340] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1995: 5.

[341] *Ibid.*

[342] *Ibid.*

Caruth transcribes representational problems into ethical considerations at the level of consciousness, as a personal reaction to non-survivors, to the dead. She considers Lacan's interpretation of Freud as one that stresses the ethical dimension of consciousness. Lacan discusses Freud's account of the father of a child recently dead from a fever: as a lit candle falls on the body of the dead child, the father is woken from sleep by a dream in which the child asks him, "Father, don't you see I'm burning?" Caruth's interpretation via Lacan emphasises the ethical constitution of the father's psyche as "a survival inherently and constitutively bound up with the address of a dead child."[343] Caruth refers to Lacan's notion of consciousness, of "psyche's relation to the real",[344] not as a matter of epistemology, but as "an urgent responsibility, or what Lacan defines…as an *ethical relation to the real*."[345] (Lacan's 'real', as discussed earlier, defines anything unrepresentable, such as death or the Other. The relevance of the real to this thesis and to Caruth's writing is consciousness' ethical relation to the experience of death-in-life).[346] Caruth argues that one's consciousness is analogous to that of the survivor, whose existence is determined as a response to those who did not survive, as a reply that is a repetition of a trauma.[347] As a model for consciousness such trauma becomes not merely an exceptional circumstance, an interjection into the psyche, but the foundation for consciousness. Caruth traces a move in Freud and Lacan's writings from the notion of trauma as a disruption of consciousness to trauma as the *cause* of consciousness: from trauma as recognition of one's own death to recognition of the death of others.[348] The trauma exists in the dilemma of having to re-differentiate death from life, a distinction that appears to constitute a precondition to, and a cause of, living. Being able to make this distinction becomes a process of the survivor's reconstitution of consciousness inextricably linked to the ethical composition of the self. The trauma becomes an "impossible demand at the heart of human

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[343] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 102.
[344] *Ibid.*
[345] Caruth's italics.
[346] van Boheemen-Saaf, *op. cit.* 1999: 8.
[347] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 92, 100-102.
[348] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 104.

consciousness",[349] what Caruth refers to as an "impossible responsibility of consciousness in its own originating relation to others, and specifically to the deaths of others".[350] And because this relation to the real is ethical, knowledge in the sense of consciously knowing a fact is not a requirement in conceiving of the real, just as repetition of a trauma can occur unconsciously. Caruth considers this function of unconscious knowledge in terms of an 'awakening' that affects the listener/reader as much as, or more than the trauma survivor: "In opening the other's eyes, the awakening consists not in seeing but in handing over the seeing it does not and cannot contain to another (and another future)."[351] In other words, the possibility of the transmission of ethically constituted, unconsciously-borne knowledge charges the narrator and reader with a significant ethical function: that of the possible re-interpretive revelatory apprehension of hitherto un-comprehended knowledge that affects the conscious and ethical self. It is as if traumatically repressed memory is capable of narrative transmission and "awakening" in the witnessing reader.

Similarly, the character Austerlitz is perpetually seeking out the details of a past that he failed to understand or properly perceive at the time that it occurred. His actions typify Caruth's paradigm of a survivor, who "awaken[s] only to one's repetition of a previous failure to see in time."[352] The survivor does not merely repeat the traumatic event, but also repeats the failure to apprehend that event. It is this acknowledgement of fallibility that inscribes the survivor's understanding of the event and any consequent understanding of themselves as peculiarly ethical. As Caruth maintains, in this attempt to know the unknowable, the survivor is engaged in an ethical, rather than an epistemological endeavour. She explains the ethical constitution of the survivor by reference to the instance of a father surviving the death of his child, and the father's acknowledgement of his situation (his "response"). His understanding of his own survival and continued existence is constituted not "as an accidental living beyond the

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[349] *Ibid.*

[350] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 104.

[351] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 111.

[352] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 100.

child, but rather as a mode of existence determined by the impossible structure of the [survivor's] response."[353] It is crucial here to note the shift between models of epistemological and ethical apprehension. While much of Dori Laub's concept of testament and witness (discussed earlier) emphasises the narrative recovery of knowledge, Caruth looks within narrative to the ethically constituted self.[354]

Intersubjectivity: Sebald, van Alphen & the Ethical Witness

The relation of the witness as a significant ethical other to the trauma survivor is peculiarly relevant to the function of trauma theory in Sebald's fiction. In Sebald's texts each character's unease conforms to the Freudian notion that psychological trauma is a symptom of the repression of memories deriving from a specific traumatizing event. This model of memory repression is followed literally in *Austerlitz*, documenting the gradual recovery of repressed childhood memories of a survivor of the *kindertransport* program. By concentrating on the process of memory recovery rather than only on the object of remembrance, Sebald avoids the difficulties inherent in conventional attempts in history to render an objective, externalised account of the Holocaust as a historical event. In this regard the occurrence of Holocaust atrocities becomes less relevant as a symptom of bodily instability (of "vertigo", discussed below) than as an implicit correlation of personal memory repression with historical repression of the past. Sebald's fiction is primarily a comment on the way that we, as individual survivors and as historians, recollect and fail to recollect the trauma of the past. While in his fiction the recovery of memory-experiences occurs at a personal level through a therapeutic inter-subjective narrative process, Sebald extends this narrational therapy so that it also

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[353] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 100.
[354] Langer, *op. cit.* 1978: 20. See also at 28, where Langer notes the paradoxical ethical call of narrative that is both impelling ("necessary") and insufficient: "During the initial stages of her mother's illness, de Beauvoir verifies through personal experience what as a novelist she must have known all along: the insufficiency and necessity of language as consolation to the dying and the survivors". While early writing by Lawrence Langer precedes trauma theory, preserving the paradoxical relations between knowledge and the unknowable, the insurmountable difficulties of witnessing and narrating are nonetheless cast in ethical terms. On the one hand he can claim that "(A)s long as death is narrated by an outsider, however close to the victim, the dying voice must be excluded from our range of imaginative perception." (Langer 1978: 30) On the other hand, Langer asserts that "(P)erhaps the most difficult and painful task of the healthy is to listen to the voice of the dying – indeed, to permit the dying to have a voice at all." The imperative assertions of exclusion and permission indicate an ethical motivation.

serves as a possible means by which to cure the ills of history. That is to say, the model of intersubjective narration functions as therapy for the trauma of both the subject and history. With regards to history, it does this by focusing on an intersubjectivity that is not present in conventional historical accounts. Considering the significance of witnessing and oral testimony to Holocaust history, the conjunction of individual and social levels within narrative recall Freud's conjunction of the individual and the historical, and make it a convenient means of drawing together the seemingly separate strands of individual memory and institutional history as a cultural memory process.[355] In other words, the narrative model of witness and narrator reconstitutes the social and the personal in an intersubjective form of narrative comprehension. One can see the connection between the individual subject and the cultural/historical in Ernst van Alphen's definition of a traumatic event:

> When an event makes "no sense" in terms of the culturally provided meaningful
> frames, it cannot be experienced or memorialized. This lack of a reference frame,
> which would allow a certain distance from the event, can only lead to a repetition
> of the event in its full, immediate directness.[356]

In this quotation van Alphen relies on a model of individual perception that is culturally determined, to the extent that the individual is unable to perceive certain traumatising events if they occur outside the parameters of culturally determined reference. Where sense is possible, it is due, according to van Alphen, to the ability of memory (or of representation) to provide a coherent narrative emplotment.[357] Both trauma theory and Sebald's fiction attempt to account for that exteriorised area of traumatic experience that makes "no sense". In so doing, they delineate the relations between history and the individual, between witness and survivor, the gap that is referred to here as the "intersubjective".

In this way then, Sebald's account of traumatised memory extends beyond the immediate personal environment of survivors to consider the broader cultural and

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[355] Dan Diner "From History to Memory - and Back," Musner, *et. al.* (eds.) *op. cit.* 1999: 117.

[356] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 163.

[357] van Alphen, op. cit. 1997: 53, 59.

political milieu. It is this social environment that informs and affects the personal mental predisposition, often to repress memories of the past.[358] This is one of the reasons why his fiction depicts the changed functions of the urban landscape and its effect on human consciousness, as I will discuss later in chapter five.

The intersubjective space between the individual and others, between the individual and history, constitutes the focus of Sebald's fiction. Because Sebald is primarily concerned with meaningful historical connections between ethics and aesthetics, between how we live and how we depict those lives, his fiction attempts to redefine the narrative space in which those connections occur. By questioning what it is to be a witness to traumatic events, he tries to link individual and social constructions of history. In doing this he seeks to join aesthetic and historical interpretation within an inter-subjective narrative that departs from the illusory objectivity of conventional historical narrative models. The dysfunctional approach of conventional history towards the Holocaust is concisely if brutally illustrated in *Vertigo* in a metaphor concerning the syphilitic writer Stendhal, who suffers horribly and ultimately dies from the mercury cure he is administered, rather than from his disease.[359] This is a useful metaphor for conventional history's inability to effectively explain, to 'cure' the past.

Art historian Ernst van Alphen explores psychoanalyst Dori Laub's position regarding the nature of testifying to traumatic events of the past.[360] Van Alphen suggests that the status of survivor and the status of witness re-create each other, with the survivor needing to narrate her past in order to survive. This process emphasises the testamentary aspect of being a witness, so that witnessing is not merely experiencing, but externalising those experiences, making them objective in some sense by relating them in a narrative format to a listener. Narration becomes for van Alphen and Laub a defining and necessary part of what it is to be a witness to traumatising events, whose

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[358] In extension of La Capra's notion that theory itself is being traumatised, cultural historian Anson Rabinbach queries whether history today is being equated with trauma. In Sebald's case I would offer a resounding 'yes'. See Anson Rabinbach "Apocalypse Postponed: Cultural History Confronts Catastrophe Fifty Years Later" Musner, *et. al.* (eds.) *op. cit.* 1999: 125-42, at 126.

[359] Sebald, *Vertigo, op. cit.* 1999: 29-30.

[360] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 150.

continued predicament as a survivor is re-invested in the inter-subjective or dialogical relation that the listener/reader brings. To quote Dori Laub directly,

> the interviewer-listener takes on the responsibility for bearing witness that previously the narrator felt he bore alone, and therefore could not carry out. It is the encounter and coming together between the survivor and the listener, which makes possible something like a repossession of the act of witnessing. This joint responsibility is the source of the reemerging truth. [361]

The listener provides a reflective frame of reference for the witness, who is then able to organise her "trauma fragments" into a functioning history. Laub's model is offered as a therapeutic process, and owes much to the clinical psychoanalytical tradition in which a split in subjectivity is healed by means of narrative re-appropriation of normally unattainable (subconscious) realms of the subjective self. Both models stress the significance of the function of the listener instead of only the survivor/narrator. By being able to objectivise the events witnessed, the survivor is "re-embodied" (Laub's term) once she has "inserted herself into the historical dimension of the listener".[362] As van Alphen states:

> The interhuman situation of testimony … is not only a precondition for continuing to live, but also, because of the interrelatedness, emblematic for life after testimony.[363]

Another way in which Laub stresses the importance of the function of witnessing is in terms of the survivor's means of self-determination, or self interpretation. As Laub argues:

> The survivors did not only need to survive so that they could tell their stories; they also needed to tell their stories in order to survive. There is, in each survivor,

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[361] Dori Laub "Truth and Testimony: The Process and the Struggle" in Caruth (ed.) *op. cit.*1995: 69, 69. Laub extends this idea to the argument that the totality of the psychological structure surrounding the Holocaust and perpetrated by the process of Nazi persecution precluded there being any real witnesses: that it is only through the dialogical function of relating the experience to another that it is truly witnessed.

[362] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 153. Psychiatrist Henry Krystal similarly recognises a post-traumatic "impoverishment of the areas of one's mind to which the "I" feeling of self-sameness is extended, and a hypertrophy of the "not-I" alienated areas." (Krystal's italics) Krystal, "Trauma and Ageing: A Thirty-Year Follow-Up" in Caruth (ed.) *op. cit.* 1995: 85. Symptoms include anhedonia, "psychic splitting, denial, and "'pseudophobia", fear of one's dreams and of one's own emotions…".

[363] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 153.

an imperative need to *tell,* and thus to come to *know* one's story, unimpeded by

ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself.[364]

Like Kafka's ghosts created from the technological scree of modern temporal and spatial modes of representation, Laub's "ghosts of the past" threaten subjective displacement and disjunction. Both Laub and Kafka recognise the crucial gap that exists between subjective representation and the ambiguities of social and historical objectivity. This distinction obtains in Ernst van Alphen's two models of testimony. The first is simply testimony as it constitutes the historical record, which he classes in terms of language's referential aspect. The second exhibits "language's ability to constitute subjectivity",[365] and encompasses notions of therapy, of recovery and reconstitution of the self through a dialogical narrative process. Van Alphen explains the second model through Emile Benveniste's consideration of 'deixis', the use of intersubjective, indexical personal pronouns such as *I* and *you.* By delineating individual subjective perspectives within the structure of speech, this practice inserts the speaking/listening subject within discourse, rendering it effective of and affected by the subject. This narrative model is deliberately clouded by the differing perspectives of speaker and listener, of I/you. As such it is intentionally or explicitly opaque, allowing language to be affected by the subject, and the subject to affect the construction and constitution of language. This model of language remains neglected by the conventional historical establishment, which prefers the apparent transparency of clear subject/object distinctions between language and speaker.[366] Sebald's texts often present instances of the conventional historical model of language (van Alphen's first model in the above discussion), in which discrete subject/object distinctions appear to exist. However, his texts readily cast the surety of this model into doubt by overlaying it with an opaque narrative format reflecting van Alphen's second model, one that constitutes subjectivity within language. It is to the distinctions between transparency

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[364] Laub, *op. cit.*in Caruth (ed.) *op. cit.*1995: 63.

[365] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 153.

[366] An instance of this is evident in La Capra's discussion of the emotive freedom of art and literature (and the discipline of writing trauma) that models its form on the subject it depicts, in contrast with the "constraints" [185] of historiography. La Capra suggests that "the literary (or even art in general) is a prime, if not the privileged, place for giving voice to trauma as well as symbolically exploring the role of excess." [190].

and opacity in language and the use of those distinctions in history and literature that we turn in the next section.

Caruth and La Capra: Excess, Absence and the Narrative Witness

For the purposes of this thesis, absence is arguably a function of excess. Absence of memory, of the past, and ultimately absence of the fully constituted conscious self, derives from attempts to cope with experience that exceeds the ethical or representational capacity of the survivor or witness. As noted by van Alphen in discussing the crisis of representation, because the incommensurable events of the Holocaust are undersold by the referential capacity of language, the attempt at representation falls short of the traumatic subject it seeks to portray. In his words, "the historical truth in need of representation seems to exceed comprehension."[367] An example of this in trauma theory is the inability of a survivor of a traumatic event to process, or to properly witness the event in the first instance, because of the cultural, moral, or perceptual incapacity to do so. Relying on Freud's model of the divided self, absent knowledge consequently comprises the unconscious excess of the conscious self.[368] La Capra states that, in Caruth's estimation, "'not knowing' is intimately related to the role of affect and the unconscious."[369] In other words, the experience of the event exceeds the capacity of the witness.

The question of absence and excess centres on the nature and possibilities inherent in representing the traumatic event, raising the question: "[w]hat is the form through which violence may be written about when its foundation … is that it exceeds limits?"[370] This problem of representation for Caruth becomes not only a subjective displacement, but also a temporal displacement. The violent event is belated, temporally deferred until a point at which it might be accepted or understood. It is

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[367] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1997: 35.

[368] See Sigmund Freud "Revision of the Theory of Dreams" (Lecture 29) in James Strachey (transl. Ed.) and Angela Richards (ed.) *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1973: 44.

[369] Dominick LaCapra *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 2001: 183.

[370] The question derives from Bataille: see Zulaika, *op. cit.* 2003: 107. Zulaika quotes from Veena Das "Introduction: Communities, Riots, and Survivors" in *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots, and Survivors in South Asia*, Das (ed.) 1990.

then experienced as if it had occurred at that later time. For the time that the event or memory remains inaccessible, it is absent, due to its ethical excess as a memory.

La Capra writes that Caruth seeks to place psychoanalysis within literature as a sub-set,[371] arguing that for Caruth "literature in its very excess can somehow get at trauma in a manner unavailable to theory – that it writes (speaks or even cries) trauma in excess of theory."[372] He links this notion of literature's ability to exceed theoretical, historiographical and psychoanalytical boundaries with romantic notions of the sublime.[373] It is a point that Anne Whitehead adopts in her critique of Sebald's fiction's ability to work through (and beyond) the experience of trauma. Whitehead observes that Sebald's narratives adopt the concept of the sublime because it conveniently replicates the notion of ungraspable experience present in trauma theory. However, because Caruth's therapeutic model of reading trauma necessitates the possibility that ungraspable experience can be re-apprehended, it is understandable that Whitehead finds fault with Sebald's sublime rhetoric, which "offers the reader no escape from the repeated acting out of trauma."[374]

Anne Whitehead observes that La Capra has sought to distinguish history and historiographical practice from the literary excesses of trauma theory by differentiating between absence, which he defines as a historical phenomenon, and loss, which he sees as subjective, specific, and open to the practice of writing trauma.[375] La Capra sees the conflation of structural and historical trauma as leading to poor historical practice, to a "tendency to avoid addressing historical problems, including losses, in sufficiently specific terms or to enshroud, perhaps even to etherealise, them in a generalised state of absence."[376] Again, for La Capra, as for Rothberg, the perceived problem in metonymical representation lies with an excess of aesthetic consideration, rather than with the issue of authentication.

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[371] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 2001: 183.
[372] *Ibid.*
[373] *Ibid.*
[374] Whitehead, *op. cit.* 2004: 138.
[375] Whitehead, *op. cit.* 2004: 13-14.
[376] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 2001: 48.

La Capra suggests that Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque, "whereby impasses are somehow played out and existing norms or structures are periodically transgressed"[377] offers a more useful model than writing trauma. While Bakhtin's model might provide a more useful means of perceiving the holocaust, I would argue that Sebald's opaque, traumatised and elegiacal fiction seeks to cope with issues that more direct attempts at representation have failed to resolve. I would seek to emphasise that Sebald's fiction is primarily an exercise in what LaCapra derides as "an inaccessible, continually deferred presence … [in which] the particular is subsumed in the general, and history or modernity is construed as Holocaust or trauma."[378] LaCapra is persuasive in arguing for the need to avoid generalising the Shoah as a pervasive condition of postmodernity, and suggests instead exploring the reader's (our own) responses to the Holocaust. Is it arguable that Sebald's fiction begins to trace LaCapra's path, attempting to present the responses of an individual narrator/witness?

An answer to LaCapra's challenge lies in Sebald's depiction of Jacques Austerlitz, who responds to the Holocaust as a narrator/witness. Through suffering a mental breakdown, the character Austerlitz experiences language as a space that he is no longer able to negotiate. His responses to the main narrator and to the reader offer the possibility that language is a metaphor for metropolitan space:[379]

> If language may be regarded as an old city full of streets and squares, nooks and crannies, with some quarters dating from far back in time while others have been torn down, cleaned up and rebuilt, and with suburbs reaching further and further into the surrounding country, then I was like a man who has been abroad for a long time and cannot find his way through this urban sprawl any more, no longer knows what a bus stop is for, or what a backyard is, or street junction, an avenue or a bridge. The entire structure of language … even the nouns denoting ordinary objects were all enveloped in impenetrable fog.[380]

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[377] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 1996: 222.

[378] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 1996: 223.

[379] Sebald's narrator employs a number of spatial depictions of memory – one of these is the prevailing use of the metaphor of monumental architecture, discussed below.

[380] Sebald, *Austerlitz, op. cit.*2001: 174-5.

Using the cityscape as a metaphor for language is commonplace enough, but is this the reason why Austerlitz almost asks permission of the listener to indulge his comparison? The phrase "[i]f language may be regarded as an old city" requires the attention of the listener/reader: it asks that the reader consider the plausibility of Austerlitz' metaphorical comparison. Following Dori Laub's argument, I would suggest that, in line with the crucial role the listener has in survivor testimony, the survivor needs the listener to be brought along on the narrative path. The survivor-narrator Austerlitz seeks the continued audience of the reader in order to be able to recount his experience: in order to witness.

But would this be the view of Caruth? Caruth speaks of literature as a language that "defies, even as it claims, our understanding."[381] Austerlitz' literary metaphor might lend itself to this interpretation, although its overt reference to the nature of language suggests the need for a more specific understanding. Caruth writes of the need to reference "what we see and hear" even where it extends beyond our comprehension.[382] While it is arguable, then, that Caruth's approach engages with La Capra's resolve to represent the responses of a survivor-witness, it is apparent that Caruth intends to establish a broader application for reading and writing trauma: one that in its structure is capable not merely of recognising and representing the survivor-witness, but which is also able to reference the unrepresentable.

Austerlitz: Absence and Departure

In Sebald's final novel Austerlitz narrates his increasing inability to write and his eventual inability to communicate. He seeks to present to the reader a period of not knowing, of absence. This absence, "like a man who has been abroad for a long time", relates directly to the greater absence of knowledge and understanding attributable to the trauma of his past. This not knowing is explicable in terms of a detective story and is in some senses resolved with his discovery of the details of his lost childhood,

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[381] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 5.
[382] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 56.

language, and parents. Austerlitz takes his leave of the narrator with the resolution that while he will continue searching the past for his father, he will also seek out his contemporary, Marie de Verneuil, intimating that he is again able to function in the present, having in some sense achieved a relation to the trauma of his past. However, Austerlitz' absence and continued searching signifies that in a significant way irresolution persists. The end of the novel returns to the main narrator's observations in the absence of Austerlitz. Austerlitz appears to have evaporated from the story the way his antecedents and family have receded from the present, leaving a sense of having read the account of an absent narrator. This account is delivered by a past survivor and witness whose memories and consequently whose self is always partially absent. It is Austerlitz' absence, however, that reaffirms an absence of knowledge, a condition of not knowing rather than of understanding the past.

Austerlitz' absence is typified not only by his literal absence from the main narrator for large periods of time, but by a narrative emphasis on his departures.[383] In this regard the title character often functions less as a character than as a motif of departure. Throughout the book he is regularly absent, present only in the thoughts of the primary narrator, while at the end of the novel he takes his leave of the primary narrator entirely. I would suggest that the process of departure is literally a movement toward absence, and that in *Austerlitz* it operates metaphorically (like the double action of departure and Freud and Kafka's notion of becoming simultaneously absent while remaining present in another place) as recognition of the function of not knowing. Caruth accounts for Freud's underlying conception of trauma theory in terms of departure. From Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* she interprets his fabulist history of the

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[383] I am applying Caruth's interpretation of Freud's "Moses and Monotheism" as a study in departure rather than return: see Caruth, *supra*, 1996: 14. Kaja Garloff's article also considers Sebald's emphasis on departure, arguing Sebald's proximity to Giorgio Agamben's philosophy of "impossible return and irretrievable speech" rather than to therapeutic notions of return prevalent in psychoanalysis and trauma theory. She suggests that Sebald's recognition of the incapacity of the survivor to witness, of "the gap between the speechless and the speaking…as the irrevocable condition of his own literature" (as per Ernestine Schlant) is a more affective, "appropriate" fictional representation of Holocaust victims than most other literature. For Garloff the gap between narrator and subject in Sebald's writing is often established by a "missed encounter". See Garloff "The Emigrant as Witness: W G Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten*, in *The German Quarterly*, 77, No 1 (Winter 2004), 76-93: 87.

Jews as a retelling of history *as* trauma, experienced specifically through the process of departure. Freud's "replacement of the story of a liberating return by the story of a trauma"[384] emphasises the departure of the Hebrews from Egypt and the new beginnings of Monotheism and Judaism, rather than placing significance on the Hebrews' return into Canaan. What does this show? Caruth emphasises departure in trauma because, she argues, the traumatic basis of Freud's history of the Jews, of a forgotten and re-remembered murder of the original Moses, is not explicit, indeed not experienced when it occurs, but "is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time."[385] She argues that "[h]istory can only be grasped in the very inaccessibility of its occurrence."[386] That is, the process of history involves an element of unconsciousness in referring to the past, a past that can only be accessed by reference to other histories, other places. She sees this function of latency as Freud's realisation of the political interrelatedness of different histories. Austerlitz' function of departure throughout the story defines an on-going attempt to realise his past. His regular search for other histories and sites of memory reflects Caruth's Freudian model of the need to depart to other spaces to be able to write history. The model of trauma as an on-going search for other histories constitutes Caruth's notion of a *political* approach to the past. This approach incorporates a politics of the Other in which elements of the past and elements of memory are necessarily absent.

Sebald's fiction is imbued with a sense of trying to know the unknowable, to apprehend something that is ultimately always beyond the grasp of the witness, of the reader. In *Vertigo* the narrator describes a scene on a train in which, not for the first time while journeying throughout Italy and Germany, he recognises a stranger as a famous historical figure: in this case, Elizabeth, daughter of James the First.[387] Elizabeth, known as the Winter Queen, recites to herself a quatrain from a book she is holding,

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[384] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 14.
[385] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 17.
[386] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 18.
[387] Sebald, *Vertigo, op. cit.*1999: 254-6.

entitled *The Seas of Bohemia*,[388] which the narrator notices is attributed to an author of whom he had no knowledge named Mila Stern. The narrator observes:

> That I did not know what to respond at the time, did not know how this winter verse continued, and, despite the feelings within me, could not say a word but merely stood there stupid and mute, looking out at a world that was now almost gone in the failing twilight, is something which, since that day, I have often much regretted.[389]

The narrator claims that although he has often searched libraries for *The Seas of Bohemia*, he has found no record of it. This episode typifies the witness' attempt to apprehend the unknowable. The witness is rendered speechless and incapable of action at the time of the event, and is unable to properly reference or represent the event later. While his search for the book from which the lines were recited inverts the process of creating narrative, it emphasises the problems encountered in attempting to authenticate the past. The unknown author's Jewish name (Mila Stern) and the congruence of the geographical location of the train journey[390] (south-west Germany) with the bleak association of landscape with unknown faces and death[391] is sufficient to remind the reader of the oblique reference Sebald's narrator is making to the Shoah. While this episode is fanciful and contrived, its absurd overload of history serves to remind us of the history that is not mentioned. The clichéd metaphors of roses and veils in the recited poetry and the fairy-tale choice of name and character (the "White Queen") lends the effect of a Grimm fairy-tale in the sense of atrocity re-presented as a familiar children's narrative. By locating the unusual and the appalling in the mundane, the narrative not only demonstrates the incapacity of realist narration, but also references the general crisis of representation. Functioning as a non-direct reference, it both is and

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[388] Deluge references are widespread in Sebald's fiction. They usually connote historical or psychological oblivion, and often contextually and metaphorically relate the two states as a comment on the bleak post-war modern condition.

[389] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 256.

[390] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 254 "(t)he words "south-west Germany", "south-west Germany" were running over and over in my mind, till after a couple of hours of mounting irritation I came to the conclusion that something like an eclipse of my mental faculties was about to occur".

[391] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 256 "Grasses white as driven snow / Veils far blacker than a crow / Gloves as tender as the rose / Masks for faces no-one knows".

is not an allusion to the Holocaust. The narrator-as-witness is reminded of his inability to entirely grasp the knowledge of this ultimately unrepresentable, unknowable event.

Temporal Rupture

And while it is so very often death that forms the centre of what for Sebald is unknowable, it is an unknowable phrased in ethical and existential terms. Death for Sebald informs and defines conscious being. As Robert Lifton has observed,

> [d]eath tests everyone's integrity: the dying person's immediate survivors, and the attending healers contribute to a collective psychic constellation within which issues of continuity, discontinuity, self-completion and disintegration are addressed.[392]

Lifton's use of the Benjaminian concept of the "constellation" constitutes a non-linear appreciation of time. As an unconventional means of relating otherwise unassociated subjects, it is a concept that will be considered later in its relation to both metonymy[393] and institutional morality. In his essay on the work of Jean Amery, Sebald considers the effect of trauma in rupturing linear chronology, so that "chronological time is broken, background and foreground merge, the victim's logical means of support in his existence are suspended."[394] For Amery death is unavoidably the point at which temporal rupture occurs, the boundary separating continuity and discontinuity. Sebald quotes Amery's telling phrase that "[f]or two decades I had been in search of the time

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[392] quoted by Henry Krystal, *op. cit.* 1995: 85 (Lifton: 1979: 109). Benjamin and Adorno's use of the concept of a "constellation" will be discussed below in terms of metonymical narrative structure in Sebald's writing. It is relevant, however, to acknowledge Krystal's extension of the concept outside of language for use in a psycho-social context. Instead of a disparate grouping of unrelated aspects around a single referent, Kystal's constellation is constituted by a "collective" of individuals: the implication for this thesis is the relevance of metonymy to define social relations. Krystal's reference to the radical alternatives of continuity and discontinuity, etc, is indicative of the dual capacity of metonymy as both a synecdochic and metonymical trope, of being both determined as a part within a whole (synecdochical and "motivated") and random and accidental ("arbitrary").

[393] Schleifer considers metonymy to register both within and outside of time. Synechdoche is strictly a-temporal because it describes the hierarchical relation of one unit to another (whether the part as a whole or the whole as a part) without reference to temporal structure. His definition of metonymy is more complex, characterising it by its piebald constitution (comprising both metonymical and synecdochical characteristics) as alternatively both temporal and a-temporal. The capacity to alternate between temporal and non-temporal narrative states uniquely qualifies metonymy as a rhetorical counterpart of trauma, which embodies temporal disruption.

[394] W G Sebald "Against the Irreversible: On Jean Amery", in Sebald *On The Natural History of Destruction: With Essays on Alfred Andersch, Jean Amery and Peter Weiss*, Anthea Bell (transl.) 2003: 154.

that was impossible to lose, but it had been difficult for me to talk about it."[395] Sebald interprets this paradoxical statement in terms of Amery's search for a form of language capable of representing his experience meaningfully, in this case the essay genre. He refers to Amery's project as "reconstructing his memory to the point where it became accessible to him and to us."[396] Caruth, however, reads exactly this type of paradox, of Amery's seeking that which cannot be forgotten, not as a search for appropriate means of articulation so much as an attempt to witness the inconceivable. For Caruth searching for that which is not lost is an attempt to include within history that which is not understandable. This reading does not resolve the paradox of an unrepresentable past time but seeks to accommodate and transmit it in the hope of possible witnessing. For both Sebald and Caruth, while chronological rupture is indicative of trauma, it is not of itself something to be avoided. It is often as much an aid to healing as it is to recognising the past.

Chronological rupture as a theme is at the centre of literary and cultural theory's interest in trauma. In having to recognise the non-conscious repetition of repressed memories, the trauma sufferer, Freud noted, would "repeat the repressed material as a contemporary experience, instead of … remembering it as something belonging to the past."[397] For the observer of such non-consciously rehearsed actions, it is a playing out of the past, a narrative that exists as a narrative only because it has been dislocated from its initial occurrence in time. Freud's interest in temporal dislocation can be seen as both deriving and detracting from the Enlightenment concept of time as quantifiably constant and linear. Schleifer comments that it is the Newtonian construction of Enlightenment notions of time – of a neutral, unending progression of coterminous and interchangeable periods of history – that enables Foucault's observation that Enlightenment representation is capable of resuscitating the absent past. In Foucault's words, Enlightenment representation possesses "'the obscure power of making a past

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[395] *Ibid.*

[396] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2003: 155.

[397] Bessel A van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart "The Intrusive Past: The Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma" in (Caruth ed. Intro) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 1995: 158-182: at 167. (quoting Freud: 1920, 18).

impression present once more'".[398] Sebald's fiction indulges in the Enlightenment re-appropriation and re-presentation of the past, carrying the reader along with the narrator into architectural, textual and photographic continuities of past events, as if those events were with us still.

Chronological rupture is inscribed in trauma narrative because of the regular return to a past traumatic event. The form of literary trauma narrative is indicative of its content, to the extent that the evidence of repressed trauma (repetition, rupture, ellipsis, silence) constitutes an ineradicable part of the narrative. It is worthwhile examining one of the many instances of trauma narrative in Sebald's fiction. To foreground Sebald's interest in contemporary society as much as in the Holocaust, it is instructive to use an example of trauma that is not burdened by the excesses of Holocaust experience, but rather situates trauma within the seemingly mundane. In *All'estero*, the second story of Sebald's first novel, *Vertigo*, the narrator relates details of two of his journeys to Vienna, Venice, and Verona in Milan, separated by a period of seven years. His first visit, in 1980, is beset by foreboding, by the feeling that he is being followed by two sinister men. References to a murderous and mysterious anarchic political group, *Organizzazione Ludwig*,[399] heighten the narrator's paranoia. When in 1987 the narrator returns to Verona, he continues to be the victim of mishap; he narrowly avoids being mugged, he loses his passport, and regularly forgets what he has done and where he has been. Nonetheless, in keeping to his intention "to probe my somewhat imprecise recollections of those fraught and hazardous days and perhaps record some of them",[400] he pieces together a narrative understanding of his first visit. From the outset of his second journey, the narrator's intention to visit the past, to let the geography impress memories upon him is satisfied. Memory on the journey has an indexical, external effect on the narrator. Rather than entering into a reverie in which he actively engages his memories, his memories (like the active function of the station platform column at Pilsen described in *Austerlitz*, below), affect him. He describes memories that

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[398] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 3 (quoting Foucault, *The Order of Things*, Random House, New York, 1970: 69).

[399] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 77-8.

[400] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 81.

"rose higher and higher in some place outside of myself, until … they overflowed from that space into me, like water over the top of a weir."[401] Not only are the memories active, they are constituted spatially (architecturally), as an externally apprehended volume, a fluid but identifiably real entity that influences the narrator by exceeding his bodily self. Drowning is a common motif in Sebald's fiction,[402] often connoting a sense of moral and existential uncertainty. This vertigo closely relates to the model of memory as bodily excess and of the concept of the abject (discussed earlier in the chapter two), as something that affects the narrator in a visceral and radical way that alters his apprehension of the past and (hence) his subjectivity. The overflow of memory into the subject causes a temporal confusion in the narrator; he is submerged, overwhelmed by the external pressure of alternative times, of past events that return to him. While so far the external effect of memory demonstrates the likelihood of chronological rupture, it is necessary to continue with the passage to fully cover the ways in which trauma's spatial and temporal dislocation effects Sebald's narrator.

In Verona the narrator meets with an acquaintance, Salvatore Altamura, who enlightens the narrator as to the details surrounding the *Organizzazione Ludwig*.[403] But, rather than immediately address the narrator's interest, Salvatore explains the plot of another narrative, Leonardo Sciascia's apocryphal historical crime thriller *1912 + 1* at some length. Like Sebald's own writing, Sciascia's novel is "more like an essay in form",[404] merging history with literature, which for Sebald is a means of raising questions about the often disorienting relation between fiction and reality.[405] An underlying theme in *All'estero* is the unstable proximity of literary and journalistic (fictional and factual) narrative. Asked earlier in the novel whether he is a journalist or writer, the narrator explains that "neither the one nor the other was quite right".[406] Many references to newspaper journalism and its relation to fact and deception occur in the story.

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[401] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 82.
[402] For further reference, see fn. **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
[403] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 127-34.
[404] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 128.
[405] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 94-5.
[406] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 94.

Salvatore himself is a newspaper editor; the narrator spends much of the earlier part of the day reading volumes of past newspapers; and after spending much of the previous morning writing his own crime story, the narrator comes to regard his work as "the most meaningless, empty, dishonest scrawl",[407] a melancholy feeling that is soon alleviated by the midday delivery of a swathe of international and local newspapers, which he reads until the evening.[408] The conflation of fact with fiction is only exacerbated by the narrator's observation that, on returning to Sciascia's novel after a digression, Salvatore told the story "as it were returning to the real world".[409] Sciascia's crime fiction is the type of narrative the narrator earlier professed to himself be writing, claiming he

> had a growing suspicion that it [the narrator's writings] might turn into a crime
> story, set in upper Italy … . The plot revolved around a series of unsolved
> murders and the reappearance of a person who had long been missing.[410]

The plot summary to which the narrator gestures resembles his own circumstances, just as those circumstances in turn resemble Sciascia's novel.[411] In the case of Sciascia's story, the missing person is *La Gioconda*, Leonardo da Vinci's famous portrait, which a thief criminally repatriates to Italy. In the case of *All'estero* it is the narrator himself who is missing.[412] During this period his passport is stolen and he is required to replace it with Italian identity papers. His memory during this period, and on his previous visit, has been flawed with inexplicable absences. Although a divagation, Salvatore's crime novel is not irrelevant to the novel the narrator is writing, nor is it irrelevant to the

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[407] Sebald, *Vertigo, op. cit.* 1999: 95.
[408] Sebald, *Vertigo, op. cit.* 1999: 95-6.
[409] Sebald, *Vertigo, op. cit.* 1999: 128.
[410] Sebald, *Vertigo, op. cit.* 1999: 94-5.
[411] Sebald's fiction encourages a model of extra-textual reader involvement, of assiduous historical sleuthing and interpretation in an attempt to comprehend meaning amid myriad associations. In this regard the narrative form emulates its content. To take a brief example: While Wittgenstein's Jewish name and emigrant status might be sufficient to establish a significant connection to Ferber, the relevance of Wittgenstein to the themes of *The Emigrants* is far more extensive. Wittgenstein's family had assimilated to Catholicism in an attempt to avoid anti-semitic stigmatization and persecution. Wittgenstein's life includes reference to Adolf Hitler, who attended the same *Realschule* in Linz at the same time, and was born six days earlier in the same year. Wittgenstein's philosophy considered the function of meaning and non-meaning in language; a topic that is particularly relevant to Sebald's narratives of forgetting, and revealing, significant knowledge of the past. Sebald's technique of referencing a *constellation* of associations is discussed in detail below.
[412] Whitehead, *op. cit.* 2004.

anticipated narrative of Salvatore regarding the *Organizzazione Ludwig*. Salvatore moves on to relate the story of a pair of wealthy, well-educated young men who, in the early 1980s, commit a number of horrific murders. Salvatore introduces this story as quite different to Sciascia's novel, because of a difference in teleology. He refers to the foreboding of the Great War: in 1913 it appeared that "everything was moving towards a single point, at which something would have to happen, whatever the cost."[413] The narrative of the murders committed by two men in the early 1980s, however, are explicable to Salvatore as not chronologically linear. As he states, the narrator anticipated

> quite a different story. And that story, to tell you the end of it first, has now almost reached its conclusion. The trial has been held. The verdict was thirty years. The appeal is due to be heard in Venice in the autumn.[414]

Salvatore's inverted narration of the story takes account of the narrator's absence over the past seven years. But it also conforms to the belated structure of trauma narrative, reflecting the narrator's return to Verona in an attempt to experience traumatic events that were not explicable or perceivable to him on his first visit. It gives the narrator knowledge of events and times he experienced, but did not apprehend. After Salvatore's brief account of the "end" of the story, he fills the intervening period with details of jury trials, respectable families, and inexplicable perfidy, after which he digresses into an account of his love of the opera, partly as exposition of the history of Verdi's opera, *Aida*. Resembling one thwarted crime of the Ludwig murderers, in which they attempted to set fire to a night club, the account ends in the inferno of an opera house during a performance of *Aida*.[415] It is after this account that the narrator remembers, indeed almost hallucinates, a motley German performance of *Aida* he attended with his mother during early childhood, "and of which hitherto I had not had the slightest recollection."[416] The narrator describes the procession of players and

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[413] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 129.
[414] *Ibid.*
[415] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 133.
[416] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 134.

circus animals from his childhood as if it were occurring before him in the piazza in Venice. It

> passed before me several times, quite as if it had never been forgotten, and, much
> as it had then in my boyhood, lulled me into a deep sleep from which – though to
> this day I cannot really explain how – I did not awake till the morning after …[417]

Oddly enough, the narrator's recollection begins with his hearing the hooves of horses in the opera procession, as if responding to Salvatore's observation that he never attends the opera, rather remaining outside, where he "cannot hear the music … Not a sound. I listen, as it were, to a soundless opera."[418] Unlike Salvatore, the narrator hears the opera regardless of its spatial and temporal absence.

The reason Salvatore offers for no longer going to the opera is that "[t]he audience no longer understands that they are part of the occasion."[419] Again, like the narrator's later hallucination of Aida, and like Salvatore's earlier account of a story, "as it were returning to the real world",[420] a confusion of representation and reality occurs, this time in Salvatore's appreciation of opera. He condemns the audience's inability to realise that they constitute part of a re-enactment, a representation. For Salvatore the opera is simultaneously the performers' and the audience's event; it is a necessary confusion that exists in the movement between representation and reality, between one narrative and another, and between reality and recollection. Invariably this confusion is closely connected to temporal confusion: it is lost (eg; the narrator's inexplicable absence of a day of sleep after his meeting with Salvatore), synchonised (eg; the conjunction of the narrator's boyhood experience of *Aida* with the present), inverted (eg; Salvatore's account of the end of the Ludwig murderers' story prior to its beginning), and recovered (eg; the narrative explication of the narrator's paranoia by account of the *Ludwig Organizazzione* trials). Although Salvatore claims to have avoided

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[417] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 135.
[418] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 132-3.
[419] *Ibid.*
[420] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 128.

the opera for "more than thirty years",[421] he responds to the historical re-creation of a 1913 performance of *Aida* with the suggestion that maybe "no time had passed at all".[422] The notion of aesthetic re-creation of reality and the past is important to the narrator's recovery of absent temporalities and memories, as is evidenced by his attempt to re-create his past in literature, and by the studied confusion in *All'estero* of journalism and fiction, actuality and artefactuality. Ultimately, the narrator of *All'estero* enacts (or, to use van Alphen's term, "re-enacts") a belated, recursive temporality to recover absent experiences. The process not only effects, but is caused by, a rupturing of linear narrative chronology.

The previous section (*Intersubjectivity: Sebald, Van Alphen, & the Ethical Witness*) considered Sebald's movement from the first of van Alphen's models to a second intersubjective model that constitutes subjectivity dialogically through language. Van Alphen's intersubjective model is a means with which to consider the significance of the Holocaust in terms of its causative function in reality, and in terms of its signifying function as repressed memory and history. But is the consideration of history in terms of repression and of intersubjectivity warranted? Some writers debate the efficacy of postmodernism's ability to engage directly with the Holocaust: while observing that modernism appears to separate from postmodernism at the point of the Shoah, Dominick La Capra suggests that it is paradoxical that postmodernism fails to deal directly with the holocaust, preferring to reify the aporia it creates rather than seek to resolve the representational and ethical problems inherent in it.[423] He observes that much in postmodern discourse occludes or evades the Shoah, that it is alternately "traumatized, melancholic, manically ludic, opaque, and at times mournfully elegiac".[424] La Capra criticises Caruth in a similar fashion, claiming that in attempting to explain the traumatic process of constant return, her language replicates the model of trauma by itself offering repeated returns instead of concrete elucidation. In seeking to delineate

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[421] *Ibid.*
[422] Sebald, *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 133.
[423] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 1996: 222.
[424] *Ibid.* This is quoted by Rabinbach, *op. cit.* 1999: 127.

Caruth's situation of literary theory in its relation to literature and to psychoanalysis, he critiques Caruth's description of the point at which the disciplines meet.[425] La Capra quotes Caruth's observation:

> And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet.[426]

Because Caruth offers two points in this model, the second mapping on to the first, La Capra sees the result as "disconcertingly opaque".[427] It is not a movement toward explanation, but a repetition. La Capra equates Caruth's returning movement as a mode of deconstruction typical of de Man.[428] It is the purpose of this thesis to maintain, however, that opacity is precisely the aspect of representation (or the crisis of representation) that has been avoided by conventional historical narrative, while it has been explored by cultural and trauma theory. While repetition of itself is limited in its capacity to explain, it remains as a practice of working toward explicability, as a precursor to understanding the past. If that understanding is limited, Caruth would suggest that the limitation is psychological and historical, but recognised by the witness, the reader, as nonetheless an opening onto new knowledge.

In debating temporality and memory, the terms used by both LaCapra and Caruth figuratively rely on spatial concepts of paths, intersections. Similarly, Sebald's accounts of traumatised memory (typified by the example of the narrator's hallucination of a past memory spatially realised before him in the piazza of Venice, and by the language of departure and arrival in which "everything was moving towards a single point") demonstrate the artefactual, often architectural landscape that structures conceptions of the relation of memory and self identity to time. It is within the rhetorical paradigm of architecture that the trauma of Sebald's memory landscapes is rendered explicable. The

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[425] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 2001: 184.

[426] *Ibid.* (Quoting Caruth, Caruth, *op. cit.*1996: 6).

[427] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 2001: 184.

[428] *Ibid.* See also: LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz*, 1998: 208n.

next chapter interrogates trauma in the terms developed in this chapter; of temporal and spatial (architectural) displacement.

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THE ARCHITECTURE OF TRAUMATIC MEMORY

Through the use of a number of close readings of Sebald's fiction, this chapter demonstrates the significance of architecture as representing an indexical (and thereby metonymical) narrative trace of subjective memory, history and identity. The readiness of architecture to embody any number of aspects describing contemporary subjectivity and history makes it particularly apposite to Sebald's project. In terms of narrative, architecture offers a useful example of the vacillation between textual presence and temporal absence that typifies the impossibility of post-Holocaust representation, and indicates Sebald's inclination toward the trope of metonymy in emphasising the temporally synchronous, spatially congruous relations between body and building, rather than the a-temporal and non-spatial paradigm of metaphorical correspondences. The role of inter-subjectivity is thus reconstituted as a spatial indexical relation between the body-as-witness and the built landscape, and an indexical temporal connection between that landscape and the past. Existentialist philosopher and fiction writer Jean Paul Sartre's construction of architecture as an instrumental projection of the body leads ultimately to an interpretation of trauma theory capable of reconciling the crisis of representation with depictions of the embodied subject.

Architectural Displacement

The narrative preference for an inter-subjective model of language is evident in Sebald's metonymical displacement of repressed memories into the inter-subjective, social spaces of architecture. For Sebald's narratives, personal memories are displaced into the public and official realm of history and politics. The buildings he describes are the culturally visible incarnations of state and public institutions charged with the responsibilities of knowledge manipulation and function, with the responsibilities of history and civic memory. But while they are a measure of cultural and institutional dominance, informing Sebald's construction of the modern individual, they function also as traces of the past, as spaces of dialogical significance to the subject.

By situating personal memory within public architecture, Sebald's fiction employs architecture as a metaphor for the incommunicability of traumatised memory. David

Frisby observes that concomitant with this sense of incommunicability is a spatio-temporal dislocation, "a displacement, an obfuscation of experience into another realm."[429] In Sebald's fiction that other realm is the topographical, the architectural world. An example of Sebald's metonymical displacement of traumatized memories into architecture occurs in *Austerlitz*. In it, reference to the violent colonial role of European history is often transposed into the gigantic edifices built to accommodate its public and state institutions. A photograph in *Austerlitz* of the Palace of Justice in Brussels is reminiscent of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, in which the same city is depicted as an arid and lifeless construction, a necropolis founded on Belgian colonial exploitation, namely the 1890s holocaust of the Belgian Congo.[430] By associating the horror of atrocity with civic architecture, Conrad renders the historically repressed (absent) amorality of the Belgian state architecturally visible. Sebald's reference to the Palace of Justice, "on the old Gallows Hill",[431] equates the monumental architecture of Brussels with a morally questionable past. But the edifice is not only the visible incarnation of a public institution complicit in genocide; it is a metonym for the authoritative and conceptual functions of European institutionalism, for the implementation of bourgeois justice and history, civic incarnations of the processes of memory that inhere in a state and its citizens. Indeed, the building is arguably an instantiation of the notion of European Enlightenment History, in van Alphen's sense of history as a structural, Hegelian absolute.[432] The edifice is described by the secondary

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[429] David Frisby "Culture, Memory, and Metropolitan Modernity" Musner, *et. al.* (eds.) *op. cit.* 1999: 102-115, at 106.

[430] Joseph Conrad *Heart of Darkness*, in *Three Stories*, 1967: "In a very few hours I arrived in a city that always makes me think of a whited sepulchre." It is of note that Conrad's narrator Marlowe regards the Company's offices, which he had "no difficulty in finding" as "the biggest thing in town" (see p. 55), certainly an applicable description for the monumental Palais des Justice. The connotations of death recur in the "somnambulist" attitude akin to mourning of the two women who receive him at the Company's offices (p. 55); the tomb-like "monumental whiteness" of a Brussels drawing room; and a piano resembling a "polished sarcophagus" (p. 156) toward the end of the novella. Sebald makes reference to the history of the Belgian Congo in a section depicting Conrad's past in *The Rings of Saturn*. See: Sebald, *op. cit.* 1998: 119-20.

[431] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 38.

[432] van Alphen, *op. cit.* 1999: 195.

narrator and protagonist, Austerlitz, as a "singular architectural monstrosity",[433] on which building had commenced prior to the completion of its planning, such that it

> contains corridors and stairways leading nowhere, and doorless rooms and halls
> where no one would ever set foot, empty spaces surrounded by walls and
> representing the innermost secret of all sanctioned authority.[434]

This passage disconcertingly implies a non-conscious (repressed) absence at the its centre of state power, further emphasised by the narrator's observation that Austerlitz claimed to have spent hours searching the building for a fabled "labyrinth used in the initiation ceremonies of the freemasons, which he had heard was in either the basement or the attic storey of the palace" (39). Power is hidden within doorless rooms, displaced into a secret society without official sanction, and rendered ephemeral by the implication that it exists only as representation; that the "innermost secret of all sanctioned authority" is not the empty spaces themselves, but what the spaces are *representing*; namely, the complicit deception that a sanctioned authority exists at all. Sebald's depiction of The Palace of Justice functions in this regard as an analogy of the artefactual structure and representation of modern bureaucratic institutions.

Austerlitz' doorless rooms also function as an analogy for the processes of traumatic memory. Just as he attempts to recover his lost memories, Austerlitz searches the palace in an attempt to recover memories that exist only as absences, as un-locatable walled-off spaces. While these interpretations might at first seem oblique, I would suggest that they are the means by which Sebald deals effectively with difficulties in representing the Holocaust as traumatic memory. Architecture is the unyielding deictic trace that the displaced character Austerlitz actively follows in his attempt to recover his repressed memories. Architecture thus both obstructs and impels him. In talking with the narrator about his research into architecture, he observes that although he no longer makes records of his studies, he continues "to marvel at the strange edifices we construct."[435] In its generality this statement is applicable to more than architecture,

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[433] Sebald, *op. cit*.2001: 38.
[434] Sebald, *op. cit*.2001: 39.
[435] Sebald, *op. cit*. 2001: 57.

which develops throughout the novel as a conceit for the processes of memory as much as the processes of institutional history and morality. But it is within architecture that the issues of state-sanctioned genocide and traumatised memory converge. As a versatile metaphor, architecture resolves problems of Holocaust trauma and representation by finding those lost or repressed connections between subject and history, between the individual and the "sanctioned authority"[436] of the public institution.

As a metaphor for traumatised memory, architecture in Sebald's fiction is situated within a landscape that is itself traumatised. A useful concept here is Stefan Goldman's notion of *anamnesis*, of recollection founded upon physical, often architectural objects in the "memory landscape."[437] David Frisby quotes Goldman's suggestion that "[h]istory is remembered not chronologically but topographically".[438] It is an observation that reflects the description of one character in Sebald's *The Emigrants*, of how traumatic memory causes a sensation of nausea akin to "vertigo" resulting from a heightened perspective of landscape,

> as if one were not looking back down the receding perspectives of time but rather
> down on the earth from a great height, from one of those towers whose tops are
> lost to view in the clouds.[439]

In this brief passage the conjunction of architecture and landscape in a topographical perspective serves as a metaphor for history and memory, both conceding a reliance on the embodied, literally *fallible* subject.

Architecture in Sebald's texts functions as a metaphor of institutional history and as a space of memory and forgetting. The constructed spaces in his texts perform not simply a mnemetic function relative to memory, but exist as a physical trace of memory, as a "memory space",[440] able to be read and recollected. Sebald's architectural landscapes of metropolitan destruction operate as memory spaces and just as

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[436] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 39.
[437] Frisby, *op. cit.* 1999: 107.
[438] *Ibid.*
[439] Sebald, *op. cit. The Emigrants*, 1996: 145.
[440] Frisby, *op. cit.* 1999: 107.

significantly as spaces of forgetting, registering what survives but also witnessing that which has not survived. One commentator offers examples from Sebald's "Max Aurach", the fourth story in the German published *Die Ausgewanderten* (*The Emigrants*). The first example is Sebald's aerial photograph of Manchester evidencing a metropolitan "lacuna", the vacant area where a large Jewish community had once existed. The second is the photograph of an office building in Bad Kissingen, built on the site of a synagogue destroyed during Kristallnacht.[441] While both photographs ostensibly portray the traces of anonymous buildings as general cityscape, their context within Sebald's account of Jewish loss produces a totally other depiction: that of the absence of specific buildings. Indeed, the reason for the inclusion of these photographs does not appear to be sufficient until the reader apprehends (by means of the text) the absence of each photograph's subject.

Forgetting forms an instrumental part of memory, which Sebald recognises and attempts to convey by often depicting buildings that have become hybrids of separate times, that have long ago experienced their heyday, and now exist wholly in neither the present nor the past. In their present decrepit or tastelessly renovated state they both enable and obscure memory, offering to the witness both the architectural space as it exists in their memory, and simultaneously the metonymically congruent but significantly altered present architectural space.[442] As Hodgkin and Radstone have observed, although metaphors for memory often employ the notion of containment,[443] other metaphors accentuate the conjunction of specific locations with specific memories. They note that the metaphor of topography

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[441] Stephanie Harris "The Return of the Dead: Memory and Photography in W G Sebald's Die Ausgewanderten" in *The German Quarterly*, 74, No. 4 (Fall 2001): 379-391, at 385-6.

[442] For a discussion of the differentiation between spatial and contextual metonymical concepts, see: Cornelia Zelinsky-Wibbelt "How Do We Mentally Localize Different Types of Spatial Concepts?" 527-50, in Pütz, Martin and Dirven, René (eds.) *The Construal of Space in Language and Thought*, 1996.

[443] Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone "Introduction: Contested Pasts," in Hodgkin and Radstone (eds.) *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, 2003: 11: "one familiar set of metaphors for memory concerns depth and containment… – memory as closet, cauldron, archaeological dig". The fictional component of this thesis employs an extended metaphor of memory as an archaeological dig, as it readily connotes the pertinent themes of the grave, reliquaries, and the mortal self.

remind[s] us how closely memory is tied to place, and how many of its moments

of disjuncture and complexity are associated with changes in a place, registering

the uncanniness of being at once the same and different, at once time and

space.[444]

One of many instances of this is Austerlitz's narration of his visit to the Wilsonova Station in Prague. Its Jugendstil ornamentation is described as having been obscured by "ugly glass facades and concrete blocks",[445] and the narrator observes that half of the station's dome has been replaced by a new building. However, when the narrator describes the basement hall of the station, a scene confronts the reader that belies the simplicity of its appearance. While the hall is partly given over to banks of poker machines, the narrator first notices the many huddled crowds of people

who had spent the night there among piles of luggage … most of them still asleep.

A sickening red-hued light immersed the entire apparently boundless encampment

in a positively infernal glare as it shone from a slightly raised platform…on which

about a hundred games machines were arranged in several batteries, idling to no

purpose and chanting inanely to themselves. I stepped over some of the

motionless bodies on the floor, went upstairs…[446]

What Austerlitz is subconsciously expecting, and what the reader might half expect, is ultimately what is narrated, so that the station becomes what it once was: a sickening and boundless night encampment of bodies, a point of forced embarkation to a concentration camp. But the connection is not explicitly made at this point in the narrative, so that the narrator's perception of the crowds and their luggage in the Wilsonova station simultaneously obstructs and assists his memory. While the Wilsonova station metonymically displaces one crowd for another fifty years hence, to the narrator the station's architecture is a memory space, a trace of what no longer exists, but what in an architecturally and mentally repressed sense partly remains. The memory trace, this slippage from present to past, is enabled by the continuance of

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[444] *Ibid.* This quote is also particularly relevant to the discussion (*infra*) of Proust's metonymical structuring of narrative memory.

[445] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 306.

[446] *Ibid.* The example of the Wilsonova station as a building straddling two distinct times demonstrates Sebald's use of architecture as an indexical remainder of the past.

architectural function: the station persists as an architecture of waiting crowds. Nonetheless, it is the technologised interspersion of the hundred gaming machines that re-differentiates the past from the present, reminds the reader and the narrator of the present. But it is now a present suffused with other present moments that, although latent, endure in the architecture and the repressed memory landscape through which the narrator travels.

Architectural Memory in Pilsen

A further illustration of Sebald's infusion of architecture with memories of the past occurs in the character Austerlitz's only memory of his recent visit to the city of Pilsen. While on the station platform he photographs the capital of a cast-iron column. He claims that it

> struck some chord of recognition in me. What made me uneasy at the sight of it, however, was not the question of whether the complex form of the capital, now covered with a puce-tinged encrustation, had really impressed itself on my mind when I passed through Pilsen with the children's transport in the summer of 1939, but the idea, ridiculous in itself, that this cast-iron column, which with its scaly surface seemed almost to approach the nature of a living being, might remember me and was, if I may put it, said Austerlitz, a witness to what I could no longer recollect for myself.[447]

Of primary concern to Austerlitz, then, was not whether he remembered the column, but the idea of whether the column remembered him. If that were possible, then the architecture might indeed also recall, as "witness", the traumatic and forgotten events of his childhood. As Anne Whitehead has observed, Sebald's fiction

> deliberately and provocatively defamiliarises the urban living spaces of Europe in order to shock us into recalling the Holocaust. He reveals that the catastrophe was uncannily prefigured in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century domestic and

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[447] W G Sebald, *op. cit.* 2001: 311.

civic architecture and that we must still negotiate its reality on a daily basis, as we continue to inhabit or live among its unhomely remnants.[448]

"Unhomely" is a reference to *unheimlich*, the uncanny effect of locating the unfamiliar in the mundane. Austerlitz's experience inverts the usual notion of the uncanny, of locating something strange in the familiar; instead, Austerlitz locates his search for the familiar in foreign landscapes and unremembered architecture. He remains entirely passive in relation to the column, which is attributed not only organic attributes as a "living being" and the human action of possibly remembering Austerlitz, but the process of Austerlitz's having remembered the column is also phrased in terms of the column's agency, of having actively "impressed itself", like a mechanical printing press, upon his mind as a child. The column's function as witness is represented here as an active bodily process. Rather than merely harbouring a passive, internalised record of past events, like the rings of a tree-bole, the active function of architectural remembering constitutes in this instance an externalised pressure, an imprint upon the mind of the protagonist. In this way the column functions as an indexical memory, a stamp proclaiming the possibility of decipherment in the latent memories of others. The indexical effect of the column on Austerlitz is explicable as a metonymical association, whereby it imparts the representation of something it has "witnessed", something that has occurred in its presence but that the column in no way resembles. Suited to the historical function of civic architecture, the metonymical connection is spatial and temporal, offering to Austerlitz a civic testimonial of the past, implicit in the function of witnessing, rather than the subjective inadequacy of his traumatised personal memories.

The function of architecture as both a metaphor and a metonym for latent memories and for forgotten history is the process that Austerlitz narrates. Archaeological or chronological clues remain latent in the architecture of buildings, like so many forensic puzzles. But architecture is not ultimately what is at stake in Sebald's fiction, which primarily, if often figuratively, considers the significance of memory and history. The

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[448] Whitehead, *op. cit.* 2004: 200.

extent to which architecture is more than a displaced signifier of memory is exhibited in its ineradicable impact on modern memory as the artificial landscape in which the majority of people, survivors and witnesses, exist.

Austerlitz's preoccupation with memory and memory repression is evident in the language he uses. Austerlitz claims that the events of his past were events that "I could no longer recollect for myself." The tense here does not simply imply that he "could not recollect", a statement that does not distinguish a time when he could remember from a time when he cannot, but that "I could *no longer* recollect" (my italics). Time here is crucial to Austerlitz' recall. However, his situation is not merely one of gradually fading memories, but of the recovery of memories that he never before recognised.

The conjunction "could" invokes the need of a condition under which his recall is rendered impossible. My suggestion is that Austerlitz could no longer recollect *if he attempted to do so.* The specific condition Austerlitz offers under which he could no longer recollect is his own subjective self: "I could no longer recollect *for myself*" (my italics). This condition clarifies the possibility that other people, or, as in the instance of the column at Pilsen station, the architecture might recall what he could not, or that, with the assistance of others or the assistance of the historical, architectural landscape, he might be capable of recalling past occurrences.

While the choice of language here reaffirms the indeterminacy of Austerlitz's memory, it implies the means by which that memory might be recovered. His task of re-remembering becomes an inter-subjective act reliant on a world of others, on the public realm, epitomised here by the architecture. For Austerlitz the realm of the extant Other often takes the form of architectural remnants of the past, as with the column, constituting the inter-reflexive form of witness.

Other than implication, however, the condition under which Austerlitz might recall is never explicitly identified. Whatever the condition might be, its literal absence emphasises the problematic status of memory, of subjective knowledge of the past. The condition of recall remains both implied and unstated, as if to show not that memory

either functions or does not function, but that the process of memory, and the broader context of its aids and impediments, is itself an issue. Austerlitz's is not incapacity of memory, but a latency of memory. At that specific time Austerlitz could not remember. However, the possibility of his being able to recall at other times, or of others being able to assist his recall or to recall for him, leaves open the possibility, even if unlikely, of remembrance. The latency of memory remains the fundamental issue for Austerlitz, searching Europe for indexical clues to memories that are inaccessible, latent, dissociated or repressed, rather than (as in the case of someone who simply "*does* recollect") searching for memories that are now non-existent.

The Cimitero di Staglieno

While Sebald's final novel *Austerlitz* relies on architecture as a pivotal literary motif, overtly presenting it as a manifestation of institutional history and as traumatised memory, this preoccupation with architecture is nonetheless evident even in his first novel, *Vertigo*. An example from *Vertigo* gives some understanding of the extent to which themes of memory and architecture are interrelated in his writing. The anonymous narrator of *Vertigo* visits the Biblioteca Civica in Verona, where he reads a gruesome newspaper report of the murder of an Italian policeman, the details of which he claims to always remember because in one of the tomes of old newspapers he finds a postcard.[449] The postcard is an aerial view of the Cimitero di Staglieno in Genoa. The photograph, included in the text of *Vertigo*, depicts a grand Italianate walled cypress grove, a large villa, adjoining tombs of the cemetery, and a background of hills. The only connection between the content of the photograph and the newspaper report is the cemetery setting.[450] What the narrator's memory and the consequent narrative correlation achieves, however, is to draw a parallel between the picturesque and the gruesome. The happenstance connection of the postcard with the report draws the reader's attention to the violence of death underlying the peaceful Genovese cemetery

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[449] Sebald *Vertigo, op. cit.* 1999: 122-3. This example has been discussed earlier in the Chapter on Photography.
[450] *Ibid.* The newspaper title and introduction read: "Ucciso sul banco anatomico: Ieri sera nella cella mortuaria de cimitero di Nogara" (Killed on the anatomical bench: Yesterday in the mortuary cellar of the Nogara Cemetery): see p. 122.

architecture. The factual newspaper report, witnessing atrocity and murder, is connected by the practical coincidences of the narrator's arbitrary research with the apparent innocence of the Cimitero di Staglieno. The result is that unstated images of a brutal mafia killing in a cemetery recast the ensuing passage regarding the postcard cemetery, so that an ostensibly transparent description of the cemetery's structural peculiarities is burdened by the narrative presence of a witnessed death. This memory is not merely of an architectural scene: like the crowd at the Wilsonova station, it is also plainly representative of something else. By the contrivance of a chance association between the postcard and a newspaper report of a grisly murder (the postcard falling serendipitously from a library volume of collected newspaper editions) the visual depiction of the Genovese cemetery becomes metonymically associated with violent death. And yet, none of the brutality of the newspaper account is present in the placid postcard scene; it is left to the narrator and the reader to enter into the task of scrutinising the postcard for clues as to what it is in the picture that is reminiscent of murder. Through this arbitrary association the photograph takes on an ironical, alternative meaning to the ostensible evocation of calmness and timelessness present in the picture. "The pale light over the dark hills", "the perspective alignment of the walls", "the black fields in the foreground": all these aspects are now not merely masonry or print but signs of a concealed meaning. For the reader, the postcard now functions as an architectural repression of a gruesome and violent death metonymically displaced into mortar and stone, an index of concealed atrocity.

I would argue that by studying the postcard in terms of its architecture, the narrator converts its visual presentation into a spatial memory.[451] While the passage describing

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[451] Russell J A Kilbourn notices the close relationship Sebald constructs between visualization, memory and architecture. Kilbourn cites the classical 'art of memory', of mnemonic visualization of an imaginary architectural space that is then associated with specific memories as a means of enabling recall. Kilbourn suggests that Augustine's model of "negative" memory, of the possibility of holding memories of something never experienced, is altered from a figurative to a literal aspect in Sebald's narratives, specifically *Austerlitz*, in which occurs the "transformation of concrete built space, through narrative description, into the exteriorised space in which memory operates." Kilbourn explains that this process enables the character Jacques Austerlitz access to a space that reconnects the present with a past he had hitherto entirely failed to apprehend. As Kilbourn states, for the character Austerlitz "architecture becomes the *literal* mnemonic space, the operation of which is recounted in a narrative whose meaninf cannot be divorced from its textual status." See Russell

the postcard is first and foremost a study of a black and white photograph, relying on light/dark contrasts of "pale light over the dark hills", a black field and a deep shadow opposing a white villa, it is, unlike the description of other photographs in Sebald's travelogue, not a place that he, the narrator, has visited. For the purposes of the narrator's journeying, the Cimitero di Staglieno postcard is not a physically, indexically realised place, in the sense of having visited and explored the site, but only a textual representation of that space. And yet the narrator seeks to persuade the reader that his study of the photograph was sufficiently intense as to convert it not only from a two-dimensional representation into an architectural space, but into a persisting memory of that space, as if he had been there. The narrator claims to have "examined every square inch of it through a magnifying glass" to the extent that it "seemed so familiar to me that I could easily have found my way around that site blindfolded."[452] This magnification of vision enables or enhances his memory of the place to the extent that it is no longer his sight that is the foremost mode of perception, but his memory. What he does in scrutinising the photograph is what the reader is invited to do also: to achieve through reading, by use of research and imagination, a sense of having been there, of being familiar with a site as if the reader had personally witnessed it. It is no longer witnessed as a picture postcard but as something familiar, a memory.

Following the cemetery passage, further references to bodily violence bolster the connection between the postcard and murder. In walking from the Bibliotec the narrator mentions the Via dei Mutilati and the name of a restaurant owner, Carlo Cadavero, implying again by his travels the architectural incorporation of death and bodily violence into history and memory.

Vertigo: the Body & Architecture

To this point I have considered the function of architecture in Sebald's fiction as a spatially conceived displacement of memory from the trauma survivor to the landscape

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Kilbourn "Architecture and Cinema: The Representation of Memory in W G Sebald's *Austerlitz*" in Long, J J & Whitehead, Anne (eds.) *op.cit.* 2004: 144.

[452] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 123.

through which he travels. In this brief concluding section I concentrate on the bodily relation to architecture, particularly Sebald's presentation of the abyss-like nausea and unease of his characters as a symptom of their traumatised memories. This unease forms the title of his first novel, *Vertigo*, a condition definable in spatial terms of displacement and disorientation. This traumatic displacement is constituted by a metonymical relocation of unrecoverable memories into contiguous spaces. For the narrative and the characters of Sebald's fiction such displacement is a means of dealing with the ethical and aesthetic difficulties encountered in representing the Holocaust.

In all of Sebald's novels, vertigo is associated with two forms of trauma; the first is the historical and personal rupture that is the Holocaust, while the second relates more generally to the figurative disorientation and displacement constituting the modern human condition. The trauma of the Holocaust is for Sebald embedded within the more general trauma that has come to typify modernity: the subjective disorientation and displacement associated with the mechanisation and urbanization of the world and the aphasia of its constant destruction and rebuilding.

Foucault realised the importance of space in considering the historical proximity of architecture to changing social relations.[453] Rather than only studying blocks and mortar, Foucault stressed the importance of studying social space, emphasising the conscribed absence of building material, of architectural space as essential in accounting for the history of a social system. As an example he cites the study of change in social relations in the Middle Ages ensuing from the incorporation of chimneys and hearths within domestic houses, intimating that the consequent possibility of large private gatherings precipitated a change in political and social relations.[454] Not only individual relations, but also perceptions of the individual self, the body and its relation to architecture would have altered.

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[453] Michel Foucault "Space, Knowledge, and Power", in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, 1984: 253.
[454] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1984: 253.

Although the relationship between the self and architecture undergoes regular changes, it is possible to interpret these changes within a cohesive framework. Anthony Vidler describes architectural analogies of the body since classical times. He suggests a gradual historical broadening of the relationship between body and building, to the extent that the body as a contemporary architectural model has dissipated and ultimately been lost within the modern metropolitan landscape.[455] Ultimately, the relation of body to building is no longer an analogy, and no longer the classical relation of the projection of control onto the external world. Instead, Vidler relies on Sartre's notion of the body as defined by "the perception of resistance that objects in the world have to the self."[456] This body is constituted by its instrumental relationship to the world of objects; as the sleeping self supported by the frame of a bed, as a travelling body incorporated into the carriage of a train; and as such is a self that is defined by risk and survival, by resistance to and control of the network of instrumental relationships that comprise and threaten it.[457] Consequently, the building is no longer an analogy for the body, but an instrumental construction of the self. Vidler quotes from Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*: "My body is everywhere: the bomb which destroys my house also damages my body insofar as the house was already an indication of my body."[458]

It is the relation of the body to the world of objects that Caruth questions. In a chapter discussing Paul de Man and Kant, Caruth characterises trauma as a continuing bodily trajectory toward death and the Other. Rather than discretely concentrating on

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[455] Anthony Vidler *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely*, 1992: 70.

[456] Vidler, *op. cit.* 1992: 80.

[457] Vidler, *op. cit.* 1992: 81.

[458] *Ibid* (Quoting from Jean-Paul Sartre *Being and Nothingness*, Hazel E Barnes (transl. Intro.) Philosophical Library, New York, 1956: 323-325). Vidler relates modern notions of bodily and social dissipation to the romantic ideal of "a lost bodily unity fragmented by time and sense experience." (Vidler, 1992: 77-8). He cites the examples of the body parts in Shelley's *Dr Frankenstein*; revisited myths of the search for bodily perfection such as Shaw's *Pygmalion*; and most significantly, Lacan's concept of "The Mirror Stage" to propose an emblematic model of postmodern fragmentation in the mutilated and dismembered body (Vidler: 70). He suggests not only that the role of the modern body is questioned, but that the body of the viewer/reader is implicated as both subject and object in its own "disaggregation" (Vidler: 79): that "(T)he body in disintegration is in a very real sense the image of the notion of humanist progress in disarray." The notion of dissipation and fragmentation is a common factor in postmodern literary theory. One theorist has suggested that postmodern fiction's tendency toward the fragmentary relies on mutilation as an analogy of the loss of structural meaning (Olsen, *The Ellipse of Uncertainty*, 1987: 36). Themes of bodily dissipation have an immediate analogical relevance to trauma theory as a means of working through or narrating trauma. The etymological origin of "trauma" is "wound" (Caruth, *op. cit.*, 1996: 3).

corporeal or temporal discontinuities, Caruth's approach joins the chronological and the carceral in an image of the body in the process of literally "falling".[459] This interpretation provides a useful reading of Sebald's *Vertigo* as *Schwindel* (dizziness), and *Unfall* (an accident), as spatial disjunction and displacement. Caruth explains de Man's theory that Newton's new paradigm of gravity irredeemably changed pre-existing depictions of the world in terms of motion. No longer would the initial motion of objects and bodies be attributed to the metaphysical prime mover, God. Instead, they would be impelled by an invisible, immanent force arising from the attraction of other bodies, and fall toward one another. As Caruth notes, the world toward the end of the seventeenth century was constituted by a paradigm of falling, and the "problem of reference" that science and philosophy encountered became a problem of "*how to refer to falling.*"[460]

I would argue that Caruth's reading emphasises the inter-subjective element of the survivor/witness relation present in narrative. By attributing the function of falling, and hence of trauma, to all bodies, Caruth suggests a tendency toward the Other in narrating trauma. I would interpret Caruth as going so far here as to attempt to re-cast post Enlightenment philosophy and its crisis of reference wholly within the parameters of trauma theory. While this is similar to La Capra's complaint that Caruth's model of trauma attempts to subsume psychoanalysis within the genre of literature,[461] I read Caruth's model as both broader and more advantageous than La Capra would concede. Although the ethical implications of post-Holocaust representation are most relevant for Caruth in the terms of a psychological response to trauma, her generalization of trauma as *falling* broadens trauma's scope so as to incorporate the referential instability of modern philosophy and literature. In the same way as recognising that reference to falling was a representational and a paradigmatic problem, Caruth has found within trauma theory an intergeneric medium with which to apprehend modern subjectivity, historically, psychoanalytically, and fictionally. The construction of the body in terms of

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[459] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 75-6.
[460] Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 76 (Caruth's italics).
[461] LaCapra, *op. cit.* 2001: 183.

architecture has ramifications for the next chapter, which, while introducing the theme of bureaucracy as a formative and destructive element in the textual representation of the mortal subject, nonetheless develops the function of architecture in defining the space in which the subjectivity of the individual and the state collide.

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THE BUREAUCRATIC INSTITUTION & DEATH

Although it is an over-used term, bureaucracy is not a precise concept. Sociologist Martin Albrow has observed that it refers to a variety of concepts: to the abuse of power, or to its expedient administration, or to "a body of officials, or to the routines of office administration."[462] This chapter addresses bureaucracy in terms of its function within contemporary institutions and its influence on representations of the mortal subject. While the first two sections introduce bureaucracy through the narrative figuration of architecture, the third and fourth sections consider the mediation, displacement and dissociation of the mortal individual subject in his or her relation to the bureaucratic edifice. My outline of the nature of goal displacement and Bauman's concept of the mediation of action (which describes bureaucracy's deliberate distancing of the individual subject from the direct experience of atrocity) criticises the ethical construction of modern bureaucracy as repressing the fact of death and denying the relations between citizen, state, and atrocity. Because I suggest that the negative dialectical approach of Adorno is a means of recovering the repressed significance of mortality, I argue ultimately (in *Bureaucracy, Subjectivity & Power* (Gramsci & Foucault) in terms of representation that the repressed elements capable of dialectical recovery are unavoidably political as well as textual.

The Built Institution

Following from the previous chapter (and continuing to rely on Foucault), I will outline an architectural conception of the power relationship between bureaucracy and subjectivity.[463] Architecture constitutes the conceptual means with which to represent the mortal body; it also constitutes an attempt to reconcile the incommensurable to representation. While architecture is first and foremost a metaphor for the body, it also functions as the site within which subjectivity and bureaucracy meet. To complicate matters further, architecture operates as a metonym for the bureaucratic institutions of state and capital. Lastly, architecture is a physical survivor of the past: it functions as an index of the past, as a substitute for public and civic memory. The metaphor of the

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[462] Albrow, *op. cit.* 1970: 14.
[463] Foucault, op. cit. 1984: 253.

archive and the library constitute a common conception of the Enlightenment institution which, in Sebald's and Kracauer's contemporary depiction of it as a mechanised and de-contextualised space, is often opposed to the familial and contextual surrounds of the mortal, reading subject.

The theme of bureaucracy as architecture usefully ties together the issues of textuality and human corporeality, resituating both within the functions of history and memory, which paradoxically enable us to live in the midst of the dead (those who existed and created the world before us) and to discontinue life amidst the living. In architectural terms, Brueghel's depictions of the tower of Babel are a useful means of drawing out the relationships between the embodied subject, the state, and the arbitrariness of death. As conventional forms of representation, and in their content, Brueghel's paintings portray attempts to overcome the apparent meaninglessness of death. They literally depict a struggle to build a structure capable of contending with and overcoming the authority of a dominating God. In so doing, Brueghel's architecture conjoins the metaphysical with the temporal, addressing the fundamental limitation of the reading subject: that of death. The organic, ornate architecture of Brueghel's buildings functions in the manner of Renaissance maps by signifying at one and the same time humanity's mortal limitations and the attempt to succeed them. This is arguably an attempt to structure the mortal world in order to attribute both ethical and epistemological significance to it. As Simon Critchley states, after Nietzsche:

> The fundamental question is that of finding a *meaning* to human finitude. If death
> is not just going to have the contingent character of a brute fact, then one's
> mortality is something that one has to project freely as the product of a resolute
> decision.[464]

Babel's representation of the failure to overcome death is embodied in the idealism of its utopian architecture. As a building seeking to breach the gap between the temporal

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[464] Critchley, *op. cit.* 1997: 67. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche asserts that "[o]ne must convert the stupid physiological fact into a moral necessity." (Friedrich Nietzsche *The Will to Power*, Walter Kaufmann and R J Hollingdale (transl.) W Kaufmann (ed.) 1968: 484; Aphorism 916, "What has been ruined by the church's misuse of it: 6. death […]").

and the spiritual, it raises the question of how to describe that which exceeds mortal conception,[465] or, in other words, how to represent the unrepresentable. Fredric Jameson associates the non-temporal alterity of death with the metaphysical ideal of utopia: both exist at a level other than that of the mortal world.[466] I would seek to make similar connections between death of the subject and the bureaucratic architecture of Utopianism. In hindsight the never-completed Babel remained from its inception a fragment existing always as a ruin, the intentions of its architects un-fulfilled. The distinction between a destroyed and an unfinished project provides useful insight into the constitution of the mortal self. In its awareness of its ultimate demise, the human subject resembles the prefabrication of destruction apparent in architecture. Like Sartre's relation of the damaged building with the bodily sense of self (discussed earlier), the relation of body and building might even facetiously answer Derrida's query: "What would be an architecture that, without holding, without standing upright, vertically, would not fall again into ruin?"[467] Like the mortal subject, a structure that does not fall again into ruin is one that is pre-emptively (always already) a ruin.[468]

Bureaucracy, Morality & the Architecture of Self

The relation between the individual and the institution often occurs in modern life within the arena of civil society, tethering the self to the State. Mortal and moral self-interrogation therefore raises the question of the function of bureaucracy in the life of the individual self. Such inquiry is an ethically-impelled response to death, reminiscent

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[465] William E Engel *Mapping Mortality: The Persistence of Memory and Melancholy in Early Modern England*, 1995: 139.
[466] Fredric Jameson *The Seeds of Time*, 1994: 128.
[467] Jacques Derrida "A Letter to Peter Eisenman," *Assemblage*, 12: 13, cited in John Sallis, "Babylonian Captivity," *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol 22, 1992: 23-31, at 31n.14.
[468] This notion of a building that both is and is not a ruin is literally present in Sebald's depiction of Liverpool Station in *Austerlitz* in the process of renovation (191: "I could not stop wondering whether it was a ruin or a building in the process of construction that I had entered."). Dr Silke Arnold-De Simine has suggested that, in keeping with the notion of "apocalypse" as both extinction and rebirth, Sebald's conception of monumental architecture as dystopia embodies the contradictory conditions, and the contradictory temporalities, of hopelessness and possibility typified by Sebald's motif of the Second Temple of Jerusalem. See Arnold-De Simine "Architecture as Memory Media in Walter Benkamin and W G Sebald" (Unpublished Work in Progress Seminar Paper, 9 Sept 2005, *Humanities Research Centre*, ANU).

of the truism that an absence of self-interrogation results in resignation or unconscious being, a state of death-within-life.[469]

Concerning the individual's construction in relation to bureaucracy, Barbara J Eckstein attempts to recover social and moral political responsibility by connecting bureaucratic process with inquiry into the modern self. She suggests the need to emphasise a conjunction of individual and social complicity, encouraging a reintegration of the moral and the political as a means of coping with the uncertainties of a contemporary world. Eckstein's re-combination of the personal and political mirrors Sebald's attempt to expose private, personal histories within the public sphere in an attempt to define the complicity between the political and the personal. Eckstein joins Seweryn Bialer's theory that bureaucracy is the primary inhibitor of radical change with Vaclav Havel's suggestion that every citizen is a member of the bureaucracy.[470] For Eckstein the result is clearly one in which "I am complicit in the recalcitrance of bureaucracy."[471] Within each individual's cynical appraisal of bureaucracy hides the knowledge that every individual is nonetheless complicit in sustaining bureaucratic institutions.

Before explaining Jay and Eckstein's conceptions of the textual, bureaucratised subject, I need to outline Marx's appreciation of individual subjectivity, which informs many of the theorists discussed in this thesis. Marx observed that the individual within the bureaucratic state undergoes a process of disjunction.[472] The bureaucratised self is split between the social and the political, resulting in the alienation of self from State, self from product, and hence eventually self from office, engendering situations in which the individual in an official capacity "regretfully undertakes that which he would scorn to do as a human being."[473] While the modern bourgeois individual seeks to maintain an atomistic and inviolable identity, the processes according the individual this intention have been simultaneously picking it to pieces. Similar to Marx's realisation of individual alienation, Freud's unconscious has to an extent undermined simple models

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[469] Rhein, *op. cit.*1964: 97: "The man [sic] who fails to question himself is dead while he still lives."
[470] Eckstein, *op. cit.*1990: 181.
[471] *Ibid.*
[472] See Jacoby, *op. cit.* 1973: 152-3.
[473] *Ibid.*

of self-volition and the notion of a cohesive self. It is this sense of individual disjunction that Eckstein seeks to assuage in her attempt to re-connect the moral responsibility of the social institution with the moral constitution of the individual.

Eckstein's conception of the responsible individual self re-connected with the moral complicity of social institutions overlaps with Paul Jay's Augustinian project of self-inquiry. Both Jay and Eckstein emphasise the role of the textual and theoretical constitution of the self. Just as crucially, however, both Eckstein and Jay attempt to re-construct the disjunctive self by re-incorporating elements of the individual's environment into the narrative of the morally constituted body. While Jay bridges self with self-representation by autobiographically connecting the past with the present, Eckstein attempts to resolve individual disjunction by recombining individual and institutional morality. However, considering that "bureaucracy is part of the larger problem of the internal structure of modern society",[474] Marx's formulation of alienation as the basis of bureaucracy[475] ensures that the moral schizophrenia of the modern self will continue to exist to the extent that bureaucratic institutions dominate society.

From the impersonal perspective of modern bureaucracy and capital, each individual self and its demise is a minor irritant, a statistical phenomenon describing the patterns that transient bodies replicate ad nauseam. This bureaucratic perception informs individual ideals, to the extent that the modern western appreciation of death is anything other than appreciation; expressed in moral terms by Baudrillard, it is simultaneously an unavoidable and unacceptable option:

> Today, *it is not normal to be dead,* and this is new. To be dead is an unthinkable anomaly; nothing else is as offensive as this. Death is a delinquency, and an incurable deviancy.[476]

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[474] *Ibid.*

[475] Jacoby, *op. cit.* 1973:153.

[476] Baudrillard, *op. cit.* 2000: 126. See also Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 132: "Mortality, once regarded as a constituent part of human existence, has been reduced to a critical episode, a certain point in time, which is supposed to happen instantly, preferably when we are asleep."

The relevance of death to modern western society has often dwelt within metaphors of civilizational disruption and decay. It is possible to discern a metaphorical displacement of concern for the death of the individual into the death of the larger social organism of the state, relocating the socially insignificant death of the self within the dramatic theatre of catastrophism, in the decline of Empire, in collapsing architecture and dwindling moral values. In other words, modern western society translates individual eschatology into the architecture of dystopianism, reconceiving the salvation of the dead self in terms of the decline of urban society. Although also mortal, the state claims the prerogative of outliving the body. Instead of a religious, metaphysical eschatology, dystopianism offers a temporary denial of death by means of a synecdochical displacement of the body of the self into the body of the state.

It is the notion of the displacement of the dead body into the body of the state that I see as crucial in locating the connections between death and bureaucracy in terms of architecture. It is not only in terms of trauma that the metonym of architecture typifies contemporary representations of memory and death. The urban architecture of contemporary institutions, in a metaphorical and a literal sense, establishes the space within which the lives and interactions of subject-bodies occur. As such, it is the most immediate artefactual reference of the representation and repression of death. Architecture functions in a paradigmatic manner as a meta-narrative, figurative explanation of any number of artefactual subjects. Nonetheless, architecture's significance to bureaucracy, traumatised memory, and the individual subject (again, at both literal and metaphorical levels) make it a useful means of understanding the representation of death in contemporary society. Returning to the notion of the displacement of the individual body into the architecture of the institution (and its consequent absence), one critic has observed,

> [i]t may well be that the 'escape' from death has taken on a widespread architectural significance. On the one hand, this concerns the architecture of the

body and how it is shaped, maintained, decorated and repaired. On the other it revolves around architectural expressions of the dead – now without bodies.[477]

Bureaucracy and the Disembodied Self

> The unspoken terror permeating our collective memory of the Holocaust (and more than contingently related to the overwhelming desire not to look the memory in its face) is the gnawing suspicion that the Holocaust could be more than an aberration, more than a deviation from the straight path of progress … We suspect … that the Holocaust could merely have uncovered another face of the same modern society whose other, more familiar, face we so admire. And that the two faces are perfectly comfortably attached to the same body.[478]

One common view regarding rationality and genocide relies on the notion that the Holocaust is an aberration from Enlightenment values. This is the view of Jonathan Glover, who argues that humanitarian values have foundered in contemporary times.[479] He suggests that while the relative peace of nineteenth century Europe concreted aspirations of humanitarian and liberal Enlightenment values, those same values were sorely undersold in the twentieth century. Glover argues that the modern failure to fulfill political and moral enlightenment ideals ensuring liberal freedoms such as individual sovereignty, emancipation from slavery, political exile and oppression, pervades attempts to understand contemporary atrocities that not only contend with, but also regularly surpass the depravity and horror of the torturous and genocidal pastimes practised on minorities of the past.[480]

While the possibilities of mechanised genocide have enabled modern regimes to surpass the horror of atrocities committed in the past, the basis from which this thesis has proceeded questions the project of the Enlightenment as a reliable motive for liberal values, working within the notion that it is not a departure from Enlightenment values *per se* that has caused modern atrocities, but the obverse. Atrocities such as Auschwitz and Hiroshima are the radicalised fulfillment of certain Enlightenment

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[477] Gibson Burrell *Pandemonium: Towards a Retro-Organization Theory*, 1997: 152.
[478] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 7.
[479] Jonathan Glover *Humanity: A Moral History of the Twentieth Century*, 2001: 3.
[480] *Ibid.*

aspirations that have seen the dissipation of moral responsibility amid the bureaucratic hegemony of capital and state. Bauman succinctly summarises this view in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, suggesting that the Holocaust is a radical fulfillment of Enlightenment ideals, rather than an aberration from those ideals. In other words, as a paradigm indissociable from the modern practices of mass-producing knowledge and objective history while alienating the individual from labour, society and self, the Enlightenment project has enabled atrocity to creep center-stage. Lawrence Langer suggests an element of truth resides in the notion that

> atrocity seems more at the heart than the edge of contemporary darkness, not an aberration, as past generations might have regarded it, but central to our civilization, an expression of history's energy in behalf of violent, arbitrary death.[481]

What connects the themes of genocide, modern bureaucracy, and a lost European subject? While for the protagonist these themes intersect in the disastrous Eastern European experiment of authoritarian communism and the fallout from its demise, they are more generally evident in the institutionalised killing that continues in the modern world, driven by the hypocrisy of political security and a pervasive conception of individual worthlessness. Death in the story, specifically modern death, is a means by which the protagonist considers aspects of her identity in ethical and existential terms. Similarly, through the post-structural model of negative dialectics, Adorno and Benjamin sought to reassess notions of identity in relation to the social and political domain.[482] Such reconfigurations influence my interest in the bureaucratised subject, as they assert that sovereignty of the bourgeois self is a fiction, and that conventional post-Enlightenment technology and reason is socially repressive.

Sebald's literature ironically and unnervingly associates institutions with seemingly unrelated individuals and events. Similarly (as stated earlier), negative dialectics has sought to locate "the subterranean links between the metaphysics [of] identity and

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[481] Langer, *op. cit.* 1978: 3.
[482] Dews, *op. cit.* 1989: 2.

structures of domination."[483] These unseen links are explained by Zygmunt Bauman as the consequence of the bureaucratic institution's *mediation of action*,[484] the process of distancing any given individual from the violent consequences of their behaviour. The technology and organizational capacity of modern bureaucratic society have made it possible to proximally and mentally dissociate the actions of citizens from genocidal consequences, whether it is employment in the assembly-line construction of components required for mass extermination, assisting in the transportation of Holocaust victims, or, as Bauman describes, "pulling the trigger, or switching on the electric current, or pressing the button on a computer keyboard".[485] The significant characteristic in all of these instances of mediated modern genocide is the moral, physical and psychological ease with which horrific actions are rendered feasible, routine, and invisible. Even where genocidal actions are directly executed, the dispersal of moral responsibility ever upwards in the hierarchical structure of the Nazi bureaucratic system ensured individual discipline and the abrogation of individual moral conscience.[486] In both the mediation of action and the abrogation of moral responsibility, the links between identity and institutional domination become as invisible as the links between individuals and their actions. Bauman refers to this state as "[t]he natural invisibility of causal connections in a complex system of interaction".[487] It is this invisibility of connections that Sebald depicts and seeks to expose when he emphasises the arbitrariness of physical, metonymical associations in his fiction. Not only is indexical metonymical association a means of retrieving moral and physical proximity from the contemporary alienation of individuals from their

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[483] *Ibid.* For reference to Sebald and the institution, see Beckett, Andy "Seduced by Sepia-Tinted Landscapes", (Review of *Austerlitz*) 21, The Guardian Weekly, October 18-24, 2001: Beckett observes that in Sebald's fiction "(T)he sense of people being dwarfed by systems is familiar from Kafka and Foucault: even the libraries where the narrators loiter are depicted as infinitely oppressive institutions."

[484] Zygmunt Bauman Modernity and the Holocaust, 1989: 24. Bauman attributes the notion to John Lachs Responsibility of the Individual in Modern Society, Harvester, Brighton, 1981: 12-13.

[485] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 26.

[486] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 22. Bauman describes a process of dissociating morality from action, of displacing it into a bureaucratic ethic of discipline. Bureaucracies excel at this, he states, because "the means are subjected to solely instrumental-rational criteria, and thus dissociated from moral evaluation of the ends." (98). He cites two requirements: the "meticulous functional division of labour" and "the substitution of technical for a moral responsibility." (98).

[487] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 26.

actions, but it is a way of emphasising the process of representational and political dissociation and subsequent repression practised by contemporary institutional bureaucracy. In other words, the "*free-floating responsibility*"[488] of contemporary bureaucratic organization is both typified and challenged by Sebald's random metonymical association.

It is useful here to consider Laurence J Kirmayer's conception of trauma narrative. Kirmayer argues that the conventional model of repression is too blunt to describe most traumatic states; that instead a more subtle and clinically prevalent model is that of dissociation.[489] While repression is an unconscious submersion of particular memories due to fear, Kirmayer describes dissociation as "a narrowing or splitting of consciousness so that some memories may be put aside."[490] What is significant here is Kirmayer's attempt to explain not only the fractured form of trauma narrative, but also the safeguarding function that trauma narrative performs in adapting to an oppressive world by means of simultaneous ellipsis and revelation. In other words, it usefully accounts for the cultural and social complicity of silence surrounding and comprising Sebald's post-Holocaust narratives. Kirmayer might define dissociation as a defensive blind that, like a bandaged wound, attracts interest while deflecting insight:

> The fragmented nature of dissociative narrative comes from the focusing of
> attention in the traumatic moment and from the subsequent absence of
> consensual social factors to help weave together the dispersed parts. Dissociation
> is a rupture in narrative, but it is also maintained by narrative because the shape of
> narrative around the dissociation protects (reveals and conceals) the gap.[491]

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[488] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 163 (Baumans' italics). Bauman describes the bureaucratic process by which upward deferral of responsibility ultimately results in a mechanism that will "obliterate responsibility." (163).

[489] Caruth observes that the concept of dissociation is attributed to Pierre Janet. See Caruth, *op. cit.* 1996: 141-2 n.8. Dissociation is a "dissociation of the psyche around the event – the splitting off" of 'traumatic memory' from the rest of consciousness (and unconsciousness, for that matter)." Caruth distinguishes the alternative Freudian concept of trauma as the belated experience of "repetition and reenactment" in terms of its temporal structuring, rather than dissociation's a-temporal emphasis on psychic splitting.

[490] Laurence J Kirmayer, "Landscapes of Memory: Trauma, Narrative, and Dissociation", in Paul Antze and Michael Lambek (eds.) Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory, 1996: 179.

[491] Kirmayer, *op. cit.* 1996: 181.

Simultaneous revelation and concealment correlates with Schleifer's model of death's representation as an alternation between presence and absence. [492] The function of dissociation in the modern world constitutes a form of disembodiment, a reminder of death. The incorporeal mechanisms of a bureaucratic world often contrive situations in which subjects never meet, but nonetheless communicate with the disembodied 'ghosts' of the past. As discussed earlier, both disembodiment and bureaucracy form significant parts of Kafka's and Sebald's modern worlds. While I have sought to demonstrate the coincidence of bureaucracy and disembodiment in terms of rhetorical (textual), ethical, and subjective displacement, it is specifically the repressed and displaced connections between the institution and the subject that require further elaboration.

Goal Displacement: Capital & the Absent Subject

The death of the individual impresses upon us the need to consider its correlative function, life. As historian Michel Vovelle notes, "death, in all its manifestations, is the best metaphoric guide to the problems of life,"[493] suggesting that attitudes toward death and their attendant systems of behaviour are "products of the aspiration to happiness."[494] The bureaucratic state of mind and the ubiquity of bureaucratic influence in modern life provide a distorting mirror with which to view our mortal selves, exaggerating, blurring or disfiguring while simultaneously displaying incontrovertible images of our selves. It is at this point that we find a relation between the written and the social embodiment of the self. It has been suggested that political action begins with the analysis of theories and texts: that contemporary textual and

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[492] Dissociation is not the only relevant departure from Caruth's and Freud's model of trauma. Shoshana Felman notes Elie Wiesel's observation that contemporary literature has invented the new genre of testimony. He emphasises legal discourse as a model for the contemporary ethical crises in literature, rather than the psychoanalytical model that Caruth prefers (see Caruth, *op. cit.*1996: 3): "The legal model of the trial dramatises…a contained, and culturally channelled, institutionalised, crisis of truth…What, however, are the stakes of the larger, more profound, less definable crisis of truth which, in proceeding from contemporary trauma, has brought the discourse of the testimony to the fore of the contemporary cultural narrative [?]" See Shosana Felman "Education and Crisis, or the Vicissitudes of Teaching" Trauma: Explorations in Memory, Caruth (ed. Intro) 1995: 17 (quoting Weisel, 1977: 9).

[493] Vovelle, *op. cit.* 1990: 80.

[494] *Ibid.*

social scrutiny amounts to inquiry into one's self.[495] This conjunction of politics and subjectivity, of bureaucracy and individual human transience, describes Paul Jay's emphasis on the function of autobiography as a bridge between representation and self-representation.[496] Writing becomes a means of overcoming death. This is the case with Kafka, well acquainted with the archetype of the self-fulfilling bureaucracy, who, like Vovelle's recognition of attitudes to death as markers of our search for meaning "claims that his art is a means to attain mastery over death, to die content, to have death as a possibility."[497]

It has been observed that the bureaucratic impersonality typical of relations between the official and the citizen are mostly absent from Kafka's fiction.[498] Where Kafka's protagonists further their causes by personal insights and access to the functioning of bureaucratic institutions, the heroine of my novel, *FFM* is confounded by the intractably dispassionate and impersonal nature of the institutions she confronts. In this regard I seek to consider aspects of bureaucracy's relation to the individual that did not preoccupy Kafka. Rather than pursue Kafka's interest in malversation, the corruption of bureaucratic procedure, the protagonist of *Fragments* is caught in the foundational contradictions of bureaucracy.

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While the individual becomes a fiction in the early Foucauldian model of power relations, Foucault's later writings establish a point of individual resistance, a point of institutional uncertainty in the reading and writing individual.[499] The relation of individual identity to bureaucracy is constituted by an element of personal resistance in the concept of a dispersed, deferred being, that of a signature, a non-presence, diffused within the institutional edifice of society. Because of bureaucracy's reliance on writing and on the authority of state power, the writing self in this model melts away into

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[495] Barbara J Eckstein The Language of Fiction in a World of Pain: Reading Politics as Paradox, 1990: 181.

[496] Paul Jay Being in the Text: Self-Representation from Wordsworth to Roland Barthes, 1984: 96.

[497] Critchley, *op. cit*. 1997: 67.

[498] Hans-Ulrich Derlien "Bureaucracy in Art and Analysis: Kafka and Weber," Journal of the Kafka Society of America, Vol 15, 1991, pp 4-20: 7.

[499] See Barry Hindess Discourses of Power: from Hobbes to Foucault, 1996: 150.

Kafka's notion of the modern self as a disembodied voice, a ghost caught within the technological inter-connections of an unchanging present.

Both Kafka and Weber use the machine metaphor[500] to emphasise the inadequacies of a formal model of rationality, establishing a paradox in which substantive irrationality results from a formally rational model.[501] The tendency of an institution to perpetuate irrational outcomes is referred to in organizational sociology as "goal displacement."[502] Goal displacement is typified by instances in which compliance with procedures and rules, often with the intent of professional self-protection, displaces the ends for which those rules were developed.[503] Henry Jacoby provides an example of goal displacement in the censorship of Kafka's fiction in the USSR. Jacoby explains that this act of censoring texts that apparently criticised the repressive apparatus of the Soviet state demonstrated the Soviet bureaucracy's inability to disassociate itself from goals that benefit not the citizens, but the state. In other words, for purposes of self-protection the bureaucracy too easily identified with the state and devalued other competing interests.[504] The consequence was the imposition of regulations without reference to the purpose for which they were intended. Lacking an anchor to the liberal or political purpose for which regulations are instituted, bureaucratic procedure becomes an end in itself, for itself.[505]

Zygmunt Bauman accounts for the Holocaust partly in terms of goal displacement, as bureaucratic institutions' "continuous expansion of original purposes."[506] However, as Bauman argues, it is not bureaucratic aberration that lies at the base of modern

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[500] Derlien, *op. cit.* 1991: 12 & 17n.14.

[501] Derlien, *op. cit.* 1991: 12.

[502] *Ibid.*

[503] Peter M Blau & Marshall W Meyer Bureaucracy in Modern Society, (second ed.) 1971: 102: Goal displacement occurs wherever "(D)iscipline, readily interpreted as conformance with regulations, whatever the situation, is seen not as a measure designed for specific purposes but becomes an immediate value in the life-organization of the bureaucrat."

[504] Henry Jacoby The Bureaucratization of the World, Eveline L Kanes (transl.) 1973: 139: "What appears as illogical policy is explained by the internal dynamics of the bureaucracy, which first of all considers all problems in the light of its own interests. The vehement and strongly emphasised resistance to the publication of Kafka's works in Russia can only be understood in these terms."

[505] Blau, *et. al. op. cit.* 1971: 106: "Displacement of goals frequently results in a preoccupation with keeping the bureaucratic apparatus going at the expense of its basic objectives."

[506] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 17.

genocide. The function of goal displacement extends to the bureaucratic institution's displacement of means with ends. Mass genocide, in the instances of the Holocaust, or Stalin's purges, or the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is not the end in itself, but merely the means of arriving at an ostensibly rational solution to a bureaucratic (or state conceived) problem. In the case of the Holocaust genocide was a means of homogenizing society; for Stalin it was a means of maintaining power; and in the instance of Hiroshima, Bauman cites an imperial display of military might, to which genocide was an unfortunate corollary effect. Bauman explains that mass extermination in Hiroshima was devised "as an effective means to implement the set goal; it was, indeed, a product of rational problem-solving mentality."[507] The Holocaust was in large part a consequence of the daily mechanisms of rational control practised by bureaucratic institutions. This is not to say that bureaucracy is a determinant of atrocity but, rather, that bureaucratic rationality does not foster the means with which to question or avoid atrocity.[508] Bauman explains that the premises of rational bureaucratic action constituted a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for the Holocaust,[509] arguing the ironical, insightful but unpopular view that Stalin, Roosevelt and Hitler's programs of mass genocide were logical extensions of Enlightenment civilization, which

> attempted to reach the most ambitious aims of the civilizing process most other
> processes stop short of … They showed what the rationalizing, designing,

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[507] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 210n.19.

[508] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 17. Bauman explains that although mass genocide is not a necessary outcome of modern bureaucratic institutionalism, its paradigm of "instrumental rationality" nonetheless holds no intrinsic capacity to avert genocide (18). Although bureaucracy does not necessitate genocide, its process of categorizing and ordering society leads to the exclusion of elements that do not conform to social conventions. Bauman characterises bureaucracy by means of the metaphor of gardening and the extraction of weeds, in an attempt to produce a "perfect" society (18). See also at 92.

[509] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 13. Kamenka draws a similar connection between the modern function of bureaucracy and the possibility of mass genocide through goal displacement. Eugene Kamenka Bureaucracy, 1989: 166: "The horrors of National Socialist Germany and other horrors have made people today extremely aware of the fact that unjust laws are not made better by being justly administered and that they are made worse in their effects by being efficiently administered."

controlling dreams and efforts of modern civilization are able to accomplish if not mitigated, curbed or counteracted.[510]

The organizing structures of bureaucracy during the Holocaust, and the extent to which they were both "formal and ethically blind"[511] in their instrumentalism, demonstrates the enormous influence they effected in establishing and developing the concept of the final solution. As Bauman states, much of the "*idea of the* Endlösung [final solution] *was an outcome of the bureaucratic culture.*"[512] It is not merely a matter of bureaucracy's organizational and rationalizing intent that enables mass genocide, but, as Bauman explains with reference to Weber,[513] its displacement of pre-bureaucratic morality into the technologised and mechanised morality of bureaucratic culture, typified by the objective and efficient fulfillment of an institution's goals.

In confronting the bureaucratic edifice, the citizen is commonly frustrated by procedural formality and the effects of goal displacement, and experiences the humiliation and intimidation of institutional inflexibility, dehumanization, conservatism, and secrecy.[514] The following example is quoted from a website lampooning the frustrating inefficiencies and hypocrisy of one of America's largest postal companies:

> Stage 6 - Friday - Bureaucratic Bliss (The Maze) - Confusion. I'm imagining a maze of paperwork. Perhaps some sort of bureaucratic puzzle. Kind of like the "Fill out the form and I'll reject it until you get it right. No, I won't tell you how to do it, that would be efficient. Besides, our Assimilation plan does not include user-friendly configurations." Cheryl suggests using cryptograms, where the code changes as you work. "I'm sorry, that was yesterday's code, you need to use today's code."[515]

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[510] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 93. As Bauman explains (at 17): "The 'Final Solution' did not clash at any stage with the rational pursuit of efficient, optimal goal-implementation. On the contrary, it arose out of a genuinely rational concern, and it was generated by bureaucracy true to its form and purpose."

[511] Bauman, *op. cit.* 1989: 15.

[512] *Ibid* (Bauman's italics).

[513] Bauman cites H H Gerth and C Wright Mills (eds.) From Max Weber, Routledge & Keegan Paul, London, 1970: 214-15.

[514] Albert J Mills and Tony Simmons Reading Organization Theory, 1995: 43-46.

[515] "PedEx: The PedEx Project" 20.10.01 http://www.rovingbar.com/pedex/quotes.html

Typical pejorative motifs representing bureaucracy are evident here: the "maze" connotes contrived complexity designed to obstruct the participant; "paperwork" references the mechanical reproduction and metonymically arbitrary relation of information with no reference to reality; rote procedural requirements of "rejection … until you get it right" ensure ritual humiliation and establish a status hierarchy. The euphemistic jargon of "user-friendly configurations" and an "Assimilation plan", equate to the formalization and enforcement of conformity. The preponderance of "codes" and "cryptograms" connotes secrecy, exclusion and the collation and use of information for its own sake, to the extent that it has been rendered useless by its lack of context. There is nothing new in this depiction of bureaucracy: Jacoby observes that for Marx the major defining features of the bureaucratic mind are "the deification of authority, and consideration of the world as a mere object of bureaucratic action."[516] Each of these functions of goal displacement (ritual humiliation; status hierarchies; secrecy and veneration of authority) have a deleterious effect on the independence of the individual subject, a perspective of the citizen-subject as of secondary or inconsequential consideration, and thus mute and incapable. This pervasive and long-standing view of modern bureaucracy is typified by the German poet Christian Morgenstern's *Die Behörde* ("The Official Form"), in which the character Herr von Korf responds to an interrogative form from the local police authorities with a confounding statement as to his non-existence:

> Korf receives from the police a strongly worded printed form demanding who he is, and how, and where; in what place he was domiciled hitherto; whether married, single, or divorced, and if not why not; place, date, and year of birth; whether he has a permit to live here at all, and if so for what purpose; what his means and what his creed is; in the contrary case he will be conveyed into custody; and at the bottom are the signatures Borowsky, Heck. Korf replies with extreme brevity: 'To the Chief Commissioner: the undermanufactured certifies himself per personal inspection/and has the honour to present himself as non-existent within the meaning of the Act and remains, associating himself with you in deeply regretting

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[516] Jacoby, *op. cit.* 1973: 154.

the circumstances hereinbefore set out, Yours etc: Korf. (To the Blankshire

County Police).' The Competent Authority reads this in deep perplexment.[517]

As evidenced in Korf's reaction to bureaucratic and state authority, the empowered

response of the individual citizen to the dehumanizing procedures of bureaucracy is

one in which the individual cannot be definitively recognised by authority. In order to

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[517] This is a plain-prose translation by Leonard Forster (intro. transl. ed.) The Penguin Book of German Verse, 1957: 388-9. See also Table of Contents, xxii, "Christian Morgenstern (1871-1914) whose anthroposophical and mystical writings are largely forgotten, lives by his almost untranslatable burlesque and nonsense poetry, in which Herr von Korf, who has no physical existence, Palmström, the Nasobem, and many other figures lead a Lewis Caroll life in the amiable realms of a higher absurdity with serious undertones." The poem in the original German is as follows:

Die Behörde

Korf erhält vom Polizeibüro
ein geharnischt Formular,
wer er sei und wie und wo.

Welchen Orts er bis anheute war,
welchen Stands und überhaupt,
wo geboren, Tag und Jahr.

Ob ihm überhaupt erlaubt,
hier zu leben und zu welchem Zweck,
wieviel Geld er hat und was er glaubt.

Umgekehrten Falls man ihn vom Fleck
in Arrest verführen würde, und
drunter steht: Borowsky, Heck.

Korf erwidert darauf kurz und rund:
«Einer holen Direktion
stellt sich, laut persönlichem Befund,

untig angefertigte Person
als nichtexistent im Eigen-Sinn
bürgerlicher Konvention

vor und aus und zeichnet, wennschonhin
mitbedauernd nebigen Betreff,
Korf. (An die Bezirksbehörde in…).»

Staunend liest's der anbetroffne Chef.

(The diacritical marks « and » are quotation marks following the German edition). Fictional prose and poetry concerning the deleterious effects of bureaucracy upon the individual is commonplace. For an introduction to the literature, see Mark Holzer, *et. al.* (eds.) Literature in Bureaucracy: Readings in Administrative Fiction, 1979. Of particular relevance to this thesis is "Request for Proposal" by Anthony R Lewis (206-16), an epistolary narrative constituted entirely by formalistic, euphemistic inter-office memoranda organizing the use of nuclear weapons in urban development. It is a fictional demonstration of goal displacement, in which bureaucratic process obscures the goal and the ultimate consequences. Comparisons with the euphemistic bureaucratic language of the final solution are unavoidable.

maintain subjectivity divorced from the state, the individual citizen wishes, and indeed contrives his or her own official (bodily) absence.

The perceived failure of Enlightenment idealism often entails the perceived failure of the idealised Enlightenment individual. Western rationality is reliant on its organizational representation within bureaucratic institutions.[518] The close association of the bourgeois individual with the structure of institutional bureaucracy often leads to questioning the bureaucratised, Enlightenment self wherever the function of western rationality becomes a target of criticism. To put it more crudely, failure of the Enlightenment constitutes failure of the Enlightenment Subject: the rise of modern bureaucratic institutions parallels the dissociation and disembodiment of subjectivity.

The radical consequence of such disembodied subjectivity is absence of the body of the citizen. Figuratively it is a state constituted by death: the means by which absence is rendered certain. If a bureaucratic system pays any heed to the death of the individual, it is an abstracted, *displaced* concern, substituting the individual body with the policies and authority of the institution. The result is typified by the etymology of the term 'corporation'. As one critic has observed, "[a]s long as survival is written on the banners of our organizations and enterprises, there is just no space for the standard-bearer's potential death."[519] The notion here again is that of the displacement of the significance of the individual into the consequence of the institution. Organizational sociologist Burkhard Sievers observes that the stages in one's life of early and middle adulthood are devoted to satisfying the pervasive and exclusive expectations of success, creativity, and production. Such goals accord with those of the institution, which seeks to preserve the alienation of producer from product, of working life from the far greater span of an individual's entire life,[520] and ultimately of that working life from death. The meaning attaching to an individual's life and the concomitant certitude of death is obscured by a displacement of life-meaning from the individual's life into that of the enterprise or the product. This displaces the question of individual death from

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[518] Burrell, *op. cit.*1997: 11.
[519] Sievers, *op. cit.*1990: 126.
[520] Sievers, *op. cit.*1990: 130.

the public into the private world, and invalidates any attempt to question the meaninglessness of the employing institution.[521] The employee, who is simultaneously the consumer, is left with the reprocessing of meaning as a paradoxical meta-product, which, created by the institution, seduces the employee to both produce and consume, establishing a simultaneity of destruction/production. In Sievers' words, "[t]he original concern for life and immortality has been substituted through the mechanics and economics of growth and survival."[522] It is the pivotal point of destruction/production, of presence/absence, the metonymical point of material indifference that constitutes the function of representation as it has been presented in this thesis. This is the point at which meaning is produced, absorbed, and reproduced as textual/social purpose in the face of death.

The organizational theorist Gibson Burrell considers a hypothetical pre-Enlightenment world in which the modern-day strictures of organizational bureaucracy are substituted with a conscious recognition of the significance of death and human suffering. As an example of bureaucratised Enlightenment logic he cites an instance from Restoration England, a period that wrought wholesale changes on performances of the normally tragic King Lear. In what once was a common version of the play Goneril and Regan are poisoned, Cordelia marries Edgar, and Lear is returned, alive, to the throne.[523] Shakespeare's recognition of the arbitrary and the nonsensical in life is reduced to an imposed hierarchy of determinate moral consequences, of which death is but one. Burrell quotes an apologist for this preference for pleasant morality tales in terms of meaning:

> What the Restoration did to Shakespeare was to accommodate him to a
> philosophy. The happy ending to *Lear* makes sense. Sense is exactly what it

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[521] Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 127. Cf: McAuley, John (Book Review of) Work, Death, and Life Itself: Essays on Management and Organization (by Burkard Sievers. 1994: Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 346 pp.) in: Human Relations, Vol 50, No. 4, 1997: 469-482: 478.

[522] Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 128.

[523] *Ibid.*

makes. Shakespeare's play does not make sense; it is an image of the nonsensical life we live, the nonsensical death we die.[524]

Like the contemporary Hollywood culture of the happy-ending, the Restoration in its Enlightenment sought to distance itself from the incomprehensible, and thus dissociated itself from the possibility of meaningless death. It attempted to recreate the world without the possibility of uncertainty or nonsensicality, but rather as hierarchical (synecdochical), as a paradigm of organised, rationally understood, controlled living. Displaying Foucault's notion of bio-power, formulated in terms of the management and disciplining of life rather than death,[525] Enlightenment organization lacks the power to control, or to comprehend death.

As Burrell states of the majority of contemporary organizations, they are "necropoli – machines for the suppression of death."[526] Death has become a "presence in an absence – a great unspoken feature of life and living."[527] Dastur also connects the repression of the fact of death with the modern westernised world:

> The Kingship of finitude, and this irresponsibility and amorality of the play of the cosmos for which no expiation is desirable or possible, go wholly without recognition wherever, as in industrialised societies ... there is forgetfulness of death.[528]

Bloch sees death in modern times as a qualitatively different beast from death in pre-industrial, pre-informational history.[529] Like the evening call of modern writers Hegel and Nietzsche, Bloch saw the rushing new capitalist world as one that no longer easily aligns with the "unchanging brevity of life."[530] The modern world readily reduces the individual to objectified informational bits, in which "manipulated man is the carefully worked-out product of an equally carefully developed administration of objects."[531]

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[524] *Ibid* (Quoting Eric Bently, The Life of Drama, 1966).

[525] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1984: 259-66. For commentary, see discussion of "pastoral power" by Hindess, *op. cit.* 1996: 118-123, and 134.

[526] Burrell, *op. cit.* 1997: 131.

[527] *Ibid.*

[528] Dastur, *op. cit.* 1994: 84.

[529] Bloch, *op. cit.* 1986: 1105-6.

[530] *Ibid.*

[531] Jacoby, *op. cit.* 1973: 179 (Quoting Hans Freyer, Theorie des gegenwartigen Zeitalters, Stuttgart, 1958).

The history of the modern self is to a large degree the history of the bureaucratic institution.

While accounting for the bureaucratic mind's unconcern for the individual, Sievers' theory of institutional displacement also functions as an allegory of the modern repression of death. As Bloch observed of the modern individual's attitudes towards death:

> The so-called modern person does not feel the maw which is incessantly around
> him and which will certainly devour him in the end. Through [repressive attitudes
> towards death], quite unexpectedly, he saves his sense of self, through them the
> impression arises that man does not perish but that the world will one day decide
> on a whim not to appear before him any more.[532]

It is a combination of repressed fear, expectation and superficial acceptance of death that informs the modern scientistic, post-industrial objectification of mortality. Sievers' theory of the displacement of mortality bears much in common with Bloch's observations. Sievers' situation of the individual body within the mechanised regime of post-industrial society also demonstrates similarities with Baudrillard's re-presentation of the mortal body as a fallible machine (see quote below). Baudrillard describes this objectification in reference to the concept of "natural death" as a process of colonization of once biological and cultural practices by the capital/social organism. The objectification and quantifying of death he defines not as social progress but as a "progress of the social, which even annexes death to itself."[533] Baudrillard states, "through the symbolic disintrication of death, life passes into life-capital (into a quantitative evaluation), which alone gives rise to a biomedical science and technology of prolonging life."[534] Or again:

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[532] Bloch, *op. cit.* 1986: 1157.

[533] Baudrillard, *op. cit.* 2000: 162.

[534] Baudrillard's comments are again reminiscent of Foucault's discussion of bio-power as a means of regulating, calculating and "taking charge of life", rather than relying on sovereign power by means of the threat of death. See Michel Foucault "Right of Death and Power over Life", (from The History of Sexuality, Vol I) in Paul Rabinow (ed.) The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought, 1984: 265. See also Baudrillard, *op. cit.* 2000: 162.

> Death is definitively secularized in material production, where it is reproduced on
> a large scale as capital. Even our bodies, which have become biological machinery,
> are modelled on this inorganic body, and therefore become, at the same time, a
> *bad* object, condemned to disease, accident, and death.[535]

The bureaucratic archetype substitutes the institution's stasis of formality and immortality for the idiosyncratic and mortal personal realm. Bauman argues similarly that "the concern with individual immortality is *dissolved* in the task of serving the immortality of the group".[536] Bauman offers an insightful variation of Baudrillard's "disintrication of death", observing that, along with all other aspects of postmodern life, death has been "subjected to a division of labour",[537] a series of specializations that deny its general function, which has been ostracised to separate, unnoticed social spaces and rendered it a humiliating and private affair.[538] Formality and stasis exist in what Sievers perceives as an unbreachable divide between managers, who aspire to the immortal status of the institutions they are devoted to, and mortal workers, who are perceived in terms of the means of production.[539] It is a model that ensures a high intrinsic level of contempt for people in modern institutional life. Sievers illustrates this suggestion by reference to the term "dead wood", given to workers deemed by management as surplus to institutional requirement. For Sievers, it "raises the question for me of what else can one do with dead wood but burn it?"[540] Sievers argues ultimately that the process of "diabolization", of alienation of the individual from what he or she produces, or of the manager (who identifies with the apparent immortality of the institution) from the mortal worker, ensures an increasing "diabolization of mortality",[541] an alienation of the institution and the individual from death. He locates the motive for this alienation in mythologist Joseph Campbell's observation that "every human attempt at institutionalization has to take two basic considerations into account:

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[535] Baudrillard, *op. cit.* 2000: 178.

[536] (My italics) Zygmunt Bauman *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 1997: 154.

[537] *Ibid*: 175.

[538] *Ibid.*

[539] Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 326.

[540] Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 134.

[541] *Ibid.*

the inevitability of individual death and the survival of the social order."[542] In other words, in weighing the competing claims of the unavoidably mortal individual and the ideally immortal institution, institutionalism often devalues the worth of the individual to benefit the institution's continued existence. Where avoidance of death once subsisted in the memory of survivors, Bauman suggests that it now relies on the possibility of the simulated memory of technical and bureaucratic records, akin to Kracauer's "general inventory" – a democratizing state of preservation devoid of the "perpetual commemoration"[543] typical of publicly remembered historical figures, but instead constituting a space that neither recognises nor wholly evades death. As Bauman notes, the dead now inhabit an indeterminate state: "The disappeared are *temporarily absent*; not totally absent, though – they are *technically present*, safely stored in the warehouse of artificial memory".[544]   Bauman observes (synecdochically) that specialization has fragmented death into "innumerable smaller and smaller threats to survival".[545] He notes that because of this fragmentation, contemporary perceptions of death are no longer represented by the cohesive image of a "scythe-wielding skeleton". Instead, it is the insistent *lack* of what Critchley would term a prosopopeic image that now constitutes death, as it is now a series of mundane impediments within everyday life (pollution, aids prevention, etc). This, coupled with the privatisation of familial death and the concomitant plethora of virtual depictions of death in everyday media (its "domestication-cum-estrangement") has deprived death of its traditional eschatological significance and rendered it mundane. As he states, death, which formerly attributed significance "to all ordinary events, has itself become an ordinary event."[546] Bauman describes the lost significance of death in terms of narrative meaning, which, he contends, is no longer present in a conception of death as "the last episode in a string of episodes."[547]

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[542] Sievers, *op. cit.* 1990: 136.
[543] Zygmunt Bauman *Postmodernity and its Discontents*, 1997: 163.
[544] *Ibid.*
[545] *Ibid*: 175.
[546] *Ibid*: 176.
[547] *Ibid.*

Sievers' evaluation of institutional organization suggests the need for revaluation of the relation between individual mortality and intended institutional immortality.[548] However, what I seek to draw out of the concept of the "diabolization of mortality" is the significant rhetorical role played by displacement in substituting the individual with the institution, the body with the corporation. The prevailing relation between the individual and the institution is one of physical everyday association rather than the metaphorical comparison of similar attributes. An example of this is typified by the premise of Hobbes' *Leviathan*,[549] in which the State is defined in terms of individual bodily attributes). Thus the relation between individual and modern institution is (unavoidably) metonymical.

Bureaucracy, Subjectivity & Power (Gramsci & Foucault)

Like the model of goal displacement, the displacement of meaning from individual to state institutions follows a metonymical path. It is the purpose of this section to explore in greater detail the relationship between the state institution and the individual by concentrating on the function of power. I rely on the social theorists Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault because their models of society admit of the dynamism and interrelational complexity that comprise power relations. Three significant points are at issue in the following discussion of Foucault and Gramsci's notions of power. These include: the relation of the individual subject to civic institutions; Foucault's notion of the constitution of subjectivity by power; and the effect of power relations on conceptions of death. The conclusion to this section suggests, by means of Steven Lukes' critique of contemporary definitions of power-relations, that the conventional *representation* of power and subjectivity represses the unconscious, latent and unseen aspects of society.

Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci conceived of the nature of institutional power as an inter-relation of civil "coercion and consent".[550] Instead of regarding power as

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[548] *Ibid.*
[549] Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968.
[550] Roger Simon *Gramsci's Political Thought: An Introduction*, 1982 (repr. 1985): 21, 73.

earlier Marxist theorists had, as a dominating force, Gramsci saw that power also comprised elements of ideological persuasion, requiring a degree of allowance and accommodation on the part of those within a power relationship. State power for Gramsci was always the representation of a leading part of society that nonetheless appeased and was supported by other social factions, whether legitimate or otherwise. This part of society's use of power is "hegemonic," and power itself is diffused throughout social groups and institutions. In this way the relation of the individual to the state and to institutions was neither a contractarian concession of natural individual rights in return for security, nor simply the subjection of the individual to a dominating force. Rather than notions of sovereignty, either of the state or the individual, the practical machinations of power in a social context become for Gramsci the basis for a subtler understanding of the function of power in society. Because of his pragmatic appreciation of social power, Gramsci regarded bureaucracy pejoratively as the entrenchment of a democratic state's administrators in the ruling class. Bureaucracy for Gramsci was democracy's downfall, constituting "the crystallisation of the leading personnel, which exercises coercive power and which at a certain point become a caste."[551] Gramsci's conception of socially-mediated power led him to recognise the significance of a morally constituted society, as opposed to confining ethical responsibility to the individual. As he argued in *The Prison Notebooks*:

> [morality] should be a question also not of a hierarchy of ends but of a gradation
> of the ends to be attained, granted that what one wants to "moralise" is not just
> each individual taken singly but also a whole society of individuals.[552]

It was Gramsci's concept of a diffusion of power relations throughout the community that Michel Foucault built upon.[553] Foucault considered power the behavioural and institutional relations that constituted society and subjectivity. He saw power as

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[551] Antonio Gramsci *The Modern Prince and other writings*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1957: 186.

[552] Antonio Gramsci *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (eds. transl.) 1971. See also Steven Lukes *Power: A Radical View*, (2nd Ed.) 2005: 144: "Gramsci viewed civil society in the West as the site where consent is engineered, ensuring the cultural ascendancy of the ruling class and capitalism's stability."

[553] Simon, *op. cit.*1982: 73.

the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies … it is the moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable.[554]

Foucault describes a radical alteration in the exercise and nature of power relations beginning in the seventeenth century and manifesting itself in the late eighteenth century, around the time of the French Revolution.[555] The declining sovereign form of power, of the right to seize or to deduct real estate, tax, labour or life, acceded to a form of power delineated by the mechanisms of fostering, optimizing and controlling life.[556] He referred to this as "the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life."[557] Foucault envisages the new power as responsible for changes in social perceptions of death, having disowned conceptions of power formulated in terms of mortality.[558] In the present day, even though mass genocide is perpetrated "in the name of life necessity",[559] death is nonetheless "carefully evaded"[560] and considered "unbearable".[561]

The consequence of these changes in conceptions of power and mortality is the significant change in the individual's relation to bureaucratic institutions, and hence in the constitution of the individual. Rather than conceiving of the mortal individual in extreme terms as either part of a sovereign initiation of power, or victim to state and

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[554] Michel Foucault *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, (transl. Robert Hurley) 1998 (1976): 92-3.

[555] Michel Foucault "Right of Death and Power over Life", (from The History of Sexuality, Vol I) in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader: An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*, 1984: 259, 264.

[556] *Ibid.*

[557] Foucault, *op. cit.*1984: 262.

[558] Foucault, *op. cit.*1984: 261.

[559] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1984: 260.

[560] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1984: 261.

[561] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1984: 260.

institutional dominance, the body of the individual becomes the point of power-contention, and hence of the political and social ambiguity that reflects its equivocal existential status. Rather than existing independently of the state, the individual body becomes enmeshed in the structure of state and institutional power relations in such a way that the individual both creates and is created by the modern bureaucratic state.[562] In discussing the concept of emergence as a function of genealogical history, Foucault describes the point of struggle between a dominating force and an emergent other as a "non-place"[563] because historical adversaries do not inhabit a common social or political sphere. Foucault contends that the inability to locate the arena of political contention, the "interstice" for which no body is responsible, results in the attempt to stabilise the relationship (between the individual and the state)

> in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations. It establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies. It makes itself accountable for debts and gives rise to the universe of rules, which is by no means deigned to temper violence, but rather to satisfy it.[564]

Cultural criticism often describes the political and moral constitution of the modern individual as a bankrupted concept, a fictive construction of the Enlightenment, a moral divergence.[565] Part of this loss of faith in individualism is due to the circumstances of the modern world. Jacoby observes that the individual in modern societies has the impression that he or she no longer exercises sufficient control in daily matters, that the increasingly systematised nature of post-industrial society denies

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[562] Hindess, *op. cit.* 1996: 150.

[563] Michel Foucault "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History", in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *op. cit.*, 1984: 84-5.

[564] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1984: 85. Bureaucratization as a means of stabilizing the power relationship between the individual and the state is also suggested by Bernard S Silberman, who argues in his comprehensive account of the rise of modern bureaucracies that "uncertainty over leadership succession in the late nineteenth century…[led to] the creation of the norms of bureaucratic role in modern society." (425) For Silberman bureaucratization was not a rational, liberal project, but the re-entrenchment of existing leadership groups within a more certain structure of political power. That is, it was "a process of ad hoc rational strategic responses of political and organizational leaders to persisting problems of incumbency." (425). See Bernard S Silberman *Cages of Reason: The Rise of the Rational State in France, Japan, The United States and Great Britain*, 1993: 425. See also (at 34) regarding the notion of uncertainty: "rational bureaucratization may be seen to occur as the consequence of persistent uncertainty or risk in the environment".

[565] As an instance, see Richard Wolin *The Terms of Cultural Criticism: The Frankfurt School, Existentialism, Poststructuralism*, 1992, particularly Ch. 8: "Michel Foucault and the search for the Other of Reason".

individual management or authority.[566] Foucault, however, has argued that, even though the subject is constituted by power relations,[567] individual subjectivity is not fully determined by the nexus of institutional relations of power. Instead, the productive relationship subjectivity has with power maintains its significance as a site of self creation.[568] The discrepancy between this view of power as unavoidably culturally immanent[569] and Foucault's later, ameliorated perception of power (distinguishing between "dominating and non-dominating"[570] forms of power relationships) is evidence of Foucault's difficulty when defining power in alternating between purely anthropological accounts and radical politics. These polarised perspectives constitute what theorist Steven Lukes describes as the difference between radicalism and "elementary sociological commonplaces."[571] While Lukes insists on the need to distinguish dominant from non-dominant forms of power, he recognises as significant in Foucault's definition of power relationships the emphasis placed on the socialising web of extra-state institutions.[572] The need to consider the generality of institutional structures in modern society leads to the question: while relations of power augment and diminish the body of the individual, does mortality of the individual ensure that power remains securely bound to cultural artefacts (such as bureaucratic, financial and state organizations) that are imbued with an immortal intention?

It is the extent to which the individual can be a site of possibility amidst the institutionalism of a modern bureaucratised society that is relevant here. For instance (with reference to the Holocaust), is it reasonable to regard individual German citizens and those of allied nations as having acted morally regarding the mass deportation and

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[566] Jacoby, *op. cit.* 1973: 159.

[567] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1998: 60.

[568] Foucault, *op. cit.* 1998: 95.

[569] Steven Lukes argues against Foucault's primary definition of power because it appears to render the notion of freedom redundant within the omnipresent effect of power relations. Lukes interprets Foucault's précis of power as the notion "that domination cannot make those subject to it any less (broadly) autonomous since there is no available state of being more autonomous." (123). Lukes claims this notion would make radical politics redundant, "which would […] render resistance to domination unintelligible." Lukes, *op. cit.* 2005: 123.

[570] Lukes, *op. cit.* 2005: 97.

[571] *Ibid.*

[572] *Ibid.*

murder of other citizens?[573] Or is it appropriate for a state to absorb and displace individuals' moral responsibility of past atrocities? Lukes discusses Pierre Bordieu's Foucauldian concept of "dispositional practices", the unconscious processes of socially immanent power that define all aspects of people's everyday behaviour. These practices are

> 'incorporated', or 'inscribed', into their bodies, thereby generating a 'permanent disposition, a durable way of standing, speaking, walking, and thereby of thinking'.[574]

As Lukes makes clear, while Bordieu's concept is useful, the unconscious and embedded nature of dispositional practices makes the possibility of differentiating acceptable or dominating forms from other forms of power difficult. Lukes suggests a means of practically critiquing the function and implementation of power in three separate categories. These categories recognise forms of enculturated power that are not addressed in western (or other) societies.[575] They take into account subjective, latent, and unexpressed grievances that are normally excluded from contemporary modes of governance. As such, Lukes' categories constitute what he regards as "*a thoroughgoing critique of the behavioural focus*"[576] of traditionally individualistic and appearance-oriented forms of power regulation. I emphasise here Lukes' acknowledgement of the need to address representations in power regulation. Attempting to represent (in both the political and the aesthetic senses of the word[577])

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[573] For the ethical/philosophical dimension of confronting the responsibility for Holocaust genocide, see: James Hatley *Suffering Witness: The Quandary of Responsibility After the Irreparable*, 2000, particularly Ch. 2 "The Scene of Annihilation: Testimony's Ethical Resistance" 39-71. Hatley states on the moral role of testimony: "For those who inherit Auschwitz, the irreversibility of loss and the vulnerability of the other to a universal will-to-death become fundamental axioms that any ethical discussion must take into account." (71). For discussion of German attempts to confront the past, see Siobhan Kattago *Ambiguous Memory: The Nazi Past and German National Identity*, 2001. Barbie Zelizer observes that discourse considering atrocity is not taken seriously in parts of western society: "The New Republic wrote in 1995 that 'the United States seems to be taking a sabbatical from historical seriousness, blinding itself to genocide and its consequences, fleeing in the moral and practical imperatives of its own power.'" (238). Zelizer, *op. cit.* 1998: 238.

[574] Pierre Bordieu *The Logic of Practice*, Richard Nice (transl.) 1990 [1980]: 70 (cited in Lukes, *op. cit.* 2005: 141).

[575] Lukes, *op. cit.* 2005: 28-9.

[576] *Ibid* (Lukes' italics).

[577] See Moira Gatens *Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality*, Ch. 2: "Corporeal representation in/and the body politic" Routledge, London and New York, 1996: 21-2. Gatens is concerned to uncover the sexual specificity in the androgenous/male conception of political representation, persuasively arguing that the Enlightenment notion of political enfranchisement is founded squarely on the homogenising and socially

dis-empowered, unseen aspects of society offers a means of avoiding Bordieu's unconsciously-structured society and Foucault's alternation between political ambivalence and radical individualism.[578]

In recognising the inadequacies of appearance-oriented forms of governance we can anticipate a return to the role of metonymy in defining the relation of the individual to the state. Goal displacement and the alienation of the individual from the state have already been demonstrated as constituting metonymical forms of displacement. Lukes' notion of a thoroughgoing critique (of social behaviour) closely accords with the role I have attributed to metonymy in Sebald's fiction in acknowledging and criticising (textual) representation. Where the foregoing problems of political and aesthetic representation relate to the function of power – its effect on modern subjectivity and representations of mortality – is in having to recognise the need to *represent* that which is presently unrepresented. Lukes' proposed "thoroughgoing critique" is a critique of the conventional *focus*, constituting both a conception and a representation of the social and the political world. As such, Lukes' response recognises, like Kracauer's (metonymical) critique of the surface-oriented archive, the repression – and potential recovery – of the contextual significance of the mortal subject. Although Kracauer's insistence on the necessity of contextual importance inheres within signification, it is the historical and bureaucratic archetype that informs and directs the purpose of subjective (textual) representation in the face of power, just as it directs representations in the face of death. In terms of the alternate meanings of aesthetic and bureaucratic power, the function of representation invokes my earlier discussion of attempts by van Alphen to establish aesthetic models of *re-presentation* and re-enactment. Both of van Alphen's models emphasise a critique of conventional representation. Metonymy constitutes a critique of representation, in the political and the aesthetic sense of the word. It is to

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alientating metonymically-derived reference to a constructed male capacity to "forfeit" one's own flesh, for example, in service of the state [23-4], a function that she argues has sought to exclude the female form. She connects the parliamentary and aesthetic meanings of representation in Hobbes' oft-used metaphor of the body-politic in his work *Leviathan* [Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968, 81-2], suggesting that "Just as man can be understood as a representation of God's creative power, so the political body can be understood as a representation of man's creative power, that is, as art(ifice)." [21].

[578] Lukes, *op. cit.* 2005: 123.

the metonymical composition and critique of representation, particularly with respect to Sebald's fiction, that we now turn.

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METONYMY: A NEW REPRESENTATION

This chapter synthesises the ethical and representational criticism of the foregoing chapters explicitly in terms of Sebald's use of metonymy. As a rhetorical mechansism that both represses and reveals signification, metonymy is aptly suited to the criticism of contemporary modes of repression present in the dissociating practices of bureaucratic institutions and the trauma of contemporary atrocities. Ultimately, I argue that contemporary representations like Sebald's that are capable of indexically recognising death and genocide foreground the processes of textual representation and their inherent ethical and institutional determinants.

Herring & Metonymy

Sebald establishes an uncanny reading of strangeness in the familiar. By altering the context of an image, by embedding it within a narrative of desolation, destruction and loss, he displaces its conventional meaning and acknowledges the representational uncertainty inherent in all textual narrative forms. His characters travel from their repression of the past toward a process of recognition of irreconcilable aspects of their history and identity. Because of the repression of memories relating to it, Sebald's Holocaust invariably takes a displaced form. The primary form of displacement in his fiction is the narrative plot structure, which frequently digresses into apparently unrelated sub-plots that connect the distant with the familiar. As Sebald has claimed, his method of writing is one of "adhering to an exact historical perspective [while] patiently engraving and linking together apparently disparate things in the manner of a still life."[579]

One of many examples of the estranging displacement of the horrific into the everyday occurs in *The Rings of Saturn,* his third novel. In this novel he invokes the mechanised procedures of mass genocide perpetrated during the Holocaust by means of his memory of a procedurally similar instance: a documentary film of East Anglian over-fishing of herring:

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[579] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 210.

> In my memory of that school film I see men in their shining black oilskins working heroically as the black sea crashes over them time upon time – herring fishing regarded as a supreme example of mankind's struggle with the power of Nature … The captain, with the air of a man mindful of his responsibilities, stands at the helm, looking ahead into the distance. At last the catch is unloaded, and we see the work in the halls where the women's hands gut the herring, sort them according to size, and pack them in barrels. Then (so says the booklet accompanying the 1936 film), the railway goods wagons take in this restless wanderer of the seas and transport it to those places where its fate on this earth will at last be fulfilled.[580]

Sebald's imagistic analogies of the Holocaust, like Boltanski's traversal of clothing strewn over a museum floor (discussed in the introduction), metaphorically invert the familiar into the horrific by displacing the everyday into an alternative context. By referencing the Shoah indirectly, Sebald's fiction avoids the authentic requirements of positivistic history. Instead, his fiction re-appropriates a representation of the unrepresentable and maintains an understanding of the past even while recognising the inadequacies of representation. Conforming to my earlier discussion of the failure of indexical representation (in chapter Two, particularly in its final section, *The Inventory: Sontag & Kracauer*), whose material goal "is always just out of reach",[581] Sebald's narrative forms effectively re-present the Holocaust because they simultaneously recognise the possibilities and the limits of representation. The above excerpt's metaphor of process and appearance, between the execution of the final solution and the "heroic" narrative of the industry of netting and processing fish, establishes a darkly ironical correlation between the ethics of German wartime atrocities and the ethics of modern industrial society. But it is not initially or simply a metaphorical relation; a later comparison of this documentary film with another documentary concerning Sericulture under the Nazi regime is instigated by accidental physical congruity.[582] The narrator discovers the Nazi documentary in the same archive shelf as the first film, both having

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[580] Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, *op. cit.* 1998: 54

[581] Kouvaros, *op. cit.* 2005: 182.

[582] Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, *op. cit.* 1998: 292.

been seemingly innocently classified as industries devoted to animal farming. The discovery results from the narrator's eccentric interests in apparently unrelated topics, and to the coincidental arm's-reach proximity of the two films.[583]

However, for Sebald the function of metonymical coincidence is not merely an epistemological or aesthetic matter, but an ethical one. The coincidence of the two documentary films' placement was unwittingly determined by the archiving, classifying function of a library (situated in an "education office"), an institution founded on Enlightenment principles dedicated to the collation of knowledge absent from issues of morality. Sebald's theme of institutional and public complicity in the commission of atrocity is central to his emphasis of metonymical connections. As with Bauman's argument regarding the abrogation of responsibility within modern bureaucracy, it is at the levels of subjective, public and institutional morality that responsibility is lost, displaced. By emphasising physical relations that would otherwise go unnoticed, Sebald's narrator brings to light the connections that demonstrate institutional abrogation of moral responsibility. Sebald practises a species of detective work that replicates Adorno's project (referred to earlier) of uncovering "the subterranean links between the metaphysics [of] identity and structures of domination."[584]

In Sebald's writing metaphorical meaning constitutes only one rhetorical element of the narrative structure. For Sebald the construction of meaning relies heavily on the context of coincidence, or what has been referred to in regard to his fiction as "elective affinities".[585] Sebald's fiction often treats coincidence thematically, and in particular travesties it in *Vertigo* as a mystical unifying medium. In "All' estero", the second story in *Vertigo*, Sebald recreates Grillparzer's account of Giacomo Casanova's incarceration

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[583] Similar coincidences occur throughout Sebald's fiction. John Zilcosky cites two examples: the character Austerlitz' random interest in an American journal on architecture in which he discovers a photograph of the Terezin file room at Theresienstadt, where his mother was killed [*A* 395/401]; in *The Emigrants* the narrator happens upon an article in a discarded newspaper that recovers Dr Selwyn's past [*TE* 23/36]. See John Zilcosky "Sebald's Uncanny Travels: The Impossibility of Getting Lost" in Long, *et. al.* (eds.) 2004: 118.

[584] Peter Dews "Adorno, Poststructuralism and the Critique of Identity," in Andrew Benjamin (ed.) *The Problems of Modernity: Adorno and Benjamin*, 1989: 2.

[585] Andre Aciman "Out of Novemberland", 44-47, *The New York Review of Books*, Vol 19, December 1998: 45. To quote Sebald: "I have kept asking myself … what the invisible connections that determine our lives are". See Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 210.

in the prison of the Doge's palace in Venice.[586] Casanova employs a cabbalistic formula to divine the date on which to escape from the prison, reminiscent of the formulaic attempts of Stendhal in the first story of *Vertigo* to ascertain the date of his death. Amazed by the result, Casanova is said to have thought "a law was at work in so extraordinary a coincidence".[587] The narrator observes that

> Casanova's attempt to plumb the unknown by means of a seemingly random operation of words and numbers later caused me to leaf back through my own diary for that year, whereupon I discovered to my amazement, and indeed to my considerable alarm, that the day in 1980 on which I was reading Grillparzer's journal … near the Doge's Palace, was … the anniversary of the day (or rather, night) on which Casanova … broke out of the lead-plated crocodile.[588]

A photograph of the narrator's diary for 1980 is included in the text, with the word "Venedig" filling the last day of October.[589] The effect is one of entertaining contrivance, but contrivance that nonetheless seeks to demonstrate a meaningful relationship arising from the association of otherwise unconnected events that "cannot be explained by causal logic".[590] This is not a metaphorical association, as no comparison of like attributes is made.

In linguistic terms Sebald's coincidences appear to constitute the function of *parataxis*, in which the association of one clause with another is wholly arbitrary. In accounting for the basis of metonymy in language, Jakobson describes the misfortune of Aphasics suffering from contiguity disorder, in which their ability to recall and use words is damaged. He explains that "*[f]ork* is substituted for *knife*, *table* for *lamp*, *smoke* for *pipe*, *eat* for *toaster*."[591] Jakobson explains that these examples demonstrate paratactical congruity in different ways: the first three evidence linguistic associations ("knife and fork"),

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[586] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 54-60.
[587] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 59.
[588] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 59-60.
[589] John Zilcosky "Sebald's Uncanny Travels: The Impossibility of Getting Lost" in Long, *et. al.* (eds.) 2004: 107. Zilcosky discusses a number of uncanny repetitions present in *Vertigo*.
[590] Sebald, *op. cit.* 2005: 214.
[591] Jakobson, *op. cit.* "Two Aspects of Language" Ch. 8, 1987: 105.

while the last relates an object's use (to be eaten) with the object that produces it (toaster).

The interpretational process of delayed recognition that Jakobson describes affects the protagonists of Sebald's fiction as much as it does the reader and narrator. Sebald's narrator and characters experience everyday re-instantiations of the Holocaust that they do not immediately, if ever, recognise. In this regard his fiction displaces signification in a metonymical, rather than a metaphorical sense. Each of his narratives draw random relations between objects or events made congruent merely by the narrator's mental or narrative divagations, relations that (superficially) do not contribute to defining those events. As a consequence, rather than being merely paratactical, the rhetorical structure of Sebald's narratives involves the technique of parecnasis, whereby prolonged consideration of extraneous matters, apparently unrelated to the narrative in any meaningful way, ultimately serve to strengthen the prevailing significance of the text. Coincidence in the context of Sebald's literature is not a function of metaphor; within the plotting of the narrator-protagonist's spatial relation to the objects and events he considers, it is a matter of artefactual contiguity, of the *narrative contrivance* of the congruence of two subjects. The connection often becomes one of the narrator's conferral of meaning on arbitrary relationships. These connections are metonymical displacements which occur spatially, temporally, textually. In many instances the function of coincidence ties the displaced instance to its often unacknowledged but implied referent.

A typical metonymical displacement transfers meaning from one object to a neighbouring object without deferring to any metaphysical or meta-narrative reference. It is not only photography that metonymically establishes a sense of indexical reality (as discussed in chapter Two). The function of metonymy is also often one of establishing a sense of reality. According to Jakobson:

> In order to engender a sense of material reality in the reader, the realist author
> works by following "the path of contiguous relationships … metonymically

[digressing] from the plot to the atmosphere and from the characters to the setting in space and time."[592]

Sebald uses metonymy not in the sense of seeking to persuade the reader of a material reality, however, but rather in an attempt to achieve a sense of contiguity between separate times and places, often by means of coincidence. Rather than establish the textual illusion of reality, Sebald's writing uses the tools of realism to critique the possibility of realistic representation. Like surrealism's attempt to unify reality and the unconscious (in a *sur*reality),[593] Sebald's use of metonymy integrates subjective and social truth to an extent that is unattainable in strictly realistic narratives.

Before explaining the relevance of coincidence to Sebald's use of metonymy, it is necessary to outline the general role coincidence plays in fictional narrative. Coincidence implies the mysticism of a transcendent meaning not explicable by physical or logical congruity or causality. To the extent that congruity exists in coincidence, it is in terms of the artificial conferral of significance to times and dates. Nonetheless, it is the purpose of coincidence to imply contiguity where none exists. Coincidence implies more than merely textual or metaphorical association in narrative connections, often by emphasising the indexical, metonymical contiguity of temporal, causal, or spatial connections. In other words, coincidence attempts to harness meaning without having to rely on the functions of empirical and rational understanding. In the stead of empirical connections, Sebald's narratives rely on the associations of memory and the unconscious. But rather than dealing exclusively with the metaphysical or psychoanalytical structures of coincidence through textual and inter-textual linkages, Sebald's coincidences are regularly aligned to touch the physical world, contrived into metonymical relations through the narrator's deliberate spatial and temporal congruity with his historical subjects. The narrator achieves this by visiting the subject of reference, by travelling to the places where those subjects lived. The narrator witnesses architecture, landscape and people affected physically by the past. Those people and

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[592] Jackson, *op. cit.*1995: 115 (Quoting Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle *Fundamentals of Language*, Mouton, The Hague, 1956: 114).

[593] Nicholls *op. cit.* 1995: 282.

places constitute witnesses to the past, establishing a physical/indexical link between then and now, creating a synchronic doubling of temporality already present in the characters' narrative of trauma.

Coincidence thus becomes an initial stage in reading the past. The coincidence is inexplicable because it is repressed, causing apparent contradiction (manifest in instances of anachrony, whereby the narrator identifies long-dead figures inhabiting the present: in *Vertigo* he sees King Ludwig of Bavaria, twins resembling Franz Kafka,[594] and the daughter of James I).[595] The contradiction is only made explicable by causing that coincidence to touch the real world, reconstituting it in a metonymical, physically contiguous relation to the past. In the narrator's travels through Europe (and the United States in the instance of "Ambros Adelwarth"), he happens upon sites that refer to the Holocaust, destruction and genocide. In one sense the narrator's presence completes part of a metonymical equation between object and narrator, in which the narrator constitutes one of the contiguous objects to which meaning is displaced by physical association. In other words, the objects he happens upon have often been witness to events from the past, and he in turn performs the role of witness to their physical congruity with that past event. In this regard Sebald's narrator functions as an indexical lodestone, divining meaning from his physical proximity to the indexical traces of the past. His geographically displaced status as an immigrant, from Germany to Manchester and East Anglia, accentuates his serendipitous role as displaced witness of the past. The narrator functions in the way of an index, locating coincidences and transmuting them into metonymical associations with the physical world of the past. Like the buildings, texts and photographs the narrator encounters, Sebald's other characters often function as indexes to the past; bearing the traces of the past in their very beings, they are traumatised, psychologically "scarred".[596] To better explain

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[594] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 88-90.

[595] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 256.

[596] Garloff refers to Sebald's text "Max Aurach" as depicting "a life scarred by a traumatic loss" (80). See Garloff, *op. cit.* 2004: 80.

Sebald's metonymical technique it is worthwhile investigating some instances in his texts.

Accidental Knowledge

Sebald's fiction abounds with instances in which a referent's association to another referent is not immediately established by similarity, but by the accident of contiguity. A simple example of this is the earlier-mentioned postcard reproduction of the *Cimitero di Staglieno*, which the narrator discovers between the pages of a volume of newspapers in the *Biblioteca Civica* in Verona.[597] While the narrator makes textual and historical associations, and further metaphorical associations can be inferred, the initial connection is a metonymical one; specifically, the proximal, physical coincidence of the postcard pressed between the pages of the library volume. The narrator does not draw a metaphorical connection between the cemetery postcard and the newspaper article he had been perusing: such connections are left open to the reader. It is the accidental physical contiguity of the postcard with the newspaper volume, and hence with the narrator, that precedes metaphorical significance. As the narrator claims:

> The [newspaper] story, which did not lack gruesome details, remained in my
> memory not least because in one of the tomes I was going through I found an old
> postcard showing the Cimitero di Staglieno in Genoa.[598]

The story remains in the narrator's memory precisely because it is connected physically and temporally to his discovery of the postcard. Ultimately, the meaning inherent in the newspaper article is displaced in the narrator's memory onto the postcard. The result is a postcard imbued metonymically with a (repressed) meaning.[599]

Similar to the herring example, chapter X of *The Rings of Saturn* develops an analogy of the final solution through the history of German attempts to establish a silkworm industry. Both sericulture and the earlier example of the herring fishing industry are

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[597] Sebald *Vertigo*, *op. cit.* 1999: 122-3.
[598] *Ibid.*
[599] Another similar example of accidental contiguity is the secondary narrator Austerlitz' experience of locating a photographic reproduction of the Terezìn file room: see Sebald, *Austerlitz*, *op. cit.* 2001: 395.

presented in a way that emphasises their procedural and technical similarities to the mass genocide of the final solution. An elaborate analogy is drawn in which the extermination of the silkworms after the completion of their labours is achieved by suspending the cocoons over a cauldron, where they "have to be kept in the rising steam for upwards of three hours, and when a batch is done, it is the next one's turn, and so on until the entire killing business is completed."[600] The sericulture example begins with the account of Sir Thomas Browne's "Musæum Clausum", an imagined museum of fascinating and rare exhibits, the last to be mentioned being the bamboo cane in which two Eighth-century monks smuggled silkworms from China into Byzantium.[601] While the rest of the chapter selects instances related to the history of sericulture in Europe, the means by which the narrator claims to have found the information is accidental. He notes that the Nazi regime revived silkworm cultivation:

> as I realised with some surprise when, last summer, searching in the education
> office of the town I grew up in for the short documentary about North Sea
> Herring fisheries which had been shown to us in primary school, I happened
> upon a film on German silk cultivation, evidently made for the same series.[602]

So it happens by the end of the novel that the films he describes; one on fascist sericulture; another on herring fishing; were not originally chosen by the narrator for their thematic or metaphorical similarities. Although the films are clearly united by their depictions of the routine mechanization of genocide, the narrator seeks to make it clear that such metaphorical and analogical connections are secondary to the explicit accident of physical proximity. The relation that the narrator seeks to emphasise is the disturbing and inadvertent inclusion of both films within the same library category, quite probably locatable within easy reach of each other upon the same shelf. The method of library classification impliedly relied on a standard theme (ie; procedures of farming) to place both films in the same category, and, indeed, "the same series".

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[600] Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn, op. cit.* 1998: 294.

[601] Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn, op. cit.* 1998: 275.

[602] Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn, op. cit.* 1998: 292. Such examples abound in Sebald's texts. Just a few pages earlier he outlines the arguments against sericulture put forward by the Duc de Sully, which the narrator happened to have "acquired for a few shillings many years ago at an auction in the small country town of Aylsham, north of Norwich." (278).

Sebald re-casts this apparently innocuous classification of cultivating and fishing procedures with the irony of quite another thematic correlation, ie; procedures of genocide. This establishes the ironical effect of the uncanny, of locating the strange within the mundane. For Sebald it is within the uncanny that the metonymical relationship inheres. By attributing meaning to arbitrary relations, metonymy constitutes the ideal trope for drawing difficult or obscure comparisons of the type made in Sebald's texts: a familiar classification undergoes an estranging realignment in which two documentary films that have previously been considered similar only by reason of their common theme of animal primary production are suddenly related by the topic of mechanised mass genocide.[603] Underlying this thematic reassessment is the function of physical happenstance: rather than seeking for the sericulture film, the narrator "happened" upon it.

Moths & Metonymy

In *Austerlitz*, the proliferations of moths that fly into the main character's London house intrigue him. He has the impression that the moths signify something important in the sense of "an incursion of unreality into the real world",[604] an oblique and enigmatic intimation of death that nonetheless remains non-specific. In a preceding recollection Austerlitz associates the moths with the luminous trails that follow them in lamplight at night.[605] Anne Whitehead recognises that these "phantom traces"[606] are signifiers of the transience of the hauntings of the dead, but also sees in their lifelike preservation after death a continuance of traumatic memory.[607] It is only towards the end of the novel, and only a few days prior to his permanently leaving the house, that the door to the adjacent walled-in block is unaccountably left ajar, and he realises the

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[603] Zygmunt Bauman explains the necessity of mechanization as a paradigm for the final solution. He cites Henry Feingold, who states that the Holocuast was "a mundane extension of the modern factory system." Bauman, *op. cit.*1989: 8 (citing Henry Feingold "How Unique is the Holocaust?" *Genocide: Critical issues of the Holocaust*, Alex Grobman and Daniel Landes (eds.) Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1983: 399-400).

[604] Sebald, *Austerlitz, op. cit.* 2001: 131.

[605] *Ibid*: 131-2.

[606] *Ibid.*

[607] Whitehead, *op. cit.* Ch 5, "The butterfly man: trauma and repetition in the writing of W G Sebald." 2004: 137.

moths have strayed from this block of land, which happens to be a Jewish cemetery.[608] Austerlitz' recognition of the moths' connection to the cemetery is belated.

For the duration of the time preceding his discovery of the moths' origins he and the reader are required to regard the moths as generalised signifiers of the transient spirits of the dead. But this signification is vague rather than enlightening, and a specific apprehension of the meaning of the moths remains ungraspable until the connection with the cemetery. It is in their preceding state as incomprehensible signifiers that the moths most closely resemble Jakobson's example of inessential detail. They are interesting, but they give the impression of extraneous detail unrelated to the coherence of the narrative.

The relations of moths with death, ghostly transience, and traumatised memory are metaphorical. Preceding the metaphor of ghostly transience, however, is the metonymical displacement from the moth to its luminous trail: Whitehead's connection of the moths with the elusive trace of the dead depends upon this slippage, from moth to afterglow. I suggest two levels of metonymy exist in this example. Regarding Austerlitz' house, the first level of metonymy is the displacement of the signifier for "Jewish cemetery" into the signifier of "moths", the great numbers of which function literally as carriers of the original signifier in their flight from the cemetery to Austerlitz' house. It is a spatial congruity, an architectural coincidence that creates a metonymical correspondence undeterred by the lack of similarity. The second level of metonymy is constituted by the overall effect of the first. This meta-metonymy comprises the movement from the horrific, radicalised world of the concentration camps to the quotidian modern life of the protagonist. It is the *unheimlich* displacement of the strange into the familiar, in which the familiar is recognised as strange. While it is the experiential, everyday associations of *table* and *lamp*, of buildings, bus schedules, libraries and cafés that physically confront the narrator and Austerlitz in their travels, it is Sebald's coincidental and metonymical universe that uncannily displaces the horrific into their, and the readers', mundane worlds. The metonymical displacement of the

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[608] Sebald, *Austerlitz, op. cit.* 2001: 408-9.

unfamiliar into the signifiers of Austerlitz' everyday world enables his gradual and horrified recognition of his traumatised childhood.

Ferber & Wittgenstein

In "Max Ferber", the last story in *The Emigrants*, the narrator relays details of the title character's past, including an account of Max Ferber having boarded at the address of 104 Palatine Road, where Ludwig Wittgenstein had lived thirty-three years earlier. The narrator records Ferber's disavowal of any meaningful relation:

> Doubtless any retrospective connection with Wittgenstein was purely illusory, but it meant no less to him on that account, said Ferber. Indeed, he sometimes felt as if he were tightening his ties to those who had gone before; and for that reason, whenever he pictured the young Wittgenstein bent over the design of a variable combustion device, or test-flying a kite of his own construction on the Derbyshire moors, he was aware of a sense of brotherhood that reached far back beyond his own lifetime or even the years immediately before it.[609]

Although this "retrospective" association is "purely illusory", it nonetheless persists as a mysterious "sense of brotherhood" that transcends and pre-empts Ferber's own life. This brotherhood is a relation that is explicable within the larger context of the prevailing theme of *The Emigrants* that is gradually revealed throughout the rest of the story: of diasporic Jewish culture and the exile and persecution inflicted upon it. Both Ferber and Wittgenstein were Jews forced into exile by the Nazi regime. Wittgenstein's emigration to England thus becomes a parallel of Max Ferber's life. By referencing the Palatinate, historically a region of southwestern Germany, the address emphasises the geographical displacement of Ferber and Wittgenstein and strengthens the seemingly inexplicable association that Ferber has drawn.

Ferber's retrieval of traumatic memories follows Caruth's model of belated recognition and re-enacted trauma. Lost memories of Ferber's parents and childhood return to him accompanied inexplicably by the excruciating pain of a back injury. In his pain his

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[609] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, *op. cit*. 1996: 166-7.

doubled-over posture reminds him of a childhood photograph in which he is poring over his schoolwork as he writes.[610] However, Ferber cites a later event that in turn reminded him of his painful slipped disk: this is his viewing of doubled-over figures depicted in the Isenheim Altarpiece in Colmar, painted by Matthaeus Grünewald.[611] It is this later event that causes him to recall the association of the pained and "crooked position I was forced to stand in"[612] with the posture he adopted when writing as a child. In this instance Ferber's retrieval of memory occurs belatedly: the association of pain with childhood remains unnoticed until two years later, when he experiences Grünewald's horrific apocalyptic visions of mental and physical suffering, including figures "doubled up by grief like snapped reeds".[613] Repetition of the doubled-over posture allows Ferber to recover the earlier forgotten connection between pain and the childhood photograph, and thence the conscious recovery of his much earlier childhood past. For Ferber, as for Caruth:

> I gradually understood that, beyond a certain point, pain blots out the one thing that is essential to its being experienced – consciousness – and so perhaps extinguishes itself.[614]

Ferber describes perfectly the function of traumatic forgetting as a censuring of conscious perception where it is ethically incommensurable or inexplicable, thereby avoiding the pain of specific memories of the past.

At this point it is worth recalling the discussion of the Graz exhibition *A Bird in the Hand*, at which the viewer is required to peer through an aperture in the museum wall to view a photograph of concentration camp inmates also standing and facing a wall.[615] Without forewarning, the viewer is manipulated into a "crooked position",[616] a posture mimicking the subjects of the photograph. Just as with the viewers of the Graz

[610] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, *op. cit.* 1996: 171-2.
[611] For further writing by Sebald on Grünewald, see "As Snow on the Alps" in *After Nature*, 2003, Isenheim Altarpiece; esp. Ch V: 22-28.
[612] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, *op. cit.* 1996: 172. See also fn. 44.
[613] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, *op. cit.* 1996: 170.
[614] *Ibid.*
[615] Hellmuth and Reynolds, *op. cit.* 1987, in: Liss, *op. cit.* 1998: 87-8.
[616] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, *op. cit.* 1996: 172.

museum photograph, Ferber's association of his own posture with a similar stance depicted in a traumatic image enables a digressive but powerfully affective connection. For each example the association is metonymical in its arbitrary relation to the trauma it references. For Ferber, however, the association is not merely the result of the artefactual and aesthetic construction of text or museum: it defines his repressed personal memory.

Sebald's structure of narrative representation follows a movement from metonymical displacement to metaphorical revelation. What initially appears to be extraneous detail (eg; a doubled-over posture) delays the reader and the narrator's recognition until a time of traumatic remembering. Like the delayed recognition caused by Jakobson's interposition of extraneous detail, the metonymical, coincidentally derived detail of Sebald's fiction ensures belated recognition, remaining inexplicable until it is attached to further pieces of apparently incidental information. The consequent constellation of apparently inessential signifiers constitutes a critical mass, a point of belated comprehension. It is this notion of a constellation that will be considered in more detail below.

The transfer of meaning from metonymy to metaphor describes movement from an arbitrary association to the underlying meta-narrative significance of coincidence. In attempting to describe the rhetorical function of repression, it is the movement between metonymy and metaphor that debate centres on. Movement also occurs between metonymy and synecdoche, constituting Schleifer's alternating rhetorical model of the representation of death (discussed earlier). It is by reference to the Schleifer's model of the relationship between synecdoche and metonymy that the metonymy-metaphor association can be derived, particularly with reference to the indexical, contiguous function of Sebald's narrators, and from referring back to discussions of the contextual function of metonymy and the role of authenticity in realist literary representations of the Holocaust.

In *The Modes of Modern Writing*, David Lodge discusses Gerard Genette's recognition of metonymical narrative structures within otherwise overly metaphorical literature.

Genette demonstrates that Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* relies on metonymy to develop metaphorically-related memories.[617] As an example of the "interpenetration of metaphor and metonymy",[618] Genette quotes two discrete descriptions of similar church steeples, separated narratively and temporally, which Proust describes alternately by metaphors of corn fields and the sea. The use of radically different metaphors for comparatively similar buildings is the result of Proust's interest in depicting the *context* of a subjective perspective, as it is affected by the physical and temporal world. The alternative experiences of cornfields or the sea affects the narrator's perspective of the church steeples, and it is this change of metaphors that demonstrates Proust's attempt to realistically depict the subjective perspective of the narrator. Lodge contrasts Proust's interest in the "authenticity of subjective consciousness"[619] with Orwell's interest in authenticating an objective, verifiable world. Orwell's use of similes with close conceptual proximity (ie, metonymical contiguity) to the environment he describes appeals to the reader's sense objective history and factual authenticity.[620] Lodge explains that Orwell's documentary approach seeks to authenticate an event, implying that any witness in the narrator's place would have perceived the same occurrence. On the other hand, Proust is concerned to authenticate the unrepeatable subjectivity between witness and event.[621] In both cases, the metonymy of spatio-temporal congruity establishes a sense of realism: Orwell's is a realism of *events* in context, while Proust's is a realism of *subjectivity* in context.

For Proust the emphasis lay in contextual circumstance, in "the movements of the individual consciousness as it encounters a reality, a context".[622] This metonymical, contextual emphasis of the perceiving subject resembles the function of Sebald's narrator in his vertiginous encounters with a reality that is never entirely meaningful; which only approaches meaningfulness through the conjunction of metonymy and

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[617] Lodge, *op. cit.* 1977: 115. Lodge refers to Gerard Genette's "Metonymie Chez Proust", *Figures III*, Paris, 1972: 53.
[618] *Ibid.*
[619] Lodge, *op. cit.* 1977: 116.
[620] Lodge, *op. cit.* 1977: 114-116.
[621] Lodge, *op. cit.* 1977: 116.
[622] *Ibid.*

metaphor (and the conjunction of subjectivity and object), perceived through the meta-narrative of coincidence as a means of attributing significance to indexical, metonymical relations.

However, it is necessary to discuss the "interpenetration"[623] of metaphor and metonymy in an attempt to shed light on the rhetorical structure of narrative and social displacement, whether repression or dissociation. On the one hand, Lacan and Grosz regard metaphor as a function of repression. On the other, Kracauer and Schleifer construe repression in terms of metonymy. Due to the coincidence of trauma theory and Schleifer's theory of metonymy in Sebald's fiction, one of the purposes of this thesis has been to establish a significant correlation between trauma and Schleifer's rhetorical model of contemporary society. That is, in drawing on metonymy as a peculiarly relevant rhetorical expression of both trauma and contemporary society, it is necessary to distinguish Lacan's association of repression with metaphor or, at the very least, to assert the pertinence of metonymy over that of metaphor as a narrative expression of elements of trauma theory and, consequently, of Sebald's fiction.[624] The "interpenetration" of metonymy and metaphor provide a means of considering the relationship of both tropes, and, as such, will help to clarify the relation of both tropes to repression.

Like Kracauer, Schleifer considers modernity to have an amnesiac and uncertain relation to the past, caused by "the clutter of material things divorced from value".[625] Modern literature's resultant metonymical, "accidental" perspective of time is exemplified by Joyce's *Ulysses*, a narrative in which Bloom experiences one day that is interchangeable with any other.[626] The arbitrary surface-relation of congruous objects denies the ability to establish an indexical standard of reality and of history. While it

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[623] *Ibid.* See also at 111: Lodge explains that while metaphor opens itself to ready interpretation, it "bewilders us with a plethora of possible meanings. Metonymy, in contrast, deluges us with a plethora of data, which we seek to unite into one meaning." See also Jackson, *op. cit.* 1995: 117: Jackson observes that the two tropes are mutually reliant, that they "presuppose each other." (117).

[624] The indexical nature of metonymy, a point that I have made in previous chapters, is a pre-existing distinction from metaphor that indicates its aptness in explaining the function of trauma. The current discussion seeks to distinguish metaphor in rhetorical rather than mimetic terms.

[625] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 62-3.

[626] *Ibid.*

appears to be the purpose of metonymical relations to emphasise an indexical association, it is exactly the problem of the arbitrary (rather than the directed) nature of language that Schleifer and Kracauer refer to in the overwhelmingly *non-real* metonymical relation of material objects. As with a photograph, the appearance of an indexical reference to reality imbues the surface depiction with the sense of the real while simultaneously revealing a dearth of contextual knowledge about the past. It is pertinent here to recall Jackson's association of metaphor with cohesion and metonymy with violence.[627] Schleifer and Kracauer's conception of metonymy equates with Lacan's conception of language as violent: both models deprive representation of contextual relativity.

But how does metaphor relate to this picture of metonymy? To restate the basics, metaphor conventionally functions by selection and substitution, replacing one signifier with another signifier chosen for reasons of comparison. Metonymy, on the other hand, involves a process of combination in which signifiers are related by proximity or context.[628] A useful distinction is made by Abdul Al-Sharafi, who observes that metonymy exhibits a relational complexity absent from metaphor:

> The feature that characterizes metonymy is that the connector that links the two
> terms is not based on one relation as is the case with metaphor. Rather, it is based
> on a multiplicity of relations.[629]

It is a multiplicity of relations that arises from Sebald's fictional digressions, just as myriad arbitrary, parecnasic relations are made possible by Kracauer's notion of the Inventory. Ultimately, although metonymy violently establishes superficial, de-contextualised relations between objects, Sebald's use of the trope re-deploys its de-contextualising capacity to uncover repressed connections. The passage of Sebald's fiction discussed above suffices as an example: the character Max Ferber's memory of a photograph of himself as a child hunched over a desk, writing. The image is connected with his physically pained posture on suffering a slipped disc, which in turn he

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[627] Refer to fn. 279, above.
[628] Jakobson, *op. cit.*1987: 97-100.
[629] Al-Sharafi, *op. cit.*2004: 38.

associates metaphorically with his constant mental suffering ("the inner constitution I had acquired over the years").[630] However, the underlying significance of the photograph (the loss of his mother and father) remains repressed, and is not clarified until much later in the narrative. Even though Ferber describes the subject matter of the photograph, explaining that the subject is himself, the lack of explicit contextual explanation as to the significance of the photograph ensures its enigmatic status as the referent of something repressed. Concealing as much as it reveals, the photograph of Ferber joins Sebald's burgeoning inventory of re-contextualised and under-contextualised images. It is only the narrator's and the reader's contextual recognition of the Holocaust that establishes the metonymical relation between the photograph and the history it prompts Ferber to recall.[631] For Ferber the photograph causes him to remember, and to re-visit, the landscape surrounding Montreaux, where as a child he helped his artist father prepare paintings for exhibition. The abiding metonymical significance of the photograph of Ferber as a child is not deducible from the associations a viewer might make, but from Ferber's innocuous recollection that it was "a photograph my father had taken of me".[632] It is the combination of the reader's context of the Holocaust and the textual context of Ferber's statement that establishes the metonymical significance of the passage. The link between Ferber's memories of Montreaux and the image of him as a child is the physical, temporal link between his father and the camera. The artist-as-father once stood behind the camera and observed the image we witness now as readers. Again, this is an example of Sebald contriving to place the reader in the same vantage point as the dead, forcing the reader to associate the death of others with self-death.[633] The photograph of Ferber is a metonym for his

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[630] Sebald, *The Emigrants*, *op. cit.* 1996: 172.

[631] Again, it is worth emphasising here that extra-textual context is peculiarly related to the function of metonymy. As Bernard Harrison has observed in distinguishing metony from metaphor, "our understanding of a metonym does not originate in the text, but in a piece of adventitious extra-textual knowledge." See Harrison, *Inconvenient Fictions: Literature and the Limits of Theory*, 1991: 275.

[632] *Ibid.*

[633] A similar example of this occurs in the first photograph in "Paul Bereyter", which replicates the perspective of lying on railway lines, inferring the final perspective of the title character who commits suicide by lying in front of a train [*Ibid*: 27]. See also the discussion in the earlier section *Citing Death*. The perspective of life from death replicates Caruth's concept of trauma narrative's effect of doubling in the "inextricability of the story of one's life from the story of a death" [see fn. 337].

father. In formulaic terms – *viewer* for *viewed* – the relation is typical of Sebald's use of metonymy in emphasising the process of representation. To reiterate, then: by drawing from the image's lack of textual contiguity and relying on its visual capacity, metonymy operates first to decontextualise the image as (in Ferber's case) representative of *childhood.* The consequence is reliance on its superficial, repressive significance (the image of a child) as a trigger for the ensuing theme of childhood in the narrative. Secondly, the combination of Holocaust context and textual context divulges metonymy's operation in the contiguous link between father and camera, recovering the crucial significance of the narrative "Max Ferber" as mortal loss. Metonymy is particularly apposite to Sebald's evocation of loss because it relies on narrative absence to achieve its effect. In other words, the text re-enacts absence and loss in the metonymical process of repression and recovery. While (as Grosz and Lacan suggest) metaphor is patently repressive in its attempt to establish a cohesive, meaningful whole, its relational capacity remains uni-directional. Conversely, metonymy's multi-relational capacity, typified by Schleifer as an alternation between the whole-part relations of synecdoche and the contiguous relations of metonymy, enable it to both repress and recover, to displace and disclose.

One of the significant purposes of this research dissertation is to demonstrate the prevalence of metonymy over metaphor, precisely because although metonymy represses signification (in Kracauer's terms of the archive) metaphor represses the signifier without enabling the possibility of recovery. As with the process of repression in trauma, however, metonymy's concealment offers the prospect of recollection. In other words, the combinatorial function of metonymy enables it to make reference to the process of repression even as it represses. The surface plane of combination preserves the recognition of the function of representation. This is better suited to the process of trauma theory than metaphor because, like trauma theory, it exhibits an alternating recognition of the subject of representation and the process of representation. It recognizes both presence and absence in the impossibility of mimetic representation. Metonymy's ability to both obscure and reveal positions it as a useful

candidate in constituting the basis of Adorno's model of meaning production and critique, a model that comprises a significant narrative strategy in Sebald's literature.

The Constellation

Theodor Adorno discusses meaning production by use of the concept of the constellation, in terms of a contextual apprehension independent of positivistic logical relations of cause and effect. According to Adorno, an arbitrary constellation of perspectives can produce insights unavailable to the "classifying procedure" of positivism.[634] Like the function of aesthetics in Adorno's work, the constellation is an attempt to surmount the domination of capital fetishisation, by which capital determines desire and discourse.[635] In this regard Adorno's project can be seen as a dialectical continuation of Kracauer's aesthetic theories, and as a precursor to the aesthetic theories of van Alphen and Sontag, and the cultural theories of Baudrillard, Sievers, and Schleifer, all of whom work from a premise of capital cultural determinism.

Adorno's constellation is explicable as a mosaic in which no single tile relates to any other, but which as a whole amounts to a definitive representation. In Adorno's language, the constellation is a "unifying moment" that "survives because there is no step-by-step progression from the [smaller] concepts to a more general cover concept."[636] He bases the constellation on the non-transcendent nature of language, which, because of its immanence never assigns objective meaning to objects. Rather, language provides an instrumental environment in which signifiers are mutually affective and non-reducible. In the same way that Lacan re-situates Freudian psychology within linguistics, Adorno claims to contextualise Hegelian concepts of dialectics and identity within language, substituting Hegel's amorphous "spirit" for

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[634] Adorno, *op. cit.*1973: 162.
[635] Adorno's negative dialectics is a continuation of the project of dialectics, which in his opinion stopped short of completing its goal of critiquing the totalizing rhetoric of metaphysical, objective discourse by failing to emphasise the immanence of its own critique. Adorno, *op. cit.*1973: 162.
[636] *Ibid.*

language.[637] Adorno interprets Hegel's "thing in itself" as a contextual definition of identity, and seeks to define the "object" or "individual" in terms of interiority/externality, so that the process of delineating identity and comprehending an object depends on its historical context. Adorno's interrogation of the function of identity/non-identity in terms of internal and external relations is a synecdochical reading that condenses meaning as – "an actualization and *concentration* of something which is already known and is transformed by that knowledge".[638] However, I would suggest that the contextual relation constituting the constellation model is inescapably metonymical in character, deriving from the congruous relation of objects situated within the same referential plane. Schleifer similarly argues that Benjamin's constellation is inherently metonymical.[639] Thus, "[t]he history locked in the object can only be delivered by a knowledge mindful of the historic *positional value of the object in its relation to other objects*".[640]

Schleifer relates Benjamin's concept of the constellation to the metonymy of modernist rhetoric.[641] An important aspect of the constellation is its analogical relation to the modernist phenomenon of collage, the juxtaposition of actual everyday found objects against a compositional field or "ground". Juxtaposing found objects within a newly-constituted representational whole constitutes a close analogy to the constellation in terms of re-combining objects (concepts) that are unrelated, but which produce a novel result. In this regard, both concepts (the constellation and the collage) are explicable as metonymical relations of congruous objects as a means of establishing a new meaning (what Adorno refers to as a "cover concept"). A further point of similarity relates to Adorno's reconception of Hegelian dialectics and identity as a process of language (discussed earlier). This reconception of reality as language exhibits a direct parallel with

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[637] Adorno, *op. cit.*1973: 162-3. See also at 56: "Dialectics appropriates for the power of thought what historically seemed to be a flaw in thinking: its link with language, which nothing can wholly break."

[638] Adorno, *op. cit.* 1973: 163 (My italics).

[639] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1993: 315.

[640] Adorno, *op. cit.* 1973: 163 (My italics).

[641] Schleifer, *op. cit.* 2000: 206. Schleifer recognises a raft of concepts developed by other theorists to accommodate modernity's metonymical character, including Bertrand Russell's "arrangements" and Werner Heisenberg's "alternatives".

trauma theory, which also considers the past in terms of narrative. This has repercussions in terms of the re-conception of visual representation as language, and is better explained by reference to Rosalind Krauss' discussion of collage. Krauss describes the ability of collage to not merely represent space and depth, but to indexically re-present the ground plane it simultaneously obscures and depicts as "a figure of its own absence".[642] The pasting of a newspaper cutting onto a canvas both conceals and re-presents the canvas plane or ground, which, Krauss explains, "is literally masked and riven. It enters our experience not as an object of perception, but as an object of discourse, of *re*presentation."[643] She explains that this function of collage ultimately leads away from the modern (objectifying the elements comprising a composition) and toward the postmodern replacement of the presence of the object with discourse. In other words, presence is replaced by language, reducing the represented object to a textual presence, a physical absence. The result is "a discourse founded on a buried origin, a discourse fueled by that absence."[644]

An important example of the constellation to be drawn from *The Rings of Saturn* is the date of Maundy Thursday, the 13th of April, 1995, which the narrator proceeds to displace to various distant points in history. For example, its origin in Christ's washing of his disciples' feet; the feast day of a number of saints; the proclamation of the Edict of Nantes by Henry IV of France, which established some measure of religious toleration of the Huguenots ("On this very day three hundred and ninety-seven years ago…"); the inaugural performance of the *Messiah*, by Handel ("two hundred and fifty-three years ago"); the appointment of a named governor general in Bengal; the occurrence of the Amritsar massacre; and the founding of the Anti-Semitic League in

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[642] Rosalind E Krauss *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (1985) 1991: 37.

[643] *Ibid*: 38.

[644] *Ibid*. Muriel Pic discusses Sebald's adaptation of Walter Benjamin's project of relying on the documentation of others to construct his own work, referred to as "literary montage". The use of marginalised documents reminds the reader, Pic argues, of the destruction already threatening those ostracised and devalued documents that are recontextualised within Benjamin's and Sebald's narratives. As Pic observes, "Sebald seeks through montage to recover a historical reality which escapes the constructions of history." [8]. See Muriel Pic "Sebald's Anatomy Lesson: About Three Images-Documents from *On The Natural History of Destruction*, *The Rings of Saturn*, and *Austerlitz*", *Colloquy: Text, Theory, Critique*, No. 9 2005.

Prussia ("one hundred and thirteen years ago").[645] Several effects result from associating these dates. Some of the dates appear to be extraneous detail, and others offer further metaphorical interpretation.

Inessential Detail: Green Herring

First, regarding the use of extraneous detail, it is worth noting Jakobson's explanation of its use in fiction. Jakobson describes it as a means of imparting the illusion of modern quotidian existence, whereby events typically exhibit little or no meaning. He observes that writers such as Nikolai Gogol or Fyodor Dostöevsky employ a degree of inessential detail to maintain the sense of reality, and argues that the use of inessential detail to the extent that it obscures possible interpretations establishes a more realistic model of representation than a narrative form with a readily discernible meaning. Jakobson quotes Dostöevsky: "in order to show an object, it is necessary to deform the shape it used to have".[646] It is relevant here to note that Dostöevsky's observation applies equally to the representation of an object (eg; the Holocaust) as to the representation of a (conventional) depiction (eg; a representation of the Holocaust). By presenting ostensibly inessential detail, Sebald's fiction deforms both the object and the representation of the Holocaust. Jakobson further explains the use of inessential detail by means of an Armenian riddle:

> "It hangs in the drawing room and is green; what is it?" The answer: "A herring."
> – "Why in a drawing room?" – "Well, why couldn't they hang it there?" "Why green?" – "It was painted green." – "But why?" – "To make it harder to guess."[647]

Jakobson situates this example as one step short of what he regards as an enlightened appreciation of realism, which he describes as "*the requirement of consistent motivation and realization of poetic devices*."[648] In other words, Jakobson recognised that an understanding

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[645] Sebald, *op. cit.The Rings of Saturn*, 1998: 294-5.

[646] Jakobson, *op. cit.* "On Realism in Art" Ch. 1, 1987: 25-6.

[647] *Ibid.*

[648] Jakobsosn's italics. Roman Jakobson "On Realism in Art", Ch. 1, 1987: 27. Jakobson's definition of realism here is defined in Schleifer as "the renewal of language and perception through 'defamiliarization'" (124). This concept is transposable into Jakobson's definition of *meaning* as a linguistical encounter with change: as "the translation of a sign into another system of signs." (126) See Schleifer, *op. cit.* 1990: 124-5, 126.

of realism requires constant appreciation of the opacity of language. It is only through acknowledgement that language is affected by cultural and representational flux that one is able to appreciate what is conventionally regarded as realistic. For Jakobson, then, inessential detail is a type of poetic device that presently happens to perform a realistic function: that of replicating the meaninglessness of everyday life. At other times and in other cultural and semantic contexts inessential detail might perform a non-realistic role. Jakobson's perspective here is at one with the structuralism of contextual signifiers: of cultural and linguistic relativity. It is arguable, therefore, that, just as with Jakobson's linguistic structure, inessential detail continues to signify a condition of reality in contemporary literature, and that Sebald's fiction relies to an extent on this device.

Returning to the Armenian riddle, Jakobson argues that the object is made clearer by hiding it, by striving "[t]o make [the referent object] harder to guess".[649] The model is the inverse of Lacan's notion of the signifier in his account of Poe's "The Purloined Letter", in which public display of the signifier assists in keeping it hidden.[650] Jakobson refers to the action of obscuring the object as the "deliberate effort to delay recognition".[651] Sebald's literature similarly delays recognition in a way that resembles the delay of representation and recognition in trauma theory.[652] To use the recently mentioned example of Maundy Thursday, Sebald's representations appear at times to be irrelevant (extraneous), and their meaning remains incomprehensible until such later time as they are incorporated (re-enacted) within a significant narrative context (a constellation). Looking closely at the Armenian riddle, we can see that the metonymical nature of inessential detail can be specifically defined. In the riddle there is no immediately understood connection between any object and its context. This lack of understanding persists in the narrative responses as non-connections: no explanation is

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[649] Jakobson, *op. cit.* "On Realism in Art" Ch. 1, 1987: 25-6.

[650] Jacques Lacan "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter", *The Purloined Poe*, 1988: 28-54.

[651] *Ibid.*

[652] As Caruth states [quoted earlier at fn. 327] "The shock of the mind's relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the missing of this experience, the fact that, not being experienced in time, it has not yet been fully known".

given for the herring being hung in the drawing room other than a negative reply that refutes the purpose of seeking a meaningful connection ("why couldn't they hang it there?"). The physical happenstance, the congruities of herring and drawingroom, of herring and green paint, are presented as sufficient of themselves, as metonymical relations that resolve the question "why is a herring hanging in the drawingroom?" with purely deictical justification. The mere fact of the herring's physical presence in the drawingroom is made to stand as proxy for proper explanation as to why it is there. The persistent avoidance of a pertinent reason for the circumstances is reminiscent of the process of traumatised memory, in which repression denies the causative logic expected of conventionally linear narrative.

The technique of establishing an authentically realistic representation by means of inessential detail is co-opted by Sebald to connote not so much reality, but the *sur*reality that conjoins unconscious fact and subjective perception in the world. It is a surreality that joins the dead with the living; history with the present. For this reason I would suggest that Sebald's fiction both is and is not filled with inessential detail. To the extent that details are often discovered accidentally or brought to the reader's attention by metonymical or coincidental association, often through the physical presence of the narrator, they can be regarded as inessential. Conversely, to the extent that these details are effectively interpretable as part of a constellation of Holocaust referents (as with the above-mentioned dates of Maundy Thursday) they are no longer extraneous, but significant. Because interpretation of a detail as inessential is usually determined by the reader's extent of historical or cultural knowledge, the search for further extra-textual knowledge (historical, cultural, ethical, aesthetic) becomes an expected precondition, or a continuing condition, of interpretation of Sebald's texts. The overall effect, therefore, is one of being drawn into a world apparently overloaded with irrelevant detail, but fully anticipating having to discover meaning within. The interpreter (whether narrator or reader) seeks to divine meaning from a constellation of seemingly unrelated historical events. As an example, the mention in *The Rings of Saturn* of the performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1742 might at first appear to be unrelated to Sebald's themes of

religious persecution, death or massacre. However, the history of Handel's work reveals attempts to locate a religious foundation in the concept of the Messiah that is common to both Christianity and Judaism, thus connecting the themes of Christian religious persecution and tolerance in Huguenot history with Jewish persecution.

The concept of a constellation of Holocaust referents develops an understanding of Sebald's association of seemingly unrelated objects. At the end of *The Rings of Saturn*, in a chapter preceding the Maundy Thursday dates, the Edict of Nantes is mentioned in a passage describing the Huguenot's "severe persecution" and the Edict's effect of enabling them to remain in their "French fatherland".[653] Persecution of a religious minority and the term "fatherland" are sufficient to connote the final solution and establish an oblique but firm allegorical relation between Europe's distant past (the Edict) and its recent history (the Holocaust). The textual recurrence of the Edict within a constellation of dates – fourteen pages and several digressions removed – serves to place the final solution referent within that broader association, tying it to a history of institutional European tyranny and suffering. In a similar way the dates of the Amritsar massacre and the foundation of the Anti-Semitic League serve to draw a thematic connection between anti-Semitism and mass genocide.

The coincidence of dates is important for Sebald's narrator because it relates otherwise entirely unconnected historical events. The result is a powerfully suggestive synchronicity between disparate periods of time, a structural significance that is non-teleological, but nonetheless unerringly cognizant of time's haphazard and interminable visitation of destruction and loss.

Ultimately, it is the attempt to apprehend Sebald's synchronous collation of past and present events that necessitates a transposable perspective; a temporally and spatially non-stable narrative representation that is irreducibly subjective. Typified by the perception of Sebald's narrator-protagonist, it is a narrative perspective that alternates between the visual image and the printed word, between death and life, between text

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[653] Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, *op. cit.* 1998: 280.

and indexical trace, between the autobiographical perspective of others and the narrative first-person perspective of the self. But these constant and necessary migrations and alternations between bodies and textual events, between the dead and the living, are possible only with the acknowledgement of the arbitrary indexical relations of metonymy, those connections that are not beholden to the conventions of Enlightenment rationality, or to the homogenising consequences of metaphorical comparison, but rather to the insight to be gained from a multiplicity of repressed and represented relations.

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Chapter Seven

CONCLUSION

Critical scholarship of Sebald's fiction to-date has researched the themes and preoccupations explicitly present in his texts, applying conceptual models and theories most immediately relevant to his literature. The most obvious of these include trauma theory, the aesthetic theories of Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag, and the cultural theories of Adorno, Kracauer and Benjamin. Common themes of the critical scholarship concern Sebald's elegiacal writing style, his reanimation of the past in a synchronic narrative format, and the place of photography in his representation of death and absence. While this research dissertation has followed the nascent tradition of the application of trauma and aesthetic theory to Sebald's work, it has sought to apply other theorists in a reading of Sebald which has not been undertaken to date, for example: Jakobson's consideration of the rhetorical trope of metonymy; Schleifer's conjunction of metonymy with contemporary representations of death; and conceptions of institutional bureaucracy and its post-Holocaust ethical significance. This breadth of research topics has often necessitated drawing seemingly disparate topics together within framing concepts, including Sebald's spatially-oriented emphasis of architecture as a paradigmatic signifier of memory, history, and bureaucracy; Roland Schleifer's post-structural characterization of metonymy as alternatingly synecdochical and metonymical (and ultimately materially indifferent); Simon Critchley's invocation of the trope of prosopopeia as the ever-receding masked absence constituting contemporary representations of death; and Ernst van Alphen's account of re-presentation as constituting a deictic bridge between representation and experience. Underlying these attempts at paradigmatic cohesion is an acceptance of the bold task set by Adorno and adopted by Sebald: to render explicit the "subterranean links" joining subjective identity with the institution – a difficult practice necessitating both aesthetic criticism and reference to the role of ethics. By drawing together ostensibly unrelated concerns through contrived randomness and fortuitous happenstance, Sebald's critique of contemporary society narratively represents the plight of the individual subject exposed to (and complicit with) the social and political institutions comprising the modern world.

The conjunction of ethics and aesthetics is unavoidable when dealing with Holocaust representation. It is also evident in the associated fields of trauma theory, Lacan's concept of linguistic appropriation as violence, and representations of the dead body. The combination of ethics and aesthetics in Adorno and Sebald's projects demonstrate the ability to uncover contemporary repressed relations between subject and state, between subjectivity and death that have not been acknowledged as significant to the construction of modern subjectivity.

Death in this project constitutes Lacan's real and repressed other, the incomprehensible, and therefore unrepresentable, margin of understanding. It is at the point of treating death in Lacanian terms as both an ethical and an epistemological threshold that the often concealed but crucial relation between ethics and representation is rendered visible. It is a connection that underlies the significance of much debate regarding the function of Holocaust representation. I have explored the linguistic connection of ethics and death through Schleifer's use of metonymy. Metonymy's ability to displace meaning between figural and actual objects describes the contemporary appreciation of death as alternatingly material and immaterial, factually unavoidable and narratively incomprehensible: the point at which the ethical interposes itself between the subject and the past, between subjectivity and the institution. Ultimately, the rhetorical trope of metonymy constitutes a shrewd mechanism with which to draw unpleasant, "arbitrary" connections between a "multiplicity of relations", those subterranean links capable of unveiling the ethical and representational malformations implicit in contemporary society. Sebald's reliance on indexical relations to define narrative space, both temporal and architectural, offers a means with which to metonymically dredge the past for those decontextualised, inventoried facts from which we have dissociated ourselves. In his travels and photographs the narrator in Sebald's texts often performs the witnessing, subjectively contiguous function of bridging the deictic space between a lost past and a repressive present, at one and the same time desiring metaphorical closure and, through the function of language itself, metonymically reopening the wounds of past trauma.

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FRAGMENTS

of a

FORMER

MOON

A N D R E W · M I C H A E L · W A T T S

If no one can be simultaneously living and dying, then I do not know when anyone is living.[i]

A museum assistant directs a crowd of onlookers to a glass case, explaining that its contents are no more or less than the skull and skeletal remains of Alexander the Great. He then adds that the smaller case nearby contains the skull of Alexander the Great when he was a boy.

CONTENTS

BERLIN

Weltbilder der Berliner Morgenpost

Bild 10: Landschaft auf dem Monde
Am Himmel die Erde

You have asked about my comments regarding the moon, which until now I have been hesitant to discuss. Following are some of the increasingly digressive excerpts that I have kept from my professional diaries. The diaries were a preoccupation of mine for some years in my past. With the inclination of a bureaucrat, I properly recorded the events and details affecting my daily work, documenting archive planning with photographs where necessary. Looking back through them, I appreciate now that for many years it had been my habit to incorporate my private concerns into the diaries. Since this realiza-

tion they have again come to seem relevant to me. Reading former entries, I feel the past return and yet remain inconsolably distant. In writing, I am reminded of a letter by Kafka. He observed that when we write something, we have not coughed up the moon, whose origins might then be investigated. Rather we have travelled to it with everything we have. Nothing has changed there, we are what we were here … but we have lost ourselves for the sake of a lunar homeland. In answer to why I present excerpts from my diaries now, I would suggest that it is simpler for me than having to remember and explain the unusual circumstances, the dog-days in which I find myself. I have had to transcribe the material, as much of it is illegible. Some of the entries are written in French, and some in German. While my handwriting was once as a rule almost flawless, these entries are often not even consistently written on each line, but diverge and begin slanting off to the upper right of each page. Partly this is due to the medication. Even my attempts at translation have on regular occasions been bold guesses rather than a literal or precise copy of what was on each page, to the extent that at times I

had the feeling that I was rewriting each entry in its entirety without reference to the original script. Although some of the material cites the writings of others in a scholarly manner, much of it is reminiscent of the unbound speculation prevalent in diaries. In making a legible and comprehensible copy of each entry I have increasingly found that my observations are tired and formulaic, that nothing I write or say to myself is meaningful; indeed I am convinced that the meaning I once believed was there has evaporated, as I read paragraph after paragraph of wandering entries devoted not merely to my life or to the moon's peculiarities, but to the colour of telephones, the shadows cast by a building, artless conversations with strangers, or the inventories of a museum case. Although these things occurred, I realize to my horror that their particularity does not matter: one museum artefact could be substituted for any other, the shadow of one building is hardly less substantial or more uninviting than the shadow of another, and everyone is a stranger reluctantly caught in conversation.

*

A letter

Having been woken by a telephone call, I dressed, expecting the telephone to ring again. I had dreamt it was a call at the door, but there was no uniform waiting outside; nobody peered into the fish-eye lens to watch for movement. I had stayed away from work since yesterday, and now I wanted to go outside. I opened the front door and walked carefully up to the row of wooden boxes where the mail was delivered. Several envelopes lay quietly in the mailbox. I removed them, snapped the door shut on a beetle husk and a spare key. Among the usual mail there was a letter, the one you have asked about, but I had not read it prior to the telephone call, which was some weeks later than the arrival of the letter. No, it was not the call that woke me. I don't know who that was; I didn't answer it. I woke to the ringing of the telephone and the grey sun standing behind the curtains. I had been dreaming, and remember thinking when I woke that before I fell asleep I had wanted to tell you something about the telephone. Now I am not sure whether that was a dream, or if I was anticipating a call. But you asked about the letter: I opened some envelopes and discarded that one because it looked like a staff survey from

the archive where I work. I have since retrieved and read the letter you speak of, but at the time my mind was a fog, and I cannot now think where it is, or what it concerned.

*

An account

I am a single middle-aged woman and I have lived in and near

Berlin for the past decade. I have distant relatives, but by relation I have no close family. I have no memory of my father. I am told that on the day I was born my father was lifted into a casket and carried to the front room of the house. For a day neighbours and relatives made pilgrimages to attend my father's solemn presence, while I lay wailing in the furthest, smallest bedroom beside my mother.

I was born in 1944. In the mid sixties I began working for an international aid organization in Jerusalem, as a nurse's assistant and then as a library clerk. Returning from Israel after several years, I continued as a research librarian and as an archivist for various governmental and private organizations. Until recently I managed one of the obtrusive new annexes of the Bonn Federal archives, relocated to Reinickendorf in Berlin. I would catch the S-Bahn to work six days in every week, and save my recreation leave for an emergency. I regard myself as introspective, possibly imaginative but outwardly uninteresting. One or maybe two doctors might add that I present symptoms of mild obsessiveness. I speak politely and intelligently. My manner and outlook remain disproportionately skewed toward details of my past occupations and the procedures I have scrupulously adhered to at different times and in increasingly demanding situations. Nonetheless, it is my insistent regard for underlying causes, for motives that might explain why I chose certain paths in my life, and not others, that determines what I write here.

*

An uncertain event

Early in the month I received a letter by registered mail. I was sitting in the bath. I did not expect to be disturbed; I was quietly, rhythmically floating on low waves back and forward with

the roll of the warm water, in no-man's land. When the door-bell began its pressured drone I imagined it was the incurable ringing in my ears that I endure frequently and with little humour. At night as I am trying to sleep the doorbell sounds exactly like the bell of the nearby church further down Senefelderstraße. The church bell tolls at midday, and at six in the evening, and for other irregular occasions I assume to be christenings or funerals.

The mail was delivered by hand through the government courier service: an uninterested woman in green uniform wearing her peaked hat on the landing. She required that I sign for the letter, and proffered a thick plastic ballpoint of the type I have normally seen on the desk of my doctor's surgery, bedizened with the logo of one or another new pharmaceutical drug. I felt exhausted looking at the envelope; but instead of returning to bed I opened the letter while I prepared breakfast. I had no interest in the letter. However, I felt compelled to open it, as if a motivation to do so derived from the letter itself. Following what appeared to me as vibrating distortions, a blurring of my vision in the air around the envelope, I moved my numb fingers loosely according to the rote of letter opening, less carefully

than usual, oblivious to its machine-stamped seal. The single page requested an appointment with the director of the genealogical projects unit at the Schönow Institute, which specialized, it read, in archaeology. The expectation of the Institute's directors was that I provide personal and familial history that could assist in formally identifying human remains recently exhumed in Israel. It was not until very close to the end of the letter that it was explained why I was required at the institute. It was the considered opinion of the undersigned that, owing to an unfortunate and uncertain event early in the month of June 1967, I had suffered a fatal accident: that I was, to all intents factual and *de jure*, dead. I felt then that if I could re-seal the letter inside its envelope, I could behave as if it had never arrived, and that I had never read it. But I had already torn the envelope open along its top edge. I had used my index finger as a rudimentary knife and stubborn jerking rips had buckled the envelope and partly turned it inside out; in my impatience I had rent the address, left the postmark unreadable, and I could not close the envelope up again.

*

The past

Remember, this is an abbreviated account of a series of excerpts from the diaries of a bureaucrat. I am of the opinion that I have

inadvertently slipped time's yoke. I believe, and have been told, that I have been accounted for on the left page of the ledger but, due to an oversight, have not been crossed out from the column on the right. How better to describe it? How exactly does one slip time's yoke?

I might explain it with the following: in my possession is an empire blue wax-paper covered pocket book, with twenty lightly inked lines per page, bound with a minimum of white cotton and two rusting staples. A competent child's handwriting covers many of the pages with dates of significant events in German history. It is a crib: the result of a month of cramming for History examinations, or the more extended project of a term at school; a way of remembering when things happened. The handwriting is consistent: staunch in its abrupt, blunt clarity. It exhibits few mistakes, and its certainty of form is practical, expedient. The opening date in the booklet is commonly regarded as the beginning of German history, starting boldly in 9 AD with Arminius, prince of the Cherusci's defeat of a Roman Battalion in the Teutoburg Forest. None but the Romans referred to the lands north of the Rhine as

Germania. The dates continue with AD 375, the year the Huns defeated the Goths and initiated a great migration towards the west and Rome. It happens to have been the year Pope Julius I conveniently connects the birth of Christ with the birth of Mithras and the festival of Saturnalia. It is the highpoint of the life of Trier as capital of its Roman province, and it is the low point of Emperor Valentinian's life, which ends that year in Brigeto, leaving his four-year-old half brother as steward of Rome.

The year 375 is still early for the nascence of German culture. The German nation would not exist until nearly a thousand years hence, even then constituting not a country but a synchrony of political divisions bridging the Holy Roman Empire with a distant present. When I first discovered this booklet I began turning to random pages and testing myself with specific dates, determining whether I could remember why those dates were included. In subsequent readings I located untimely gaps and reversions, an unnerving history in which the date of 1933 was interspersed amid lists of much earlier years. On the same page 1933 separated the year 1800 from the beginning of the Franco-Prussian war, in 1870. At one page 1933 fell between 1800 and 1829, two dates without any immediate significance. What was the reason for choosing these dates? Was it because in 1800 Volta invented the electric battery, or that Berlin insti-

tuted a postal service? And what of 1829? That year witnessed the death of Friedrich Schlegel and the birth, on 26th February, of the immigrant Levi Strauss.

The date of February the 26th recurs a few pages later with the death of the printer Alois Senefelder, in 1834, and the death of psychologist Hermann Ebbinghaus in 1909. Ebbinghaus devised the Forgetting Curve, a means of measuring the efficacy of rote learning.

Is my situation any clearer?

It occurs to me that I need to recount my past. I need to recall those parts of my history that lead up to, and away from, the month of June, 1967.

<center>*</center>

The letter

No, it was not a letter: it was a telephone call. I am no longer sure of the story I have told you of a letter being delivered by hand. I do recall a formal letter, but I also remember a telephone call that woke me on that morning. It might have been more than coincidence that on the morning of that call I dreamt of a great number of human umbilical cords that had been stored in wool-lined bakelite containers till long after the owners were deceased. After an indeterminate period, a man who bore more than a passing resemblance to my great uncle would take the time to remove the desiccated bile-brown twistings of human flesh from their caskets and set about cramming them under doors as draught excluders. My great
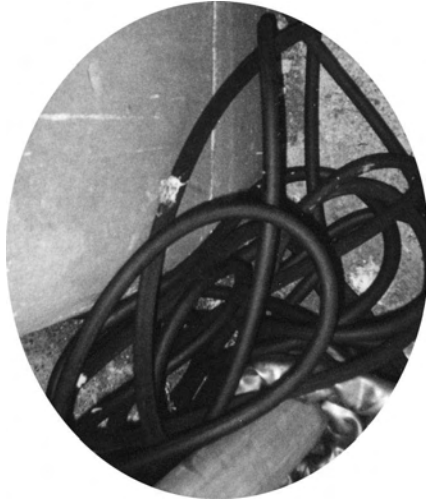
uncle would often annoy his wife attempting without success to repair furniture and appliances about the large house they kept in Leipzig. I remember him leaning against the foot of the kitchen doorjamb on one occasion when I was young, contriving with a round-edged chisel to repair a warp in the door. He enjoyed me watching his repair work until the point when he realized himself that no good would come of his handiwork, at which point he lowered his brows and shook his head, muttering my name to imply that I had interrupted him, and directed his attention to the threadbare Hessian kitchen door-mat, as if it had always been the mat that he had sought to repair. I imagine it is this memory that attributes my great uncle with the task of setting umbilical cords under doors. In the dream he also made them into earplugs that resembled primitive telegraph wires. These wires accessed the hissing scree that surrounded the temporal world and enabled him to communicate with the dead. On waking, my mind continued along these absurd lines, and I lay unmoving for a quarter of an hour or so under the urgent misapprehension that the telephone was distressed, and that this was why it was ringing.

I remember now: I had to unwrap myself from the bedclothes, as if they were swaddling. Now the phone silently suggested to me that it had never rung. I attempted to call the number back using the return dial function, and waited several seconds for

the call to signal its through-passage at its destination. I held the receiver away from my ear as the ring tone pulsed. When the ringing was cropped short with a satisfying analogue crunch I held the phone close against my ear, only to be met with a coarser-than-usual hiss like the crackling of the Sun's corona. In the gravel of static I could hear that someone answered but, overlaying the respondent's brisk and impersonal recitation of the telephone number which I had dialled, were other voices, several separate conversations that continued unimpaired on separate lines, between and across each other. Each pair of conversants was unaware of the presence of another conversation, apparently converging along the path of the call that I had made. Heard all together the voices were nonsensical. After listening for a short while, however, I was able to discern each speaker as they related the events of yesterday, or the groceries to be bought, or the state of someone's mother's health. So it was a telephone call, and not a letter.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Sleep

I would gladly have returned to bed and tried to sleep. I should explain that for years I have been suffering from a variously named fatigue that, as it appeared incurable and was not life threatening, did not even vaguely interest my doctor or the spe-

cialists that I have visited. I remember that on the day I received the telephone call I was especially tired, with lead humming in my veins and my hands. Or I was not so much tired as without motivation, incapable. I was unable and unwanting to do anything: almost ready to consider doing something, but never arriving at a decisive juncture. I had already spent some hours that morning lapsing into idleness for longer periods than necessary, so that at any given time I would find myself stationary again: hunched on the edge of the bed or leaning against the kitchen sideboard for longer and longer periods at a time. Intermittently throughout the morning I made my way from the bedroom back to the dining room, where I would sit at the table, and stare at nothing in particular.

I recall that on the night after reading the letter I did not sleep. In succeeding weeks I was no longer capable of sleeping for even a few hours. I coped badly with the world; I remained only partly in it, submerged in a half-state that functioned less than half-well. And while I carried all the waking hours that tilted into darkness with a bodily hope for sleep, I would arrive far, far later than I should have at evening, after sitting in all of the chairs in the flat normally reserved for the use of visitors. The gas radiator in the kitchen became my chosen post to stand at without blinking, leaning against the wall holding a book ready for reading, its marker recently removed. Standing, I

would keep the pages apart with an index finger, the book forgotten. I would decide that tomorrow would be the day that the early morning was turning into; that I would put off the things I intended to do that day, as I was always too exhausted. While standing at the gas radiator and waiting I would imagine time as a poor lodger who also waited; who, after craftily deliberating, would choose to stay in and save sleep for a later evening.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

A bath

On many cold nights like these I would wait until dawn, when I would run a bath and lie in it, constantly adding hot water, keeping the bath water warm until I would hear the occupants of adjoining flats begin to rise and shower and breakfast. I never used to like baths: their inefficiency of time and water, their shallowness, and their principle of cleanliness, founded on the ideal of the human-as-soup, disgusted me, and led me by choice to the ruthless drainage of a shower. However, I often felt on these morning occasions, that my choice had more to do with a combination of sleeplessness and the feeling of agedness: an almost overwhelming need to lie down. And so on this morning I ran a bath, and closed the bathroom door to avoid the glare of light from the living room. Like most of the new
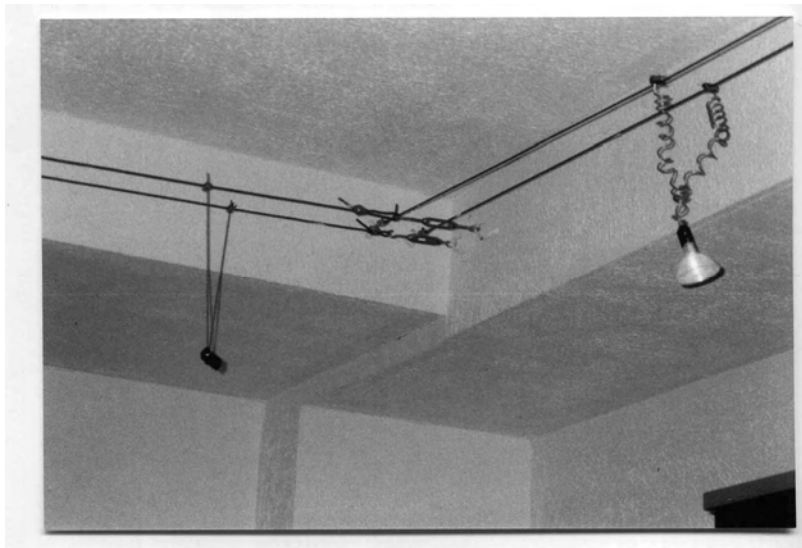
Germany my flat had been thoroughly painted over in grey absent white, and its lighting had been redesigned so that spot illumination, resembling overhead power-lines, and modern blue standard lamps eradicated the gloom with unremitting glare. It was a basement apartment, situated below the level of the street and the sewerage lines.

A large non-descript moulded box had of necessity been attached to the underside of the toilet cistern. When flushed, and increasingly arbitrarily, it emitted tortuous grinding noises.

The door to my bathroom is large and built unambiguously from cedar. On this occasion, as on many previous occasions, the door did not fully close. Owing to a warp in its frame it is difficult to shut without firmly leaning against it. As I lay in the

bath the door unwedged itself from its frame and the friction against the top of the jamb caused it to creak, emitting a re-

peated series of staccato cracks uncannily similar to the amplified ticking of the hall clock, ratcheting open with the fracturing sound of a glacier straining to split. I have seen glaciers, like the ice-sheet at Innsbruck, having splintered themselves after their massive prolongation of unfixed time, and ground the lengths of moraines that now bear the signatures of time's elapsed state.

- 28 -

Pitted with the Pliocene memory of granite fissures inched over by million-tonnage hibernating valleys of frozen water, the certainty of every further minute fall is registered on their hidden underneath paths with the scarring of broken boulders. Glaciers appear to me to hold an immeasurable expanse of Sisyphus' time and task, walled up in a constant polar reverse, drawing

suspended rock down from peaks with a finite, magisterial slowness. The door jerked its way open with the protest that it would never be closed again. While I lay in the bath staring at the glare from the other room I felt like the regrettably crumpled, discarded, registered mail envelope.

Now, at the thinning end of August, when cold days alternate with the remaining warm days of autumn, I lay in the bath, my head partly immersed against one end. I pancaked my ear onto the enamel and listened to goings-on in the adjoining flats. With my ear submerged, the water and the tiled cavity underneath the bath absorbed and magnified each sound like the

funnel of a phonograph up-sided on the floor. It was in effect a giant ear, already perfectly curved and cornerless, concentrating sound in its giant air cavity and reverberating filaments of shocked air through the pressed metal drum of the bath and into the water in my ears. I was like so much thoughtless brain floating flesh-cradled in the tissue of an undersea clam. I was disembodied, part of the mundane clunking and scuffling of the life of other flats. The volume of my heartbeat grew in my skull and ears. The feeling solidified in the cavities of my head, and I found it easy to imagine myself a hippopotamus listening for the terrestrial world from the pressured gelatine of river water, only her ears and eyes reaching outside. I saw myself as a diving bell breaking back through the water's clinging surface to stare at its alien underside. If I let my head sink back into the bath, it floated at precisely the level for a thin film of water to cover my opened eyes, like an extra layer of viscous optical tissue. When I breathed in and my lungs inflated, my body would rise slightly; water would draw back from my forehead like a hangover and bend up against my cheekbones.

It isn't that I desired knowledge of the occupants of other flats. Rather, my listening revealed the unworldly attachment of watching an ant-farm, in which the ants go about their subterranean affairs. Everything in the adjacent flats was fringed by my invisible presence. I melted into corners or grew large over

a doorframe as proxy for another tenant's shadow. Would anything happen, I wondered, if my neighbours chose to run the water for a bath, step into it and immerse an ear; pressed it against the enamel to listen for sounds of the flat next-door? I imagined a series of phonographs submerged in a yellow-tiled tank, the cone of each machine nestled each against another, listening to the scratching of needles on wax cylinders, each recording the sound of the next machine's scraping needle. On this moonless winter morning before dawn I lay in the bath directly beneath the cellophane shower curtain, which was rustled up over the curtain rail in a crumpled cloud that looked like Masaccio's Archangel Gabriel glowering down, seeking to drive me out of the bath. Instead of waiting as the bath water drained out from around me, returning to me the sinking weight of the world, I heeded the overhanging glower and briskly removed myself from the water the way I imagine the original hominid couple exited Masaccio's muddy garden. In movements half unconscious I was standing before the realization that there had been movement; holding a towel and looking back at the retreating water, expecting something to happen. I remained standing with the towel

now concealing my face and hair. Unclothed and entirely still, I imagined I was an idol sealed in an echoing chamber that has had its doors bricked in. It is an image of my self that repeatedly returns to me when I write about those days before the telephone call and the events I have set down here. When I write now I think readily about my pallid badly-haired thin-pig body, a Masaccio body, stolid grey and pale and grotesquely human, unseeing and with a misshapen towel instead of a head: silent, unseen, bunkered in a grotto.


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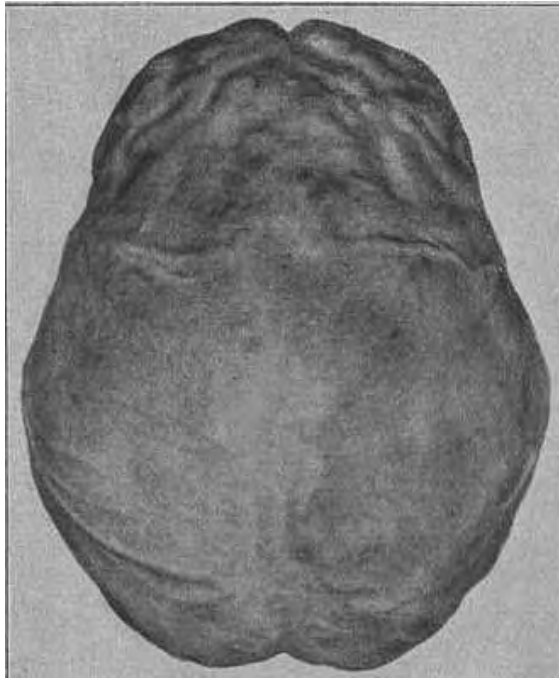
The Schönow Institute

It was in the after-days of August, near to the beginning of winter that I received the telephone call, news I could in no way have expected. When the telephone rang I was waiting; not for a call, you understand, but for a distraction of any sort. I had been lying on the divan under the window in the small sitting-room, almost sleeping, remembering times in the past when my mother would sit on the edge of the bed, against my legs, so that even with my eyes closed I could tell that she was there. I probably woke myself earlier than the telephone call by the memory of one particular time when I could feel the pressure of her sitting near me, and opened my eyes briefly to see that she was not there.

I was asked to attend the Schönow Archaeological Institute where I would be given the details of my difficult situation. What had archaeology or a fatal accident to do with me? Hours
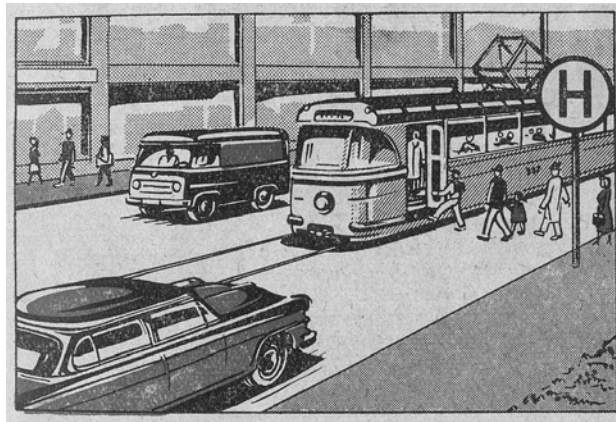
earlier than I needed to I dressed formally as for an interview and walked to the corner of Prenzlauerallee and Fröbelstaße, where I purchased a ticket and caught a tram to Alexanderplatz. The tram ticket was printed with two small arrows; I assume they represented the dynamic qualities of our Deutschbahn public transportation. Schematised, idealized progress: the ticket arrows were not only an instruction on how to orient the card for insertion into the time-franking machine but also a designation of the direction of travel. We move forward.

I walked to the front of the tram where there were available seats. On the edge of the ticket beside a telegraphic account of the time of boarding was the blunt assertion that reproducing the ticket was strictly not permitted. From Alexanderplatz I caught the S-Bahn to Schönow.

*

Erhard W Benass

Schönow is located in the south of Berlin, near the wall in what was the American sector. I arrived at the address far earlier than the interview time. The institute building was one of those

pre-war studies in conservative grandeur. I found that part of the atrium, as in many large institutions, was devoted to an exhibition depicting its history. The exhibition comprised several plastic triptychs which displayed reproductions of photographs from the Weimar and the post-war periods. Below each photograph were mounted flat-screen monitors and simplified keyboards with which to choose options regarding the institution's structure and history: the buildings currently owned and maintained by the institution; the breadth and expansion of its projects domestically and internationally; the significant figures who featured in the history of the organization. A clip-locked dispenser provided disposable aseptic earphones so that I was able to listen to set monologues on each topic. I chose to listen firstly to a general historical introduction outlining major early influences on European architecture. The voice, a woman's, was calm, rehearsed, and precise, and read as follows: just as the Carolingian Empire from the beginning of the ninth century significantly affected the culture of European and Western society, the influence of Mohammed has directed the path of much of Middle Eastern culture and religion. And yet Mohammed and Charlemagne were both products of the collapse of Rome.[ii] In terms of modern European history, Western and Eastern cultures have grown out of the wake of Rome's decline. The detritus of Rome remains visible across Europe: in its recovered

foundations; its quarries and roads; in the monumental architecture of all ensuing European history; and in the grandiose architecture of the modern age, and the burgeoning authority of the nation state . . . I moved on to option number seven regarding the founder, Erhard W Benass. This building, the recording explained, was designed by E W Benass, a man of varied interests whose eponymous foundation continues to support both archaeological and architectural projects in Germany and throughout Europe; it began with this, the Schönow Institute. Benass was born in Wannensee, Germany, in 1883. He studied under Waltraud Andersch at the Leipzig Building School, specializing in antiquarian triumphal architecture. Besides several public buildings, he was responsible for a number of Classical monuments in surrounding Westphalia, Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg. While the majority of his monuments were commissioned during the Weimar years and commemorated the vast losses of the First World War, his earlier designs were more varied . . . I must have grown uninterested or become preoccupied with my imminent appointment because I do not recall any part of the recording after this point, until close to the end of the entry. The recording noted at its end that on his death Benass had no close relatives and left a considerable estate that at his bequest formed the basis of the foundation for ongoing archaeological research as well as, amongst other

things, an annual architecture prize. I have since had reason to research some of Benass' history. I recall that of his commemorative monuments one, still on view in the courtyard of the Landesmuseum in Magdeburg, celebrates the territorial acquisitions of German East Africa. It is replete with a bronze relief of what once was the tallest German mountain, Mt Kilimanjaro. The summit of the African peak is surmounted with burnished eastern rays of sunrise that exhibit a more than passing resemblance to the later Japanese imperial flag, its sun rising over a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere.

The normally conservative Benass was drawn to avant-garde

reform movements advocating anthroposophy and nature worship. He suffered an early death in 1940 from bronchial pneu-

monia after a prolonged late October stay at a nudist resort on the North Sea.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Postkarten

Although Benass' personal correspondence was held in the hardcopy archives of the Institute, much of it was publicly ac-cessible on the exhibition monitors under the title of Biographical Material.

I recall one letter, dated 28th September 1922, in which Be-nass wrote from Berlin to his soon-to-be first wife: Liebe Lotte, I have received your dear letter and am myself angry that my last reply on Sunday was in vain. It gratifies me, my dearest, more than the half of me that is angry. Come definitely on Saturday at nine o'clock with haste for at three twenty-three I depart and return here. I will be there early at Leipzig Hauptbahnhof: on the platform we will meet again. I

assure you I will remain standing on the platform so that we will not fail to meet. Nonetheless, how quickly the fourteen days evaporate, and how quickly they return, and I have to wait through them to see you again. To my favourite, for a few days yet, happiness and best wishes, and in my thoughts for always, Yours, Erhard.

I have since read much of the personal correspondence of Benass. I recall further postcards, replies from Lotte to her first husband when she studied in Leipzig, and he was working in Berlin:

Leipzig 22.09.31: My dearest Erhard! Your Lottchen sends you many Greetings from school. Dear Fred please quickly bring me my night bag, it lies in my bureau. I did not go to Herr Richter's. I wanted today at times to go to bed early, but I didn't come home and get to bed in the evening before 11 o'clock. Everyone sleeps in such a way; if it concerns exam study, you must have all those nights to work. Heartfelt greetings, Lottchen.

Leipzig 03.09.31: Dear Erhard! Just now came from the theatre, it was very beautiful. But not for me. Now I am again entirely abandoned and alone, and there is nothing even on the radio, and now I must also finish my schoolwork. Today was

Börner's application; I would gladly have gone with him, as he had promised. Has it been received? Regards, Your Lottchen.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Maximilian

Benass' research into the European triumphal arch from antiquity to the present suggested, as he put it, that while it was a symbolic expression of state strength and a commemoration of past losses, it was also a structure that, because of its dubious practical function, deliberately avoided the horror of past events. The triumphal arch, Benass wrote, is typically isolated and unattached to a supporting structure, a border or wall: it directs my path through it but simultaneously permits me to avoid it altogether.

Benass took an interest in Maximilian the First's commission in the earlier part of the sixteenth century of a paper arch; not a stone arch, which due to his constant expensive wars and his debts to the Fuggers he could not afford. Durer and other master printers of Nuremburg produced for the Emperor an oversized multi-part wood-block print. In appearance it was quasi-Oriental, a Byzantine folly.

So rather than suffer the destruction of weather and battle, the chiselled defacements and the unashamed pillage of stone blocks, Maximilian's arch could be freshly printed and re-printed onto paper. However, the wearying intervention of time has hindered Maximilian's ideal of the purity of the mechanically reproducible image. Later prints taken from the wood block frames, the surfaces of which by 1796 were worm-eaten and irregular, attributed to the arch a vague impression of rottenness. There was a discernible vagueness surrounding what were once sharp lines, the damage caused by worms conveying a sense of insubstantiality. Of the several hundred prints made, only two sets in the last few centuries have been reassembled and pasted-up vertically so that they could be viewed at the proper angle. On a visit to the United States I took the opportunity to see one of the images. Three-and-a-half metres high and three metres across, it is an imposing vision. It was intended as an emblematic recreation of Maximilian's nobility, honour and strength, attributes that varied according to the extent of powers and funds ceded to him by the Imperial Diet,

and to the taxes ceded to him by his increasingly burdened subjects. Honour and nobility must have been difficult traits to define. Fifteen years earlier Maximilian had assented to the papal bull of Innocent VIII, which opened the Holy Roman Empire to the unhindered persecution of heretics by the author of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, and the enthusiastic counter-reform of his Jesuit order.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Tickets

I looked up from the flat screen monitor and recalled where I was: the anteroom of the Schönow Institute building. I was now late. Rather than waiting for my appointment, it now waited for me: I hurried across to the elevator well at the edge of the atrium and found the waiting room on the further side of a chained-off stairwell, at the end of the corridor. It was in fact two small rooms; the larger little more than a part of the corridor furnished with benches fixed along the wall, as if it were a police station. On this, my first visit, I asked the receptionist about my appointment. I was told that even though I ostensibly had an appointment I would need to collect a ticket from the ticket machine, and this would determine my ranking in the queue. I was informed that the only way to ensure an appointment was to arrive one hour earlier than the opening hours, at

seven in the morning, and to queue up outside. If one arrived in the mid afternoon, she explained, the waiting area would be totally empty because no more queue tickets were available.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Return

I took the receptionist's advice and early the next morning I woke in darkness. When I boarded the train it was still dark. The lighted vestibule of the S-Bahn carriage fluoresced with a startling subliminal flicker like the memory of a film cascading through thirty-six frames every second. The pallor of the enamel paint on the walls and ceiling gave off a sickly fluorescence. Opposite me, the usual internationally recognizable detritus of fast food packaging sat poised dryly on the seat. Next to it lay a magazine folded to an internal page so that I could not read its title. Two private security guards hired for the city rail service stood disconsolately near the doors clutching radios, hands in their pockets, not looking at anyone, waiting for the next station as if they were disembarking, but at each station remaining on board.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Crossing

I changed trains at Ostkreuz Bahnhoff, where I had to walk down from its raised ring-line platform. Beams from the head-lights of oncoming cars caught the power lines level with the station platform. The light mimicked electrical charges as it revealed receding lengths of the power lines, like so many messages in transition. Looking down at the traffic crossing the bridge below the level of the platform, I noticed an unusual stratifying effect: trains; cars; a sea of buildings; people. It was a windy juncture overlooking the city. Staring from the station platform out over the east of the city, I felt as though I stood on the prow of an oversized ship. The platform felt unsteady. I had previously stood there, I now recall, on the day that I returned to Berlin early at sunrise in winter. Already the early workers had meshed into an intolerant silent multitude incapable of being accommodated easily on the narrow platform, which had to function as a thoroughfare as much as a place to wait. I had not used the station before. When I asked directions from a poorly attired pensioner, he observed that mine was not the staccato Berliner accent he was used to. Without hesitation he proceeded to tell me of his expatriate British history; that although he had lived in Berlin at different times over

the past thirty years, was retired with a casual girlfriend and things to be getting on with, he had no intention of revisiting the United Kingdom. He had travelled extensively during his life, not for the purposes of work, he said, but that did not keep him from earning a wage.

In other words, he explained, he decided many years ago to travel overland and follow the path of the crusades, but not in the usual unbroken travel undertaken by passengers, by which one's life is reduced to a suitcase or a motor vehicle. Rather than endure the vicissitudes and disappointments of an extended excursion, he dissolved the entire eleven thousand kilometre length of his return journey, which equalled almost exactly the circumference of the moon, into his routine of commuting to and from work. His journey occurred by proxy, through frequent changes of residence and place of work. In this way, he said, he retained the comforts of domestic and vocational security while simultaneously drifting in the direction of his intended destination. Rather than return home each day to the same flat, he would instead travel from his place of work to a residence located closer to wherever it was he wanted to visit. Likewise, he would regularly change his place of work, so that every other morning he would catch a train or walk to a newly determined workplace slightly less removed from his place of

arrival, and slightly further from the residence he had vacated that morning.

While this at first seemed preposterous, he assured me he had in fact undertaken this journey. In order that he might persuade me, he secured from me my address, to which a regular stream of almost illegible letters began arriving over the ensuing month. Attached to some of these letters were the original post-marked envelopes from prior correspondences, on which the return addresses changed from week to week as they gradually shifted southward. He sent me some of the old correspondence he had sent to his relatives and colleagues. Amongst the letters was a photograph that he had probably forgotten to remove from the letters, and which I have since mislaid. It at first looked unassuming: it was a snow-scene with a group of people. But looking more closely, I saw that it was very much like the Solstice dramas of seasonal death and rebirth common to the village festivals I had seen as a child: it was a Purim Shpiel, retaining the makeshift remnants of a pre-Reformation Mummers' play. The sky was brittle white. Standing in a line in the snow, the group of people faced an unseen audience, their mannered inexpressive faces exhibiting an unseemly appearance, as if it were one of Blake's prints of an underworld horde that had been painted over with inoffensive masks. Some of the audience could be seen spilling in behind the players, form-

ing most of a circle. The photograph had been taken after the play was finished; the man with the role of the Turk had already suffered death and was again standing, revived. He was a canker, an *Auslander*, reborn hoar-filmed in the cold, now facing the crowd as a temperate warning of the spring season. A uniformed woman in the close foreground was looking away from the photographer and watching the play. Jutting in from the very edge of the photograph was the grey stab-line of her rifle barrel, dividing the space between the collar of her coat and her jaw.

<p align="center">*</p>

Moving away

Amid the anecdotes in his letters I read of the considerable effort he devoted to the task of substituting one job for another, an old for a new residence, often more than once in the same week. What occurred to me as even more inconceivable than his convoluted organizational feats, was his ability to fit in, to appear as if his past was not a constant migration. During all of this time each of his successive landlords and employers exerted a Byzantine cloud of technical difficulties on his foreseeable future. I wrote and asked him what he thought of a life so entirely devoid of ease, and he replied that his choice of travel had not been unending: that at some point he had arrived at his des-

tination. In the meantime, he assured me, he found it decidedly less troubling than regular modes of directed travel, which made it seem to him as if his life was set on rails. My life of travel was as secure as it is now, he wrote: at the end of each day I am free to return to my home.

I only met the man that one time, while standing on the platform at Ostkreuzbahnhoff. During this time he mentioned that most of his friends had died, both in Berlin and in Britain, and so, he declared, I am at times lonelier than I would like to be. Ideally, I would like to live with my girlfriend, he said; but she will not have it. I am going to visit her now, he said. As you can see from the clothes I wear, I am a pensioner, I do not have the lifestyle I once enjoyed when working, but still it is not a bad city to live in. Although, he repeated, many of my friends are dead now; I have too much time passing me unattended, as it were. Yes, he agreed, it is a beautiful view now in the morning air. A railway guard stared at us as he passed.

While I listened to him and nodded understandingly I could not help uncharitably wondering whether he might after all be soliciting something as yet un-stated. I wondered if he was seeking something besides my address, something I was not prepared to surrender: money, a place to sleep, friendship. I worried that he might attach himself to my side like a stray dog. Between nod-

ding and agreeing and smiling I would look out at the luminous solidity of the winter buildings as they stretched away below us toward the now risen sun. Briefly he glimpsed at the sun, and it was then that I realised he was intent only on persuading me of the difficulty of his situation, of his colleagues and relatives and friends no longer being present. My train arrived, and in the jostle I turned and left him.

<div align="center">*</div>

Records

Now at my second visit to the Schönow Institute I was early
enough to queue outside the locked glass entrance with thirty
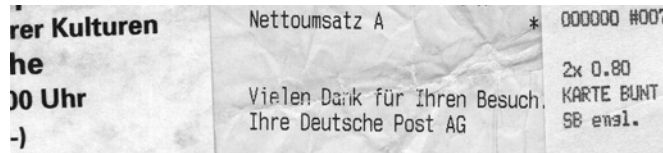

other people, ready for the eight o'clock opening. After the
initial opening rush, I collected a ticket from the machine, and

dropped it into my change purse. A familiar thought occurred
to me: that in the prevalence of electronic printing, official

scraps of paper, tickets and receipts forever follow me. Re-
ceipts accounting for trivial daily transactions fill my handbag,
reminding me of our consuming need not to recollect signifi-
cant parts of our lives, but the inconsequential and constantly
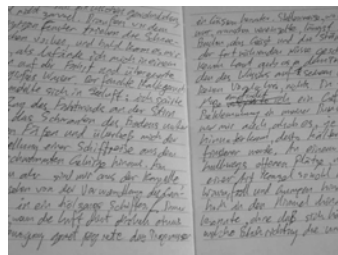repeated rituals of our ongoing relations and exchanges. It
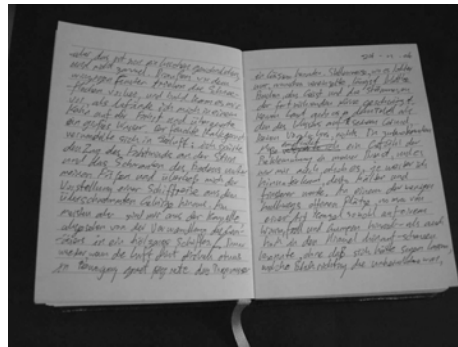
seems to me that these scraps of paper replace the need for writing, or for any responsible account of life.

I write: my writing has been like a prayer wheel, fulfilling an act of supplication, but instead of spinning unhindered through a cycle of prayers, I 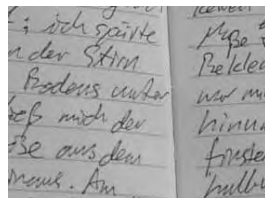have to regularly intervene to prompt its revolutions. And so I ought to explain my act of writing in terms of something less ancient, less absurd: maybe a codex of pages that I must rifle through to renew the memory of each entry. It is odd that diary records are called entries, as if the chronicling habit of setting down words forges a passage into other places. I have yet to determine if each day's entry continues the ingress of earlier entries, in the way that an external door leads to the inner rooms of a house. If this is not the case, then each new entry must begin from the outside, and progress is cut short at the conclusion of each day's entry. I question

whether days succeed one another at all, or whether they offer only the opportunity of renegotiating the outermost rooms, those previously and often frequented vestibules and hallways with which we are all familiar.

Nonetheless, I substitute a considered reckoning of my days with a handbag swollen by precise, empty records of the past. In all of the specific financial transactions, exact times, and company names there is nothing of my self. In silent, crumpled complicity in the darkness of my coin purse, these proxies of my life corroborate a traceable account of where I am and what I have done. After a month or so I purge the bag so that nothing of my personal history exists in print; there remains only an ethereal repository witnessed dutifully by each teller machine withdrawal, credit inquiry, and grocery purchase. All of these receipts and tickets contribute to a narrative of paths, of trails, that when joined together reconstitute a ghost that resembles me. A few receipts survive for a while longer, masquerading as banknotes at the ends of my jacket pockets. Others, the more attractive ticket stubs recalling actual events rather than transactions, I reuse as bookmarks. I am aware that many
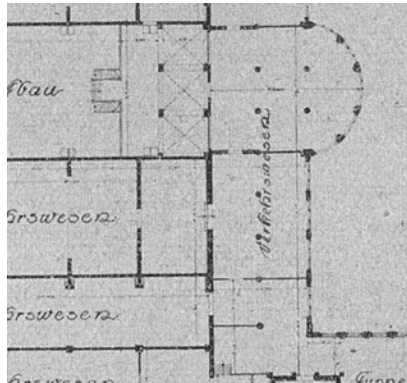
people do this. Recently I was using a bookmark that I thought was my monthly boarding pass for the train. It was blue, the size of a business card. But on looking closely I realised it was someone else's bookmark, a business card from the Hotel Oot-serreichhaus Café in Swakopmund, Namibia. The second-hand book I was reading must have once been a gift to someone. Written in oddly rhyming English on the back of the card was the message:
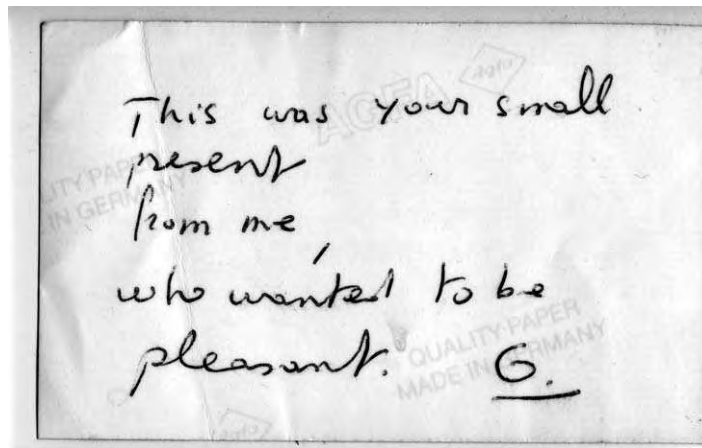
This was your small present from me, who wanted to be pleas-ant: G.

<center>*</center>

Bookmarks

I was not surprised to find that my habit of using receipts as bookmarks derived from observing my mother. I still possess

her psalter hymnbook. In it, at some time in a prior decade, my mother had placed her deposit-book security card. No doubt she did this for safekeeping of the card. Nonetheless, I imagine she also used it as a bookmark. The Gothic script on the back of the card states that repayments would occur only if the deposit book was submitted together with the card. The security card, it continued, therefore offers good protection against damage through loss of the deposit book, if one retains it separately. It is best, it reiterates, if one hands the security card over to another person for safekeeping.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Waiting rooms

At eight o'clock in the morning both rooms were too crowded to find a seat. By nine-thirty the crowd had diminished sufficiently that I was able to sit down. With poorly concealed anxiety each person waited for their ticketed number to appear on one of the three red-lit boxes attached to the wall

at the end of the larger room.

Even though all the seats were turned to face the centre of the room, each person faced towards the wall with the red-lit signs, or peered up at the wall every so often to ensure that they were not passed over, something that could easily and very quickly happen. I felt as if there was a mutual agreement on the part of every soul there to pretend that this ordeal was merely another mundane chore. It was not threatening or significant.

Having waited for upward of three hours I was finally summoned by the electric sign at the far end of the waiting area. I went to the door indicated on the ticket and found the listed vacancy at a desk very near the entrance. I stepped forward and presented the letter with the now rolled-up queue ticket. I exchanged pleasantries with the official. It was a nice day. I was feeling well. She felt well. From her voice it was clear that she was not obliged to attend to my appointment, that she leniently tolerated my letter of interview, which was no more to her than an inconvenience. She registered my responses without moving her head and told me that I should not have rolled the ticket: that it needed to remain flattened, as it needed to be fed into a machine. She demonstrated the feeding of the ticket into an off-white plastic box on the desk at her side. It slid into one side of the box and came out the other changed in an obscure but significant way that she did not explain. I told her the ticket would not have been rolled up if it were not for the three-hour
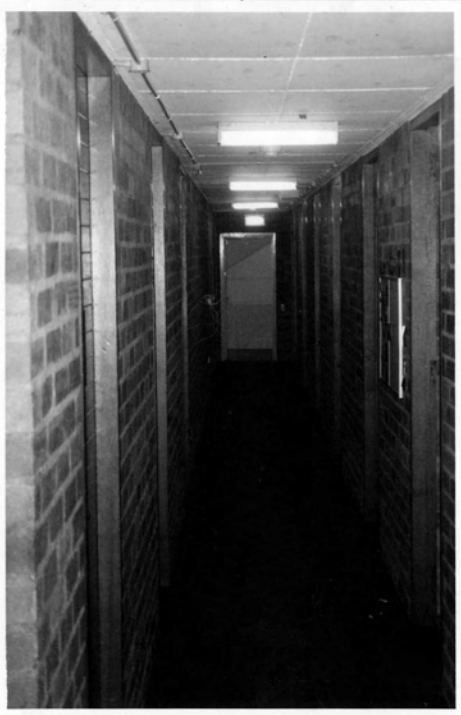
queue. She asked if I was stressed. No, I told her, I was not. She set down her pen and turned her head to one side to stare at a distant point of the floor, past the other receptionists, through the furniture to the extreme edge of the building, and without looking at me asked if I had any further business to attend to?

I did not know what she was asking. Before I could take the time to reply she had returned to the task in hand without any apparent recollection that she had asked me the question. She returned me the sweat-moistened ticket and a broad orange envelope with sharp corners. I asked what I should now do; she hesitated and looked at a screen behind the counter before directing me with a barely audible murmur toward a further open door, and through it to a descent of three or four stairs leading to an internal corridor. Out of politeness I turned back and thanked her, to which she did not respond, but rather gaped at me with an estranging stare as if I was already a distant, receding figure.

<p align="center">*</p>

A corridor photograph

I descended the stairs and entered an unpainted, apparently temporary annexe corridor. A synthetic cork notice board was affixed to the corridor wall on my right. Pinned to the board was an old reminder for an end-of the-week drinks night, an appeal for weekend child minding, and a bold-type injunction to staff not to loiter in the hallways. Fitted into the frame of the board was a coloured photograph depicting the view of the corridor as it stretched away from me at that point of the building, looking toward the stairwell. No one was in the picture, only the receding perspective of an empty hallway. Subtle differences existed between the picture and my present view of the corridor. In the photograph each of the over-head fluorescent lights functioned, whereas I saw that one of the lights now stuttered. The

regulation-illuminated exit sign presently visible at the end of the hallway had been removed in the photograph, or possibly the green tint of the sign had cancelled out in the incandescence of the camera flash. Either way, the picture displayed a uniform whiteness in the strip lighting along the length of the hall, decreasing at intervals in anticipation of the corridor's end, which opened onto the vacant stairwell. It seemed almost as if people were supposed to have figured in the photograph, but that during the developing process they failed to materialize.

*

An absent friend

I was reminded of a photograph taken in my early years at school. It was my favourite photograph, taken when I was ten years old and in Herr Dornauer's class. To this day I am unable to recall the photograph in its proper condition, but only as unaccountably wrecked, and I am unsure if the photograph is truly damaged, or whether I only dreamt it. In my memory the image had been eaten away at its centre by an abrasive blotch a fifth the size of the photograph, so that along with three other unfortunates a close childhood friend of mine was no longer discernible. It looked as if the photograph had been eaten away by disease, as the centre of this off-white abrasion was wholly worn through.

Looking more closely I could see that the torn white area was covered in ageing paint the colour of dirty plaster, and I imagined that at the very margin of my vision I could discern the barest blocked-in likenesses of two of the girls' faces. Although I was also a student in that class, I do not recall seeing my face in the photograph. I am certain, however, that I was in that

class; I remember Herr Dornauer's mathematician's features and the rest of the faces in the photograph remain familiar to me. My face is not one of the missing four: I don't fit the remaining characteristics of any of the four girls whose faces, if not their hair tone or their clothing, have been eradicated from the picture. Two of the missing girls have blonde hair, as you can see, and the two missing seated children are wearing their

uniforms in ways I wouldn't have: I never wore thick hose or pants. I would not have chosen the photograph if I did not recognize it. I can see that it is part of my childhood.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The unconscious

I have been told that we do not so much see our familiar world as dream it: that our memories replay most of the waking world according to what we already know. What is it to wake remembering a dream in which I cannot ever see another person's face? In the dream I am aware that although I am not a hairdresser, I nonetheless am trying to cut a customer's hair while he sits hunched forward. The barber's chair is set at an incline and, for a reason I cannot explain, I am unable to move round to either side of the seat, but rather try repeatedly to reach the man's scalp over the high back of the chair. There is no mirror on the wall in front of the chair. It does not occur to me that I have not seen the man's face until I hold up a small mirror at the completion of the trim for him to check its evenness across the back of his neck. He produces from his own pocket a Bakelite cigarette case containing a tiny hand mirror, with which he reflects a view from my mirror to his. While doing this, I think that I might have glimpsed the shape of his eyes. Only

one other person waits for a haircut, reading a large fashion magazine that covers her face.

It is busy outside the hairdresser's, in what functions as a shopping centre but appears to be the atrium of a metropolitan hospital. I walk out into a large waiting room and turn to the first person I pass. The mother of a two-year old, she is busying herself with blankets in the infant's pram. I ask her something, but she does not stand up to respond. Instead she continues to ruffle and reorganize the contents of the pram, folding, brushing, soothing, and all the while talking in a calm voice. After a minute I realize she is not talking to the baby, but addressing me. As I walk around the pram she coincidentally finds an important readjustment to the pram is needed, and positions herself in such a way that my view of her face is perpetually constrained to a vaguely silhouetted sidelong apprehension of dark straight hair and chin.

In desperation I look up and around to catch the expression of anyone within view. No one faces me. I step back off the pavement and retreat along a narrow alleyway, at the end of which is a propped-open set of double doors, the inside of which I can see are fitted with horizontal alloy bars at waist height, designed to allow for ease of exit in an emergency. Inside it is dark. When my vision has adjusted I see that I am

standing at the front of what looks like a large auction hall or a university auditorium. A number of people sit as if waiting for a pronouncement or the start of a lecture. One seated group stares down at open notes so that I can see only the tops of their heads. Various others are leaning over the backs of their chairs attempting to secure the attention of those in higher rows, who in turn are preoccupied by conversations or by a scattering of loose change or the broken spine of a textbook. A woman sleeps sprawled over three seats, her face obscured by a cardboard architectural model balanced on the arms of the chair nearest her head. As various people turn to the front of the auditorium or adjust their seating they incidentally lower their heads, or raise them to the ceiling, or simultaneously subdue a sneeze or cough with a forearm or the back of one hand. On casting my gaze over the entire auditorium I realise that although each face is obscured from my sight, there is no intention on the part of anyone to deny me the sight of his or of her face. A handkerchief is raised to a mouth while the hair and face of another is rectified with an obscuring compact. People contort to retrieve dropped books, stare directly up at the spotlights and skylights overhead, kiss, or are in the process of pulling off or drawing on a pullover. Wherever I look, faces are accidentally concealed, for an everlasting moment that presumably only I am aware of.

In consternation I sit in one of the foremost rows. The lecturer appears, as if he had been standing close to the lectern the entire time, and waits for silence. Tidily dressed in a Viennese suit, the gentleman carries a cane. I now gain the impression that the lecture had begun earlier, but had since been interrupted. Except for one individual at the back of the auditorium, talking loudly and seemingly to himself, the hall now sits silently waiting for the lecture to begin. The lecturer stands and patiently waits. After a long while the lecturer, still without any apparent concern, asks for several members in the theatre to take the man, who continued talking, from the hall. Seven or so people stand, nods are exchanged, and then four of these, three men and one woman, each of considerable height and weight, trot up the shallow auditorium stairs to where the talking man is standing. As they gather around him he continues to talk, pretending that no one is there. They hold him by the shoulders and by the wrists, while one of the contingent pushes at his back from behind as they propel him out of a waiting set of double doors. Loose chairs are pulled up and set against the closed doors to deny later entry to the expelled man. For the duration of this scene I see no faces.

*

Childhood

I see my childhood in many photographs that might have been taken on holidays and visits to relatives. I see my childhood in postcard photographs that are only views of famous or less than famous buildings, monuments or seaside hotels.

I have visited those monuments and I know of them, and those I have not visited are of a sameness that still constitutes the past I know. Photographs of my grandparents were sufficiently precious to be affixed to thick cardboard. Their shape was usually an elongated rectangle that accommodated the human frame exactly, as if the bare minimum of film should be expended on each figure. They wore their best clothing, and for the women there was included some furniture, a side table, curtains, or a chair, to show that it was the home they belonged to. I recall a photograph of my aunt when young, dressed for church, white gloves and prayer book in her hands. She stands outside in the quadrangle connecting the rectory to the school assembly area. What surprises me is that her gloves are far whiter than the whitewash of the building, or the mortar point-

ing joining the bricks on the windowsill behind her, or even of the pages of her prayer book. Of course, they were conscientiously starched regularly as they were worn weekly, while the concrete and the book pages were already fading. Why do I hold onto these photographs? I have read that our peripheral vision is restricted to tones of grey, and that we attribute colour to the edges of our perception because we assume the world is coloured in its entirety. Today medieval and classical statuary is not gaudy in colour as it once was, and our memory of past generations in photographs is similarly divested of colour, as if the past is always and at best a marginal and faded portrait. In my opinion each photograph constitutes a peripheral view, a sideways glance at the past.

I was adopted. My foster family, of which sometimes I recall everything and at other times I recall nothing at all, was differently sized at different times of my childhood. As a child I had always hoped and intended to found a family as large, if not larger, than the one I had been brought to. In my later teenage years I had not abandoned this notion. I would locate a husband dull enough to maintain a steady income, yet sufficiently imaginative enough to be noticed as a father. It seems that I have outgrown this desire, as I remain resolutely childless, and rarely think of what my life might have meant if I were to have raised children. I recall discussing it briefly with a close friend

many years ago, as if we were husband and wife. Now: my fam-
ily. It was a community unto its own, extending in directions
that stretched the definition of family so fully that I recall never
having quite understood where its edges might properly be
drawn: who was and who was not a member. It did not help
that my much older foster brothers, sisters and cousins took up
many of the roles around the house and the neighbourhood

that might normally be undertaken by strangers. A cousin de-
livered the mail; a brother-in-law repainted the house; my aunts
would baby-sit and my mother continued her mother's com-
munity-minded attendance of innumerable women's organiza-
tions and charitable societies dedicated to the betterment of the
world. At the time I saw this goal as entirely within the scope
of my mother's prodigious welfare campaigns.

Family history

You asked what I meant when I said that I would not have asked for the photograph of Herr Dornauer's class if it were not familiar to me. I replied in a tone as if to say that the topic had been discussed before, as if I had talked about it at length with you in the past. I said that what struck me when I first saw the photograph was not the gaping hole in its centre, but the light fixture hanging from the classroom ceiling, which looked as if it had no globe. I spent some time wondering why this was before I realized that a significant portion of the photograph was missing.
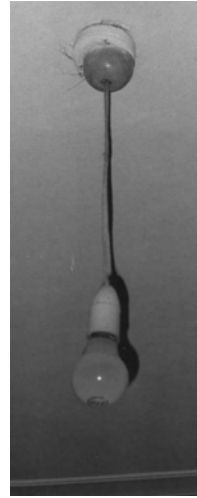
I located it in an album of photographs. It was an old album, like many I have seen. Often I find that the older albums with the corner slots for holding photographs are empty. I imagine the proprietor would have taken the photos out to sell separately, as they can be removed without damage. This photo was loose but, if I recall rightly, it was in a book of glued photographs. I often end up looking in such albums, as they are usually the only ones left intact. Neither the owner nor the cus-

tomers are ever quite sure what to do about them, as the photos do not detach easily. Whether the proprietor considers ripping out all of the pictures and damaging them, or if he pretends a type of respect for the past by leaving the album intact, I'm never sure. I am practised enough now at carefully peeling back old photos to check if there is a date, a year or a helpful message scribbled on the back without letting the cardboard tear off their backs. I have had to spend many hours searching in the stores around where the family estate was sold in Leipzig, and sometimes through the antiquarian trade in the capital, which absorbs any and all printed material from as far as Münster or Weimar. Sometimes the photographers' studio has remained in business from the time of the sitting, and I am able to negotiate for reprints from the original plates, but this is rarely the case, particularly in the instance of pre-war prints. Our family photo albums were all sent off with the furniture when mother died; none of the relatives were interested at the time, and it didn't occur to me someone in the family wouldn't take them.
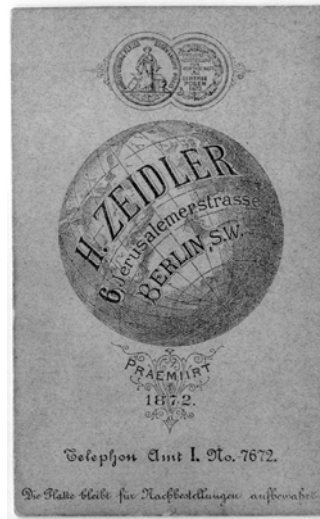
But after much trouble I have been fortunate enough to find some of my past: pictures of my siblings, my parents, or myself. I have sat for hours with shop-owners in braces and slippers sitting at a distance silently staving off sleep while I sort through heaps of boxes and memoranda, postcard stacks and letters in

which photographs are often hidden, and which are themselves sometimes small histories of my family. It is difficult having to pay money for what was once part of my past. On finding pictures of people I have known and lived with, I have often had to bite my tongue and quietly pay the required fee. Often it seems that the price is exactly what I happen to have in my purse, as if the owner has keenly surmised the amount of cash I might be carrying, or that I would be willing to part with, which in these instances amounts to the same thing. I could hardly decline to buy the pictures back, or to try and haggle over my own family's history.

Often it is confusing trying to remember who was who. Whether, for instance, a particular photograph of a family group is the family I remember. The group is standing outside on the steps of a brick building with large opened windows. The grainy photograph gives the stairs the appearance of fluting on a column, forever disorienting me when I imagine the group standing on ruins while posing for the photograph.
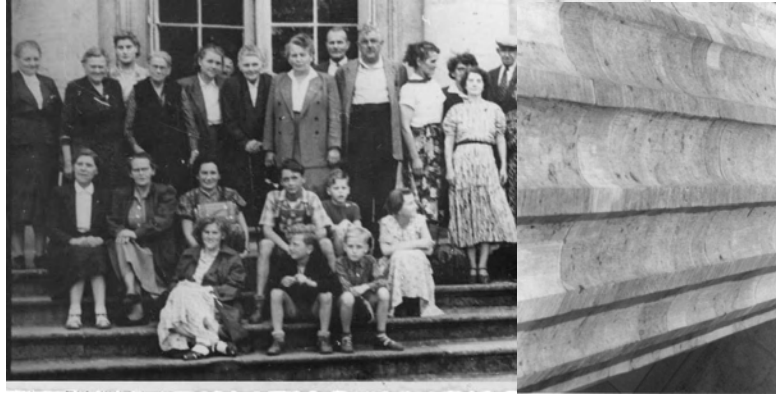
I recall visiting the cut graves from which columns were quarried during the waning years of the Imperium. I visited with the close friend I mentioned earlier. I remember facing my companion's camera as I stood in much the same way as the family posing on the stairs, in this case standing on the engraved absence of a column. I did not reciprocate, and so I do not have a picture of him from that time, and indeed have kept very few pictures of him.
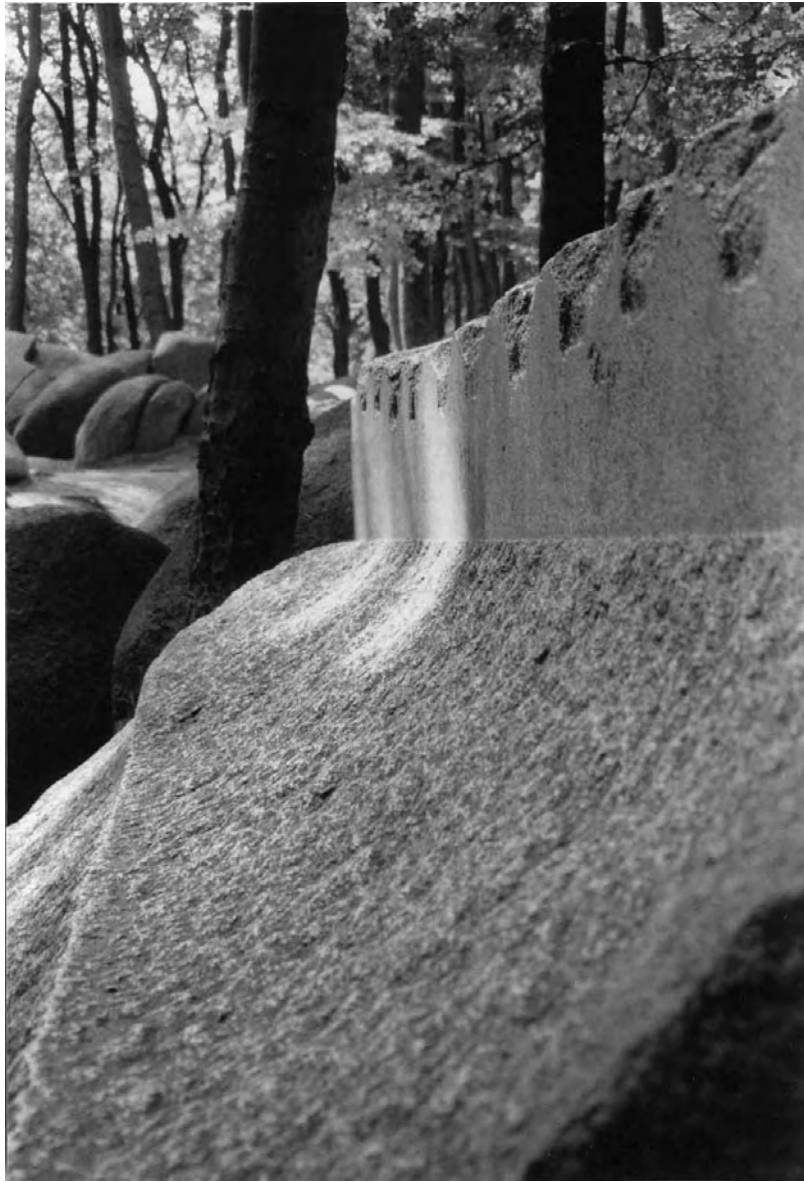
Or again, I worry whether an informal afternoon scene of a

young mother in a headscarf attending to her daughter is a scene from my childhood. The child sits in the back garden while her aunts and mother sit at a small round lace-covered table laden with tea-things. Similarly, I often stare at the picture of a sad woman dressed in the tunic of a domestic servant. She leans against an

open window. Light from the late morning inches its way into the darkened house to leave bright shapes of white on her cotton short-sleeve blouse, her right forearm and hand. The light touches her forehead and bob-length hair, tucked behind her right ear. I also possess a group

portrait of a family in winter. They stand in their home garden, all obviously related as you can see from the eyes and faces, variations on a common theme of cheek creases above the mouth, and the slight tendency toward a receding chin. All are smiling in a bemused way at the camera, except the youngest, a girl of seven whose eyes are averted at something off to her left. Another photograph shows a view from behind a woman who faces out across the square of a small town at a Gasthoff in the early afternoon. She carries a slim overnight bag and a handbag that she has to push up onto her shoulder and brace with one arm against her side. Or another photograph shows a dishevelled two-storey building with an overgrown garden taken in 1933. I am sometimes unsure if they were part of my family or part of my childhood at all.

*

Fatigue

From the notice board I continued along the corridor to the stairwell. In an alcove to the right was a short desk behind which stood a man wearing a uniform. I thought at first that he

was a toilet attendant, but there were no toilets. He told me that I could access many of the lower floors from the stairwell, and that the room I was after was located on the second lowest floor. He might have recognized the signs of growing exhaustion in my manner. Alternatively, he said, you might care to sit awhile, either here at my desk, or on the divan here reserved for visitors, if you are in need of a rest. I was at first tempted to ask the attendant what his job was. I did not understand why a sitting area should be set into this short section of corridor, and was uncertain as to what I should say. Underneath my uncertainty, however, I knew that indecision might be an answer in itself, and that it might be better if I did not ask anything. I turned my thoughts to the offer of a place to sit, and glanced at the desk chair and the divan. The divan was in fact a table pushed against the wall, on top of which had been set a long Regency-striped cushion cut to the table-top's length and width. It was at once apparent that if I sat there I would be able to freely swing my legs, as it was too tall for me to reach the floor. It was sufficiently high that it reminded me of a medical examination table of the type found in a doctor's surgery, and a small step sat positioned on the floor in front of it. I declined the offer, and descended the stairs.

*

A waiting room

At the foot of the stairs was a partly opened door, behind which was another waiting room. There was no ticket machine here, and only one other person, an aged man trawling through a broad plastic-bound portfolio of medical photographs depicting images of scarred and pock-marked flesh resembling cratered moonscapes. As I waited for what seemed an interminable length of time, I examined the room. Whoever had decorated the waiting room had sought to persuade those who waited in it that it was part of an eighteenth century manor house. While the reproduced décor was opulent, my unendurably long wait revealed to me its pretence and contributed to an uneasy and mounting feeling of insecurity. The room boasted ostentatious wide skirting boards and cornices; several plush frilled lounges covered with eighteenth and nineteenth century floral designs; and French-styled ornate antique upholstered chairs; a window seat scattered with regency striped and chintz heart-shaped cushions; flamboyant palempore curtains of gold satin adorned with fabric roses. All these furnishings betrayed themselves through an overt lack of authenticity: the machine weave of cushions, upholstery and curtains glittering with the semaphore of synthetic fabric; instead of ornate plaster-work, the ceiling was adorned with smoke detectors and a motion sensor; the cushions on closer inspection were not heart-

shaped, but betrayed the indeterminate profile of less romantic internal organs; and the bronze Grecian vase astride the coffee table looked as if it was mourning its twin still located at the crematorium. This vase contained twistings of vine and birch sprigs, lilies and open antique white roses.

The petals were made from an unexpectedly authentic fibrous sponge-like material, the washed out colour of the flowers and the vase's grandiose design made the arrangement look perversely funerary.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The grand canal

The pictures on the walls were fitted with special brass-covered lights. The artworks were not original canvases but glass-encased posters advertising the work of Sisley, Renoir, and Canaletto, from an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in London, November 2nd 1989 until January 21st 1990. One print, a view of the Doge's trireme and the Grand Canal in Venice, was largely diminished by the name of Canaletto, spelt out in capitals across a fifth of the print. I have very little if any admiration for these artists, although the print of the Grand Canal brought to mind another painting from around 1760 by Giovanni Antonio Canal. I stood in front of that painting for a quarter of an hour in the Gemeldegalerie in Berlin. In it a small square of the Rialto is given over to a market, politely cluttered with second-hand objects of the home: large gilt-framed mirrors; pewter serving trays and plates; wooden coop washing-tubs; water jugs embellished with filigree patterns; a sturdy old bureau that looks as if it has been the property of a fishmonger for the previous thirty years; brass candlesticks in pairs; a detached bed-head; a number of long-handled bedpans looking at first glance like sitars or spindled lutes; upholstered and plain chairs; and along the entire left wall of the square, stalls selling silverware and Majollica crockery. At the back of the square are desks at which clerks in black robes and white cravats sell and

re-inventory the assorted objects. Gentlemen stand about the square inspecting the furniture and other goods while above them, against an especially worn blue firmament, a group of workmen repair a gaping section of damage in the roof of a building. I do not know why it came directly to my mind, but, absurd though it was, it seemed to me that the building had been the target of unexploded ordnance during a recent aerial bombing raid. As with photographs of rubble clean-up I had seen from the war, most figures in the square are not paying any attention to the repair-work. They are inspecting goods; like the man at the centre of the picture, scrutinizing a massive hexagonal copper-framed glass-panelled lamp, while his daughter hides in his shadow. However, a number of men are simply standing and looking about as if they are contemplating the picture before them in the same way that I was, forced to acknowledge an unusual significance exerted by the buildings that enclose the square and the picture. It was as if all these utensils from the past had suffered a turning-out, and that it was in some way caused by the damage in the roof above them. Their placement in the public space of the square was an incongruous and unsightly exhibition of each of these buildings' secret interior calm.

I wondered how many of the household bits and pieces were already the discarded content of deceased estates; how much of

the material had come from the house with the wide open roof; and how many of these pieces were still present today, decorating the hallways and stairwells of bed-and-breakfast guesthouses, or displayed in the glass cabinets of provincial historical museums, like so many silver-bromide photographic plates. While pots and lamps vie for new homes, the dark yawning aperture in the roof of one of those homes waits to be re-tiled.

The receptionist was a brusque scarf-and-jewellery woman, not so much impolite as deliberately unaccommodating. After I had waited for a half-hour she glanced out at the waiting room from her desk and called my surname without looking at me. There was only one other door, also partly ajar, which I assumed I was expected to enter. Without opening the door any

further I slipped through into a boardroom office, which was floored in synthetic carpet squares. A separate colour of carpet formed a simple geometrical pattern around the edge of the room.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

An explanation

In the weeks after the appointment I conducted a number of independent interviews in an attempt to corroborate the claims of the institute. The notion of my death was absurd; I could authenticate my continuing existence by reference to extant citizenship papers, passports, licences: a history of civic life, of education and employment, that couldn't be overlooked. Trails of paper corroborating my identity led in most every direction. And yet the organizations I visited insisted on my deceased status. These are not your records, they suggested; there has been a mistake. The most useful of my interviews was with the director of the archaeological institute at Schönow, Doctor Gottlob Harz. Doctor Harz agreed to a meeting on the condition that none of its proceedings were to be electronically recorded, and on the understanding that the interviewer submit all notes that were made to his secretary for agreement. It was stressed that without hesitation legal measures would be resorted to in the event that any misrepresentation or injurious

statement as a result of the interview regarding the responsibilities, procedures, policies or actions of staff members of the Institute were made in any public medium. No staff member could be accountable, as they were simply carrying out their duties as officers of the Institute. I have since been sent pro-forma agreements that I have been required to sign and send back with my contact details. I was advised that someone from the office of the director would contact me to arrange a convenient time to meet. For Doctor Harz' office this process took three weeks. It was a common format to most of the meetings that were arranged, if indeed they were agreed to in the first place. Several organizations, after weeks of failing to reply, would emit cursory single-line non-committal statements that denied that any record of the person in question was held by them. Or the reply would blandly state that those records were temporarily unavailable and that I should re-apply for a meeting with one of their staff-public liaison officers in the future. Several replies bluntly insisted that a meeting of the type requested was at the present time, and for the foreseeable future, regrettably not possible. Of the few organizations that did agree to a meeting, the responses were often non-committal. The remaining meetings, even after concerned and censorious vetting by purse-lipped androgynous officers in high-buttoned suits, were still worth noting here, if only because of an underly-

ing sense of indecision that pre-existed and persisted in each case. I was invited to ask questions of Doctor Harz in an office that was obviously only used for meetings with the public, floored also with squares of filamentous synthetic carpet in a design reminiscent of the floor plan of a building. It was an impersonal space separate from the inner rooms of the Institute.

I did not at first believe the news. I was subsequently persuaded by their account of events that could only have been parts of my own life, and which pointed irrevocably toward my untimely and unfortunate demise in Israel. I underwent a number of pathological and forensic tests and had explained to me the intricacies and faults of blood group matching, pyrimidine base and rare metal toxicity correlations, fracture comparisons, handwriting samples, and somatic matches from an envelope containing locks of hair belonging to my great grandmother. One orderly described to me a means of manually pairing RNA molecules located in the sputum on envelopes I had sealed thirty years previously.

All of this went to prove that the desiccated remains of a body they had discovered in a mass grave in Jerusalem were not simply related to me, they were no one but me. I was persuaded of the fact that perhaps thirty years ago I had died. The world I

originally inhabited could no longer have been inhabited by me. It had disappeared. My personal record had undergone an irreparable erasure, from my early twenties until the present. In its place was what? The bureaucracy of my working life, and this institution: the Schönow Institute, its account of my past and my death. I felt immaterial; an apparition denied the solid presence of my former self.

While I have since considered a number of differing lives and possible deaths that might once have been mine, my life is now an artefact that might be looked at in the same way as moon samples, specimens of dust deriving from somewhere
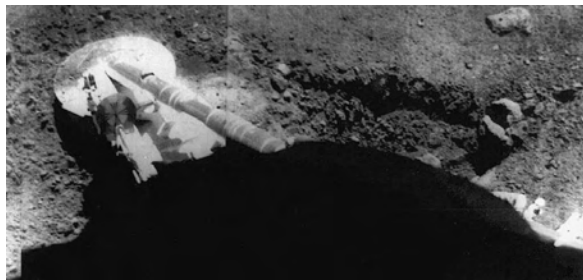
unearthly.

Like a gathering of soil from the moon, my existence appears normal, but under scrutiny is devoid of micro-organisms and of life. I am assailed by doubt as to my own identity. I have sought second opinions, authoritative assurances that I do indeed exist, only to have it explained to me that I have died. Some of those institutional accounts to which I have referred

overlap with my following attempts to corroborate and to explain the seemingly absurd circumstances in which I have found myself.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

A determination

I investigated what I could of false and unrecorded deaths from that period of my life. I read of the history and sociology surrounding my circumstances, of situations similar to my own. I read literature: Gracchus and Leukippe pretended death, as did Juliet, Hermione, Falstaff and Hero. And while I felt that I was erroneously registered as part of the dwindled majority, death became for me much larger than ordinary living events. After reading through articles, papers and studies in search of what I hoped would be an enlightening experience, I merely felt sick.

I sought leave from work, only to be met with the response that leave might not be the most appropriate course of action: that instead I might seek bereavement counselling and consult the organisation's policy manual on families' employment insurance. I decided to resign. If I were able to inspect the bodily remains and interview those people with knowledge of their unfortunate discovery, if I was able to fully remember the incidents and events of my life prior to June 1967, it might be possible to re-establish my absent past.

Stadtmitte

After that first interview I caught the S-Bahn back from Schönow to Stadtmitte, a place that readily lends itself to those waking half-recollections that only later during my day reveal themselves as absurd. I once saw a man in a suit who placed his clipboard on the pavement and began grasping and pulling at the columns of the marble railing surrounding one of the buildings' miniature 19th century moats. He seemed under-equipped for the task, almost as if this was not in his ordinary line of work, but that he had nonetheless to carry out an inquiry regarding the structural security of the railings. Now each time that I enter the S-Bahn in Stadtmitte I am reminded of this

building, two blocks south of Leipzigerstraße.

As this memory resurfaces I feel physically ill, as it is no longer the same simple memory of a man testing the strength of railings, but inexplicably my correlation of that memory with the vision of a crowd of people I imagine I once saw loitering outside the same building, in halves. They would spend their time entering and exiting this ageing four-storey building, and stand or drift about, depending on whether it was the upper or the lower portion of their bodies they had discarded. Pairs of legs anchored to bodiless groins would walk about, while torsos would glide along without their lower halves, each half apparently entirely independent of its other lost portion. Each person chose to absent him or herself from work and to waste their days in the shadow of this building, on its main staircase or in the seamier alleys and entranceways to it, of which there were a considerable number. The building had an ill-used, blank visage of neglect; the forehead of its higher gables no longer appeared to look outwards but to be solely occupied with brooding on its own disrepair. I vividly recollect the upper half of one man. The chill weather on the cold steps continued to work at persuading the hat from his gloved hand and returning it to his head. His mouth was oddly ajar, and I noticed one tooth, a canine, was broken. He did not look at me but stared into the window of the building, perhaps only seeing the reflec-

tion of yellow sky in the glass panes. It occurred to me then that the sky on Mars is not the expected colour of blue, although I could not recall what colour it was. It also occurred to me that if it were not for his broken tooth this man might be my father. Passing citizens did not say anything or choose to make any untoward comments about this half-man or any others, as they seemed to regard it as improper to do so.

<div align="center">*</div>

Beach chairs

From Stadtmitte I chose to walk home, back through Alexanderplatz, detouring along the canal at Museuminsel towards the great church and through Oranienburgerstraße. At a corner

near Oranienburgerstraße a policeman stood. He was part of a

group guarding the Synagogue on the farther side of the road, adjacent to a line of cafés. Café chairs outside cafés in Berlin do not always face tables, but instead point outwards, reclining like beach chairs staring at the other side of the square, or at the other side of the street, even where, as in Oranienburgerstraße, the view was the blank rear wall of a warehouse. My uncle once told me of a beach he visited on the North Sea before the war on which many, perhaps a thousand, beach-chairs stood opened and empty. He explained to me that they were empty not because they were simply vacated, or because it was winter, or because an unexpected shower of rain drove everybody under the cover of the distant promenade café awnings. Rather, he said, the reason was that everyone previously reclining in each collapsible canvas chair had died. I asked my uncle why this was. He explained that it was not unanticipated: each person reclining on that beach was quietly expected to, and did, evaporate with the out-going tide. Not all at once, he added, but close enough to make it appear that in the time of an old dog's blink an entire coastal population had vanished. One wave, slightly larger than those preceding it but not unduly so, caught everybody's attention, and by the time it had filtered away into the sand, so had they. And no one who remained busily attending to daily tasks behind the strand in the offices and shops paid more than passing attention. In the particle-

board privacy of suburban bedrooms some relieved, self-pitying, but prevailingly uninterested tears were shed. As the obituaries were not a large feature of the tabloids, no one noticed.

I imagined what would then happen: soon workers from the council would realize the morning was getting on and come to fold away the chairs. Already, however, tourists and hopeful new regulars, and all those workers who had for some time been thinking of phoning in sick, would have noticed the empty chairs and come down to the sea to watch the empty shore. They would have been able to watch as tepid waves surged loweringly toward the line of grey seaweed that indicated the highpoint of the tide. Already some bolder people would have availed themselves of the empty beach chairs. After all, they would say, sitting in them was what they were built for: standing on sand for too long is not a pleasant way of passing the time. Sooner than anyone, either on the beach or in the town, could care to notice, the chairs would all be full again, and passers-by would be checking vacated chairs from the corners of their eyes, where there were no nearby towels, baggage or clothing, wondering if they were available.

*

A walk

On the day after I had received the news of my demise I did not go to work, but instead decided it would be best if I took a long walk and thought about my predicament. On this occasion I chose to walk north through Heinersdorf. I have now for more than a decade been living in Prenzlauerberg in Berlin, near to where the wall once was, but not near enough that you could have seen it. You can tell you are in what was East Berlin because there are many more tramlines that operate mainly on

the eastern side of where the wall once stood.

Where the Eastern boundary once cut north into the French sector toward Chausseestraße Checkpoint, the tramlines six, eight and thirteen still terminate for no visible reason just short

of the Military Hospital, following rails that keep strictly within no longer extant boundaries.

*

Celluloid

Ten years ago the notion of moving to somewhere that was inside East Berlin was not a consideration many people would entertain, only I had sold my Berlin apartment several years before while working in Bonn. When I moved back there were many more flats available in the East than in the familiar suburbs around Schöneberg, where my old flat was located. Prenzlauerberg is close to Pankow where I sometimes walk, where all the old party apparatchiks used to live. Today I decided to walk through nearby Heinersdorf. I passed Caligaristraße. From the Great War and throughout the nineteen twenties Heinersdorf was the centre of Europe's film industry; it produced Lang's *Metropolis* and a few years ago a small paved area at the end of Heinersdorferstraße was named after the film *Der Kabinett des Doktor Caligari*, the framing plot of which left me uncertain as to whether anyone in the story had died, or if the deaths were idle mental discursions of the narrator. I later read that during WWII the film's original structure had been revised. The new plot denied the possibility of a wartime world of mur-

der and deception, plumping instead for the paranoia of one deranged protagonist.

I was horrified by the climactic point in the film where it was revealed that the ghoulish sleeping figure assumed to be Dr Caligari's strongman Cesáre, stretched out in a two-doored cabinet otherwise resembling a coffin, was a mannequin, and that Cesáre was terrorising the local population unhindered. For a moment, as the protagonist lifts the dummy Cesáre from the coffin and hurls it to the ground, the roles are reversed as the victim enacts his revenge. Unlike the Hohenstaufen emperor asleep under his mythical mountain, the protagonist is forced to realize that the somnolent form of Cesáre has already woken. In Cesáre's place lies the inanimate wax and cellulose effigy to which the protagonist had mistakenly attached his horror of death.

The Doctor was the director of a mental asylum who sought to change himself into the murderous historical figure Caligari. As I watched him maniacally reading the obscure history of Caligari to his newly discovered somnambulist, tearing the pages and raising his crooked fingers, I realized that the film was a moral revision of Frankenstein. While Dr Frankenstein claimed innocence as justification for his moral outrage, Doctor Caligari's project was to consciously incite murder while the towns-

people, and the murderer, slept. By reading him history, Dr Caligari incites a sleeping man to re-enact past atrocities. It reminded me of the term *Kabinettsfrage*: a vital question.

The director of the film immigrated to Paris in 1938 to avoid persecution, and died from cancer the same year. In 1939 the writer of the film script escaped from Germany's waking nightmare to New York with his wife, where he unsuccessfully tried to garner Hollywood interest to remake the film. The story
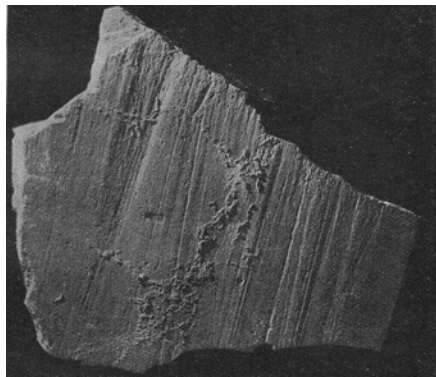
did not immediately impress western sensibilities, and only a poor remake eventuated, twenty years later. Due to deterioration of the original celluloid stock, the increasingly warped and degraded frames of the film have been restored a number of times, in varying guises.

Celluloid? You should be aware that Cellulose Nitrate entered commercial use in 1870 as an ivory substitute for billiard balls. Its flammable qualities were discovered just subsequent to the American Civil War and only a few years prior to the Revolution of 1848. As a Vormärz precursor to the revolution, patri-

otic burghers demanded political representation and a unified German nation-state. During this period of foment, the Chemist C F Schönbein accidentally mixed two acids with cotton and invented an elastic, flammable substance later used as smokeless gunpowder, and later still as rocket fuel. Cellulose acetate was made into crockery in the nineteen twenties; assorted powdered chemicals were added to colour it in such a way that it resembled sandstone. While cellulose nitrate ultimately proved too unstable for large rockets, film manufacturers have continued to use it for the mass-produced imagery in celluloid negatives and cinematic film stock.

*

News

In Heinersdorf I stopped at a newsagent and peered at the shelves. The weekly political magazine, *Der Spiegel*, caught my attention: Schwarzmarkt Des Schreckens: Blackmarket of Horror! The Secret Trade in Atomic Weapons Technology in the Third World. An atomic cloud rose behind an overlay of technical blueprints. I flipped the magazine over to inspect the prior week's edition. It was entitled Dr Death: The Enormous Trade of Corpse-Exhibitionist Gunther von Hargens. Wearing a black Homberg, Von Hargens posed on the cover flanked by two of his flayed, anatomically explicit plastic-impregnated

corpses. The article asked: Does an assembly line worker who claims to have populated this world with so many fabricated bodies by the end of his career believe that he will require a purpose-built Human Museum? Or is this simply the case of a charlatan, who makes huge profits in the name of art and medicine because he works with dead people as readily as with sides of pork?

Photographs showed von Hargens dancing with a stripper in front of exhibits; medical-gowned Chinese workers meticulously preparing hanging suits of sausage-coloured human skin; a diagram depicting Hargens' method of impregnating body-parts with a plastic solution; and a reproduction of the famous Rembrandt painting of an anatomy class.

Another article entitled The Last Hot Dog detailed the final meals of executed prisoners in the United States. It included reproductions of Stacey Lawton's Jar of Gherkins, John Rook's

twelve hot dogs, and Timothy McVeigh's tub of mint-chocolate ice cream.

I replaced the magazine and inspected the local paper. I read in it that the Chancellor of Germany had agreed to offer Israel a number of Patriot missile systems as defence against future Iraqi bombardment. It seemed to me that giving the name Patriot to a largely unsuccessful missile system expressed a wildly ironical sentiment close to the heart of its builders, and indeed to the term itself. Officials in the Chancellor's government had made reference to the German people's responsibility to the citizens of Israel, claiming that this responsibility derived from the Holocaust. The Chancellor stated that military support of Israel was Germany's historic and moral duty. I was reminded again of my time many years ago in Israel, of the rumours and conjectures that were true to the Israelis at the time: that Muslim and European anti-Semitism was crushing the Israeli nation-state. In the immediate post-war period Germany supplied missiles to Egypt for future use against Israel. I could not recall the name of the rockets Germany gave to Egypt. Although it was now snowing I stood under an awning and read the newspaper article to its end. The proprietor knew me well enough and did not normally mind my reading the articles prior to purchase. On that day, however, I was preoccupied and did not buy anything. He tersely wished me a good day, to which I

looked up briefly. I could not keep from thinking about the Chancellor's claim and about my time in Israel, and these thoughts distracted me from my current problems. I felt tired again, and determined to return home to my flat.

North of my flat in Senefelderstrasse is a street of apartment blocks built after the war for miners and their families. I walked down this street while returning to my flat. Each block still holds onto an indifferent and undersized stretch of garden. Whereas most of the gardens are paved or dedicated to planter boxes or a few low benches, one of them is unpaved and given over in the spring and summer months to Gazanias and Gentian Violets. Some foliage still covered the garden. It was sparse, and I knew that in winter, when the ground became bare and covered with ice, I, like most passers-by, would be confronted with a once hidden but now terribly visible plaster grouping of seven gnomes and one larger figure. I had seen this occur last winter, when I assumed the larger figure to be Snow White, responsibly glued to her role as pure and virginal matron to her stunted charges. However, after a week of passing and staring longer each day, I realized that the Disney congregation of dwarves was not clustered around their familiar guardian. They were simply garden gnomes, and the matronly figure was a statuette of the Virgin Mary: compassionate, powder blue with white, blond Dutch curls and, on closer inspec-

tion, a blood-swollen Catholic heart clutched in her breast. One of her collarbones was chipped, showing the dusty plaster beneath, pulverulent bone far dryer than the flaking acrylic paint of her cloak and skin, tempting passers-by (I had seen this occur) to overstep the low wall and touch the wound. By narrowing my eyes and pushing my head forward into the garden I could see that the painted flesh around the open bone was worn, apparently by the inquisitive trespass of so many fingers. It was too cold for me to take off my gloves and touch the unhealed figure, and I returned quickly to the path. In spring, a month or so later, I saw that the open break had been plugged with mint-green chewing gum.

*

Prague

Senefelderstraße is named for the inventor of Lithography, Aloys Johann Nepomuk Franz Senefelder.

He was born in Prague in 1771 and never lived in Berlin. Out of frustration with having to depend on unreliable printers and publishers to disseminate his literature he had by 1798 devised his own inexpensive alternative to relief printing. He was granted a lithographic printing monopoly in Bavaria for his invention Unlike the grand woodcut blocks of Maximilian's Arch,

lithography did not rely on the mechanical excavation of the printing face to selectively transfer ink, but rather on the natural separation of oil from water. This enabled the wet portion of a minutely-grained Bavarian limestone block to remain ink-free while its greased opposing sections held the ink. The printer then transposed an image onto paper from the smooth surface of stone. For the sake of clarity and precision in reproducing copies, the limestone needed to be free of irregularities. Bavarian limestone is still favoured because of its compact texture. It is almost wholly free of the disruptive once-living imprint of

fossil detritus: molluscs, ammonites, ancient images of pelagic organisms indexed in the sea floor. After printing, the surface of the limestone block would be wiped clean for re-use, and only the copies would remain. There would be no worm-eaten wood block plates, no carved originals from which to recover the image, lying bent with age in a neglected archive.

*

An archive

In my interview with Doctor Harz he had admitted to me that the remains were mine, and had asked about Israel. I understood that the question was in some way related to the earliest part of my career. In my early twenties I vainly decided my future lay otherwise than at home, and volunteered to travel to Israel as part of a privately sponsored international medical aid scheme. I was in no way qualified for the post. While I applied for the position using my citizenship papers, I relied on a conspiratorial aunt twelve years older than myself, employed as a sister at Berlin's Delbrückstrasse Community Hospice for Women. She had worked as a

Die Kenntnis des menschlichen Körpers gehört mit zum Unterricht der Gesundheitsdienst-Mädel

sdienst

nurse's assistant during the war; I used her experience and references (names and dates altered at the appropriate places) to gain the job. I spent twenty-seven months in Israel, during the first two months of which I managed somehow to perpetuate the fraud of my clinical training.

In my first few months in Jerusalem it became clear to me that

medical orderlies were not in demand, whereas an opening existed for record-keeping at the Aid Scheme's neglected Society for Practising Apothecaries and Surgeons. It had survived the last war solely because of the financial support of the institution for which I worked. However, by 1967 the society was unable to avoid political stigma deriving from its ecumenical treatment of the sick, regardless of creed. My superior decided that a rushed history had to be compiled; one that demonstrated to the municipal authorities that the political and social favour the service courted was appropriate to the day. For this reason all

the old files, many from before the Great War and housed in broad ledgers of brittle carmine hide, were to be examined and purged of newly inexcusable associations.

We deleted the names of some earlier benefactors, and while a number of files were kept, selected for their sympathy the current municipal administration, we excised other entries from their stitched binding and burnt them. Many other volumes we burned whole. It quickly became evident to me that the older woman, Hirah toward, charged for the last few years with cataloguing records, was illiterate. Years earlier she had embarked upon an ambitious program of organizing the filing of each record according to its size and condition. Thus the only way that I could locate a file was by reference to its dimensions, and then only after exhaustive searching throughout several shelves' worth of material. Often, after hours of shuffling I would find a crackling yellowed pro-forma file card signalling the absence of that one file. Thinly pencilled on the card would be the date, often only the year, of the file's removal, and cryptic quasi-pictorial shorthand references as to its whereabouts. I recall spending many days searching for one or two files, constantly climbing ladders or crouching to retrieve armfuls of leather codex or loosening folders of ribbon-tied triage reports from the war. Many of the reports were filed on foot-high shelving close to the floor, making them difficult to access. Several weeks into

my job I had the sense to procure the services of a local carpenter and have the shelving of one of the wooden file trolleys cut away so that it resembled the wheeled board a mechanic uses to access the underside of a motor car. I was then able to remain kneeling, in a secular variant of prayer, while trawling the lower shelves of the library.

I spent months compiling an acceptable history from the volumes and loose sheaves of brittle paper. I did not alphabetise or use Dewey's numbering, having found that cataloguing the majority of the files according to date and purpose disturbed the contents and the records officer the least. With this method Hirah's arcane knowledge of the files continued to be invaluable, as she was able to accurately determine the age of much of the material by reference to its dimensions, or, if not, then by its condition. I still remember clearly the stink of poorly cured animal hide filled with rag-pulp pages.

I recall dragging the ledgers out of the plastered niches in which they had spent the greater part of the century, stacking them upon a cast iron hospital trolley and wheeling each load to the landing. There an orderly would pile the ledgers into a crate and lower it by pulley down one of the larger internal air shafts that had been converted for use as a small manual elevator for the records. It was said that the hospital building stood on the

site of an abattoir; it had originally been built as a tannery, and the many airshafts dissecting its three floors provided the ventilation necessary for curing hides. It was not until 1902 that the building was bequeathed to the city for use as a hospital. After the war one wing of the top floor had been given over to storage of many of the records (medical, legal, historical) relating to the hospital and affiliated surgeries in the city.

In telling you this now I realize that the material interests of libraries and tanneries would have coincided often enough in the past, since parchment was constituted from the hides of goats. In the far past even the largest tanneries would have been haphazard outdoor affairs comprising a series of stone or concreted vats through which skins would be transferred. From depilating lime baths they would be passed through bark solutions of gall-tannin, then scraped and stretched on frames for drying. It seems almost as if tanneries held a religious function, that their purpose was a rebirth of sorts, converting the skin of animals into a medium on which the past would be written, on which history could occur. It is as if the death of these animals was the motive force of time. Until the last century, ink was constituted by a mixture of ferrous sulphate, gall-nuts, and Gum-Arabic from the sap of North African Acacia trees. It was known as Iron Gall. The Gall-nuts were acquired for their tannin, the same ingredient used to cure animal hides. In dead

flesh it exerts a preservative effect, while on vellum or paper the tannin establishes a corrosive path within which the iron sulphate oxidizes. After centuries the ink fades to brown, and eventually it destroys the page.

Gall-nuts are the result of a tree's mutagenic response to insect infestation: hundred-weight harvests of vegetable canker crushed into baths of wine or water, used either to preserve skin, or to eat into it as a way of sustaining words.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Hirah

While I was aware that Hirah was named after the mountain where the Prophet received the Qur'an, it reminded me of the Old Testament Hiram Abiff, the Phoenician builder of Solomon's Temple. Hiram sealed his knowledge of architecture and the power of his position with his own death, refusing to divulge the secretive signs of his office to assailants who fatally struck him with a hammer, a plumb and a level, each blow delivered at separate entrances to the temple. Sinking slowly down onto the tiles below the East door, Hiram became a sacrifice for his own building. As he turned and fell at its threshold, the great architect's view of his work would have been newly touched by morning sun as if by a candle with an unvarying flame. I have devoted my life to this edifice, he might have

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thought, and it is here, gazing sidelong at the serenity and sever-ity of its construction, that my final perception of the world fades. Before my temple's creation I anticipated the outlook from this door as its most benign, looking back as it does into the Eden of God's creation.
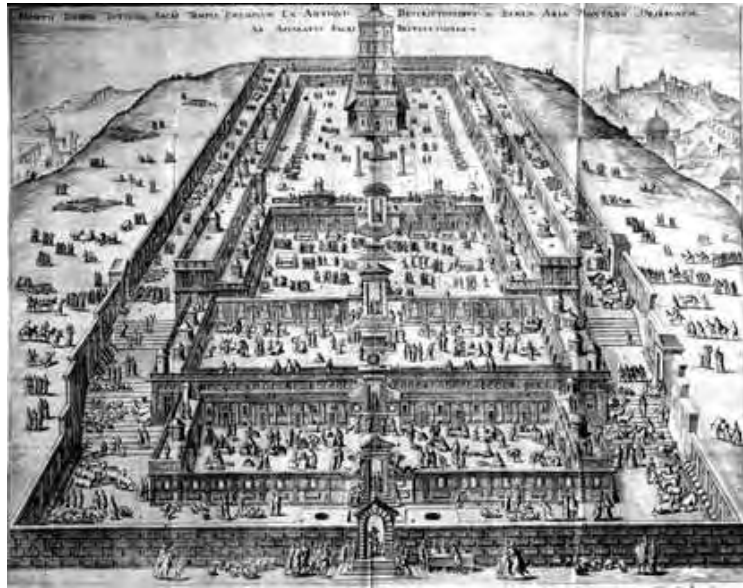
My assailants stand and watch quietly as the morning exhala-tions of dead air from the confines of the temple escape over me and disturb my robes, detaching the folds of cloth from my body as my soon putrefying flesh will cleave from my bones. The murderers will now cursorily inter me in a thinly covered grave; as ceremony they will place an evergreen acacia branch at

my head. And after that Solomon will be summoned, and he will draw me up out of the earth and restore my life, rejoining my flesh with the wood of my bones, so that it would be as if I had never died.

<p style="text-align:center">∗</p>

Disposal

The death in a car accident of the same aunt that brought me to Israel beckoned my early return. I remember thinking that I would only be away from Israel for a short time, but was drawn into the family's concern for my aunt's property and quickly found myself helping with the disposal of her estate. By the time this had been completed there was no job for me to return to in Jerusalem.

<p style="text-align:center">∗</p>

ZUGFAHREN

I seek to make it clear to you that my early death is both as alien and as familiar to me as the Moon is to the Earth. The moon comes to us from several places, in a number of conspicuous ways. On one account it was born out of the surface of the Earth, leaving a weeping hole in the planet's side that is currently the Pacific Ocean. Diagrams depict this as the mitotic division of a magma body, a gradual oozing polarization resulting in two separate bodies. For several billion more years the larger body retains a molten state encapsulated by a thin epidermal layer, a skin cool enough and stable enough to spawn legions of bacteria. Having thrived on thermal vents, they proceed to cover its surface in a swarm. The other planet is too small to retain interior heat or air and in a few millennia cools into grey quiet dust. Alternatively, at the time of the Earth's inception an asteroid struck its surface and displaced a large volume of its crust into orbit. Or again, the moon was dragged into its present orbit about the Earth, having deviated from the asteroid belt between Jupiter and Mars. But it also formed at the

same nascent stage as the Earth, accreting from stellar dust over billions of years and gradually melding under its own gravitational pressure. Other moons have grown and vanished in similarly Wagnerian ways. The asteroid belt separating Mars and Jupiter was once a moon or a planet that was caught and smothered by Jupiter's gravity, or shattered into floating rubble by collision with another celestial body, an asteroid or maybe a moon. Miranda, one of Uranus' twenty attendant satellites, was an amalgamation of the vast remnants of a former obliterated moon. Pluto may have been a comet of particles and gas lured into a solar orbit, or a former moon relinquished by Neptune's grasp.

I have examined our uses of the moon in the temporal world. A newspaper story written for the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, Minnesota, is entitled *Former Moon Family Member Chronicles Abuse, Corruption.* Inga Uhlemann won a Japanese Haiku competition with an image of the moon broken into the many surfaces of massive waves as they drown a winter coastline. The Earth's moon has been broken down into a collection of instruments depending for their exis-

tence on the often very specific purposes for which they were conceived. The mean moon is a creation of astronomers that travels with unerring uniformity in its orbital path, while the ecclesiastical

or calendar moon, which was once located by arcane and disputed reference to the Column of Golden Numbers, exists solely to locate the days of Easter. The reason for these inventions might be found in the need to resuscitate the moon, an aged and lonely veteran, and to provide it with companions. As Dawson observed in *Earth & Man* in 1873: The moon seems to be a body which has had time to complete the whole history of geological change, and to become a dry, dead, and withered world.

*

Some revision

While arranging a flight to Israel to visit the remains of my body I was told that they were no longer located in Jerusalem, that the remains had been flown to Frankfurt. An employee of the institute observed that it was a difficult time, and that mistakes could occur; that although my situation was not in question, it might now be next to impossible to ever locate the remains. Although they were recovered recently, their historical and political context raised insurmountable difficulties, and he would not be surprised if the remains had been destroyed. I asked the Shönow officer further questions, only to quickly discover his disinclination to provide me with answers and his lack of knowledge or concern regarding my case. He did not think it would help me to telephone the officer who had cleared the freight documents. I did not know what else I could do, and so remained standing at the counter of the enquiries desk far longer than the officer would have liked. Eventually he ignored me and began attending to other people.

I arranged a meeting with a specialist; someone said to be expert in resolving personal difficulties like mine. While Prof. G.E.'s offices and weekly business were located in Leipzig, he agreed to a brief interview during a working holiday in the flat, rambling Bavarian city of Regensburg. The way to Passau took

me through Nuremburg, a place that I had visited before, and indeed lived in for a short time. From the train I watched the landscape as it passed. Outside Erlangen I saw what looked like old bunkers. Protruding from the ground were concrete appurtenances that had the appearance of being attached to a greater subterranean whole, although the nature of that whole remained unclear to me. What I could see might have been visible evidence of a gigantic metropolitan storm-water system of drains, built at an extraordinary price in the hope of averting future flood, or it may have been the outlet valves for cooling ponds connecting to the distant nuclear power plant. Then again, they might yet have been entrances to a catacomb of underground cold war bunkers, a subterranean city built to protect citizens from biological hazards and radioactive fallout, and from knowledge of the world outside.

*

Exhibits

The weather in Nuremburg has a curiously clear quality. The sky is so chill and quiet that it seems to have let in the cold space that normally lies silently outside our atmosphere, between the moon and the earth. I had given myself more than half of the day to stop in Nuremburg. I chose to walk across the canal and through the old city and the Marktplatz. Before I

did so I took the time to wander through the art and history museum. While a visitor to this organised and well-appointed museum could spend days reading through its galleries, I had seen many of its exhibits before, and so limited my interest to one wing of the complex dedicated to an international travelling exhibition. One of the objects of interest was
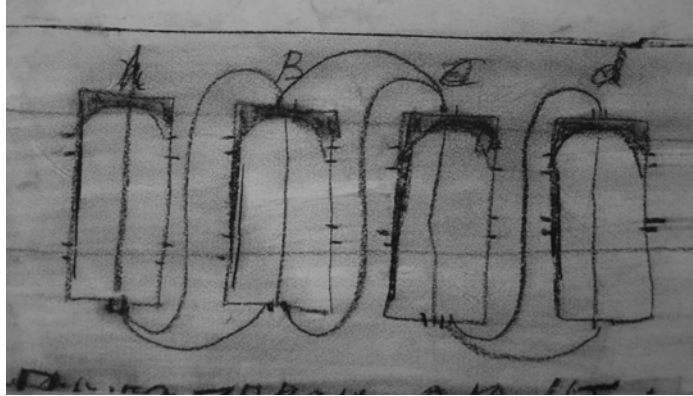
an invention

sketched by Alexander Graham Bell of the *Present Form of Multiple Telegraph*, dated 1878. I was struck by the schematic, almost religious quality of the drawing of four oblong vessels labelled A through to D. A repeating S motif connected the vessels, from each of which protruded six nodal attachments for the reception of the wire S. One wire represented the earth. It was the sort of drawing one might expect to find on an Aegean tomb wall describing the passage of the dead through succes-

sive stages in the underworld. Or it might have been a precursor of the four medieval humours constituting the body's temperament, connecting the choleric presence of bile with fire, of sanguinity with air, and melancholia with earth.
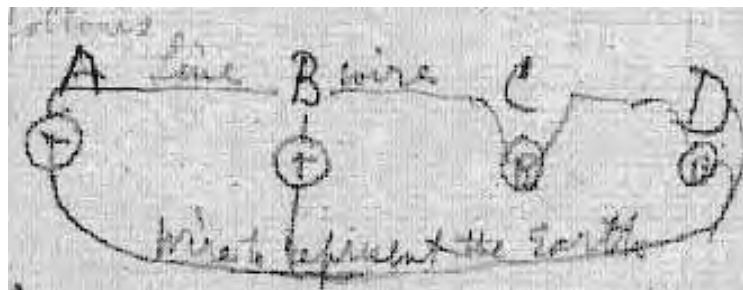
In considering all of the many exhibitions, collections and files that I had witnessed, it occurred to me then that most of the things we know and record are given insufficient attention because of the categories into which they are sorted. This ought not always be the case. By re-classifying certain objects, an archive might establish startling, unerring correlations. It might skilfully join Victorian heirlooms with brittle cuttlefish hand carvings of Jupiter and its attendant moons; flow charts describing the regulatory process of the liver of an owl could function equally well as the blueprint for a Marconi wireless or the schematised outline of the fruitless travels in 1245 of Innocent IV's envoy, Giovanni de Piano Carpini, to the Mongol summer court. A portable clavier, once the pride of an accomplished musician, could be re-presented as a broken collarbone, thin

enough that it is transparent in places, worn through with smooth holes in others. Categories would blend at their edges, and neighbouring classifications merge to the extent that it would often prove impossible by use of conventional criteria to
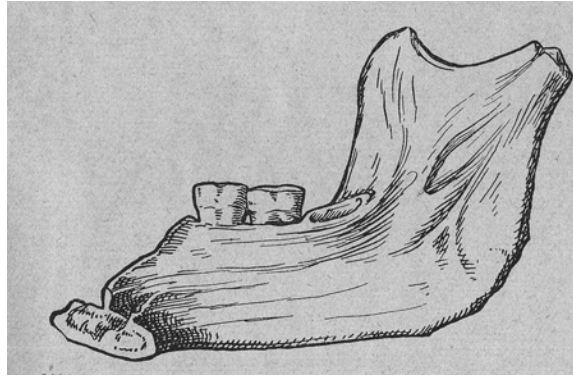
differentiate one artefact from another. Although a newcomer would insist that the process of classifying things be revised, owing to its present inadequacy, he or she would shortly thereafter realise that each object, as represented in the archive and in actuality, was neither definite nor unequivocally recognizable, but subject to change without recourse.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The telephone

Below the exhibit of Bell's invention was a short blurb describing its effect on the modern world. It explained that because visual cues in facial expressions form a very large part of understanding during social interactions, the invisibility of one's tele-

phonic communicant has changed the way we perceive others. We speak to many people whom we never encounter, who remain un-instantiated in space and whom we will never meet in the flesh. Their disembodied voices brought to my mind a feeling that the world I communicate with has been extruded through underground telephone cables, stretched out, and then stretched out further again, its gauge repeatedly diminished until it has lost any physical substance. While I am not normally interested in contemporary art, I was impressed by the self-contained exhibition at the Nuremburg gallery of international works and, in particular, by four sizeable monochrome prints, each depicting the same pensive and thoughtful young woman. In each picture she displayed for the camera a black and white photograph of an infant.

The pictures recalled iconographic representations of the Madonna and Child. However, the child was present only as a picture, held out by the Madonna for the viewer. The infant might in some instances have been the woman herself at an earlier age. In other instances it may have been a son or daughter. The woman stared directly at the camera, making it appear as if she knowingly looked into the world of the viewer, of myself. On reading the list of works I saw that the title of this display was printed all in lower case: *as she looked behind her she was unable to see clearly.* Although she was dressed in a way that made it dif-

ficult to identify the period from which the photographs were
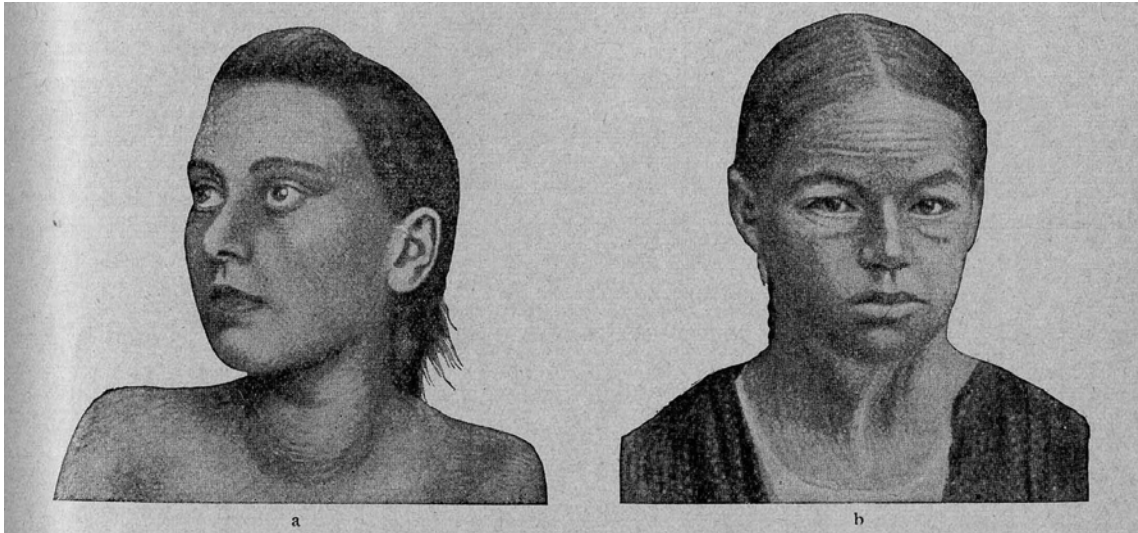
taken, the overall effect was that of an older era's dictates imposed on an anxious mid-sixties generation. They were the Sunday clothes one would wear to have a portrait taken, the formally dressed adolescence of below-the-knee skirts and blouses buttoned to the throat.
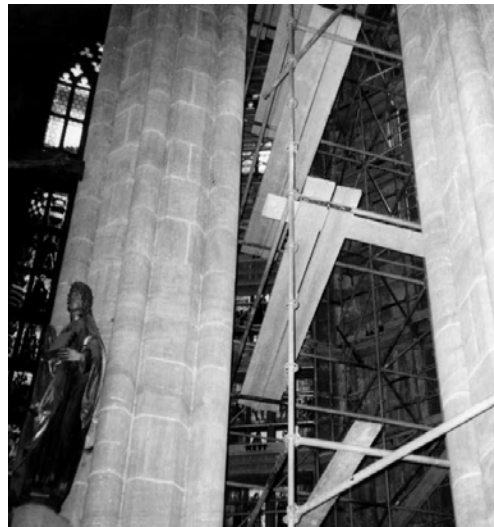
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St Sebald

After the museum I walked through the Nuremburg platz and passed a church into which a group of choir singers and musicians entered, carrying among them assorted folders of music, music stands, viols, blockflutes, and a cello. I decided to attend

the service, which was just beginning. After the service I viewed the church's artwork, among which were more than eighty representations of the Virgin Mary, and the reliquary of the church's patron saint, St Sebald. Presumably all the bones of Saint Sebald's remains lay in the ornate iron sarcophagus crouched at the centre of the church, giving the appearance of a gilded tent ensconced within intricately buttressed tower-cities extending heavenward.

Much of the Sebalduskirche was destroyed in the Allied aerial raids on Nuremburg in 1944; like many reconstructed buildings in Germany, photographs of this destruction were exhibited for visitors. At the time I visited the church it was undergoing repairs. The apse was transected with alloy scaffolding that extended to ceiling height. Temporary plank platforms regularly marked out the internal dimensions of the church, like the sieved and marked earth of an archaeological dig. As a finite gauge, the scaffolding demonstrated the extreme elevation of

the church's roof while simultaneously detracting from its normally un-spanned, un-measured height. Rather than infinite rising splendour, the inside of the church was delineated by alloy intersections that, Samson-like, managed the imposture of holding the church roof and walls apart, and reminded me of the spaces we do not normally see.

One of the statues I stood before in the triforum looked much like the church's other eighty Virgin Marys and exhibited the

typical medieval posture, the Virgin Sway, but rather than proffering the Christ child she held the model of a building in her arms, as if she were a saint for builders or architects. It was one of the many central European depictions of St Barbara. Rather than holding the expected three-windowed tower, she cradled an entire spired church, presumably a representation not only of

her own architectural intrusion, but also of the Sebalduskirche itself. During the bombing of the last war she had not let go of the miniature sandstone building; it remained a solid, un-evacuated sanctuary.

*

Shadow

From Nuremburg I caught the train to Regensburg, the next large city on the line south. I was able to sleep for a short period, during which time I could not avoid dreams that I believe were attributable partly to my profession, and partly to the time I had spent in Nuremburg.

In the dream I stood in the room of a museum and watched a girl crouching on the floor in a roped-off area while a bacterial infection dissolved her flesh and redistributed the epidermal and coriacious layers of her skin across the parquetry floor like a veined carpet. I could see the minutest details of pullulating flecks and corpuscles within the growing spread of flesh as it crawled out across to where I stood. Looking more closely I saw that beneath miniature furrows of coruscating tissue pulsed blue capillaries, looking like the serpent forms of an Amerindian burial mound.

The girl in my dream now stood at the centre of the carpet of skin surrounding her on the floor, and lectured at me on the anatomical composition of shadows. With the proper equipment, she said, with the right tools, like a surgeon, you would be able to peel away the obscuring layers of your own shadow, revealing a monochrome land of blood rivulets, of shadow tubules and the shivering jostle in darkness of foamy organs.

She continued: the harsh sun recreates my darkened likeness on the objects I pass. It is something I have noticed acutely in *my* dreams, as if de Chirico had painted them for me. The inner workings of a body are unlike the internal swathe of muted shadings constituting a body's shadow. Exposition of a body reveals the conspicuous blue or red tincture of blood vessels. According to the designation of vena or arteria, the blue and red is reminiscent of the visceral reasoning seen in maps of municipal rail networks; abutting colours depict the inbound and outbound traffic (both effusion and ingression) of the circulatory process. However, circulation does not admit of the need for the openness of the system to external provision. In the instances of both junctions, of respiration or of municipal rail travel, a subject is absorbed, transformed, and expelled. While the junction of respiration allows the intrusion and expulsion of air to taint and propel an otherwise dead organism, the junction of a railway station admits and disgorges commuters. Such sys-

tems, which are alternately red and blue, cannot be merely circulatory. Instead they require a motive input of nutritive fluid, as with the two hundred pounds required to redeem oneself from Gaol after a turn about the Monopoly board. In many instances it is the inhalation of oxygen, nitrogen, or other gasses into the lungs. In the body of a shadow, however, the monochrome tint of blue is indistinguishable from red; circulation is no longer a matter of influxion and effusion, but rather an enclosed revolution of uniform grey.

The girl concluded in a categorical way that, regardless of her knowledge in the matter, all of this knowledge is unverifiable. The shadow belonging to me is unwilling to divulge what is internal to it: corpuscles, tubules, sinew. It absents degrees of light, denying me vision of what lies inside.

*

Regensburg

I woke in semi-darkness. Regensburg was grey, and it rained for the short time it took to order a coffee and, seeing that I was going to miss my connection, return without my coffee to the platform for the train to Passau. As I stood watching an earlier train depart, I was unnerved by the behaviour of the crowd around me. Each of the several hundred people waiting for the next train was looking towards the same point midway

along the platform. I followed their gaze down from the antique water tower to a young woman, and it was only then that I realized that the scraping wail I heard was not the brakes of a train arriving at another platform. The woman ran dangerously close to the edge of the train and screamed as it slowly gathered speed. Her screams were hoarse and intolerable, as if a ghastly accident had occurred. Nonetheless I was surprised to see the train decelerate: before it had entirely halted the woman wrenched at one of the doors and hastily shut herself into a carriage.   Another young woman, the stationmaster, looked on unimpressed. She had radioed for the driver to stop. I imagined how embarrassed she might feel, returning through the corridors of the train to find her seat and belongings, sitting and

staring ceaselessly out at the grey rain as Regensburg slid away behind. I could see the eyes of other passengers glaring at me in her seat. Earlier as she ran along the platform she yelled constant hoarse desperate screams, I presume for the sake of her luggage. Is it a strain of bravery that enabled her to halt a train by screaming? In her position I know I would never have been able to carry through with what I keep thinking of as a deception, making out that there was an emergency, an accident, while I had merely missed my train.
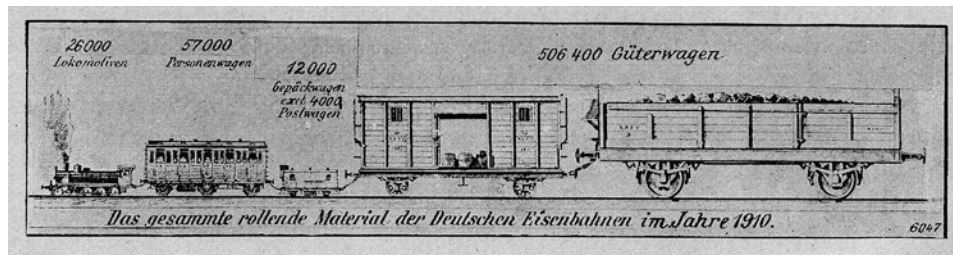
A woman standing close by me confided that in the same situation she would have died. It occurred to me that the exaggerated expression was not quite right. In response to an embarrassing situation I might have said that I could have died, but then the difficulty of dying twice would immediately intrude, and as a reflex I would attempt to correct what was in the first instance merely a figure of speech. For much of the time I did not believe that what had happened to me had in fact occurred, but rather I would at times correct my thought regarding certain phrases, certain states of being, or the occurrence of a recollected event. The phrase spoke to me more precisely of choosing to die as a means of evading a situation too humiliating to endure. It was a radical and most certain means of avoiding the ongoing memory of a humiliating circumstance. The phrase was ridiculous; its exaggerated and inappropriate reaction de-

rived from a stale sort of humour that was both larger and sadder than life. Maybe the option was offered to me in the past, without my noticing, and maybe unknowingly I accepted. I have imagined my own death, this time without ambiguity, but nonetheless it was my imagining and not my memory. Although I have no recollection of my death, maybe my situation is an appropriate one: nobody in this world remembers her own death. And besides, as the philosopher Epicurus sought to persuade his wife and friends, prior to his own pre-ordained end: death is for other people, not ourselves.

*

In train

On this occasion Prof. G.E. had arranged to meet in a park some distance from the station, as it was close to his hotel. I decided to walk from the station. While making my way along a small back alley to avoid a local fair, I passed a slowly moving limousine stretched to such a length that it gave the impression of a hearse. The long tinted side window was difficult to see into, and I discerned the barest outline of two self-conscious smiling faces. On the road in front of the limousine a miniature tractor train, towing three open and empty carriages, eased its way onward with almost no momentum.

26000 Lokomotiven   57000 Personenwagen   12000 Gepäckwagen exd 4000 Postwagen   506 400 Güterwagen

Das gesammte rollende Material der Deutschen Eisenbahnen im Jahre 1910.   6047

For several minutes my walking kept pace with the little train. The driver noticed this and waved to me. It appeared as if the train, which was really a poorly disguised tractor, was giving the driver gear-changing difficulties. As I turned a corner back towards the fair I did not see whether the driver's problems resolved themselves. While negotiating the last cordoned-off block I did however see the same empty miniature train waiting amidst the crowd, or at least a train that looked very similar. Considering the short time it took for me to traverse the block, and the slow progress the train would be forced to make through the crowd, I assumed then that it was not the same vehicle: that there were two trains. However, it was at that point that the driver of the second train appeared to recognize me, as if he had seen me prior to this occasion, and waved. While I did not recognize him, I felt an unexplainable dread that prevented me from waving back, and which to this day I am unable to explain. I stood quite still, like a rabbit realizing that it is being watched.

When I told this story later that day to G.E, he suggested that both circumstances were true: that I saw the first train both times, and that there were two trains. I could not help replying facetiously that this possibility demonstrated in the driver either remarkable organizational skills, or an incompetent deployment of resources, as the unusual dispatch with which the first train caught up with me was in no way aided by the second, super-fluous train. The second train was for me an absurd contriv-ance: I never saw it. In no way did it contribute to an account of how the same train might be in two places in so brief a time. But even if it was not a finite resolution of the matter, it none-theless constituted a satisfying, if mystifying, response.

And yet a feeling of unease persisted, and twenty minutes later I realised that it was the image of another train that lay at the base of my anxiety. This was a memory of myself standing on a rail bridge in Berlin. Below me was a deep rail siding cutting down into the fossilised past, and on the rail line was a train that I as-sume repaired railway lines. I could see its insides. Its complex of pipes and mesh grids, hydraulic arms and conveyor belts lay permanently exposed. Yet they conformed to the rectangular dimensions of a normal train, filling every available gap, the way new apartment blocks extend eaves and gables to their regu-lated limits. The train looked as if it had shed its exterior dis-guise to reveal an exaggerated utilitarian purpose. Casing de-

signed to impart the usual attributes of a train had been dis-carded to reveal an innate, previously hidden purpose. It led me to think of an anatomical exposition in which the species of

the animal to be eviscerated was clear. After the careful flaying of its skin, however, it is recognized as not an animal at all, but the re-shapen corpse of a recently executed man, a criminal assigned by the State for the purposes of medical exposition.

*

A park in Regensburg

On the day I met with Prof. G.E it was very cold. The park was empty. Its high wall made it appear private, but on entering I realised that it was a public park, in the respectable pre-war sense of the word. I was early, and determined to walk around the park in order to remain warm. Paths crossed the park at

angles, along which at intervals stood benches, some slatted and curved, others built from two colossal planks in a rustic fashion. The paths attempted to anticipate where the people, Mitburger and Mitbergerin alike, would walk. This arrangement ensured a respectful distance from the foliage, which accommodatingly had receded with the oncoming cold spell. Indeed, the park flora had receded in a similar way to the forest surrounding the city, which had obligingly retreated to make space for medium density housing estates and newly designated semi-industrial zones. All the industrial zones and the housing precincts were referred to as parks. This park was empty because it was a weekday and the weather was cold. I was reminded of television documentaries portraying life in Russia, where everything, must be conducted indoors, and the streets and squares hide a quiet desolation behind monuments and waterless fountains. Several spreading oak trees stood at the centre of the park. A man was tending to one of them, shovelling soil up over the exposed roots of its base. The buildings surrounding the park were part of a larger institution, possibly a training academy or second-class offices for civil administration, or maybe they had been given over to record storage by the local technical college. They were buildings that had moderately altered their function toward ever less important roles as previous organizations moved away. The original users would have relocated to more

easily serviceable multi-level offices in Frankfurt. Having found the complex increasingly ill-suited to their needs, they would have consolidated work space in more convenient and better appointed buildings with newly asphalted delivery bays, protected by harshly coloured security doors and convex mirrors, attached high up at each corner. At one end of the park near the gardener's sheds and the small nursery the grounds changed from tended lawn into the exposed light grey soil of a miniature hill, covered in young saplings and crisscrossed with deep animal trails, looking like nothing so much in its abrupt irruption above the park as a Neolithic burial mound. Its artificially steep ascent also gave it the appearance of a scale model of a renowned mountain, whether it was supposed to have been Mt Fuji, Mt Sinai, or a closer Alpen Berg I could not say. It was a neglected section of the park, the purpose of which I could not

fathom. From its peak I was able to look down over the park wall at the passing traffic. It seemed to be an uncomfortable interim refuge for lovelorn adolescents and homeless people. The view across the corner of the wide intersection was like that from a junction box. It was the sort of park that would embarrass anyone who chose it as a place to interview some-one. Probably because of its orderly neglect, and more so than with other places, the park imparted a feeling of cold unreality. I had the feeling that since its construction, years before, it had grown old without ever being properly inhabited or frequented in any normal, everyday sense. It looked as if, at the erection of the surrounding buildings and walls, the fortunes of the area had changed for the worse. Even before the planting of the planned trees and the careful laying-out and treading-down of the gravel pathways, the architects and the builders and plan-ners and the people intending to move into each building were called away. They had to visit relatives, or they relocated to other towns or cities because of further work commitments. They were stricken with illness or unavoidable accidents, or de-cided to walk their dogs elsewhere. As years stretched out into decades, very few people ever inhabited or worked in the sur-rounding buildings or stopped in the park and, if so, never for a length of time that could be considered more than temporary.

*

Professor G.E.

Although I had carefully described my attire and my stature to Professor G.E. over the telephone, when he arrived he did not at first recognize me. Prof. G. E. was a gently spoken, inquisitive and quietly humorous man who walked with the cautious steps of someone inflicted by the depredation of age or by chronic, agonizing spinal damage. We decided to walk to a nearby café in the Marktplatz, where, as it turned out, Prof. G.E. knew the Syrian owner. The outdoor glass-walled café gave a view across to the city's old Rathaus and the Schloss.

We decided to sit at the outdoor tables. I had the impression

that Prof. G.E. travelled for his work, as he referred to the clear brisk blue heavens as Sydney Sky.

After a short while of talking and showing him some photographs of my childhood and my time in Israel my coffee was no longer lukewarm but thoroughly cold. Oddly, he had brought with him a package of large pretzel rolls, which we ate. He asked me questions about what I thought of Israel. When I replied that it was particularly unlike Germany, he asked what it was that I found specific to Germany, as opposed to elsewhere? I offered Heimat and respect for cyclists, and mentioned Walter Abish's opinion that besides an easy acceptance of encroaching Americanism, Germany suffered from a sense of beauty that is always imbued with a threat, an underlying sinister thread within the normal, be it a well-dressed pensioner quietly riding

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the S-Bahn with her muzzled Doberman or a bed & breakfast guesthouse incorporating a basement target-shooting gallery.

Visit Heidelberg, G.E. said: the Allies didn't bomb it.   He agreed that because of the bombing in Frankfurt and many other cities, the newly-filled gaps in the houses were like dental bridges, crowns; the darker exposed stone and brickwork of the past was outnumbered now with white-bagged buildings fitted with ingenious alloy-framed windows that open in either direction.

G.E. talked of the personal burden of being German, of being German today as a necessary dimension of political responsibil-

ity. He observed that while his father, during the war, had been

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respectably engaged in submarine engineering, his dentist's father was a policeman seconded to Special Forces in Poland. While G.E. could not associate with someone like that, one's relationships with the elder generation were happenstance. For instance, he asked, what if my father had been a dentist?

I tuned and realized that the man I had seen tending the trees in the park earlier was now crossing the Marktplatz.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Otto

I did not know what to reply. Prof. G. E. told me that he remembered the arrival of the Americans in Berlin when he was a child. He recalled his realization at the time that there were valid alternatives to the desperate and seemingly hopeless plight of Germany. Prof. G.E. asked me whether I had read the papers that day, as there were articles concerning the Frankfurt trials in 1965 and their relation to Israel's trial five years earlier of Otto Adolf Eichmann.

I recall that I was studying psychiatry in Frankfurt at the time of

the trials here in Germany, Prof. G. E. told me. I clearly re-

member that during the weeks they occurred, I took the extra trouble to walk to the University, past the courthouse, rather than taking the Strassenbahn. Only now do I realize that I was more interested than I might have cared to regard myself as being at the time. On one morning I saw a crowd as it dispersed around the court buildings, and I even thought that I might take

a day off from my studies and see if I could not attend the gallery crowd, and watch the day's proceedings. I never did so. Not to matter. And it is Eichmann that we remember. We have all seen Adolf Eichmann on the television, he said. He was raised in Linz. He argued that, regardless of his knowledge of the fate of his trains' cargoes, he was entitled

to do nothing other than his professional duty, which he carried out with diligence and efficiency. He was aware that his colleagues and superiors committed gruesome acts of murder. I recall that one of the magistrates asked Eichmann if he regarded his colleagues as criminals. Eichmann said that he could not answer that ques-

tion.   In his trial he would alternately stand upright to speak, and then sit again to listen. His pinched nose and face looked like a museum exhibit in his glass dock, which reflected, in ghost outline, the prosecutor's film images of atrocity, displayed for Eichmann and the court.

He pursed and twisted his oesophageal mouth up and to the left side of his face so that it triangulated with the brow line of his plastic-rimmed glasses to form an arrow sign pointing away from his face. He possessed two pairs of glasses that from time to time he changed: one set for reading and another for longer distances. In keeping with the time, the collars of his cotton shirt were understated serviette zigzags. He replied to the residing judge that he would not divulge his innermost feelings, as if the whole truth was not relevant here. He too easily fitted a conception of the prosaic, ordinary possibilities of civilian evil. According to Eichmann, his part was a *notwendiges Übel*: a necessary, regrettably unavoidable chore. I forced myself to imagine Eichmann as the poet Rilke's idea of Death: a large cup without a saucer, broken handle: a blue draught for somebody to drain.[iii] According to Rilke the cup needed to be strangely balanced on the back of someone's hand. However, rather than being able to imagine Eichmann as this mundane porcelain vessel, I could only retain a constant image of him lifting the cup in such a way, the cup tremoring precariously on the back of his hand,

which was scrubbed like a surgeon's. How could someone be a teacup? Is it possible Eichmann was as much porcelain as flesh? What were his innermost feelings? At times while he spoke I had an image of him holding a heavy cup slightly above the table, at less than shoulder height, and he would drink from it in a way that would assure everyone that it was not a venous

blue liquid, but simply ersatz tea, and that he should properly be holding it as he did, on the back of his hand, even though the size and weight of it should have made his hand tremble. Sometimes on the television his fingers clutched his other arm against his body as if something was broken.

The glass box Adolf Eichmann sat in made him resemble a newsreader or a prominent political figure: he was backed by two armed military policemen, surrounded by microphones, bespectacled, watched by the court and by television cameras. The chair Eichmann sat on was dull and purpose-built, requisi-

tioned from a waiting room, with curved functional plywood back and arms. Nonetheless, it appeared as if the glass box might have housed something extremely valuable. It seemed to display a precious holy relic, an exhibit that answered the problems history made for itself, as if what floated behind the glass was a rarefied specimen of air cored from our earliest glacial past. Like H G Wells' intrepid hero of *The Time Machine*, I imagined Eichmann poised on a saddle from which he viewed the passing of the world. He held a starting and a stopping lever, one in each hand, and recovered the past in measured instalments, as if it were on rails.

Eichmann's body was cremated, said Prof. G E, and the ashes were strewn beyond Israel's maritime borders, in the Mediterranean Sea.[iv] I wondered whether the ashes floated for long, and, if they did not, which they might have drifted with the current. Before taking his leave of me there at the café, Prof. G E. remembered to divulge to me that the remains I sought were not, as had been suggested, in Frankfurt. You need to talk to the director of a dig near Munich, he said. She also does forensic supervision for the

UN, and she oversaw the Anata excavation for your case. Prof. G.E. wrote the details on the reverse of his business card and handed it to me. I did not know what I should do or say in response to this. Apologising, he explained that he had an appointment to keep, and that, owing to the good company, had regrettably already stayed past the time that would enable him to reach his office without having to make excuses. I wished him a good day, but remained seated at the café.

*

Ludwig

Across the square and facing the Schloss, the sun weakly measured itself around the fluting of a memorial column as if it was a grandiose sundial or a study in perspective by Giotto. The older buildings stood around facing the square and each other like so many boxes. Pedestrians paid little attention to the Straßenbahn and the multi-coloured concertina buses, which obediently slid by the crowds, entering and exiting the square without fuss. Having recently evaded its parents, an intrepid Maltese child yoked into a sailor's collar and smock ran about in the nearby empty fountain, repeatedly circling its centre. The uppermost storey of the Rathaus directly opposite was tiled with shingles on its outer walls in the same way that the roof was, a peculiarly European feature giving the impression that

the roof had developed territorial aspirations and decades earlier had begun to climb down to the uppermost floor   to better view the grand main balcony, which was surmounted at its centre with a carbon-stained pink sandstone crest of lions and ribbons. Behind the Rathaus I could see the gantry of a tall crane assembled on the site of the old Klinikum, much of it now demolished and being replaced by four new nine storey wings, a new emergency ward and private surgery rooms. The lonely statue of a Grand Duke named Ludwig stood atop a high column in the centre of the square. It faced the diminished sun, head bowed slightly, dressed not like a Bavarian prince but robed like Augustus. The names of larger pharmaceutical and financial corporations adorned flags and buildings surrounding the square, while advertising hoardings displayed the state telecommunications logo and a stylish sports-drink. The advertisement relied less on sport as on a notion of well-being, a national preoccupation that manifested itself not in gyms, jogging or triathlons, but in massage, sauna and solarium parlours.

*

A number of pigeons

Tourists interspersed with locals. Pretzels were self-consciously eaten, maps were re-folded incorrectly, and bicycles, the prevailing mode of city transport, waited in huddles about the square.

In a last-ditch effort the sun sent glowing warm triangles to se-
lect windows and building façades around the square. The des-
tination names lit up on the fronts of the buses remembered the
colour of the setting sunlight, as did the startlingly orange lumi-
nous smock and trousers of a city employee who was suddenly
there collecting discarded food wrappers and cigarette packets
with brutal greasy iron pincers.

As a pigeon deterrent, sinister needle aerials jutted from the up-
permost surfaces of the streetlamps, railings and statues sur-
rounding the fountain. From the lime-white and black-mould
spattering on the heads and torsos of the statues, it was clear
that the anti-pigeon spines were unsuccessful. They did not de-
ter roosting pigeons, which nestled amid the spines and contin-
ued to desecrate each statue. The sculptor had intended to re-
create the imposing clarity of antiquity, an impression added to
by the subsequent removal of arms from several of the figures.
However, the addition of acupuncture spines and bird faeces
re-cast enduring classical sublimity of the statues into long-
suffering martyrdom. The smooth, pure Roman exteriors were
now despoiled by two drastically conflicting modes of defile-
ment: excrement and metal spines. Although radically antitheti-
cal in their composition and purpose, the spines and the faeces
united in their common subject, the flea-infested pigeon.

It acted as an unlikely medium between a heavenward pointing crown-of-thorns wreath and the dribbling scatological make-over that slid gradually down the face and body of each statue.

*

My great uncle

While I sat outside at the cafe I noticed the man sitting at a nearby table who bore a considerable resemblance to my great-uncle. This man was older than Prof. G. E., and far heavier. I had several great-uncles, but the man I knew specifically as my uncle was in truth my maternal grandfather, one of those un-aging figures who remained reliably constant in their manner and their dress, as if the decades that swished by them were lit-

tle more than an afternoon celebrating someone else's birthday. This great-uncle wore a sombre grey suit and, as he meticulously excavated his out-of-season sundae, he grasped the edge of the table with his other hand. While in the estimation of a growing child he physically shrank with each ensuing year, my grandfather nonetheless retained a stature that was both civilizing and forthright, an unreflective propriety that could be mistaken for arrogance and which belied his selective, rarely impulsive generosity. I believe it was his first young marriage to which my mother owed her existence. As he never spoke about his past, it was only by word of my mother and the occasional outspoken relative or prior neighbour that I learned of this wedlock undergone swiftly to avoid indiscretion and almost as swiftly annulled on his return from the war. While my oldest cousin once told me that my grandfather persisted in wearing the wedding ring from his first marriage on his other

hand, she also told me much later that it was not a wedding ring
at all, but shrapnel that had been removed from behind his left
ear after the war, as if by magic, she said. It was beaten into
shape and polished. There was a scar behind his left ear, some-
thing I do recall him telling me resulted from his own mis-
judgement as to the drunkenness of the local barber. He died
in 1955, from heart problems; I remember my mother asking
the nurse about the EKG results, which she agreed looked ab-
normal. It was printed on waxy paper tape bordered with tiny
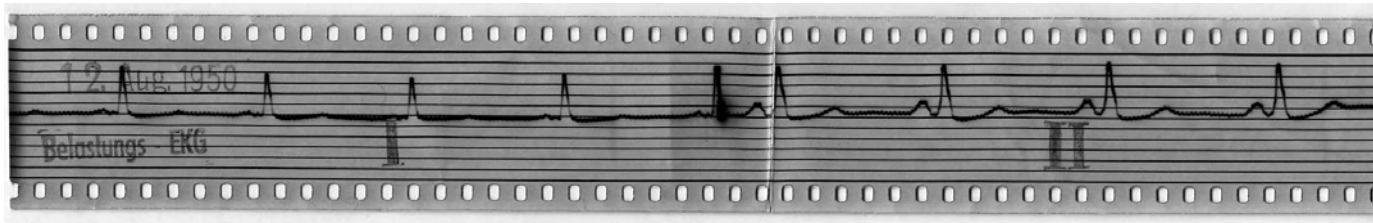
catchment holes. It looked very much like 35mm camera film,
only without the segregating frames, so that the heart-line con-
tinued without pause, although the heart-rate wavered in peaks
and sputtering sub-rhythmical attenuated half-beats that looked
worse than a murmur. The tape was left attached to the folder
swinging from the end of his bed, and it seemed strange to me
at the time that this cramp-folded line of tape existed separate
from my uncle, a sonar reading brought out from his dark in-
side that would now probably live on past him, a few hours at
most of jagged landscape interspersed with the gradually reced-
ing waves of a calmer rolling ink horizon. Maybe I could feed it

into a film projector, and for a brief while I could replay that short time, maybe it was when I last saw him. Part of the reading occurred when he was conscious. I may have been talking to him at that time, each peak might in a subtle way record his reactions, his responses to me when I sat with my mother beside his tall bed. I was again sitting beside the tall hospital bed of my uncle, staring at one of those many conspicuous vents that occur in hospital walls and remembering other sicknesses I had seen.

*
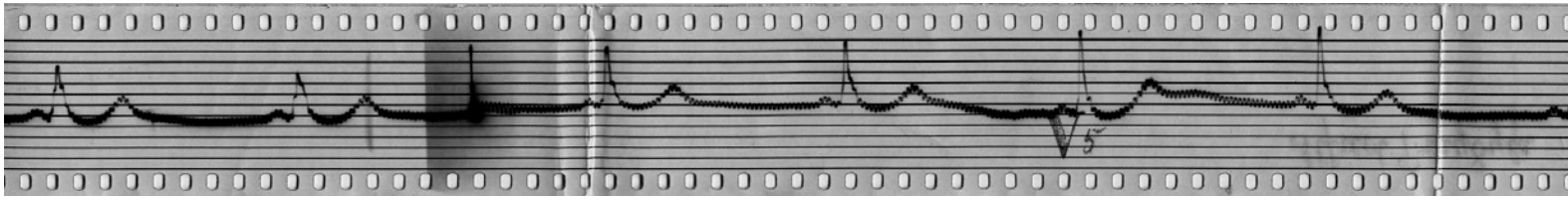
Illness

Illness has been accorded a priority in my past, whereas I have given little precedence to living. I have not sought inspiring roles in life or conceived of projects over which my peers or I might obsess. Lately I have realized that the treatments I have sought for one illness or another have, to some small degree, substituted for any active inclination on my part for adventure. As with adventure, my visits to medical practitioners, specialists

and the like have been meditations on my ability to live, on my mortality. These visits have offered the familiar surrounds of science, of discoveries achieved by means of aseptic measurement. By scapegoating various causal paths hidden within my body, but always in a generalized manner, my doctors defer the likelihood of a prognosis or a cure, like something threatening me without my seeing it. Such diagnoses comprise constantly receding prognoses, by which the medical fraternity has humoured my flaws the way risk humours animals, pretending that death isn't there while pressing against scars, tender flesh and swollen joints with a plastic biro, testing weaker tissue. Likewise, adventure does not involve a cure: it is a constant subjection of the body to a risk, reminding the body of its present evasion of the unavoidable, of death. While subjecting my body to the possibility of raised blood pressure, punctured skin, dilated pupils or a comatose state, instruments of measurement crystallize its decline, arresting it on a graph for later distillation within a cabinet of medically obscure phrases. Momentarily the body's slide back into the gathering layers of the earth is held still on a triage clipboard or on A5 lined cards of serially-dated history, or on rolls of paper tape patterned with venous blue scribble. With haphazard quotidian scorn the medical establishment chronicles stresses to my body, as if those stresses were ghostly facsimiles of actual bodily corrosion.

So rather than deliberately remind myself of my own incapacity by slowly swearing through impossible menial chores, I instead
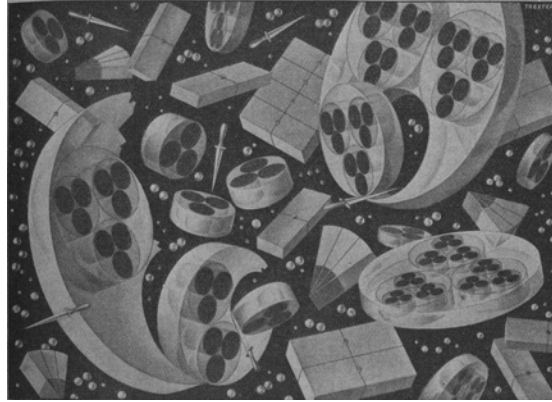
defer all choice and submit my body, quietly, to the constraints of medical opinion. I take the medicine, and I know it doesn't help me.

A psychiatrist once suggested (in a neutral manner) it was my expression of resignation that fuelled my illness and its deteriorating effect. The symptoms, he said, manifest themselves in individuals pursuing hectic careers they are not fully committed to. Those who succumbed to my illness should opt for a plodding lifestyle; indeed, many plodders were not even aware they were sufferers. He suggested I had hitherto led a hectic perfectionist life to which I was not suited. I wondered if this implied that a suitable hectic life would be an effective cure. He glossed over any further consideration of the ailment, preferring, in the stead (or possibly in support) of professional wisdom, to further
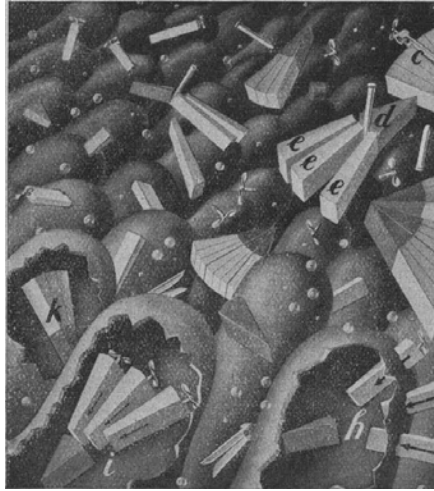
conflate symptoms with causes. By such Dickensian logic only the driven, the morally true, whose breeding embodied inherent goodness, would be guaranteed impunity, predestined for a life of professional achievement. Those of us who remained unconvinced or unsure of our purpose in life un-avoidably exposed our tender immune systems to the ill winds of Sloth.

*

Treatment

I dwelt on my brief meeting with Prof. G. E. As daylight ebbed out of the square, I left the café and began walking in the direction of the Regensburg station. I was no longer sure of my purpose in life. My death: was this to do with my illness? Had I slipped off during the night? I had been feeling ill for a while now; I was still waiting for an appointment with a specialist whom I had seen several years previous, for the same condition. It was a condition for which I had tried and exhausted a long

list of mis-prescribed medications. Maybe I was less well than I thought. Maybe this is the treatment: Gone for Treatment, they might say.
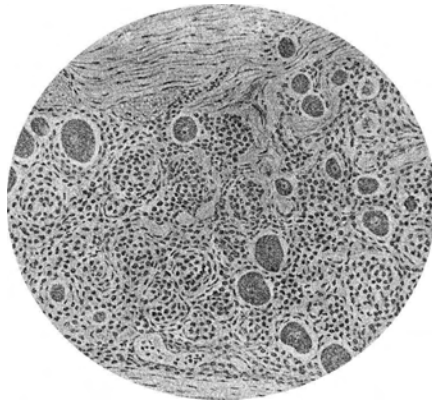
Borges observed in relation to his own death that, even while young, there were books in his library that he had opened for the last time; that would remain closed to him for the remainder of eternity. There stood gates on his property that he would never again open; people he had met that he would not speak with again. Such images and such an idea remind me that we are dying while yet living. Each day one or many of these deaths occur, and they are carried along with me until that point at which all things will have been done for the last time. But before that point, at innumerable unacknowledged junctures, I will farewell an acquaintance I will never see again; I will look at a particular painting by Grünewald or Braque and I will not see it again.

*

The ceiling

I booked into an inexpensive hotel close to the Regensburg station. I was given a small, empty room, of which only the uppermost of a pair of bunk beds had been made up, with a quilt and sheets. While sitting on the top bunk close to the ceiling I was reminded of Giorgio de Chirico's paintings, his claustrophobic looming blank mannequin heads. The human forms are always too large for the rooms they are trapped into. Heads cramp together in pairs close to the ceiling, facelessly fixing the viewer from within the room, eyelessly apprehending what lies outside.

The ceiling was made up of a repeated motif of rough half swirls of thick plaster looking like impasto art deco fans or broken pieces of shellac records lain one over another. The pattern replicated the image of an already-broken machine-pressed record. It looked to me like the herald of a rapidly altering world, a recolonising post-war stamp of the New World upon Europe, plastered onto the ceiling in the guise of futurist chromium curves. However, the ceiling was not original. Judging by the lead-light window designs, the mid-nineteenth century ceiling would have incorporated regency bars, medallions and bows of ribbon: traditional symbols of domestic and material textile wealth. Now the homely emblems of the past were covered over with the thick revising crust: a half-swirl design carelessly emulating the new era. A light fixture close to the ceiling set deep parallax shadows across each etched plateau and groove. It was a cost-effective fix-it job concealing water stains and rotting plaster. Of course, since larger rooms had been divided into smaller units, the ceiling patterns no longer agreed with the placement of the walls.

The elevated view made it feel as if I was an ornament attached to the ceiling. Foreign to the floor, I was encumbered wholly by the ceiling's oppressive plaster horizon. It was not a normal human perspective, but rather one of architects or pigeons. It brought to my mind a view of my situation that hitherto I had not apprehended, of no longer properly adhering to the face of the world, held fast only by the ceiling of my room.

*

Dachau

Early the next morning I was ready to catch the train to Passau. Strange birdsong had woken me while it was still dark. It was not until I checked out and was walking back to catch the train that I noticed that the hotel was adjacent to a parking station. I realised that it was not birds but the noise of central locking mechanisms beeping in people's cars, on and off, locking and opening, which had woken me. As I reached the platform I was seized by doubt as to whether I was travelling in the proper direction. After inquiring as to which was the München line, and which the Passau line, my doubt remained unresolved. I was intrigued by the mention Prof. G.E had made of the archaeologist, a Dr Muiderberg, responsible for moving my remains. As director she was currently involved in archaeological excavation of a work camp near Dachau. The work camp had

been operational from the summer of 1942 until liberation. It was one of many later satellite camps organized under the aegis of Dachau. Recent excavations had revealed that only a metre and a half underneath the camp were the remains of a small Roman fort. Prof. G. E. had given me the name of the director. I should visit, he said, and then I might continue on to Ulm, which, he reminded me, is where the Danube begins. It is a beautiful town, he said. It is also a place you must visit.

I decided that I would visit Dachau. It would be a day-trip. The weather was calm and mostly still and very cold. By two o'clock the light was already weakly falling from a slanting winter sun as if the blue sky had used up what small share of day there was. Near Dachau in Gunzehausen I saw open rail cars piled with pine logs, covered with canvas. At Ingolstadt I saw rail wagons at a siding loaded with lines of new luxury cars, all identical, all wearing white weather-proof coverings, purpose-built with an aerial-shaped inclusion particular to that model of car, so that the covers only fitted that model of car.

While on the train I acceded to a young man's request to travel on my ticket, the conditions of which enabled it to cover a number of people. He was a French man studying engineering in Germany; his parents were Moroccan. Half an hour into the journey police boarded the train. They stopped at his seat and

asked him questions regarding his travel documents, what he was doing in Germany. They asked me why he travelled on my ticket. They did not ask anybody else questions. It seemed to me that only certain people were asked questions, and that the policemen applied a work method based closely on that most popular saying of the infamous anti-Semite, Henry Ford, regarding the limited colour choice of his mass-produced cars.

When alighting on the platform at Dachau I was not sure if it was the main station. I approached the elderly conductor, who stood waiting at an open door to signal the train driver to depart, and asked him if this was the Hauptbahnhof for Dachau. This is it, he replied politely, this is all there is: there is only this stop, he repeated: for Dachau there is only this stop.

I inquired at the information centre adjoining the station as to the whereabouts of the recent archaeological dig of a smaller concentration camp attached to the Dachau system. The man at the counter had not heard of any such research being undertaken in the area, and suggested that I take the bus to the Dachau concentration camp museum, where I might find the information I was after. The bus, primarily designed for tourists, was still waiting for loitering and lost travellers outside the station. As we made our way to the Dachau Gedenkstätte each stop was announced on a video screen depicting a map of the

bus-route, interspersed at regular intervals with commercial advertisements for Dachau grill restaurant, Dachau sporting complex and swimming pool; and the Dachau local travel agency. Many of the people on the bus were American, and their voices were predictably over-confident and loud. They reminded me of the student on the train who had told me of a friend he had known since childhood who moved back to the United States with his family when young, and had since joined the army. He said his friend was now ensuring the safe dispatch over Afghanistan of swollen daisy-cutter bombs from the converted holds of military cargo planes.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Another museum

The Dachau museum included a scale model and plans of the entire lager and surrounding area, a district the council of Dachau unsuccessfully attempted to separate itself from in the 1960s. I noticed that when in operation the camp included an Angora rabbit farm. In the scale model the hutches were ordered in rows like the barrack blocks of the inmates. While the prisoner barracks had been demolished, outside on the grounds their foundations were still discernible. At the end of the war Dachau was used for a further twenty years to house immigrants. Also exhibited in the museum were two purpose-built

bureaux; low, large, heavy desks containing divided slotted drawers designed to house file cards recording the details of every inmate, whether deceased or still living. Inmates constructed them within the workshops of Dachau. Each bureau and the files it held constituted a discreet world unto itself, a world comprised of dead material, built from wood, filled with wood-pulp paper meticulously printed, stamped and written on in ink mixed from organic chemicals.

The bureaux were collections of once-living organisms, dismembered and reassembled as indexes of the prison, another organism that acknowledged its contents as a structure built on the further unstinting destruction and disembodiment of its constituent parts, the inmates themselves. It was as if the bu-

reaux, rather than the scale maps and models, were a more accurate representation of Dachau.

I asked the staff of the museum about the nearby archaeological excavations or the director who might know of the shipping details of my remains. They could tell me nothing other than that poor weather and lack of funding had prevented a dig scheduled to occur near Gunzehausen two months ago; it had originally been funded by a private institute in Berlin, one of the museum staff members said: he could not recall the name. As for the proposed director of the dig, she was employed as part of a United Nations forensic team based in Belgrade. Did she have a phone number? The curator rifled through a loose-leaf inter-organizational phone book, located two office numbers, and called both while I waited. I am sorry, he said, they tell me she is not currently contactable by mobile, as she is visiting mass grave sites in the south of the country. She will be back in Belgrade by the end of the week. He gave me a square of green sticky-pad paper with the address of Dr Muiderberg's hotel. Rather than wait in Munich, I decided that I would continue on to Belgrade, where I would be able to talk with the Doctor in person.

I exited the museum building and walked out onto the vacant

assembly ground. As the oncoming darkness grew up from the east, a lucid scotch green enveloped all the objects that I could see, contributing an ethereal quality to the lapsing light, so that it did not appear to fade so much as to fly out of the sky, in the dramatic way that moons rise and dancers abandon the stage in a grand opera. After the monochrome greyness of the prison, it was very strange. The luminously contrasting cobalt and pink

sunset contrived an incongruous and absurd glory of that final part of the day in colours that I had, I felt, forgotten.

As I walked north across the assembly ground I looked down at the blunt blue-metal stones and could see the light cast from inside the building ending at fits and stages the further I went from the doors. Turning and looking back, I could see the light from inside, pretending invitation. Its bright squares reached over the field almost to where I stood, a little beyond its last, already-traversed barricade of monochrome yellow. As I watched, every detail of each happening inside the lighted rooms was magnified. The building shrank towards a point in the distance and the outside stillness expanded around it. While a clean wind moved the branches of trees about me, it was calm and dead where I stood. Inside I could see that things went on regardless of my absence: were I to remain out here, the exhibition inside would continue as if I had never visited.

Afterwards I walked with a crowd of tourists and stood at the 726 bus-stop. Here we waited for the 724 bus, which never arrived. Because of the continuing pall of respect and horror, everyone whispered. Occasionally someone would read the small notice instructing people to walk to the further bus-stop around the corner; they would confer with several others in a splinter group, which would then depart from the main herd.

They behaved like sheep, moving off in huddles, crossing the road and ushering each other further round the block to where the correct bus-stop was.

By the time I had caught the bus back to the Dachau station I no longer felt alert enough to continue with my inquiries as to the whereabouts of the archaeological dig that was the purpose of my visit. I recalled an acquaintance domiciled nearby in Munich with his wife, and located their telephone number from the white pages. They had moved since I last visited several years before.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The cabinet

They now lived in a newly built and recently purchased flat. It was furnished with every conceivable in-built convenience, giving me the impression of the interior of a lunar module as much as a house. It felt like an exclusive windowless hotel. I was shown the bath-sheet towels, affixed with stainless steel hooks for ease of hanging, and the basement storage, which was organized and filed in purpose-built wall-mounted cabinets that slid on rails to save space and time. That night I quickly fell into sleep with the feeling that I was drowning, overwhelmed by the feeling that I ought to be stored in one of the basement cabinets. Horrified, I felt obliged to file myself away, a neces-

sity that seemed all the more urgent when, having ventured into

the basement, I found a vacant cabinet exactly my size. It was then that a memory of my early childhood returned to me, of a time at pre-school when, incensed by my relentless activity, the teacher forced me to stand silently in one of the washroom locker cupboards until the end of the lunch hour.

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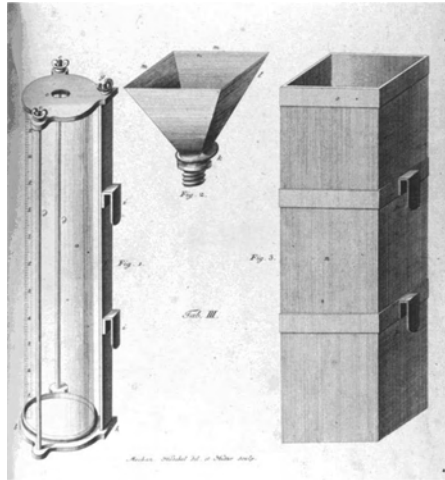
Another musical

In the morning I spoke with my acquaintance's wife over break-fast. On telling her of my dream she replied that it was under-standable considering the museum exhibition at Dachau. She had a recurring memory of a dream that began after visiting the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin a decade ago. In this dream she is a player on a small stage, she said, part of a nineteenth century musical, maybe an operetta. She is an affa-ble and mildly overweight middle-aged man with a part in the

men's chorus; dressed in the red tunic and ridiculous leggings of the Napoleonic army, or possibly it is the army of the German Confederation. She dances and smiles simply. She displays her remarkable sideburns with each decisive turn, always near to falling into the tiny orchestra pit as she confidently tramps out each tune. While leaning out over the footlights, she is stricken by a palsy of doubt, even paranoia, that she is not fulfilling her role properly and that she should leave the stage as soon as possible. All the time now she is looking back at the cause of her fear. It is the lead role: a dauntlessly beautiful, characteristically doomed heroine whom she thinks is the only real reason for the audience to attend the show and who, she realises only a few minutes prior to the opening, has mercilessly bitten the palm of her fellow player's left hand below the thumb, sorely rending the musculature so that it breaks open with every twitch or salute or stretching wave of her hand. How could she have forgotten this? How could the audience have not noticed? And what is the rest of the cast thinking of her now? She will never be able to perform again. With all certainty, she assures herself, she will never be able to address the leading lady again, to offer her an adulatory smile and some quick praise, knowing that they, indeed all of the cast, have participated in a grand event. At this point in the dream she stumbles, grasps reflexively at other members of the chorus and, due to her weight and des-

peration, unbalances several other performers and, for a foundering minute, unsettles the musicians and most of her side of the stage before jerkily, hysterically locating a not-to-be used curtained exit and rushing from the stage. The performance continues in her absence, and no one comes to ask her what the trouble is. Strangely, no one is present back-stage at all, the darkness necessary to front-light the operetta for the performance leaving her in blackness waiting for it to end, feverishly deliberating whether she should leave or if she should hide somewhere, maybe in one of the unused dressing rooms, or possibly under the stage. It is then that she recalls something and, after a moment of hesitation, tears off her sideburns, and, pushing herself into motion slowly out the back stage door, throws her ornate helmet into the snow.

That is an unusual dream, I replied. I could only think to say to her what she had already said to me, mumbling that places like those inspire such dreams, not to mention this sort of depressing breakfast conversation. She did not say anything in response, merely nodded and looked away.

*

A train to Passau

I determined that I would not visit Ulm, the beginning of the Danube. I felt that I was now further from locating my remains

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than if I had never followed Prof. G. E.'s advice and visited Dachau. I had developed a growing dread of coming down with a cold. Nonetheless, I had nothing to follow now other than my ever-lengthening trajectory south and east in an attempt to locate the woman who purportedly knew of my fate. I resolved that I would travel to Belgrade. I thanked my hosts, caught a taxi to the train station, and bought a ticket to Passau. On my way to Passau the man who was cramped across from me in the new second-class train constantly called and answered work colleagues on his mobile telephone. He was both very German and very Italian, with a large black moustache, a tasteless shirt reminding me of an Olympic logo, and an assortment of photocopied promotional material and paperwork. After half an hour the routine he had devised for himself sedimented out into what looked like organizing numbers on his telephone, but he may have instead been playing a game on it. At intervals of a few minutes he would arrange and re-arrange his paperwork and his morning paper, glancing over the documents although never really reading them. At the next change to Neumarkt-St Veit most of the seats were already occupied, and I was forced to travel facing backwards. Two teenage girls in tank tops and jeans discussed the selection of muslin scarves that one of them had brought along. The recorded voice announced that the Nächste Halt was Langenbach. It was a

miniature town; the most prominent feature was still the Salzburg Chuch's peppercorn-grinder bell tower.

The land grew up around both sides of the train with vineyards and bluff hills, and then briefly one side was exposed to a large channel-like river and a freeway overpass that crossed it. Nearby the roof of a copper-domed hall was visible, while further off a silhouetted castle vied with the brewery and a concrete manufacturing plant, industrial storage sheds and electricity cables and cranes. All of these were situated amidst green Landshut hills and a light grey delft-ware exposure of weak sky. Outside Landshut the rail embankment fell down and away from the train to a conifer forest, a wild jagging of orange moss, green needles, white-grey stones, shell-dark grey boles and clean bracken, like parkland. Above the forest on a hillside a bracken clump spilled down into surrounding farmland. Over and to the left was the moon, pairing off against the bracken clump as if it were its double.

My first view of the Donau was grey-blue, near Vilshofen, where I was struck by the brimming, accommodating calm of the river against its clean edge. Tended rows of market garden vegetables and fields would begin directly at the river's edge, as if it never unduly altered its level, which was imposed, measured

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Passau

and controlled by the expectant order of the surrounding countryside.

Later that day I discovered what all tourists find in Passau. Although the landscape insists that the river is unchanging, markings on the baroque Town Hall remember a dozen periods outside this history of apparent constancy. In 1921 and 1959, for example, water rose over the first and second floors of buildings in much of the older district. The markings were like plimsoll lines on a ship, but instead of anticipating a safe displacement of water, they prescribed this level in retrospect.

*

THE DANUBE

The moon is not only a dry and dead world: its sometime lapse into redundancy connotes a world preceding the ones we invent. It is not a present, but a former, prior moon. It is not always full on the fourteenth day, as we had hoped, nor reliable enough in its shaky ecliptic to precisely determine a significant date, such as the anniversary of the death of a prophet. In its pre-existent state this primeval monument is a world of disruption and escape. It brings to mind the improbability of a prior self, a former life, and suggests to me the formation of a body once reliant

upon another, and now autonomous. As seen from the Earth, the waxing and waning faces of the Moon, from crescent to disc, constitute a chronicling of millions of

former moons, each monthly instant the hollow repetition of the past. NASA moon-rock samples were taken from the moon in a post-historic era; yet they pertain to an earlier, former moon that was always a contrivance, an exotic celestial geology constituted by nothing more than recovered rare samples of dust and meteorological specimens. The moon does not precisely orbit the earth, but instead orbits a de-centred, displaced point deep underground, a compromise between the attraction of the earth and the attraction of the moon. To a slight extent, the earth orbits the moon.

The fragmented moon is an exploded notion; both a progenation and dissolution of self, a mitotic division of the heavenly body-as-messenger from a murmur-less satellite self. A former moon is less the notion of a present, but of an ex-moon. It is a prior alterity that no longer pertains, that leads me merely to speculate the cause of such change. The connotation of a Former Moon implies an object that does not exist, so that the past continues to haunt the present in language, and the moon's continuing ghost-existence makes of it a reliquary, a recognition of a prior

and present altered state. It is a linear passage of time that ceases and begins constantly but irregularly, like a mnemonic. It becomes an extra-terrestrial or fantastical theme. If the Earth has only one persisting moon, it is an otherworldly remembrance of structures and events no longer present, of losses or evasions of a once-controlled orbit. And yet it remains no more than a history or prehistory of rocks, of fine grey dust in long free-fall.

*

Der Strom

I took a boat from Passau. I waited on the wharf in the bitter cold with a quietly bullying queue of elderly passengers. In an attempt to remove itself from the rain I saw a sparrow squatting flush with the wharf; it sat on its haunches and gaped while minutely reverberating its craw several times each second. Its throat gaped in spasms as if expelling something. With lucid round eyes and grey fur-like feathers it resembled a mouse. I recall reading somewhere that the skeletons of mice and sparrows are almost identical.

On leaving Passau I ascended the boat's stairs onto the rooftop deck and spent an hour looking out over the prow; the water of
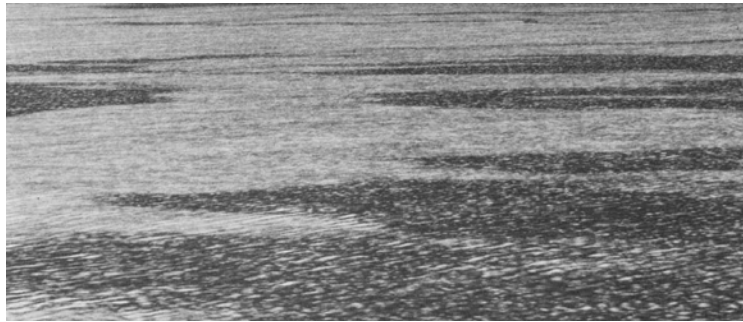

the river further downstream pattered with a dark olive shimmer in light grey rain, the autumn season ageing the same green in the surrounding hills that reached over both sides of the river. Vapour floated out of the trees on the ridges. Not too far away I saw clouds at ground level.   They were far too low to

truly be clouds. The water looked very much like velvet brushed in alternating directions, causing continents the colour of algae to drift arbitrarily against spaces of grey.

Sitting at the top of the empty ship I was able to watch the vacant ranked lunch tables stretching out in a perspective view that met with the river horizon, as hills slipped by, murmuring like the ship's engines. The rain made it seem as if the river joined inevitably with every possible view from the ship, whether of sky or of hills. The farthest sloping ridges that I could see delved downward into the river's watercolour pane. As the ship grew nearer, the steep angle of each ridge would appear to become more approachable. But through all this the mist and clouds writhed. While the clouds would arbitrarily reabsorb one another, at times they would also remain alarmingly

distinct, as if they were as solid a part of the landscape as the trees, river and earth, or even that they were a separate landscape of their own making, obscuring views and establishing new angles of sight as readily as the land they floated through. My view over the empty tables obscured the wake of the ship's path, which diminished backwards with the inverted triangular concurrence of the retracting river. At one point in the journey the ship stood directly level with a rift broken into the tree line on either bank. The forest had been shorn away from each rising hillside so that cables could pass overhead. Colossal A-frame stanchions lynched a raft of thin wires from either shore out across the perpendicular force of the water, and against the grain of the river's natural vanishing point. All the while the cold, gathering closer to me than my jacket, would remind me of the horrific impossibility of surviving the arctic temperatures of the river if the ship should ever happen to capsize. Between Passau and Linz, near Obernzel, lies Tochenstein Lock, where the ship was lowered fifteen metres, exposing iron ladders and bollard holes cut at regular intervals into the lock walls. The ship began exiting the lock as I walked toward the stern. For a short time my walking speed exactly reversed the motion of the entire upper deck. It was as if my walking was for a moment propelling sixty thousand tons of ship, like a monumental exercise walking machine, or a mouse in a wheel.
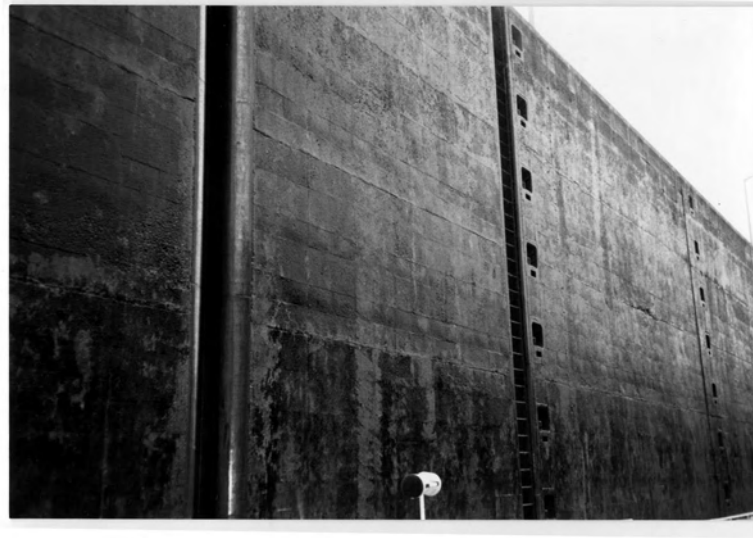
Later the rain momentarily faded. The water of the river was a still green glass surface. The ridges, modestly hidden beneath a wall of trees, led steeply down to the river. Signs marked the river edge at regular points, slanted and facing the river, black-on-white: 280/1, 20:7, 4. I imagine these numbers informed ship pilots of their location and the depth of the river. The ship traversed another lock, just above Aschach, home to another pepper-grinder kirche.

The water sluiced out of the further gates as they opened inwards on hydraulic arms, like water being drained out of a bath. I remember imagining the ship lying submerged in the lock like a body in a bath, being gradually revealed as the water drained out and away from it. It would be a curious process, I thought, to sink a ship in a lock.

The lock buildings formed an imposing concrete and glass complex stretching across the river, giving the appearance of an oversized Art-Noveau ferry terminal or a monumental autobahn tollbooth.

*

St Barbara

Almost all of the travellers disembarked at Schlögener Donauschlinge Wellness health sanatorium, where each day would be measured into monotonously regular lengths of time, not only by the constant interspersion of meals but by repeated bathing from morning till evening in varying temperatures and varying magnesium-sulphur dilutions of water. The only construction in Donauschlinge that sought to rival the gross concrete oblong health resort was the pepper-grinder spire of the local church. However, it was clear from the number of visitors to the resort, and its monumental dimensions, that the physical health of the body was more important than the spiritual. As I

looked at their radically differing profiles, the church white-plastered and prim, the resort a squat, dour parking-lot of a building, I was reminded of an obverse situation in the unfortunate story of Saint Barbara, whose father Dioscorus kept her locked away in a tower within his palatial compound. He arranged for bathing chambers to be built for her, and in his absence she altered their construction. The plans were not pictures or diagrams; they were a series of written prescriptions specifying particularities and irregularities peculiar to the proposed building. She craved permission to see these prescriptions, and forced her scribe to surreptitiously append an alteration. Instead of two windows, three were set into the tiled walls of the bathing pavilions, blatantly symbolizing Barbara's new faith in the Christian trinity, and ensuring that her father on his return would arrange for her limbs and flesh to be mutilated and her head to be severed from her body. It is not known whether the windows of the baths were left in their profane state or restored to their original binocular perspective. Nor is it known whether, prior to her father's return, Barbara had the opportunity to bathe under the three windows. I am nonetheless intrigued by the strange manner in which the inclusion of additional windows invested a secular building designed for bathing, a *hammam*, with a religious function. Among her few freedoms she would have counted the several views of desolate

Anatolian escarpments and knotted olive plains that rose up against the walls of her father's estate. She might have pleased herself in the unendurably empty long days with the thought of what she would see from her newly-built window. But she did not find this solace, and instead the baths, now the site of her martyr's grave, were attributed as a place of healing by the wretched and the pious. Depictions of her in the churches of Europe grew to be commonplace, cradling a diminutive three-windowed tower, like the spire of the Donauschlinge Church, or often an entire miniature cathedral in the crook of her arm.

<div align="center">*</div>

Explanation

My predicament might be nothing new. My dilemma might not be that unusual in the greater scheme of things: after all, famous precedent exists in the notion of hunting across Europe for the bodily fragments of a corpse. Is it then only an aberrant fantasy that I have conjured up, an invention of my self that I have seen fit to set loose onto the landscape? By choice I travel overland, rather than wait at lounges in airports and airport hotels. It is my fear of straying from the signs directing my search that dissuades me from the air. I admit that the knowledge I have of my status, in an official or existential sense, is somewhat incomplete. I realise the necessity of locating the fissures in my

record; the smaller as much as the larger holes (of which some are indeed large); in the hope of securing the years and the hours that I have lost and that remain to me. I have spoken with officials, and I have signed forms; I have endured the unseen whim of undisclosed decisions regarding my livelihood and, I suppose, my life.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Bratislava

I did not stop in Vienna, but took the train to Bratislava. While on the train I felt as if I were part of a five-days-five-nights European tour of major sites, of historical and artistic places of interest, those places we all require ourselves to see. But then, on a metropolitan tram lumbering into the city like a giant sick animal, a feeling of the insignificance, or rather the non-significance, of local experience, caught me. The tram appeared to have been built at the onset of the Cold War, although I could see that the windowpanes were now Perspex. Each single seat lining either side of the tram incorporated a squat, cast steel heating duct as a means of countering the brutal cold, making the fibreglass chair itself look like an after-thought. I had stepped off from the meaning-

ful routes of London-Paris-Tokyo. On these well-trodden routes faux Forties posters, exaggerating the bows of luxury steam liners, confirm that it is a safely-gridded journey, a fully ironed-out Baedeker with secure airport-hotel links and a spring morning constancy of air-conditioned comfort. In this world I was equivalent to everyone else. Every event and meeting, each attendant and colleague was a constant point in a transitory world always measured in its change. While each route was worth a specific number of points, and took a specific length of time. The individual bodies that boarded each flight could pop in and drop out of its diluted array of plastic-container channels at whim. As part of the cluttering crowd, dolefully hanging from the rail straps and arms raised above their heads, I felt like I was no longer a part of that world of consequence. The tram terminated at the city bus depot. After the forensic cleanliness of Germany, the metropolitan buses in Bratislava were ridiculously decrepit. An advertisement on the side of the bus sought miserably to portray the proud heritage of the Bratislavan metropolitan public transport system with the simply-draughted outlines of an early tram. I watched as a partly-uniformed man, whom I supposed to be the driver, prised open the hydraulic front doors with his thin fingers, grabbed his jacket, locked the bus doors and left. Without the slightest shock I realized

that I had fallen into a state of immobility and had not moved

for some fifteen minutes. Like so many times in my past, I knew that I was relapsing into exhaustion. I would need time to rest from the recent days of exertion, of constant travel, and so booked into the nearby Hotel Gremium, opposite the Akademia Vzdelavania, for two nights.

On my first night in Bratislava I walked through the old part of the city. While walking past a row of tenement houses, I was forced to step sideways to skirt around the leviathan body of an aged cactus tree. An immigrant from the new world, it was the sort of exotic organism that when split open would reveal an

armless corpse and a rusted car engine. It was not a reputable

part of the plant kingdom: it was wrinkled, without flowers: the stuff of nightmare. Its needled rubber-foam bladder branches reached out and down, devoured substantial acreage in their expansionist maw.

Having cleared the perimeter fence, the cactus' dirty evening shadow unrelentingly reminded passers-by of its incongruous placement, its corpuscular insolence, swollen to behemoth stature by a nearby storm-water drain and the blood-and-bone cosseting of a retired gardener with an unsettled head.

*

A bridge

Late the next morning I breakfasted downstairs. I then took a walk to the western end of the Novi Most Bridge, where I found myself trying to read parts of the Bridge's history that had been bolted onto a series of broad panels. The panels were only vaguely comprehensible, as they had been sprayed over with organic curves and cross-outs that covered up whole sections of the bridge's past, obliterating parts of the record of its construction. Cranes, crane cables and giant bolts, weight distribution diagrams and gigantic floated fragments of the bridge's arched form were all concealed under an unreadable revision of lilac. While it was evident that the construction had occurred, at the same time the account of how it occurred was now different from what might have been. Having traversed the length of the bridge from the old section of the city, I now stood and read of sections relating to its birth. It all amounted to one depiction. I tried to squint through to the obscured words, but I could not properly discern what lay beneath.

*

The evergreen tree

Near the hotel Gremium at a restaurant in the old town I ordered turtle soup, something I had never before eaten, and which I would normally have regarded, along with the legs of

amphibians and the spleen of any animal, as physically and in some indefinable way, morally indigestible.

The soup was viscous, and it smelt as if it still strongly remembered life, haloed with the odour of riverweed and years of anaerobic slime. I was reminded of the turtles I had watched in Berlin as a child, in the park adjoining the bear enclosure. Quiet animals, unlike the bears they were seemingly unaware that they were captive: that their lives and families would always remain concentrated within that walled glade with a green concrete pool. The bears spent much of their living years staring up out of their paved trench. It was a pastime that amused me as a child, and which I only recently recalled when I visited the Tate Museum in London and saw an exhibit by Giuseppe Penone. It was constructed from a twelve metre tall wooden beam, what was once a sawn block of timber that had been painstakingly stripped back along its layers of growth to reveal a younger tree. Its nascent branches and trunk had once been visible at an earlier stage of the tree's life; they were obscured by further decades of growth before being cut into lumber. This process of stripping back the rings of the timber exposed the tree's skeleton, a re-embodied memory of a young tree. It worked back through the past to a time when each branch's knobbed and swollen junction with the flayed bole of the tree resembled the

outsized joints of someone who had been starved for months, her limbs far thinner than her knees and elbows.

It was then that I remembered the pine trees in Berlin that the bears would sit in and chew, each tree anticipating the installation standing before me in the Tate museum. It was as if each bear, a heraldic emblem of Brandenburg, had sought its primordial past in the evergreen tree, the most pervasive of German archetypes. Chewing away at the indigestible tree bole,

they might have hoped to reveal an inner significance that lamentably remained unreadable in the feeble light of the zoo enclosure.

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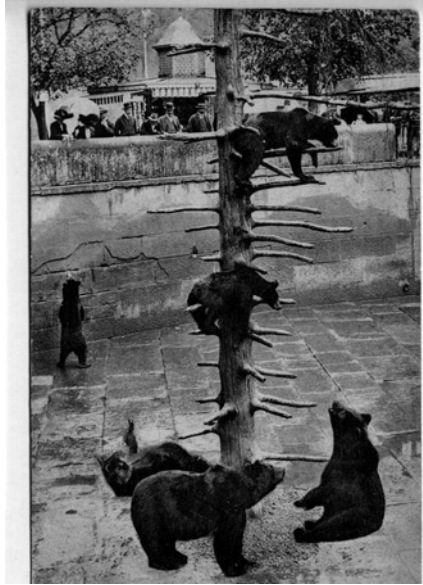
Trionyx triunguis

I further recalled the sculpture of a turtle I had once seen at the Majdanek Concentration Camp, three feet across and carved
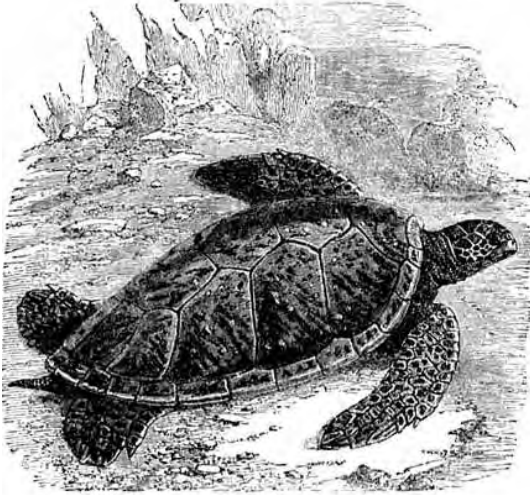
from a white sedimentary stone that had the porous look of concrete.

An explanatory plaque noted that the inmate artist, Albin Maria Boniecki, had carved the animal with the permission of Majdanek's SS overseers. I thought of the Golem myth, of an artist attributing life to an inanimate form. But it was only animals that the artist Boniecki carved, and not the human form of a Golem, which might have been why the administrators of the camp allowed Boniecki to continue to sculpt. Animals were exempt from the privations of Majdanek; their animation in colossal stone carvings would not aid the plight of the inmates. I wondered if the shape of the uncut stone dictated the sculptor's choice of animal, whether a semblance of a turtle already existed in the stone prior to the carver's intentions.

Maybe the reason she often chose to carve the form of a turtle was because it bore its own sanctuary prison on its back, a personal, constantly emigrating *Heimat* with a clearly defined, impregnable exterior.   In an earlier part of my career as an archivist I had researched proposals for the Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife. I recalled a minor section of one project concerning the carnivorous Nile soft-shell turtle, *Trionyx triunguis*, native to the Eastern Mediterranean, which had been recognised in the 1980s as almost extinct. By

the following decade fewer than five hundred mature turtles were thought to survive. One report on the species' status proposed that the population in Turkey be protected from fish traps, dynamite fishing, sewage discharge and the waste products of abattoirs, such as dumping in the Cukurova Delta of tons of chickens' feet. Some reports went into detail about dumping practices. The surface of the water would repeatedly split open to admit bin-loads of scaled feet, amputated, leathery like the soft shell of the turtle waiting in the shallow water. The primary report sought to discourage continued maltreatment of the turtle. In the Alexander River of Israel half a century's discharge of effluent had contaminated the river to the extent that it was now uninhabitable by the Soft-shell and most other living things. The Soft-shell turtle does not resemble Boniecki's stone turtle. Stolid in its impervious carapace and a land-dwelling

EDIBLE TURTLE.

animal like those of the Galapagos, it normally grows to the similar length of approximately three feet.

*

An arch

Due to inexplicable visa difficulties I could not travel by rail and was forced to catch a plane flight from Bratislava to Budapest, a city I stayed in only long enough to arrange train tickets southeast to Belgrade. On that afternoon I booked into a hotel early and lay on the bed listening to the late afternoon traffic. I dozed and dreamt of a gigantic Stone Arch. It was less an arch than the architecture for a world succeeding this one. It was a gargantuan edifice, a triumphal archway stretching from the horizon of Galilee to the DDR: from the Holy City of Jerusalem north, across the East to Berlin. Like all the triumphal arches of European cities it was built in the classical style: a Roman-

esque semi-circular arch coffered on its underside. Heavy plinths surmounted with frieze-work, which depicted scenes of wartime slaughter from the past. It did not occur only on maps. It could not be overlooked or regarded as incidental: of necessity it was accounted for in all matters. In this regard it was not unlike the *flugzeug* lines of transient winged dots that, like letters in a palindrome, reconnect daily from and to Frankfurt, retracing the shadow of flown paths across the continent.

This triumphal arch amounted to a new continent built from masonry. At times during the year its profile forced the Sun uncomfortably, slightly, from its path through the sky. Entire colonies of birds lived and died on its stone flanks, feeding on the cycle of epiphytes and insects that had adapted to the mortar crevices and carved niches housing outward-staring carved figures. Crops grew translucent in its shadow, while cloud formations and meteorological forecasts were as daunting as the edifice itself. Seismic interference only trifled with its foundations. It was the most imposing and unnatural object conceivable. Its dimensions featured in topographical analyses and newly published atlases that described the seasonally changing umbrage it cast over much of Eastern Europe. Its shadow altered the migratory path of terns, the dates of grain harvests, the distribution of peoples and their agriculture. The Aral Sea refilled within the decade; dams snapped under the boiling

weight of the Tigris, while the tide of the Danube shrank back from its banks like gums from the teeth of an aged horse. I was looking down across the waterless expanse of the river at its exposed ribs of debris amid dried silt and isolated pools choked over with weeds.

Although where I stood a harbour wall and the surrounding dockside prevented access, I managed to locate one of the less dangerous paths from the old city down onto the broken bed of the river, and was able to walk across it. My path was circuitous, as I regularly had to circle around what appeared to once have been small islets, but which up close were readily discernible as bodies wired to one another in groups of twenty or more. I knew they had lain at the bottom of the river since the war, still inexplicably intact and identifiable.

*

The commission

The Danube reminded me of the destination that was drawing me south through Europe. I now recall that at the time I had begun to think it was a path drawing back from myself and into a past that determined my ancestry and, possibly, my future. It seemed as if its flowing journey from a dubious past into an absent future was an artery infused with the memories of many

people including mine, sometimes floating, sometimes drowned.

On the day that I was leaving Budapest, I caught a bus and inadvertently got out some stops short of the new railway station, where on the corner a well-dressed man without shoes stood selling plastic windmill vanes attached to cane sticks. As I hurried past, hauling my overnight bag, he surreptitiously handed me a pamphlet. One article in it concerned hitherto unreported mass executions during the Serbo-Croatian war. In 1991, the article claimed, a Vukovar police inspector's work records were found detailing the torture and execution of civilians denounced as enemies of the Croatian state, and the subsequent concealment of these details in coronial investigations and autopsies. The author of the article suggested that the police preferred the Danube as a site for disposal of the bodies. This would preclude the location of a specific site at which to memorialise the crimes, as with the construction of memorials at the sites of Ustashi mass executions that occurred during the Second World War. According to the pamphlet, the inspector's reports included details of recovered bodies. A corpse was pulled from the Danube in July of 1991 near Vukovar, tied into a blanket with tent cord.

Having been re-dressed in jeans and shoes, the body had been

wholly stripped of its skin. The story reminded me of an interview with a journalist exposing the concealment by Serbs in Kosovo of the mass murders of civilians. The journalist's report included the interview of a Serbian policeman, Bosko Radojkovic, who carried in his wallet photographs of a small-goods truck washed into the Danube, crammed with bodies. In what the German medical fraternity referred to as the euthanasia project of World War Two, the SS murdered seventy thousand or so handicapped and crippled people. Hartheim Schloss was one of five sites devoted to this end. I recall visiting this place in late 1989 to discover that it was being rented out as apartments, reminding me of Dachau's use as refugee accommodation up until the sixties. The Schloss has since been re-requisitioned and again renovated, this time as a museum exhib-

iting blown-up photographs of people with physical and mental disabilities. It also exhibits the outwardly self-confident and serene photograph of the project's director, psychiatrist Dr Rudolf Lohnauer, and his colleagues, sitting together under a spreading oak tree. The doctor also managed the Niedernhart Mental Institute in Linz. I have imagined him as a solicitous family man, conscientious and dedicated to his work. In the final year of the war he killed himself with poison. Dr Lohnauer's loyal team cremated ten thousand inmates and dumped the ashes in the Traun River and the Danube. Such a great volume of ash: still, it would have made no impact on the constitution of the Danube, which would have flowed on without recognizing the addition of one hundred tons of snow-and-black cinder, featherweight grey floss and ground pieces of bone. If particles of this ash were diluted into the water of the river, how much time would elapse before it reached the Black Sea? Or again until it reached the Mediterranean Sea? I thought that it might be possible to mark the progress of the ash on its
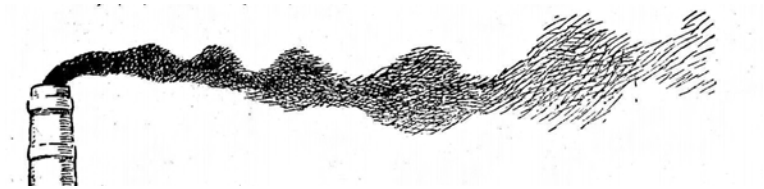
journey south. Flowing as one body of water into another, it could mark the passage of time, if only it could be detected. The

European Water Association has observed the spillage from a mining disaster of one hundred thousand tons of cyanide-mixed water into the Danube. Five months of dredging by cranes removed the debris of destroyed bridges from the river-bed after NATO bombing in 1999. If half of a century after Dr Lohnauer's exploits a small-goods truck could be located and dredged from the river's flux, I wondered whether so many tons of ash would have been recognized today? Would Budapest's Danube River Commission notice a hundred tons of ash in its river?

*

Patria

At the end of the summer of 1940 a number ships steamed down the Danube past Hartheim Schloss. They were transporting Jews on their way to Romania, who had escaped from Danzig in the north. Each ship took on more refugees in Vienna and Prague. In the Black Sea port of Tulcea they changed to the repellent conditions of three Greek cargo ships heading for Haifa in Palestine, where the British prevented them from disembarking. The intention of the British Colonial Office was to send Jewish refugees to the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean.

It was strikingly reminiscent of the German government's strategy, finally deemed unnecessary, to deport all European Jewish peoples to Madagascar. Whenever I read of exile in Madagascar I am reminded of the Emperor Napoleon's exile to the Corsi-

can island of Elba, and then to the South Atlantic island of St Helena, meagrely scattered with barren place names: High Knoll, The Briars, Diana's Peak; evoking the loss of time and proximity to the present world.

In my possession are two old postcards from the Great War; one depicts the island of Moribus; the other I pretend to be a perspective of the island as if I were no longer viewing it from the sea, but standing in one of its motionless cypress groves.

The three Greek ships were not seaworthy. In Haifa the refugees were transferred to the *SS Patria*, a twelve-thousand-ton transatlantic liner built by Forges & Chantiers de la Méditerranée, in La Seyne, in 1913.[v] Since its launch the *Patria* had berthed in Marseilles, Providence, the Azores, Constantinople, Alexandria and New York prior to its second owners Messageries Maritime chartering it to the British Colonial Office in the autumn of 1940. On the morning of November 25 the Jewish

resistance group, Haganah, arranged to scuttle the *Patria* with explosives in an attempt to delay deportation of seventeen hundred refugees to the Indian Ocean. Inexpert use of explosives inadvertently ruptured the ship, which in one quarter of an hour capsized and drowned more than two hundred refugees. For a very short while survivors looked on as the ship rained its mas-

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sive cargo of timber onto drowning evacuees. After rolling over, the body of the ship filled with water and dropped onto the floor of Haifa harbour, where its hulk lay undisturbed until the beginning of the Korean War, when it was salvaged and scrapped in Italy. 1700 European Jews were ultimately sent to Mauritius for the duration of the war.

The French or, more precisely, the *Compagnie Française de Navigation à Vapeur Cyprien Fabre & Compagnie*, were responsible for the name of this ship. They possibly sought to further celebrate the established transatlantic amity existing between the two great nations of France and the United States.

<div align="center">*</div>

Leipzig

And yet for Germany the notion of *Patria* was somewhat more divisive. A monument to German patriotism was completed in the same year as the *Patria*. The architect, Clemens Thieme, was commissioned to complete it for the centenary celebration of the defeat of Napoleon's army as it retreated from Russia one hundred years earlier, in 1813.

Besides being Germany's largest, it is also easily its most hideous monument, appearing against all physical laws to rise like an igneous   extrusion   out   of   the   artificial   lake

over which it stands. Brutal and soot-blackened, the Battle of Nations monument, known as the Völkerschlachtdenkmal, squats over forty-thousand square metres of parkland in the city of Leipzig. It weighs some ten million hundredweight in concrete and granite-porphyry casing and, as so many postcards, stamps and travel manuals assert, cost six million publicly donated marks to build, a figure


intended to demonstrate vast national wealth and public nationalist fervour. Ten years after the completion of the monument, public fortunes succumbed to inflation, and were worth nothing beyond the superlative words

printed on too many banknotes. There was a preoccupation with the progression of ever larger numbers, a need to display figures in millions, as milestones that had been worked towards and were now surpassed. It was as if, like Maximilian's Arch, the mass-circulation of paper flyers displaying these measurements was more significant than the monument which affected the appearance of stone. In the main domed hall of the monument sit four monstrous figures representing the virtues of the German peoples: courage; willing and joyful self-sacrifice; strength of belief; and fortitude. Each of these values seemed to me to be expressions of the one intent: of unquestioning destruction. And yet each of the figures, heads bowed, was not standing ready; each was asleep, dreaming of its own death. Adorning the front of the monument, a winged armoured warrior, presumably St Michael, stands flanked by eagles and a stormy landscape rendered serene by its stylised patterning. Carved in enormous gothic lettering above St Michael are the words, God Is With Us.

For a considerable length of time during its fourteen years of construction the monument had the appearance of a scaffold-encased ziggurat, as if the children of Bismarck were building a
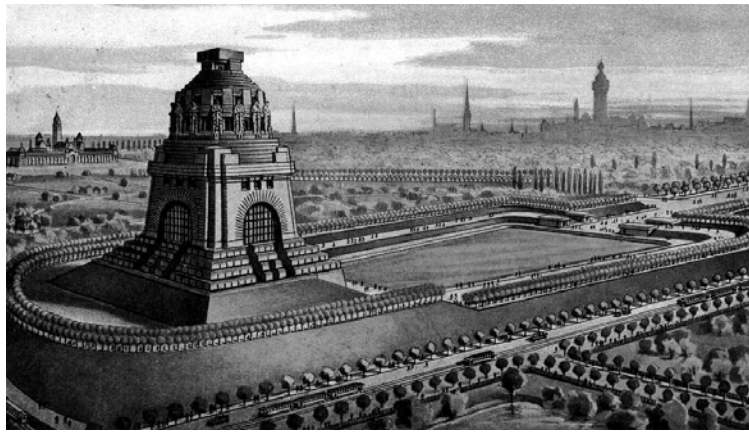
new Babel. The ceremonial consecration on the eighteenth of October, 1913, saw the lighting of a beacon set atop the smaller victory memorial in Karl Marx Platz. Erhard Benass observed that while one early visual depiction arms each of its four sides with a portcullis, on visiting the monument one discovers that each portal is a window of stone slats. These give the impression of cathedral organ pipes, or an amphibian's gills, as if the building's monstrous interior was engorged with a primordial arrangement of stone lungs. Even the confident postcard renderings of it, replete with sunset colours and silhouetted views of the distant city centre, fail to camouflage and really only emphasize the structure's obscene mass. Like a dark sun, or the ventilator ducts of Leipzig's underground railway, it drags one's vision across and into it. Ostensibly a celebration of the halt of Napoleon's trans-European campaign at the battle of Leipzig, its timing spoke of the German people's readiness to re-enact

the little Emperor's journey. Benass observed that it resembles the Kyffhäuser monument to Kaiser Wilhelm I, and indeed it has the appearance of a bloated version of that monument, a Teutonic Lighthouse of Alexandria grown corpulent under a far heavier burden.

*

The Palmengarten

The Völkerschlactdenkmal featured a slatted Romanesque arch, a popular feature of buildings of the time. I recall seeing a similar arch-like structure in pictures of the Leipziger Palmengarten

concert hall, a four-towered miniature Hagia Sophia, which was blown up in 1939 to provide building material for the war effort. My grandfather mentioned having walked in the carefully tended grounds of the Palmengarten on several occasions.

At the northern end of the garden, past the small lake, lay the grand palm-house, housing a variety of exotic tropical flora, which I once took the time to visit. Even more impressive he said, were the society and concert hall. I have since found a picture of the concert hall building and surrounding grounds, in which Sunday strollers, primly buttoned with hats and canes, stand on the various paths and in the gardens, admiring the precision with which nature had been tamed.

It might have been a lithograph. It was difficult to be certain whether it was a photograph or a drawing because of its flat colour tinting and faded perspectival precision. I felt as if I was viewing the scene through binoculars, which impart that peculiar two-dimensional effect. Each figure gave the impression of a cut-out stencil, of cardboard statuary that had been glued into the scene. It had the Baroque effect of technical illustrations of monuments that included a diminished human figure with which to contrast the colossal architecture. I identified myself with one woman who was typical of this role, standing and politely looking at the Palmengarten building. Since she was looking away from the viewer her face was not visible. The coloured tinting of the photograph emphasised her figure and made her look as if she might not

have been standing in the grounds of the Palmengarten at all. She could have been somewhere else, looking at something else entirely, but only happened for the purposes of this exposure to be embodied, transiently, within this picture. It wasn't that she was absent, but that she quite probably remembered being somewhere other than the grounds of the Palmengarten at that point in time.

*

Clarification

I was not in Leipzig. I had travelled extensively in an attempt to locate the missing parts of my past. Now I anticipated meeting with Doctor Muiderberg in Belgrade. I was consumed by the feeling that only by remembering these past events that I had never properly comprehended, never known, would I be able to resolve the absurdity of my present situation. The time that stretched from June 1967 until now began to feel insubstantial to me. It was as if I was existentially beholden to the time preceding that date, and that everything since was dissipated, told to me rather than lived. I could not think of anything beyond that date as quite real. At the same time singular events and dreams prior to that date; feelings and memories that I had not recalled for decades; had begun returning vividly

to my mind, borne up to me like balloon-raised artefacts lifted from the ocean floor.

Where it was unavoidable I travelled by air. Where I could, I travelled by train. While I do not believe it was rational or explicable, I had always felt that on a train, secured by its behemoth weight to rails, which in turn were pinned to the earth and laid so that they joined one point to another, I was assured of reaching my destination. On trains I could register the passing of buildings and village station platforms, always precisely signposted.

From my flat in Berlin I had travelled south to Leipzig, Erfurt, Coberg, Erlangen, then to Nuremberg, Ingolstadt, Munich and Dachau, before retracing the train line back through Regensburg to Passau. Regensburg is the first large city that the Danube meets as it writhes southeast from above Ulm in Baden-Württemberg, eventually sliding into the Black Sea several thousand kilometres and five nations closer to Asia Minor and the Middle East. From Passau I travelled by riverboat to Linz and Vienna. I crossed the border into Slovakia and thence to Bratislava by train. From Bratislava I was forced to catch a plane to Budapest. What had been the Donau, and then the Dunaj, became the Duna.

At Budapest this variably named, colossal watercourse wound

through Dunaujvaros and Mohacs to the border with Serbia and Croatia. Now the Dunav, it would continue to the south until Vukovar, then wind eastward to Novi Sad, and thence to Belgrade.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Novi Sad

I bought tickets to travel by train from Budapest to Belgrade. By rail I travelled parallel to the Duna, south through the town of Kiskoros, crossing the border into Serbia forty kilometres west of the city of Szeged. The train spent half an hour in Subotica, enough time to eat and drink gritty lukewarm mint coffee at the platform cafeteria. Then the train moved on through Topola and Vrbas, to the city of Novi Sad. They were

not cities: they were names on a list, related only by lines of rail. At Novi Sad, however, even this connection was broken. The voice of the conductor intruded over the intercom, alerting the passengers that the train service could not continue on to Belgrade, due to rail construction work. Buses would take us the remaining distance. With many of the passengers from the train I slept overnight in the waiting room lounge of the desperately unclean Novi Sad bus terminal, waiting for one of the few local coach services able to take us the remaining seventy-five kilometres to Belgrade.

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Marmara and Gibraltar

From Belgrade the Danube continues east to Socov, where it forms the Southern border of Romania. Later, as the Dunea, it forms the northern border of Bulgaria. At Silistra it leaves the Bulgarian border and lunges northward along the Romanian coast. At Calarasi the river breaks into a series of long islets north toward Braila and Galat`i. But the ships do not travel as far as Braila; a massive canal now connects the river with the Black Sea coast at Agigea and Navodari, one hundred kilometres south of the Danube delta. The remaining stretch of the Danube, between the canal exit at Cernavoda and the sea, flows north to Romania's triple junction with Moldova and Ukraine,

then heads east to Tulcea. After Tulcea a third of its volume dissolves into the Delta Dunarii, defined by Lakul Razim in the south, and the Ukrainian Dunajs`ki Plavni nature reserve in the north, where it rolls out into the Black Sea.

And then where? Much of the water of the Danube is caught in the anti-clockwise current of the Black Sea that flows southward past the Delta, via Istanbul and into the Bosporus Strait. Here, in the depths of the strait, saltwater flows in from the Mediterranean beneath the outgoing surface current of the warmer, less saline water of the Black Sea. As both currents pass each other in the strait, they remain discrete.

After an indeterminate period of time a substantial proportion of the Danube flows into the Sea of Marmara and out into the Mediterranean. There is little in the way of significant sea currents in the Mediterranean. After years some of this water will escape the strait of Gibraltar and join the Atlantic. As warm saline water it will float out across the cooler, fresher ocean, and reach into its lightless depths with millions of pointed spindles of salt-infused water, soundlessly driven downward by the rapid loss of its warmth and the density of its salt.

Some water from the Black Sea might also after a time tend southward from the Sea of Marmara and arrive at the coast of Haifa, but not without prior dissolution in the waters of the

Aegean and the many rivers of Asia Minor, and never in an appreciable or recordable volume.

<div align="center">*</div>

Belgrade

I arrived in Belgrade on the early Novi Sad commuter coach. Six and-a-half days had passed since I had left Munich. I had little faith that Dr Muiderberg would have returned to the city by then. It seemed that I had spent far more than a week trying to meet her: that I had been seeking to contact her for the better part of my lifetime and that it would not be unusual if I failed to meet with her here.

Her hotel was more opulent than I expected. It was an established stone building, and a green canvas awning, that easily would have placed it in Berlin or Brusselles, covered the entrance. On asking the desk clerk, an efficient man wearing a wire earpiece for the telephone, I was told that Dr Muiderberg had been booked in from the end of the week, but that two days earlier she had delayed the booking for a month and informed the hotel in the event that anyone asked as to her whereabouts, that she was taking a week of leave in Israel. The desk clerk gave me an address.

Israel: I urgently felt the need to leave the city of Budapest on the same day that I arrived. It was still early morning, and I had grown suddenly tired of my journey. Standing outside Dr Muiderberg's hotel I tried to look up at the green awning I had seen over the entrance, but I could not bring myself to look up at the sky. Prisms of light appeared to drift away and into the ground in front of my feet, as if I had mistakenly put on a pair of glasses ground to an out-dated prescription. The morning sunlight violently intensified the brightness of the descending squares of light ahead of me and the light of the day everywhere grew alarmingly intense; sweat grew out of the sides of my throat. I was fearful that it would stain my collar. I did not have a clean blouse to change into. I would need to wet the collar in a fountain; if I did that it would hide the stain before anyone noticed. Why I could not see through the vivid light did not concern me, but, all the same, I watched as the whiteness blanked out the hotel and the street, and only then did I notice the quiet. A thin, balding porter helped me up from the pavement, pressed me into a chair while he waved the entertainment section of the newspaper at my head. I could see the vibrant colours of the film advertisements, appearing and disappearing at the rate of a hummingbird's wing-beats, giving me the impression at the time that the figures in the newspaper were moving, frame by frame, further into the distance. I felt that

anything I might look for in this world would from now on evade my presence, would recede in front of me like the rear view from the train at Regensburg, or the churned dark white

water foaming to an invisible point behind the horizon, aft of the river ship at Passau. I was no longer inclined to travel by land.

<p align="center">*</p>

Coast

I left the Danube entirely at Belgrade and took an early morning plane flight directly to Tel Aviv. The flight took a path south-east over Bulgaria and Istanbul, across the great bulk of Asia

Minor south of the Black Sea; over Eskisehir, Aksehir, Konya, Karaman; over the rivers Gediz, Büyükmenderes, and Dalaman, and the Taurus Mountains on the southern edge of Turkey. In the early morning I glimpsed the coast of the Mediterranean and the eastern end of Cyprus, a misshapen sickle or crescent at the limit of the horizon, as the plane headed down the long chopped-back Levantine coastline. The threat of broken under-carriage on the tarmac at Ben Gurion caused the flight to be re-routed to the Airport of Giv` Atayim, inland from Tel Aviv.

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ANATA

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Whether reflected in waves, burning up in the stratosphere, or shuddering into dust in the orbit of Jupiter, my mind entertains images of weightless, irregularly shaped moons pitted with the knowledge of their crude birth and eventual destruction. They are stricken, I feel, with a wonderful and horrifying schizophrenia. As multitudinous ciphers of a pre-existing whole, they consist of form and non-form; they are references to a past unity. They remain as factual evidence of an earlier or other world, of myriad worlds without the prospect of conciliation. These un-joined pieces are moments of recollection, memories of something greater than the self, separate facets of an absent object: they are relics. I imagine these fragments as both a part of, and not a part of, a whole. Like the silicon vertebrae filler in an exhibit of dinosaur skeletons, these pieces are integral, but not original to the former body. I imagine the unseen side of the moon as a part of the entirety that is not ever visible but assumed to exist: negative space, an unsure synecdoche in which it is not clear whether a part represents the whole, or the whole represents a

part.   We are familiar with the Moon only because it always faces us.   While the shards of broken crockery in our wedding ceremonies bring luck, the satellite fragments I write of do not herald fortune; they do not break compliantly into the elements constituting a whole, but rather into pieces related only to its fracturing; they are each signatures of a disintegrating past event.

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The possibility of death

I caught a coach from Giv` Atayim to the newly-constructed Jaffa Street bus station shopping mall in central Jerusalem, opposite the convention building Binyane Ha-Uma. In Jerusalem the area surrounding the bus depot was a dreary ranking of low international style complexes and tourist restaurants. The coach stopped outside the bus station. While waiting for the queue of passengers to slowly disembark from the bus, I peered absently through the sandblasted haze of the windscreen. While summoning the courage to ask the driver for the direction to the tourist information desk, a fluttering on the glass outside caught my eye, and for a brief moment I glimpsed what at first I thought was a moth. I was aware that some species of moth in Jerusalem grew to sizes larger than a hand, but it was far thinner. I recognised it as a dragonfly, something I had not seen in many years. Like an armadillo or a cycad, it was an immigrant from prehistory. I imagined it silently whirring across the polished alloy roof of the coach. It seemed to me that the conjunction of the metal bus

and the iridescent, mother-of-pearl dragonfly was at one and the same time a meeting of cousins and strangers. The overwrought polished armour of the coach and the glinting carapace of the insect coincided. This collusion reflected a latent danger in the potential speed of each object; even when stationary, their lustrous surfaces created a slipstream that constantly evaded and threatened the possibility of death.

By this time the passengers had disembarked, and I decided against asking directions from the driver of the coach. Instead I followed the other passengers out onto the asphalt.
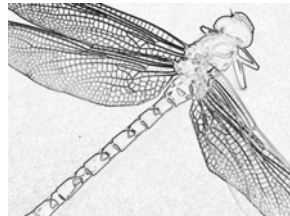
While stepping down from the bus I received a shock at seeing, between the open edge of the door and its hydraulic arm, the sandwiched moon, still full and only now beginning to wane. It might almost have been thinning itself into an oblong, shedding weight to escape the alloy frame of the coach door. The sky remained liver yellow. While I stood at the roadside waiting for my luggage I occasionally looked over at the newly freed moon. The coach driver, who I noticed from the pin on his lapel was a former air force mechanic, caught his hand in the latch of one of the underside bay doors while removing the passengers' bags. He returned to the cabin for an improvised first-aid set

that appeared to have been made from the same reflective pressed aluminium sheeting as the coach, complete with riveted panelling and jointed alloy corners. The passengers and I had to wait, the driver all the while insisting that no one unload the bags, while he laboriously dressed the dribbling wound on his hand with a filthy nylon cloth.

*

Odradek

When as a young woman I had travelled to Jerusalem to take up my short-lived career as a nurse, I was billeted for six months in the home of a local German family. The family had originally moved from Germany to Israel in the mid 1920s.

Hanging on a crumbling mud wall of the room in which I slept were old postcards and photographs of the family. The wall had been slightly aslant, leaning forward the higher it went, so that the uppermost frames hung free, moored to the wall only at the point of each picture hook. Before the addition of this bedroom annexe the wall would have been external, as evidenced by the streaks of starling excrement adorning the brickwork, contributed by birds that once roosted in the eaves. For those first months I could not securely identify myself within the novel surroundings of Jerusalem. Sleeping in a room of yellowing German photographs every night ensured that each

morning I would wake with the shocked realisation that I was no longer living in my mother's house in Berlin.

One of the photographs spoke to me particularly of a loved relative lost to the past. It seemed strange to me that while I continued to remember much of the detail of the picture, the subjects of it were themselves likely to have been forgotten. The vague shadows of four men stood in the darkened room of what appeared to be the smithy for a horse stable.

While three of the men retained some detail, the fourth, holding a horse close to the far wall of the picture, was much like the horse: only a silhouette. I could discern only the detail of his Polish workers' cap. The cap of a taller man in the front of the picture was part of a military uniform. I remember taking the picture down from its frame on the wall. On turning it over I could see that it was a postcard sent from the front during the

First World War. I was able to decipher the Feldpostexpedition date stamp and the violet-pencilled date of Sontag 19th March 1916. The postcard was signed by Carl Stailßer, who had written many diminutive and mostly unreadable sentences to his wife. I never asked the family, but like to think that one man in the picture, the smithy with his sleeves rolled, wearing an apron and holding a hammer, was Corporal Stailßer. His face appeared to be ever so slightly more open to the lens; he was more expectant than the others, who each looked like they had submitted to the ordeal of having their photograph taken as yet another chore they were obliged, with little humour, to endure. There was an inexplicable darkness to the picture, as if the insufficient exposure was not merely attributable to the lack of internal light, but to the vague blotched-in grey shapes, which, like figures in a water-colourist's gouache-and-ink preliminary sketch were directly a cause of the fading fall of time on our memories. The right foreground of the frame is the only part of the picture to receive enough light, and yet it illuminates a dusty, over-heavy iron contraption, the function of which is unknown to me. The more I look at it the more it takes on human attributes, as if it were a joker's avant-garde sculpture, a Klee-like stylised human with thick spar arms and a candle-holder head that might conveniently attach to a locomotive tractor or screw shut an irrigation outlet.

Like Kafka's character Odradek, a wooden device of uncertain design, this iron figure is inanimate but in the picture evinces life of a sort. It is more real than the faded men lapsing into the

shadows behind it. It appeals to us with hopeful wide-open surprise while the unmoving men stare solemnly, with suspicion or resignation, from the gloom.

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Statuary

I remember a similarly disheartening postcard given to me a long time past by my great aunt. She held no close attachment to it as it was sent by a cousin some places removed from her, someone she did not know well, if at all. The cousin, Paul, poses along with his regiment in, of all places, a Brussels hospital garden. He stands in the foreground, three places from the right. Of the twenty men in the photograph he is one of three

whose images are sufficiently developed to exhibit the shading of tone and colour. The remaining seventeen men resemble

exhumed statuary, as pale as the classically styled masonry of the hospital wall. I have wondered why it is that only Paul and the other two officers of the regiment retain any tone, while the enlisted men appear to be plaster contrivances: the three officers have seemed to have concreted themselves to a monument.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

Dr Muiderberg

Although the hotel in Belgrade had given me the Jerusalem address of the pension Dr Muiderberg was lodging at, I was resigned to the possibility of discovering that she had moved on. After innumerable telephone calls on the afternoon of my arrival, I ascertained that, as I had supposed, Dr Muiderberg was not residing at the pension. However, neither had she intended to. She had never arrived in Israel. The hotel in Belgrade had mistakenly switched rooms booked for a working colleague of Dr Muiderberg's, associate director of Archaeology, Dr Ylena Grünevá. It was Dr Grünevá who had come to Israel for a

week on personal leave. Automatically, and without any hope of resolving my dilemma, I telephoned to meet her.

<center>*</center>

Samson & Delilah

I arranged to meet Dr Grünevá in a café. While I waited for her to arrive I stared at the prints decorating the wall of the
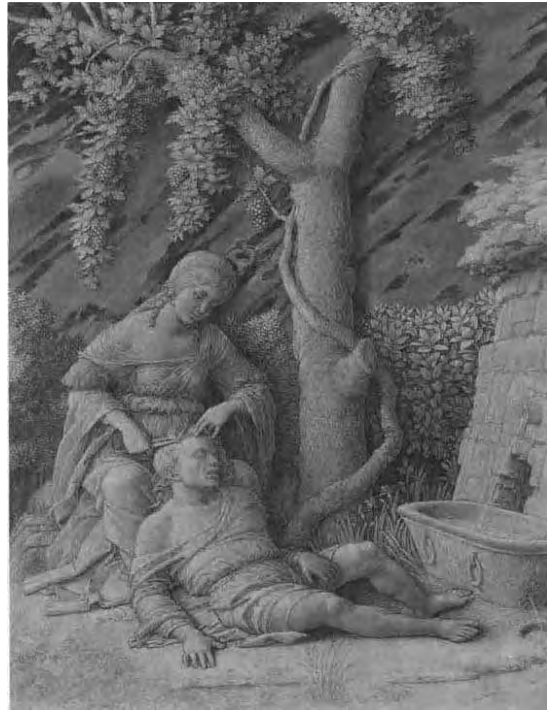

café, in particular, at a grimy reproduction of Mantegna's painting of Samson and Delilah. I could not help but notice that Mantegna had replaced the gilt background of medieval altar

painting with a bloody dawn of striated red-purple marble, a cataclysmic dissociating relief against which the simulated frieze of Delilah and her betrayed charge are cast. Mantegna had fossilized Samson's downfall in a motionless stone instant, a courageous reinterpretation of Pompeii. The only motion in the scene is the doomsday sky, which hails time obliquely downwards into the ground, concealed behind an innocent hedgerow. Meanwhile Samson obligingly stretches out to have his hair cut as if having already inferred his fate.

When Dr Grünevá arrived fifteen minutes late, I surprised myself when I realised I was expecting her to be wearing the practical clothing of a field-worker. She introduced herself as Ylena, and apologised for the misunderstanding. After I told her that it was not my first time in Israel, she asked me about my prior visit. I told her about my time in Jerusalem and Anata as a young woman. It appeared that she felt some affinity with my early life. She explained that although she had been born in Haifa and raised in Jerusalem, her parents and grandparents had emigrated from Slovakia before the war. She said that as a child she never saw herself as a part of Israel, but as a displaced person. She described herself as a suitcase holding recollections that were not hers, but her family's, observing that as a child she often felt herself to be an impostor. She had travelled and lived in much of Europe since then, she told me, and realised

now that home was not any of the places her family once lived. It is like a photograph, she said, always showing a place that is no longer there.

I explained the reasons for wanting to speak with Dr Muiderberg: that I wanted to know what had happened to the remains I was searching for; and what had happened to the Anata Hospital building and the archives that I helped to reorganise? It was at that point that Dr Grünevá exclaimed that she had read
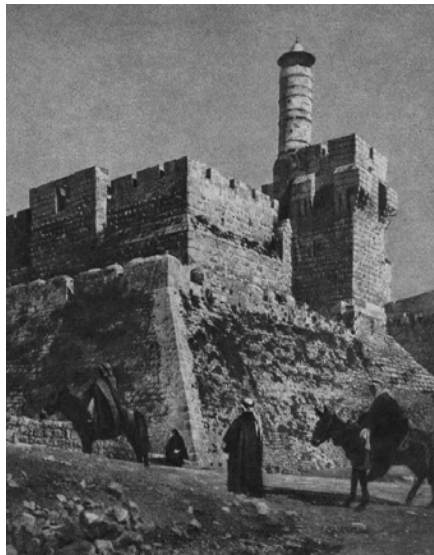
my case file; that although she knew only some of the working details of the situation, she was certain that the remains I sought were stored at the Temporary Holdings at the Archaeological Institute of the university. She was intending to visit the university after

attending to a dying friend of the family, which was her reason for spending the week here, rather than continuing the forensic supervision in Croatia.

I asked her about the Israeli village of Anata, north of Jerusalem: what had happened in the years since I had worked there? She appeared to think about this for the time it took for an approaching stroller to appear at the corner outside the café, pass by and disappear at the further end of the square. She did not have a furrowed brow or a puckered lip expression; she simply stopped for an extended period. Indeed she seemed to have ceased breathing, to keep so totally still I had the impression that she might all along have been a mannequin, and that I had been talking at myself. It was a strong enough feeling that I looked about to see if anyone was staring at me, but, I remembered, today no-one looks twice at a person who talks to themselves. They would once have been considered insane, but now they talked into miniscule receivers connected to hidden telephones: ostensibly a more acceptable way of talking to oneself. And while mad people talked to themselves out of the most incurable loneliness, I had the feeling that it was similarly unattached, isolated people who maintained the impermeable and overwhelming cloud of mobile telephone conversations that envelop us all. She continued for another minute to sit quietly opposite me, then finally resumed breathing, turned her face slightly toward the sun, and, while beginning to squint, told me that of course she didn't know the bodily remains I mentioned were mine; how could she have known? She told me that it was

not a mass grave but a single body caught in a fire after a badly targeted shelling. .

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

A line

She produced a map that connected central and Eastern Europe with the Middle East. She placed it on the table and, with the use of a soft pencil, traced a line north-west from the Holy City, all the while describing the sites it crossed. From the Holy City in Jerusalem it continued through the East Jaffa Gate of the Old City, Ylena said, through Bevingrad Mamila precinct, once a British Security area after World War II, then north on the inner city road across the old Jewish area of Mea Shaarim, through outlying sprawl which, until the Six Day War, was the Arab village of Upper Lifta, and on towards Tel Aviv. Since the annexation in 1967 most of the scattered Arab villages lying north and east of the city had been levelled and all Palestinians had retreated back into East Jerusalem in an axial strip stretching from the east of Jerusalem to Ramallah in the north. Influenced by hardliners, Israel had recently reneged on a plan to hand over some West Bank villages into the full control of the Palestinians, including the villages of Abu Dis, Azariyyeh, and the northern village of Anata. The latter remained under Israeli

control. Israeli authorities claimed that this prevented the possibility of East Jerusalem becoming a Palestinian capital.

Ylena explained that the line she traced exited Jerusalem from the west, a long way from the village of Anata, which today was far more difficult to travel through. She told me she remembered having regularly travelled through Anata on the way to Ramallah each month to deliver food. I am not sure whether we were required to do that then, she said; it might have been because some of the drivers had families in the area, and we almost always stopped for black market cigarettes and also shoes from French Hill: I remember shoes were always a sought-after commodity, even by foreign staffers when they had been here long enough.

If she had traced the line far enough, she remarked, it would traverse much of Eastern Europe, crossing from Turkey into Bulgaria, up through Slovakia and the Czech Republic, no longer Czechoslovakia, into Poland east of the River Elbe, and eventually the line would move onward into Eastern Germany, south of the Odra River, and ultimately arrive at the outskirts of Berlin.

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Besiedlung

An aerial photograph of Anata, located at the junction of Road no. 5 and Road no. 45 (new constructions completing the ring road which consolidates the Israeli expansion of 1967) shows the 153 hectares of razed land confiscated for Israeli settlement. Road no. 70, begun in late 1998 on dispossessed land, functions simultaneously as a border and a means of access, connecting eastern with northern Israeli villages and separating inner eastern Palestinian villages from outer villages on the West Bank.[vi] More recently, the Israeli government has built a three-metre wall that divides Palestinian west bank villages from the city, from their work, and from each other. Dr Grünevá confided that while Anata in Egyptian mythology stood for A'nath, the daughter of the solar deity Ra, and in the Bible is the father of Shamgar, deliverer and judge of Israel who murdered many hundreds of Philistines with an ox-goad, in Japanese Anata means You, and in Hebrew it also means You. Some religious scholars have made the rather unorthodox suggestion that congruities between ancient Hebrew and Japanese demonstrate the twelfth tribe of Israel's migration to Japan. Observation has been made of such things as the Star of David adorning a lantern in Kyoto's Imperial Ise-Jingu Shinto shrine, and the tradition of sewing the shield of David onto the back of a new infant's kimono. She paused to recover her lapel-pin. I recollect

now that at the time she said this to me I could not adduce any useful meaning from it. I have no knowledge of the Hebrew language, nor of Japanese, and could not with any certainty guess where Ylena's revelation might lead.

I could not see her eyes; her brow shaded them, her face was directed downward at my shoes. I assumed she had ceased talking while bending down to retrieve the pin, but realized that she had continued recounting various incarnations of the name Anata. Her strange habit of talking regardless of the situation was something I later witnessed on many occasions. When she was unsure she would say nothing. However, when addressing a subject about which she professed an opinion or regarded as a topic worthy of conversation, her voice would assume a speech-like roll unimpeded by the remarks of others or the obtrusive regularity of physical interruptions, such as having to retrieve a fallen lapel-pin.

Why I am not an archive

Her mobile telephone rang. Excuse me please, she said. It is work: I need to answer this call. She spoke into the telephone the way I had spoken to officials from the Institute on numerous occasions in the recent past, holding her forehead and pushing back her tidy hair. While it seemed as if the silences on the line were longer than they should have been, in the periods when she was not speaking I had the impression that nobody was speaking at the other end of the line either. I thought that possibly this was not a professional call. Maybe she was trying, I assume, to think of the appropriate words to say to someone that she had not seen for weeks or days or years. I could not imagine the person at the other end of the line. Since being told that I had died, I had not been able to use the telephone with ease: I felt ill in their deceptively unobtrusive presence. Indeed, it seemed to me that since their inception, telephones had undertaken a resolute and invidious slide into the most personal and constant spaces in our daily life. No longer remaining boxed off in voice-proofed, weather-proofed cubicles, they now posed on advertising sidings, or were extracted, bleating, vibrating, from our handbags. I could no longer see the telephone as a machine connecting myself with others. It wasn't a geometri-

cal, transparent link between places and people, but had instead grown increasingly absent until contact with the speaker at the further end was, at most, an approximation. It substituted presence with the sounds of a voice, haphazardly simulated and displaced. The last call I remember answering in good faith was on my final day working in the Archives in Reinickendorf. I received a telephone call from someone who sounded unsure, as if he had called the wrong number. He asked: you are not the Archive, are you? Not personally, no, I replied. Ah. He apologized and quickly broke the connection.

<center>*</center>

The Eiffel tower

Sorry about that, she said: where was I? In Russia, she continued, Anata is the name of a rock band claiming to play Melodic Death Metal: their most recent album was entitled *Dreams of Death and Dismay*. In the Argentine northwest it is the Aymaran name of the New-Year festival celebrating the end of the rainy season. From what I have read, she told me, this is a time of play, the feast of devils, and locally it is more popular than Christmas. Anata is also a Ukrainian broadcasting agency. In the Donetsk region the Anata agency charges the equivalent of US$340 per minute to

<center>- 243 -</center>

advertise on television. Possibly re-configured from the first name of its President Natalia Medvedeva, the second A in the company's logo is substituted with the image of a transmitting radio mast, shaped like the Eiffel Tower. Unlike the Egyptian A'nath, the Phoenician Anata refers to Anat, the Goddess of love and war, winged and armed with a spear and a spindle.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

The shadow of an embrace

I have not mentioned this to anybody before, Dr Grünevá said, but archaeology encourages unusual habits. For several years I carried in a pocket of my field jacket a small alloy cast taken from a two-and-a-half-thousand year-old bronze amulet I un-earthed in Spain, a miniature of the goddess Anat. Although depicted variously, in this incarnation she wore a helmet and stared with alarming almond-shaped eyes. Her wings were un-folded at her front in ready display, like weapons, or shields, and I was never sure if she was preparing to destroy her sub-jects or embrace them. This split embodied both her will to annihilate and her will to create, a freedom of self that was lost to the later pantheistic religions of Greece and Rome. Why did I carry her image with me? At first I did not know, but several years ago now, it occurred to me that she constituted a patron saint of archaeologists, so-to-speak. I saw in my daily excava-

tions the shadow of her embrace: as I worked to disturb and disinter dormant shards from the unbroken soil of what was once a road or a house, I regularly felt that I was destroying the past even while I uncovered in it. But at other times, particularly in the evening when the wind grew and dust would perpetually re-cover an artefact I was brushing free of the earth, I experienced a sense of restoration, of recalling and re-naming things that have been lost for an unendurable length of time. My actions were simultaneously displays of love and of destruction. As I thought of them during my long hours of restoration, it seemed to me that time resolved itself into a crystalline shape: a sharp, formulaic growth with nothing at its heart that differed from its surrounding flesh.

I understood something of Dr Grünevá's musings, and agreed that time was not always like Hegel's constantly changing river, or Caesar's Rubicon, which determined the choices we might make. Dr Grünevá was encouraged by my observation. She recalled that, in past epochs of Japanese culture, time did not proceed on a horizontal plane, from the past forward to later times. Rather, the past was above us, and we worked our way downwards into the future.In this way, the future was forever below us. I have imagined when excavating a site, she said, that I am delving into a later apprehension of the world I create with a shovel and a brush, and hence my own future.

If we determine the direction of time with our choice of words, whether it is forward or downward, shouldn't we also be capable of digging up the future? I descend the cut steps past clay strata and increasingly older levels, Ylena said. I cut ever lower


through old walled towns, and slowly catch up with the incessant downward raining into the earth of time. If I were to find the remnants of a clay urn, or of a body, those shards of clay and bone would be a part of a later time to come, one that I had uncovered.

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Deluge

We see time as a flow, Ylena explained to me, because we have always measured it with water. But it is not necessarily so. I have read the theory, she said, that, like the discrete and disconnected fragments of our memories of the past, the future is, in actuality, only ever an arbitrary assemblage of disparate and isolated events. Some of the potsherds that I have found might once have been Clepsydrae, vessels the Egyptian and Hellenic world constructed to measure time with water. Early models simply measured the loss of water from a pot, from which derived the concept of one's time running out. Later versions were designed in such a way that a constant pressure of water flowed downward from one vessel to another. Measurement changed from the revelation of marks as water ran out, to the obverse. Now the water gradually covered markers as it rose, each graded marking on the inside of the lower container becoming submerged by the incremental passage of each drowning hour.
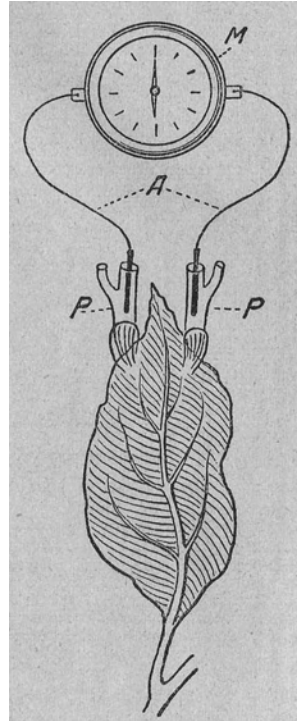
Having talked unreservedly for half an hour, Ylena ordered a plate of stale baklava and sat quietly looking at the Mantegna print. I thought about vessels measuring time with water, filling with seeping hours of the past the way a perforated lung fills with fluid. Maybe some people die from being too full of the past. Or is time for me a process of running out, whereby experiences and memories drain out of me, leaving lines of calcified residue, deceptive imitations of tide markings which never rise, but only recede. That is how I often feel; a brittle vessel emptied out of those elements that once gave me some form, like a hollowed-out tree or the vacated shell of a cicada. It reminds me of old men whose uniforms continue to speak of ability and power, with their exaggerated epaulettes and double-breasted lines, while the withering defaulter hunches quietly inside.

Ylena resumed talking, but her tone had altered. If it is not simply the past that an archaeologist recovers from an excavation, she said, it is more accurately the presentation of a later time, a new birth of some of the lost swollen traffic of departed goods and souls that have lain dormant in the earth. When I feel this way, it occurs to me that it is not only time that rains downward into the ground. On its way to the earth droplets of rain merge and break apart; when two drops join an event occurs. This is the arbitrary unconcern that defines every event.
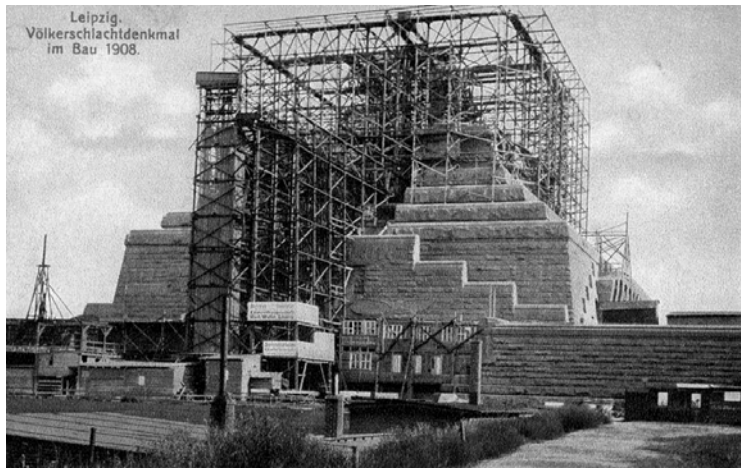
We humans do not crawl, but rather hurry ourselves down into death. Averting our gaze, we run headlong into the earth, like animals. If it is not approbation that we receive, then we are indexed, murdered, and forgotten under the ground. At other times I do not so much feel or even believe that this is true, but rather think that it ought to be so, that people are not sufficiently awed by the profound constraining trench we call death.

<div align="center">*</div>

The wall

As we left the café, Ylena told me of a story confided to her by one of the older Anata village matriarchs who was dying of cancer in the UN hospice. Ylena said that the old woman often spoke of the effect the wall exerted on those who had to travel to work. The old woman said that for Palestinians the wall was now part of what Ylena called an incommensurable architecture of everyday life. That is the phrase Ylena used; I doubt it was the Anata woman's phrase. In the Anata woman's hopeful and paradoxical story the wall, although complete and unbreachable, was in some inexplicable way ignored and traversed by those Palestinians seeking to cross it. For a reason only incompletely understood at best, she insisted, commuters for a time of weeks or maybe a month continued daily to enter and exit the village on their way to and from work. Each worker and relative was

aware of the wall, but of necessity refused to acknowledge its effect. Although no one technically crossed it, she insisted, many people strangely avoided the inconveniences it was intended to cause, and boarded the usual buses that transported them to work and home. I could see that Dr Grünevá enjoyed this story, as it led her to yet another. It can be likened to those ancient ziggurat stairs, she said; stairs that forever sought to attain the vertiginous mansions of Heaven, but never quite got there. Like at the wall here in Jerusalem, on those stairs, thou-

sands of years ago, impostors disguised as *huriyyah*, as angels, would persuade people as they ascended each step that the situation was other than it appeared.They would lean into the ear of each climber and bellow: Look up! coaxing him or her on

with poorly veiled impatience. Above you is the purpose of your exertions, they would yell: there is only failure below.

Dr Grünevá related to me other things the Anata woman said about the wall. The wall should be like the spaces between tall trees on a hill, she told Ylena, and the precise shadows thrown onto the earth below them. Like a horizon, these things are places that are visible but inaccessible. I am certain, she said, that small birds live in the gaps between the tree crowns and shadows, mid-brown darting wrens and moving thickets of starlings, but they are too distant to see. Lastly, Dr Grünevá told me that the Anata woman had said that the geometrical surfaces we build around ourselves are remembered in the heavens, which are, after all, angular.

I am visiting her this afternoon, Ylena announced. I would appreciate it if you came with me, as we can finish our discussion afterwards. I visit her regularly, she confided, although I never find it easy. She is very old and the doctors have told me that she will not survive the month. As far as I can tell she is not used to the treatment recently afforded her; she is still humili-

ated at the prospect of table service and a starched bib, and she cannot any longer get out of bed. Will you visit her with me? Yes, I replied, of course.

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The hospital

The hospice was not very far from the square and the café. It was small and private, more like a house than an institution. When we arrived at her bedside I was shocked to see her condition; she was a thin crest barely displacing the length of the hospital bedclothes. Most of her hair had been cut extremely short, as the back of her head was covered with a red psoriatic sore that had spread from the nape of her neck. No hair grew at the back of her head, but at the painful borders of the sore long strands of hair fell out and down from the mown halo of her scalp like rushes at the edge of a dead lake.

She was not asleep, but she did not talk. Her head was tilted toward the window and her glazed eyes reflected the sunlight. While Ylena sat by her bedside and talked to her, not expecting a response, I stood and surreptitiously examined her face. She was still handsome: her nose, aquiline and presumably increasingly so with age, gave her the staunch beauty once found in the extravagant chins of the Habsburgs, and in the antiquated and uncomfortable naming of a woman as Jewess. More uncom-

fortable still, as it was clear that this ward was for Palestinians. I fancied that when I grew old I would not present nearly so regal a visage from my bed. If ever I were to grow as thin as she had, I know that my profile would not remind others of my presence the way hers did. It was then that I realised that her face was familiar. I asked Ylena what the woman's name was, already guessing at the answer. Hirah, she whispered. While at first I thought she might recognise me, I realised almost as quickly that she was not the Hirah I had known in my youth. Even if it were the same person, I thought, I do not imagine she would have been able to recognise me. She did not recognize her own name. Ylena held the woman's hand for another half hour.

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Anathoth

I excused myself and sat on a bench in the corridor to wait. Framed and leaning against the wall nearest the door was a small, finely drawn Middle-Eastern scene. After waiting for more than ten minutes and staring at the picture, I asked an orderly in poor French what it was doing there. He had not noticed it before, he admitted. The corridor walls had recently been painted, and I saw now that there was no hook or rail on which to hang the picture. I asked if they would be hanging it back up. He thoughtfully replied: here in the corridor? It is

painted anew and there is nowhere for it here. Maybe it will be put elsewhere. He leant down and turned the frame over, then brought the picture over to me. On the back of the frame a label was attached, inscribed with the Star of David. To the right of the Star of David I could make out in tiny letters the title of the print, and the artist.

The print was a distant view of the village of Anathoth, entitled Hill Country, Judea, and was taken from a drawing made in 1847 by Bartlett Israel. The foreground featured several Bed-

ouin standing with two camels. In the background, undulating hills, broken by sandstone, serenely framed a distant hillside

view of mud brick houses. A gouache chiaroscuro haze gave them the appearance of majestic castle ruins. The haze softened the aridity of the countryside and shrouded the more distant hills so that it was difficult to determine what was hill and what was mist. Everything merged beyond the village in a bright fog that obscured the horizon and spilled out into the distant valley in a radiant, heavenly brilliance. A broad valley, depicted in the far right of the drawing, was sufficiently indistinct that what was presumably a desert plain might equally have been a layer of cloud, viewed from above. This impression was encouraged by the expansive vault of sky to which half of the composition was given. In the foreground two darkened patches of scrub balanced the composition of illuminated sky, and were extraordinarily dark in hue, as if the lowered sun still held its midday strength.

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Temporary Holdings Wing

It was mid-afternoon, so I had time enough in the remaining business hours to visit the Institute of Archaeology. Ylena gave me a lift to Mt Scopus, where, without too much difficulty, I located the municipal annexe to the Carasso Family research wing.

You might inquire at Unprocessed, the clerk told me. The regulation period has elapsed, he said. In circumstances where claims of possession, religious, scientific or otherwise, have been registered, the items, so long as they have not already been yellow-tagged for return to the original site, and so long as they have not been green-tagged as municipal property and of no archaeological or scientific merit, would be sent along to the New Temporary Holdings Wing of the Unprocessed Claims Desk. Not the old wing of UCD, he emphasised: the Temporary Wing.

The Unprocessed Claims Desk was situated behind the university's school of archaeology in a part of what was once the Library. Several floors had been built below ground to accommodate the ever-increasing need for storage space and, although the area dedicated to Temporary Holdings was underground, it continued to be called a Wing. After submitting a reference from my Schönow records at the counter, I sat and waited in the small empty anteroom for my details to be confirmed. A few minutes later a door was opened. A suited man with a cane leaned through it and called my name, as if this was the waiting room of a doctor's surgery. On seating myself in his office it occurred to me that the man was concerned by something that he was about to tell me.

It is most likely, he began at a volume barely short of a bellow, that the remains you have applied to inspect have been re-designated. That is why some difficulty has arisen regarding inspection rights. The Schönow Institute has recently registered a requisition and inspection exclusivity order on these items which, until it has been reviewed, on its merits, precludes inspection by any parties not already listed on the Original Excavation Property register. While you are not listed on the original register, neither (and this is unusual) is any other party, including the Schönow Institute. So, what this means, he explained, is that although you cannot currently inspect the listed items, nor can anyone else. I remained unmoved. He beckoned me through his office and we walked along a number of further corridors.

As he led the way he spoke at me loudly over his shoulder of what he thought regarding my strange situation, often raising his voice to a shout, so that I gained the impression that we were walking into a storm. You have travelled from one to another place, from one State to another, he said, only to find that the body you came for is not present: it has been dug up and taken somewhere and you didn't know, only finding this out third-hand, later. You thought the body you were after was abroad? Maybe it has been transported home, you were told, and yet now you are abroad, searching for it. You are insistent

that it exists: they told you that it exists. It is better documented than you, and it might therefore be more real than you.

As if it seemed reasonable I nodded agreement, in no way understanding the intent of what he said to me. At the time I felt only that his voice was in some mild way both defensive and accusatory. He continued: not that this is an aspersion on your life or your liberty, he said, merely an account of things as they are, as they acquit themselves in the records. The records are not subject to the vagaries of happenstance, of the world. Although, of course nothing works in a vacuum: nothing can carry out its proper function, its own determination of purpose, without our recognizing this. And such a thing is recognized here, regularly: adjustments are made, like the trim on a ship, or the continual computer-assisted redirection of passenger planes that, for most of the time, are off course. But the proper corridor is there, and only those with sufficient insight should determine where it lies. I was now no longer sure if he spoke figuratively.

Stopping at a door, he scratched at his right lapel in a way that seemed as if it, and not he, was itching. While there was no-one to vouchsafe my observations, I recall that, after having done this once, he repeated the gesture six or so times more while he talked, at intervals of less than a minute, always scratching the

lapel, sometimes peeling it over and holding it with one hand so that he could scratch it more thoroughly with the other. I began to suspect that maybe it was a message. These repeated motions recreated from his jacket cloth the function of an animal tongue, and any worthwhile meaning was to be found in this irritated flapping of linen rather than in anything he said.

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A file

He gestured me into a room resembling a laboratory, furnished with four large stainless-steel-topped tables presumably used for vivisection. Glass-fronted shelves lining an entire wall were filled with differently coloured vinyl folders. After staring at the shelf for a few seconds, he set his cane against a table and reached for a folder, apparently without looking to check its details, as if he had chosen it at random. As he gave it to me he apologised, saying that, regrettably, at present there was nothing more that they could give me. He said that I would not be able to copy the file, but that I could view it here, and that he would return when I had read it.

The folder contained a file of thirty close-typed pages of varying pre-formatted styles and letterheads, indicating the combined work of several authors and departments. Appended to the file was a plastic sleeve into which had been slotted four photo-

graphs the uppermost of which was only vaguely discernible through the partially opaque plastic. I tuned to the closest table and tipped the photographs onto it. Before examining the photographs I stood at the table and thoroughly read each page.

The body was located during a small archaeological dig in the East Jerusalem suburb of Anata in January last year. The excavation of recently discovered Roman cellars also unearthed what in the nineteenth century was a tannery. At the time it was destroyed during the Six Day War in June 1967 it functioned as the Johannes Siecht hospital. Jordan had begun shelling western Jerusalem in the early hours of June fifth after joining with Egypt and Syria in the short-lived war against Israel. By the eighth of June Israeli troops had expelled the Jordanian offensive and occupied east Jerusalem and the West Bank. Along with blocks in the Jewish Quarter and sections of western Jerusalem, a number of outer suburbs were shelled over that period. The Johannes Siecht Hospital building was sufficiently damaged by the shelling that the decision was made not to rebuild.

A few witness reports from the time accompanied the report. A hastily typed insurance damage review observed that the ensuing fire had irreparably burnt the roofing and upper floors, and the entirety of the northern wing. Another longer handwritten account included photographs that showed the old

brick-work of the walls that remained standing, blackened and powder thin, with silhouetted lines visible between many of the bricks; it looked as if the mortar once holding them together had been reduced to a dry grit in the heat of the fire and fallen out of the brick joints as so much blackened sand.

I recalled the time when I worked in that hospital, and one occasion in particular when I climbed up onto the rooftop of the northern wing and sat in the sun. I remember the unusual weather on that day; it was an almost overcast day when the flies stuck to everyone. I walked out of the hall and upwards toward the lightest, outer-most part of the building, where I could stand in the corpulent afternoon sun. The dirty stairwell that took me to the roof opened directly onto an ancient sandstone rotunda that admitted the sunlight through a glare of grease-smeared Hessian cloth. Since leaving the sun seven minutes earlier, the light had obliquely burned a path through the air of a continent, and it now fluoresced orange with fatigue. On that day, as on many others, I was astonished by the immediate view of gilded roofs. They fell away below me toward the sun, blackening the closer they were to the horizon, on which I could make out the burnt finger of St Michael's Seminary bell tower, and further South one minaret of the St Peter's Mosque.

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June 6, 1967

At the time of the shelling the Johannes Siecht hospital had no in-patients. The two old half-functioning wards that had been open since the turn of the century had closed in February of that year because of urgent structural repairs that had been overlooked since before the war of Independence in 1948. There was no record of any casualties from the shelling of Anata, which by all accounts was misdirected by officers of a mobile Jordanian artillery brigade who should have been shelling further to the west and the centre of the city. As Ylena had assured me, there was no mass grave. Only this body was discovered, thirty-five years later. Parts of the northern wing where the body was located had collapsed and burnt through into the cellar. Seeing that the record clerk, neighbours and surrounding families were certain that no-one was missing, and that no-one could have been in the building or in the north wing when it burnt down, the cellar was never excavated. The body was not recovered in the laborious brick and timber-salvaging that took place as part of the anxious rebuilding program that occurred in the ensuing year when Eastern Jerusalem was, for the first time since 1948, brought under Israeli control. Since 1948 the Arab League of Jordan had destroyed all of the Synagogues and many other Jewish buildings. In a practice reminiscent of that used in the Krakow ghetto, Palestinians

used Jewish gravestones to pave the roads of East Jerusalem. Like the Churva arch, an Old City memorial to the single synagogue that was never rebuilt, the Johannes Siecht Hospital building was not put back together again. It had only been with the Israeli authorities' recent levelling of houses and a metal-working factory in Anata that the opportunity of conducting an archaeological dig arose. While researchers at the excavations assumed the body would prove to be part of an unmarked cemetery, it quickly became apparent by the lack of a coffin and the injuries to the bone fragments that it was not a peaceable interment. Because of its shallow location and partially-fleshed condition the body was evidently no more than a few decades old, an estimate supported by radiation dating, but most readily corroborated by debris found in the vicinity of the body. Glass phials, a pulverised arc light, the remnants of a carton of fracture splints, the spines of books, the enamel identification pin and deteriorated document wallet of a medical aid worker, a volunteer for a German *Medicin Sans Frontiers*, only without the renown of its French archetype; all these signs pointed to a recent, un-recovered death.

So these were the remains of an extremely unlucky victim of an extremely short, very conventional war in which very few, probably several thousand civilians were killed.

*

A body

The photographs.

At first I thought it was the same photograph printed four times over. I then realised that each of the photographs depicted plan views diverging ever so slightly to the left or the right, but all overlooking non-descript dried flesh laid out on a white linen-covered table in a shape resembling a human corpse. The uppermost photograph, taken most directly from above, seemed to be the clearest of the four perspectives. Cast against the aseptic laboratory-issue linen, the shadow of my remains was a constant grey. It clung closely to solid form, retreating under the reassembled pieces of bone and the translucent leather-dry flesh jacketing the torso and some limbs like so much dried tobacco leaf. Indeterminate collections of shreds of cloth lay along one side of the exhibit. I could identify the former life of each pile as a coat, a belt, or a nylon collar-tip only by their placement next to the body. Shadow, where visible, skirted these bits and pieces, reduced the mass of pitted dead flesh to a silhouette.

The outline of the shadow resembled the course of a Portugese Cog tacking along African coastline, desperately replicating each crag and headland by maintaining the slimmest unvarying distance from the mass it seeks to encompass.   The effect was of something insubstantial, parasitic. Nonetheless, it seemed to me that, like tiny foreign boats clinging to a continent, it was a forewarning of rupture, of irreparable change. Even though most of the face and part of the jaw were missing, it still seemed as if there was something recognizable in the narrow cheekbones and high forehead. I imagined that I had seen those articles of clothing before now: worn them, washed them. A rag-and-bone merchant would not take them now, and here they were being accorded better treatment than when worn by the living, each remnant assiduously gathered., sorted: arranged as if waiting to be reinvested with the body of their long-absent wearer. Clear cellophane bags labelled with indecipherable small tags lay open at the end of the table, ready for storing the cloth scraps and the loose pieces of flesh and bone. Piled one on top of the other, each bag added to a weak composite shadow separate and different in kind from the body and the clothing. Rather than establishing a firm contrasting outline, the clearness of each bag refracted the fluorescent overhead glare into monochrome contours of nebulous overlapping shapes. It occurred to me that they looked somewhat like clouds, although the

shadows cast by clouds are not like that at all. By staring as closely as I could, I could force the arbitrary layers of cloud to
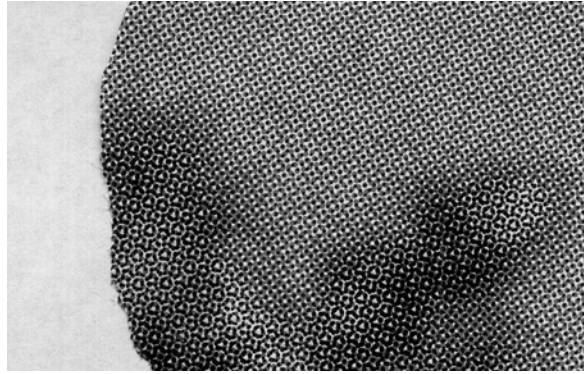

burst into a regular pattern that, although constant in its snow-flake repetitions, refused to admit to me a purpose.

*

Worms

I had been struck by a similar situation once before: a circum-stance so oddly incomparable that it surprised me when I re-membered it. Resting in a small iron-vaulted glass box in the Dom in Worms is the left humerus bone of a bishop. Rather than lying exposed on its padded cushion like a freely-offered

wedding-ring, it lies enveloped in cellophane, whether for scien-tific reasons of preservation, or in keeping with the fastidious trend of moral hygiene, I could not determine. The bishop's

present form was reduced, concentrated into the calciferous fraction of one arm, with all likelihood that it was not his favoured arm. If he wrote at all it would in all probability have been with his other hand. I imagined him giving benediction with his right hand while his left arm attended to balancing and holding a chalice, or to supporting his own body against the
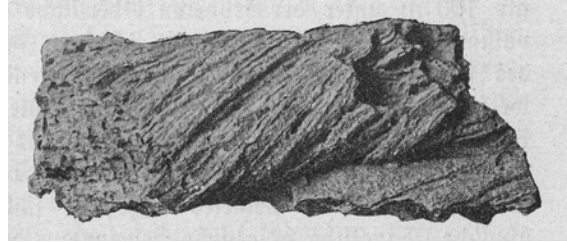
rails of the dark sanctuary at Worms. Now he had become a shard of his left arm, incomplete at one end, pitted and brown.

The apotheosis of reliquaries is the burial and subsequent exhumation of Saint Hubert of Liege. On his second disinterment one hundred and four years after his death he was said to appear as if he was buried the day before. The Rogier van der Weyden workshop painting of this disturbing event depicts the bishop Hubert with the deliberately closed eyelids of someone feigning sleep, or of someone turning their gaze inward upon themselves. None of the lessening effects of death had altered his physiognomy, which the congregation witnessed solemnly as fully preserved, untouched by decay. The formal limp alignment of his hands, palms down as if he was waiting to be

cuffed, gave more of a sense of death than the bemused expression of his face. Even though he was being lifted out of his constraining casket, rigor mortis and a century of death still pressed his arms in front of his body, as if they were invisibly shackled together.

<p style="text-align:center">*</p>

An evergreen tree

Remembering again where I was, I looked up from the table. Without my having noticed, the man with the cane had returned, accompanied by a lab technician who now stood little more than an arm's length from me, as if to imply that I was not merely an obliging guest of this institution, but in some more immediate way in its custody. Forgetting the photograph, I walked to the nearest window, almost a skylight set into a thick recess where the ceiling joined the outer wall, and looked up at the daylight view of a narrow floating moon and a bustling evergreen, probably a Eucalypt. Although I had the impression that we had descended several floors, even taking an elevator, it was clear now that we had only descended one floor below the ground. The tree's branches waved, its leaves and lesser foliage curled and twisted in linked swathes of motion the way fields of grass, or seaweed, move in unison in the turbulent shrug of the sea.

Explanation

The mechanisms we build seek to explain and to order. However, even before they have been fully assembled, like Plasticine animation, these structures are peering back down into the dust. Our reasoned practices and our organizationally daunting creations: dam walls, improved hair rejuvenation techniques, Mars excursions, plankton filtration devices, floating high rises, open teaching environments; beneath all these constructions resides an unmentioned, ever-present taunt of genocide, the underlying quietude of death. Like a renowned museum collection that is never exhibited and remains always in still-air storage bunkers in a cavernous basement, like an inmate-built bureau in Dachau, it is a collection of often unclassifiable instances of attendant obliteration, a superstructure of conscious biological tissue smothered or still-born in middle age. On the underside of everything that we write and that we live in is that ancient mountain range, Dante's seven inverse valleys comprising everything that disgusts and humiliates. It defiles and blackens with the fat from chicken offal and the infections of tuberculosis, bipolar disorder, and cancers of every description, pressuring rupture against an unnervingly permeable, inescapably contaminated casing of skin.

A file

Below ground in the Temporary Holdings Wing it was still and everything was at rest. I had finished reading the report. The man with the cane and the lab orderly stood nearby. Behind me a door opened. This time I felt the hydraulic press of air as it sealed shut, and heard the busy talk of synthetic clothing as name-badged employees whispered through to other rooms.

I asked about the wall of coloured folders. Were they similar cases to my own? Some, yes, but rarely, said the man with the cane, smiling, I suppose, at the thought of many people in my situation.

Look: you will see, he said, beckoning with a lazy gesture at the shelves. Surprised, I chose a folder the same colour as mine. It contained very little printed explanation, consisting mainly of several sheets of incomprehensibly pencilled records. Loosely held in the front sleeve of the folder was a hospital triage entry, its details: Bed GF 06 B, MRN: 048050, DOB: 16/04/98, M Stat NIL, ACC: 066820 Adm: 01/08/55. They were not my details, and nor were they the details of anyone
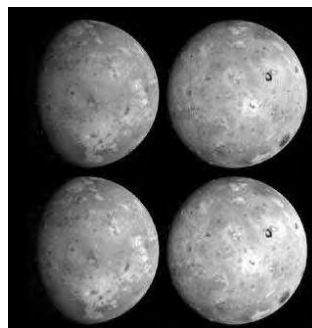
that I knew. There was no name. The folder sleeve contained one photograph, split into quarter-view squares of black on a clean blank border. Although I must have known then that it was taken for medical or scientific purposes, it looked to me like the close orbital view of a satellite passing a distant moon. In each was the image of part of a white sphere, looking like a close-up view of Jupiter's moon, Io. Each moon fragment was edged with a gradual smooth tinge of pink haze, resembling the marbled fat of Io's ice-encased horizon. Obtruding into the frame of each photo was what looked like a close-up of the alloy arm of a space probe. I imagined its name might be Humboldt or maybe Voyager. As I looked at the photograph I was wholly distracted from the usual, normally unbroken thoughts regarding my demise. I remembered the corpulent form of my

great uncle lying on a raised hospital bed, his over-fed torso raising the sheets up in a sine-curve, and the entity (not my uncle, but this corpulent, bloated torso) speaking to me and to my mother, saying that with hope (mit Hoffe) and his best wishes, we should have a good evening. I was still at school when my uncle died. We learnt English and listened to the radio. With my uncle's wish I remembered also those radio programs hysterically announcing the

groundbreaking achievements of space exploration. The late 1950s saw experimentsto direct radio messages to the opposite side of the earth by reflecting them off the distant moon. With the aid of the moon, the radio announcer's voice dictated, we have discovered a means of talking to ourselves. At Jodrell
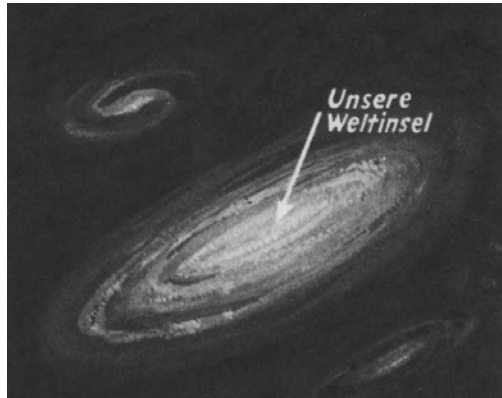
Bank in Cheshire stands one of the largest radio telescopes. It rotates on railway tracks, and it adjusts its skyward view by means of WWII gun turret racks salvaged from a scrapped battleship. In the observatory archives of Jodrell Bank lies a double-reel tape recording of an astronomer's voice saying goodnight to the moon, and the moon's mimed response: Goodnight; Goodnight; Goodnight.

*

Amid the many diary entries chronicling my untimely death are a number of unnecessary entries. One in particular concerns the Austrian physicist and philosopher of letters, Dr Rudolph Pozdena, who researched and compiled *The Book of the Moon*. It was published in 1933 by The New Museum in Salzburg, now known as the *Haus der Natur*. The museum is situated off Müllner Haupstraße, facing the Cathedral, a building old enough to have burnt down ten times in its history. The Cathedral's most recent incarnation is a celebration of Hapsburg Catholic counter-reform from the Thirty Years War. The river on which it is situated, the Salzach, flows from the Salzkammergut area. Once the salt mining centre of wealth for the city of Salzburg, Salzkammergut is home to the town of Mondsee (Moon Lake), built on a crescent lake of which there is an account of the Virgin Mary's warning to villagers of an imminent deluge. While the villagers took heed and saved themselves, the waters rose and drowned the original settlement and its unbelieving, shiftless prince.

On a clear winter day when the lake is especially calm, the walls of the old town and the tower of the church are discernible under a league of water. Dr Pozdena had visited Mondsee. By the fraction of sunlight that the moon reflects, Dr Pozdena estimated that a certain proportion of the moon's surface, white-grey in colour, indicated the presence of stone salt. He was familiar with the valleys and shadows of the moon as he was with its seas and lakes. Although the astronomer Riccioli's swooning and grandiose names for the moon's greater seas have hidden its ancient pallor behind veils of Serenity, Fecundity, Humour, and Cleverness, the names of its lesser lakes reveal its abiding presence as a diminished and absurd relic: Lacus Oblivionis, Lacus Solitudinis, Lacus Somniorum, Lacus Timoris, Lacus Mortis, Lacus Temporis.

Disinclined to mysticism, Dr Pozdena abhorred astrology, preferring the mathematical clarity of Canon Nicolas Koppernigk. He sought to clarify our perception of the moon as one of a run-down and lifeless mass. One is of the opinion – he wrote towards the end of his book – that the moon has already de-

volved to a condition that, from our point of view, we must regard as having completely solidified and died off. Wherever one believed to have discovered a variation in the night sky, it has turned out later to be imagination, founded on a mistake.[vii]

*

ILLUSTRATIONS

[cover] Class photograph, hole torn out of centre; infant's handwriting on reverse: "Ein Geschenken am der 4 Klasse. Der Lehrer…" (A present from 4th class, the teacher…).

[11] *Weltbilder der Berliner Morgenpost*, picture 10 – "Landschaft auf dem Monde: um himmel die Erde." – one of 60 illustrations, this picture used for the week from 9th – 15th March (1930).

[14] Photograph by author – letterboxes, Sydney (2004).

[15] Photograph by author – apartment block, Prenzlauerstrasse (2004).

[17] Photograph by author – church, Darmstadt (2003).

[19] "Hermannsdenkmal im Teutoburger Walde" Postcard– washed-out blue nib ink handwriting. Postcard No. 491. "'Römer-Karte' Photo-Zentrale Detmold" (1944).

[21] Photograph by author – small exercise book, Prenzlauerberg (2003).

[22] Photograph by author – electrical cable, Sydney (2005).

[27] Photograph by author – lighting, basement flat, Eschollbrücken (2003).

[28] Frozen river – postcard of "Franz Josefshaus 2422 m mit Grossglockner 3798 m" "Echte Fotographiekarte. "Aufnahme mit Zeiss-Objektiv". Postkarten-Industrie A G, Wien I. Wollzeile 19." Card No. 23631.

[29] Photograph by author – Bath & bathroom, Chippendale (2005).

[31] Masaccio – "The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden" 1426-27 (b. 1401, San Giovanni Valdarno, d. 1428, Roma) Fresco, 208 x 88 cm, Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence. []"Web Gallery of Art" http://www.wga.hu/index1.html [Accessed 12.01.2006]

[32] Illustration of top of skull ("Das Pithecanthropus-Schädeldach") p. 270 in chapter entitled "Mensch oder Affe?" in A Steinhauss and M G Schmidt, *Lehrbuch der Erdkunde: für höhere Schulen*, B T Teubner (Verlag & Druck), Leipzig und Berlin, (1911).

[33] "Wenn an Haltestellen von Schienenfahrzeugen …" p. 49 *Lehrbuch: Führerscheinklasse 3*, Verkehrs-Verlag, Remagen (1956).

[34] "Enzelfahrausweis" – single fare ticket, Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg, "copying forbidden" (2003).

[37] Couple in bathing robes, beach huts photograph/postcard. No. 408818.

[38] Photograph by author – Library basement / compactor shelving, Canberra (2005).

[41] "Albrecht Dürer and others, The Triumphal Arch, woodcut", *The British Museum*, Compass Collections online http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass/ixbin/goto?id=OBJ 2502 [accessed 2.12.2005].

[44] Jean Amery: "Jean Amery, 1978 (Bild: Photograph by author Archiv)" *Deutschlandradio* http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/buechermarkt/298600/bilde r/image_main/ [Accessed 12.01.2006].

[50] Photographs by author – miscellaneous receipts, Berlin (2004).

[51] Photographs by author – diary (2004).

[52] "Deutsches Museum: Grundriss des Haupthaus." [floorplan for large house] p. 102 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1926).

[53] Business card – "Hotel Schweizerhaus Café Anton", Swakopmund, Namibia.

[54] Bank account card ("Sicherungskarte") – no year, Reich symbol.

[55] Photograph by author – Visa registration offices waiting room, Darmstadt (2003).

[58] Photograph by author – Corridor, Sydney (2002).

[60] Class photograph, hole torn out of centre; infant's handwriting on reverse: "Ein Geschenken am der 4 Klasse. Der Lehrer…" (A present from 4th class, the teacher…).

[65] Young woman standing with book and gloves — glued to original card backing (no markings).

[67] Women's society postcard photograph (no markings).

[68] Photograph by author – Light bulb and ceiling, Sydney (2002).

[69] Card backing of photographer's studio H Zeidler, 6 Jerusalemstrasse, Berlin, SW, established 1872, telephone 7672.

[70] "Quittung" ("Receipt") – Herlitz forms, Berlin, January (2004).

[71] Family on stairs – frame and tessellated border – written (in blue *biro*, post-war) on reverse: "Bad Rosen. Wörlitser Park with D.F.B."

[71] Photograph by author – Column (close-up) of Brandenburg

Gate, Berlin (2003).

[72] Photograph by author – Roman quarry, Darmstadt (2003).

[73] Outdoor tea party –straight frame border – writing (in pencil) on reverse shows year and torn backing from album (1933).

[73] Woman at window –frame and tessellated border– "Agfa-provira" photo paper (no markings).

[74] Woman facing square and 16th century style building–, torn from album (no markings).

[77] Classical vase – B&W photograph, "DLB Foto, Berlin, 63/IV B156".

[80] Photograph by author – Glass exhibition cases for Joseph Beuys exhibition, *Darmstadt Landesmuseum* (2003).

[84] "Surveyor 5 Footpad Resting on the Lunar Soil (Moon)" 11.04.2000 / PIA02978,

at NASA "Planetary Photojournal", Sue LaVoie, *et. al*, (principal developers, *Jet Propulsion Laboratory*).

http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/target/moon?start=10 [accessed 12.12.2005].

[86] Photograph by author – Atrium, *Darmstadt Landesmuseum* (2003).

[88] Photograph by author – Museuminsel, Berlin (2003).

[91] Author's photograph of Bruce Naumann exhibit (reverse side of exhibit), Unter den Linden, Berlin (2003).

[94] Photograph of limestone slab ("Kalkstein" fig. 19) at page 37 in chapter on "Das Nordeutsche Tiefland" in A Steinhauss and M G Schmidt, *Lehrbuch der Erdkunde: für höhere Schulen*, B T Teubner (Verlag & Druck), Leipzig und Berlin (1911).

[96] "Rembrandt, Doctor Tulp's Anatomy Class, 1632." at "Salve! J. Michael Shin Sum." www.clt.astate.edu/mshin/netherlands_17-1.htm

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[99] Photograph by author – Madonna statuette, Coogee beach (2006).

[100] Photograph by author – Senefelderstrasse, Prenzlauerberg, Berlin (2003).

[101] "Die Kenntis des menslichen Körpers gehört mit zum unterricht der Gesundheitsdienst-Mädel." (Shot taken for RJF-Bildarchiv) Image appears in article by Erica Geisler "Jugend im Gesundheitsdienst" 170-171: at 171 in (Hauptschriftleiter Otto

Reiners) *Das Deutsche Rote Kreuz*, (Delivery area: Potsdam) Annual set 6, July (1942).

[102] Old dishevelled building –frame and tessellated border – stamped on reverse: "IV/5/33 Foto Otto Wegener" [alternative copy held by author: "Photo-Wendt, Bad Liebenverde IV / 13 / 16" (washed-out nib ink handwriting)] (1933).

[107] Medieval European depiction of the Second Temple. "When Is a Man a Mason?"
http://amalgamatron.kinlok.name/masonry/temple.jpg [accessed 12.12.2005].

[115] "Guericke Crater as seen by Ranger 7 (Moon)" 11.04.2000 / PIA02974, at NASA "Planetary Photojournal", Sue LaVoie, *et. al*, (principal developers, *Jet Propulsion Laboratory*)
http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/target/moon?start=10 [accessed 12.12.2005].

[118] Photograph by author – diagram drawn in the manner of Bell's diagram of telephonic communication (2002).

[119] The Alexander Graham Bell Family Papers at the Library of Congress, 1862-1939.
"Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, Eliza Symonds Bell, and Carrie Bell, February 18th, 1875 (Series: Family Papers, Folder: Alexander Melville Bell, Family Correspondence, Alexander Graham Bell, 1875)
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[120] "Der Untertiefer von Piltdown …" [Piltdown jaw] p. 427 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[122] "Basedowkrankes Mädchen mit bergrösserter Schilddrüse…" ("Grave's disease [exophthalmic goitre] girls with oversize thyroid gland…") p. 365, *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[123] Photograph by author – Sebalduskirche, Nuremberg (2003).

[124] Photograph by author – Sebalduskirche, Nuremberg (2003).

[128] Photograph by author – Railway water tower, Mainz (2003).

[131] "Das gesamte rollende Materiel der Deutschen Eisenbahnen im Jahre 1910." [German rolling-stock, 1910] p. 58 A Steinhauss

and M G Schmidt, *Lehrbuch der Erdkunde: für höhere Schulen*, B T Teubner (Verlag & Druck), Leipzig und Berlin (1911).

[133] Photograph by author – Railway repair engine, Darmstadt (2003).

[135] Photograph by author – View of rooftop car-park, Broadway, Sydney (2003).

[137] Photograph by author – Professor Gerd Egloff, Darmstadt (2003).

[138] Photograph by author – View from rooftop car-park over eastern suburbs, Eastgardens, Sydney (2003).

[139] War ruins in snow postcard, No. 111.S – Deutsche Feldpost stamp (1917).

[139] "Gott Mit Uns" – Nuremburg. Issued by the Art Institute Rosenblatt, Frankfurt a.M. (detail from) coloured drawing of "Völkerschlachtdenkmal Leipzig" – postcard, publisher Karl Fickenschen, printer Louis Glaser, Leipzig (1913).

[140] "Gruss aus Frankfurt a/M – Hauptbahnhof", postcard No 5024. Black ink fountain pen (beautiful script), postage stamp and date stamp removed. Addressed to Fräulein Thea von Grundherr,

[141] Photograph by author – Glass exhibition cases for Joseph Beuys exhibition, Darmstadt Landesmuseum (2003).

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[146] Photograph by author – Darmstadt Platz (2003).

[149] Photograph by author – copy of classical statue, Darmstadt Palace & Hochschule (2003).

[150] Well-dressed seated gentleman with cane and apron wearing woman, outdoors. "Foto-Greiner C862 Altheider-Bad".

[151-52] EKG monitoring (paper) tape, 1950, Prenzlauerberg, Berlin (2003).

[154] "Der Rahrungsassau im Augen." [microbiological depiction] p. 23 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[155] "Fig. 9 …" [broken cell depiction] p. 24 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[156] "Schnitt durch das Raden ganglion …" [microbiological depiction] p. 233 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[157-58] Giorgio de Chirico – "Expo Revue" http://www.exporevue.com/magazine/fr/futurisme_lodeve.html [accessed 2.12.2005]

[163] Photograph by author – Inmate-built file bureau, Dachau Concentration camp (2003).

[165] Photograph by author – Windows of main exhibition room at Dachau Concentration camp, (2003).

[168] "Instruments for measuring snow and rain amounts", at "Instruments, Diagrams and Principles" (page 4) in: *Beschreibung der meteorologischen Instrumente....* by Augustin Stark, published in 1815. Library Call Number QC876 .S72 1815. Image ID: libr0371, Treasures of the NOAA Library Collection, Archival Photograph by Mr. Steve Nicklas, NOS, NGS. *National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration* (NOAA) http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/library/inst4.html [accessed 17.01.2006].

[173] "Passau" postcard. "No 10/71201. Dr Tr & Co., L. H. N., Nbg."

[177] "Moon – North Pole" 29.01.1996 / PIA00126, at NASA "Planetary Photojournal", Sue LaVoie, *et. al*, (principal developers, *Jet Propulsion Laboratory*). http://photojournal.jpl.nasa.gov/target/moon?start=10 [accessed 12.12.2005].

[180] Photograph by author–near Passau (2003).

[181] Photograph by author – View from ship: Danube river near

Obernzel (2003).

[183] Photograph by author – Tochenstein Lock: Danube river near Obernzel (2003).

[183] Photograph by author – Aschach: Danube river (2003).

[187] Half-hour tram ticket, Bratislava – "Depravnỳ podnik" (2003).

[189] Photograph by author – Tram seat, Bratislava (2003).

[190] Photograph by author – View from Hotel Gremium, Bratislava (2003).

[191] Photograph by author – Randwick, Sydney (2003).

[194] "Bern. Der Bärengraben" postcard (No. 25) Photograph by Ernst Selhofer, Mittelstrasse, Bern. (1913).

[196] Edible turtle "Ocean Clip Art: Sea Turtle"
"Karen's Whimsy – Public Domain Images"
http://karenswhimsy.com/ocean-clip-art.htm [accessed 14.12.2005].

[197] Aeroplane – no border or markings.

[201] "Body of Zdravko Dadic, a Serb from Vukovar, killed and thrown into the Danube", from article entitled: "Crimes Without Punishment", by Vojin Dabic and Ksenija Lukic Part of the Balkan Repository Project, Serbian Unity Congress © http://www.balkan-archive.org.yu/politics/war_crimes/vukovar/vukovar7c.html (1997) [accessed 2.12.2005].

[202] "Rauchschwingungen bei berscheiden hohen Schornsteinen." [smoke from chimney] p. 238 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[204] Coloured postcard. Toteninsel: Illes des Morts: Necropolis, Nr. 764. (1924).

[205] Coloured postcard (Woodland and Cypress trees) "Senftenberger Krone-Brickett" Series, Römmler and Jonas, Dresden. Series III, image 1, H Rüdisühli: Dämmerung (1915).

[207] "Zehn Millionen Mark" Reichsbanknote (1923).

[207] Photograph by author – Masonry crates, Darmstadt Hauptbahnhof (2003).

[208] (detail from back of) "Völkerschlachtdenkmal Leipzig" – postcard, publisher Karl Fickenschen, printer Louis Glaser, Leipzig (1913).

[209] Coloured drawing of "Das Völkerschlachtdenkmal aus der Vogelschau" – postcard, No. 51409 GH. Ges. Gesch. (1916).

[210] "Leipzig Palmengarten" Coloured postcard. Printer Paul Wolf, Leipzig, AC, Breitstrasse, 7a, No. 27. Postcard No. 1374. Date stamp obscured ("Deutsches Reich" postage stamp and depiction of Arminius situates period as great war or early thereafter).

[211] (detail, see above) "Leipzig Palmengarten".

[214] Photograph of diluvial river plain (fig. 20) at page 38 in chapter on "Das Nordeutsche Tiefland" in A Steinhauss and M G Schmidt, *Lehrbuch der Erdkunde: für höhere Schulen*, B T Teubner (Verlag & Druck), Leipzig und Berlin (1911).

[219] Photograph by author – Rear view from passenger train, Frankfurt-Munich (2003).

[227] Photograph by author – Dragonfly (2004).

[228] Photograph by author – Dragonfly (2004).

[230] First-war stable-hands postcard. Feldpostexpedition (1916).

[232] (detail) First-war stable-hands postcard. Feldpostexpedition (1916).

[233] First-war postcard (faded), no. C109, no other markings.

[234] "Samson and Delilah by Andrea Mantegna, about 1430/1-1506, Glue size on linen, 47 x 36.8 cm". Postcard (No. 811703) from National Gallery, London, printed in Great Britain (2003).

[236] "Jerusalem, The Citadel", Postcard, photo by Y Benor-Halter. Published & Copyright by the Art Publishing House "Migdal", Jerusalem, PO Box 440.

[241] "Lost Tribes – Israelites Came to Japan – Photograph by author AN", "In Kyoto pref., there is a shrine called "Manai-jinja" which was the original Ise-jingu Shrine. The crest of "Manai-jinja" is also the Star of David. So, this has been used since ancient times." http://www.biblemysteries.com/library/tribesjapan.htm [accessed 2.12.2005].

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[246] Photograph of archaeological dig – "Pevkakia – Früh – BZ Megaron"..

[247] "Einfache Borrichtung zur Ubleitung …" p. 426 *Kosmos: Handweiser für Naturfreunde*, Franck'sche Verlagshandlung, Stuttgart (1925).

[250] Coloured drawing of "Leipzig, Völkerschlachtdenkmal im bau

1908" – postcard, No. 14 (1908).

[251] "A Palestinian woman returning to the ruins of her house, Sabra, Beirut 1982" Don McCullin, *The War Portfolio*, at Hamiltons Gallery, 13 Carlos Place, London W1Y 2EU http://www.hamiltonsgallery.com/photographers/mccullin/mcculli nwar.html [accessed 12.12.2005].

[254] (detail) "Israel, Bartlett: Anata, Anathoth 'Hill Country. Judea'. Camels. Figures. About 3 miles north of Jerusalem." At "Antique Prints of Israel." www.antiquemapsandprints.com/holy-land-israel.htm [accessed 2.12.2005].

[266] Photograph by author – envelope lining close-up (2004).

[267] "fig. 59. Stricklava von Londorf am Vogelsberg." p. 123 Brauns, Reinhard *Vulkane und Erdbeben*, Verlag von Quelle & Mener, Leipzig (1913).

[270] "Full Disk Views of Io", 24.09.1996 / PIA00715, at "Great Images in NASA", Michael Hahn (author) Dwayne A Day (ed.) http://grin.hq.nasa.gov/BROWSE/jupiters_moons_1.html [accessed 12.12.2005].

[271] Knee surgery arthroscopic images, Dr P M Walker, Sydney (2002).

[272] *Weltbilder der Berliner Morgenpost*, picture 25 – "Schematisches Bild der Welt, soweit wir sie beobachten sönnen: Mächtige Sternen-Inseln (Milchstrassen-Systeme), mit grosser Geschwindigkeit weiter eilend, erfüllen das All." – one of 60 illustrations, this picture used for the week from 22nd – 28th June (1930).

ENDNOTES

[i] St Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, Henry Bettenson (transl.) Penguin Books, 1984: 518.

[ii] Richard Hodges and David Whitehouse, *Mohammed, Charlemagne & the Origins of Europe: Archaeology and the Pirenne Thesis,* Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 1983: 175.

[iii] "There, a blue draught for somebody to drain,/stands Death, in a large cup without a saucer . . . ." (November 1915) Rainer Maria Rilke, *Poems 1906 to 1926,* (intro. transl. J B Leishman) The Hogarth Press, London, 1957: 218. Alternative translations render subtly alternative readings. For a more faithful translation, see Stephen Mitchell (ed. transl.) *The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, (intro. Robert Hass) Bilingual Edition, Vintage International, New York, 1989: 145. In the original: "Da steht der Tod, ein Bläulicher Absud/in einer Tasse ohne Untersatz." Mitchell translates as "There stands death, a bluish distillate/In a cup without a saucer."

[iv] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Faber & Faber, London, 1963: 228.

[v] Bonsor, *North Atlantic Seaway.* Holly, "Exodus 1947." Steiner, *Story of the "Patria."*
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[vi] "Distances among Palestinian Cities"
http://www.pnic.gov.ps/transportation/among.html Palestinian National Information Centre [accessed 23/08/02]

[vii] Rudolph Pozdena, *The Book of the Moon*, The New Museum, Salzburg (1933): 99.