

On Public Representation of Trauma:

A Review of Jane Goodall and Christopher Lee's
Trauma and Public Memory (Houndmills, Basingstoke and New York:
Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

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Abstract

This is a review article of a collection of essays entitled *Trauma and Public Memory*, edited by Jane Goodall and Christopher Lee.

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As this thematic issue has repeatedly shown, trauma studies have proliferated in the past decades, with a huge broad range of scholarship that spans disciplines such as critical theory, literary theory, psychology, sociology, memory studies, to name only a few. From this perspective, Jane Goodall and Christopher Lee's *Trauma and Public Memory* brings a multidisciplinary approach that lends a sense of deeper thinking into this burgeoning field of inquiry. Made up of three main parts, one entitled 'Overviews', one containing 'Interviews' and the remaining part that is called 'Reflections', all covering topics that deal with situations in different parts of the world such as South-East Asia, Australia, Africa, Europe, Cuba and the United States, the volume shows how individual and collective traumatic experiences are transferred into the public memory. Goodall and Lee's edited collection moves from the traditional understanding of trauma with its limitation to victims of violence, abuse or accidents that left disastrous injuries. As Peter Levine has shown, '[t]rauma does not have to stem from a major catastrophe'; some common triggering events include 'automobile accidents [...]; routine invasive medical procedures; loss of loved ones; natural disasters, such as earthquakes and hurricanes.'¹ It is exactly from reflections upon a natural disaster that this book started, more precisely the meetings Goodall and Lee had at the University of Southern Queensland in the regional Australian city of Toowoomba. The city was affected by massive floods that were transformed in an 'inland tsunami' in January 2011 and resulted in 35 casualties, over two hundred thousand people affected and damages of around 2.38 billion Australian dollars.²

Andrew Hoskins and John Sutton, the editors of the Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies Series, where *Trauma and Public Memory* is included, draw our attention on the complexity of the way in which we remember traumatic events in the 21st century, when

¹ Peter A. Levine, *Healing Trauma: A Pioneering Program for Restoring the Wisdom of Your Body* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2005), 14, original emphasis.

² Information retrieved from 'Timeline: Grantham and Toowoomba Floods. Five Years on, ABC; available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-09/grantham-floods-timeline-january-2011/7070414> [accessed 30 October 2018].

'[g]enerational change and new technologies of memory are reshaping the ways in which memory works, and the influence of trauma narratives is a factor in this' (1). There is always a gap between the way in which an individual who was directly affected by trauma recalls the respective event and its public reception. Thus, as Goodall and Lee make it clear, their volume is not concerned with 'the politics of public memory *per se*, but rather with the relationship – or lack of it – between the experiential memory of traumatic events, and the kinds of narratives and commemorative practices embraced by a wider public' (2) with the purpose of analysing how traumatic events 'may register upon a wider public, distanced from them in time and place' (3).

Structurally daring and deeply particular, this book aims to advance trauma studies as a discipline that exceeds the limits between theory and practice, unmooring itself from very strict theoretical and practical imperatives. As it proceeds, *Trauma and Public Memory* covers both the way contributing writers from the humanities and cultural history study trauma as an academic field and professionals primarily involved in healing traumatised people narrate and remediate trauma, informing one another.

Taking their cue from the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs's notion of collective memory where he included individual memories as mere fragments³ and from Jürgen Habermas who opened the discussion of the emergence of 'the public sphere as a discursive domain', the editors introduce the concept of public memory: that memory that 'emerges when individuals, families and social groups encounter each other in time and space and negotiate a common view of shared events' (4), thus 'a memory disseminated' and sometimes formed by sources and institutions that are often compromised, but constitute 'various sections of the public sphere' (5). Goodall and Lee think of the practices of relating to trauma which have all become standardized: traumatic events make front page or headlines in media, then they are mentioned in politicians' speeches and then memorials, films, narratives, commemorative events appear. However, the sooner the event has been memorialized, 'the sooner the community could be encouraged to move on' (6). Such remarks are consonant with those expressed in the last years by many scholars within the field of memory studies.⁴

Goodall and Lee are also concerned with the huge gap between the narrative coherence of public memory and the individual memory of the victims of tragic events.

³ See Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (Paris: Alcan, 1925); *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter, Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter, Intro. Mary Douglas (New York: Harper and Row, 1980) and *On Collective Memory*, ed., trans. and Intro. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

⁴ For instance, the German historian Martin Broszat has suggested that in spite of referring to history, instead of reminding people about events, monuments bury them altogether beneath and 'coarsen' historical understanding ('Plea for a Historicization of National Socialism', in *Reworking the Past: Hitler, the Holocaust, and the Historians' Controversy*, ed. Peter Baldwin (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 129) and Pierre Nora has introduced the notion of *lieux de mémoire*, claiming that what 'we call memory today is therefore not memory but already history' and that '[t]he less memory is experienced from the inside, the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs.' ('Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, Special Issue: 'Memory and Counter-Memory' 26 (Spring 1989): 13). In his *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995), Andreas Huyssen has suggested that in a contemporary age of mass memory that is produced and consumed, the proportion between the memorialization of the past and its contemplation and study has been inverted. James E. Young has coined the notion of 'counter-monuments' by which he understands 'memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premise of the monument'. See 'Memory and Counter-Memory: The End of the Monument in Germany', *Harvard Design Magazine* 9 (Fall 1999): 3.

While commemoration urges *Do not forget!*, victims need to work through their trauma and move on; at the same time, while commemoration urges to association ‘between the participants, between those assembled in the present and those remembered from the past, between historical causes and the ongoing convictions of a contemporary society’ (8), individuals live states of dissociation (like flashbacks, nightmares) that make them go back to the place of trauma and that affects personal relationships and wider social interactions’ (9).

Section one starts with Christopher Lee’s essay, “‘But Why Should You People at Home Not Know?’: Sacrifice as a Social Fact in the Public Memory of War’ which analyses Lieutenant J. Alec Raws’s *Letters* that were recorded by Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean in his *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*. Raws’s *Letters* depicted in vivid details the horrible deaths around him in the battle for Pozieres on the great Somme battlefield in 1916. 23,000 casualties were registered, including Raws himself and his younger brother, Goldy. Raws’s *Letters* exposed his family to trauma in different ways (to his sister he told the plain truth about the imminent death of their brother, to his parents he would mention his brother’s wounds but the possibility of recovery to give them hope). Lee identifies Bean’s dual role both as a liberal journalist and an official historian in fulfilling his task of handing down individual traumatic experience to the public. He points out that Bean’s use of ‘simple, dispassionate language’ and his straightforward style that recorded the thoughts of a simple Australian soldier is an indicator of his attempt to ‘communicate with an unlettered Australian public’ (25). Bean made a selection of Raws’s letters in *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, a reason why he was criticised for several omissions and relegations, which are regarded by Lee as a gesture typical of ‘the official historian whose determination to “stamp” the nation building achievements of war – “with some high moral purpose” markers of his deep concern for his historical duty – “stamp the war with high moral purpose”’ (31). Lee sees Raws’s letters as resonating with ‘new histories, new debates about war and nation, trauma and suffering, gender, race and class’ and claims that they contain what some may call ‘mythology’ or ‘ideology’ but he himself prefers to consider rather ‘a recurring trope, a common frame of incantation which consistently bundles this testimony in the forms of a resilient ritual’ (33).

Wendy Richards’s ‘Trauma, Dispossession and Narrative Truth: “Seeds of the Nation” of South Sudan’ focuses on editing the stories of refugees taking into account the way in which public imagination ‘functions as a marketplace, in which the refugee story must compete with other depictions of traumatic experience for empathy, legitimacy and the resources necessary for the construction of social belonging’ (41). Richards not only looks into the transference of private turbulent memory into the public sphere but also emphasizes the part this transference plays in emotion politics and necropolitics. She suggests that the filtration of traumatic dispossession lies both in its difficult settlement in a strange community and its struggle in representing the trauma experience imagined and constructed by that community, which asks for the delicate exposure of individual misery and tricky testimony of destruction. At the same time, invoking Julie Salverson’s work on the ‘erotics of injury’,⁵ she questions the role of the witnessing public, wondering whether we should guard ourselves against our ‘predilection for “innocent listening”, in which we avoid acknowledging the price imposed by trauma upon disclosure itself’ (41).

⁵ Julie Salverson, ‘Change on Whose Terms? Testimony and the Erotics of Injury’, *Theater* 31.3 (2001): 119-25.

She reflects on her work as co-editor of the Awulian Association's⁶ Anthology containing both personal and communal traumas of destruction and displacement from the conflict between Sudan's north and south, especially the narratives of 'Lost Boys' (42). Richards is sceptical about this 'naive flight narrative' (44) where adventure and resilience of refugees and benevolence and generosity of the host community are overstated, while violence and displacement of Sudan civil war are understated, pointing out that the commodification and sentimentalisation of the 'Lost Boys' leads to the ignorance of the domestic chaos in Sudan. In reality, the lost boys were orphans, unaccompanied and unaided by adults, 'who endured long, arduous and life-threatening journeys on foot through the harsh landscapes of South Sudan' where they were preys to diseases and animal attacks (44). The only support they received was in refugee camps operating across the region's borders, where the international community stepped in 'with programmes of resettlement to refugee-receiving countries within the Global North' (44). Richards' s account attempts to give a comprehensive report on her role as the editor of the traumatic narrative with all the dissociative symptoms, including detachment and emotional numbing that the victims experienced, a narrative from which she maintained a detached position, yet connected distance while authors were making constant revisions to their texts, being aware that their works would become public.

Jane Goodall's 'Trauma and the Stoic Foundations of Sympathy' examines experiences of violence, direct and witnessed, among individuals. Peter Bouckaert, Emergency Director of Human Rights Watch and photojournalists Jerome Delay and Marcus Bleasdale were witnesses to a horrible lynching of a man who dared disturb the speech of Catherine Samba Panza, recently elected interim President of the Central African Republic while she was demanding for a call for unity in her public address to the national army in 2014. The essay is written in the immediate aftermath of this horror (actually one day after it, as the author claims) and two days after Bouckaert and Bleasdale risked their lives in order to rescue the archive of photographer Samuel Fosso, whose house was in an area that was comprehensively trashed by looters (53). Permanently engaging with the other contributions in the volume, which is a unique feature of this edited collection,⁷ Goodall is interested in the way witnesses can bridge the 'immense gulf' between awareness and understanding of an event (54); that results from two tendencies: on the one hand, 'the influence on public memory, so that it is accountable for the full spectrum of human reality', on the other hand, 'the need for a more fundamental kind of influence, on the cognitive and emotional range from which public memories are drawn' (54). In order to address the second issue, Goodall resorts to examples from history, delving into the way in which 'certain influential figures were concerned with the formation of memory in circumstances that test the capacities of human sympathy in the modern era' (54). She offers a contrastive analysis between Abraham Lincoln's 1861 inaugural presidential address that 'sought to offer a vision of public memory drawn directly out of trauma to create the fabric of a wholesome nation through the bonds of sympathy' and Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) which, in spite of their different agendas, were somehow similar in their embodying the principles of Stoicism, since they both rejected the cynical philosophical

⁶ An association that helps refugees from sub-Saharan Africa who arrived in Australia.

⁷ The editors have structured their book in an unusual yet highly original dialogic structure. Not only do the editors comment on all essays in the *Introduction* and also in the introductions to each of the three sections, but also the authors relate to one another's chapters and to the Introduction, keeping a conversational thread that is not common in edited books.

tradition of classifying human beings ‘as an inherently savage and combative species, whose mutually destructive tendencies can be quelled only through the control imposed by a ruthless leadership’ and both saw civilian concord ‘as the way out of a state of war and sectarian division’ (54). In spite of this, the difference between Lincoln’s and Smith’s views lies in the way in which they conceived the implication of witnesses of historical events. Smith practised the Stoic tradition, self-training himself to respect the principles of what is known as *apathaeia* which refers to holding feelings at bay, refusing to embrace or identify with them (56). Questioning what kind of sympathy Smith envisages when ‘apathy, however particularly interpreted, is the precondition’ (56) of engaging with an event as a witness, Goodall engages with the way in which Lincoln’s speech was perceived by the public, discussing the highly positive way in which the renowned American poet Walt Whitman interpreted it. If Smith believed that sympathetic feelings expressed by a public in response to a private experience should be moderate and in correspondence with stoic practices, Whitman followed Lincoln’s conviction, stressing one’s need to identify with sufferers, a thing that he did himself while helping the wounded and the dying from the war with whom he spent his days during the American civil war. His *Memoranda During the Civil War*⁸ testifies to ‘the seething hell and the black infernal background’ (63). Yet, what made Lincoln a hero is in Goodall’s view his ‘visionary determination to influence how the future would look upon the present’ (67). To this extent, the people who never lived their predecessors’ traumas can be informed via image, cinematic portrayal of events and photography. There are two examples of photographic exhibitions with an impact at national level that Goodall uses to illustrate ‘the public deployment of historical images to re-shape public consciousness’ (68), examples that were used by Erica Lehrer and Cynthia E. Milton in their edited collection belonging to the same *Palgrave Macmillan Memory Studies, Curating Difficult Knowledge*:⁹ a massive assemblage of around 9000 photographs collected from Polish people and entitled ‘photographs of Jews before the Holocaust’, which evoked ‘a lost social world’ and ‘a collection of images by photojournalists in Peru recording “the faces of suffering, the visible proofs of the injustices committed” during the previous decades of civil conflict’ (68-9). Goodall’s essay ends symmetrically with the example of the photographers who rescued Samuel Fosso’s work from the ruins of his house in Bangu. Rescuing those photographs, they rescued public memory in the form of the defenceless against trauma, one who witnessed ‘to the harshest forms of reality’ (69).

Laurie Johnson’s ‘Unremembered: Memorial, Sentimentality, Dislocation’ deals with the ‘psycho-social’ function of collective memory in relation to trauma theory in an analysis on war memorials. The theoretical premises for this essay are Paul Ricoeur’s work on memory, *Memory, History, Forgetting* and Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer’s *Studies on Hysteria* that showed that, even if after trauma the physical body might heal, the ‘foreign body’ which is the memory of the psychical trauma enables the trauma to persist until it can be removed to the unconscious (71-2). Moreover, Freud’s discovery of the process of mourning, in which the mourner expands his ego to include the lost object, partially in agreement with Sándor Ferenczi’s explanation of ‘introjection’ meant that once we mourn, we identify with the deceased, a gesture which, in Maria Torok’s view,

⁸ Walt Whitman, *Memoranda During the Civil War*, ed. R. P. Basler (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), 5.

⁹ Erica Lehrer and Cynthia E. Milton and Monica Eileen Patterson (eds), *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

‘involves surrendering a portion of the ego to another’ (72). Sociologist Erika Apfelbaum ‘suggests that in populations defined by dislocation, a sense of community can be built in a new location around a “need for legacy”’¹⁰ (73); they are confronted with ‘a lack of a past, and this is what enables them to regroup around a communal bond’ (74). Apfelbaum’s ideas help Johnson to start a discussion on the psychosocial function of the war memorial in Australia which is the main focus of her essay. She defines it as ‘the artificial establishment of a need for legacy rather than a need arising from a forced dislocation’ (74) and compares it to some American memorials of large-scale traumatic events like the memorial for New York 9/11 or the memorial for New Orleans Hurricane Katrina. Laurie Johnson argues that ‘the memorial actually pushes the loss into the distance, as a moment defined by being elsewhere and in the past, by virtue of the fact that the memorial *stands-in* for the object of loss’ (76). Johnson invokes Tobias Döring who pointed out in *The Performance of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture* that the culture of memorial appeared in Europe as early as the sixteenth century, after the Protestant Reformation and the abolition of Purgatory which meant ‘a mourning for the dead.’¹¹ Johnson’s conclusion is that ‘the monument functions, at least in psycho-social terms, in *lieu* of the past, to which end it ensures a break, which in the depth of feeling that is generated via widespread displays of sentimentality enables the break to feel *like* a trauma of memorial, here, now; the past unremembered’ (83).

When it comes to trauma, medical specialists, rescue workers, police, counsellors and government officers play their role in helping the victims of trauma. The second section of the book consists of the editors’ interviews with professionals who are experienced in responding to traumatic events, including clinical psychologist Ross Anderson, emergency nursing specialist Therese Lee, disaster co-ordinator Norman Fry, chair of Human and Social Response Committee Tanya Milligan, recovery officer Sue Hewitt, and Foreign Correspondent Mark Willacy. A big part of the interviews is concerned with natural disasters such as earthquakes, large floods, hurricanes which – although not directly human-caused – were injury or death-producing environmental events that adversely affected a substantial number of people. This section does a brilliant job in articulating the different meanings of post-traumatic stress disorder and other related traumas in and after such disasters or during war or after physical assault or acts of terrorism as well as the huge gap between the way they appear to the ones who suffered the direct consequences of such disasters and their close circle (family, close friends) and the totally different way in which other people relate to the respective event. These interviews perfectly capture ‘insights into the stressed relationship between public accounts and experiential recollection in a disaster situation’ (85). The diversity and speciality of interviewees are the highlights of this section which guarantees the credibility of the trauma narratives included throughout the whole book and showcases the editors’ concern for humanity.

Anderson mentions specific techniques of treating posttraumatic stress disorder like ‘normalising in the form of acceptance that the suffering after the event was valid’ (88) and general anxiety management techniques in treating trauma victims, making distinctions between primary victims (those who were physically present) and secondary

¹⁰ Erika Apfelbaum, ‘Uprooted Communities, Silenced Cultures, and the Need for Legacy’, in *Challenging Subjects: Critical Psychology for a New Millennium*, ed. Valerie Walkerdine (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 78-88.

¹¹ Tobias Döring, *The Performance of Mourning in Shakespearean Theatre and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

victims (friends and family and co-workers not present at the time the traumatic event took place), explaining the necessity of peer support among disaster professionals. He is concerned with the cognitive management of the psychological impact during the initial period of shock. Considering 'the modern entertainment media landscape' a tool that leads to systematic violence desensitization, he believes this has led 'to a desensitisation to the impact of trauma on others' (92).

Therese Lee recounts her previous experiences as first aid provider who attended on site traumas at motor vehicle accidents, fires, incidents at building sites and moved on to helping in major disaster situations. She does not believe that media coverage of a disaster can actually make people comprehend what really happened. Recalling her experience with victims of tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, following the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake – which was assessed as one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history and the deadliest of the 21st century – or that with victims from Vietnam, she makes it clear that private suffering cannot be rendered into public memory simply by images and reports. There are people, especially the ones who have never travelled overseas, who cannot comprehend the immensity of a catastrophe. However, in spite of witnessing the '*horrible, the absolutely grief stricken and devastated*', she feels it was 'a privilege to be with people in the highs and the lows of their life, even in those life and death situations' (102, original emphasis).

Norman Fry, as one of the two disaster management coordinators for the Toowoomba Regional Council in Australia at the time of the 2011 floods, reflects on how accurate information was derived and circulated from the chaos of Toowoomba flood, but in its attempt to reach a wider public keen on reading and watching spectacular news, 'any available information may be appropriated to support established generic modes of disaster reportage' (86). Speaking about his own experience and the other coordinator's, he shows how they were both affected to the point that they needed the help of other professionals; psychologists counselled the whole group and also spoke to individuals if these ones required. Fry also discusses the role of politicians in disaster situations. 'Politics comes into a disaster situation right from the first minute', he says, adding: 'you can expect visits from the premier, visits from the leader of the opposition, visits from the government, visits from the governor general, visits from the prime minister' (108). Although abstaining from commenting more and ending his interview on an inconclusive note, Fry voices a general truth: that politicians come to the site of the disaster not necessarily with the intention to help but with the desire to show to the world that they care.

Tanya Milligan and Sue Hewitt offer a detailed description of the floods from Lockyer Valley in South East Queensland in 2011. Tanya Milligan, herself a victim of the flood who was evacuated from her house, found herself in the position of helping the one hundred people who were in the same situation, while Sue Hewitt, a Red Cross worker, came from Brisbane to give a hand to the victims. Contrasting 'local media that have [...] done an excellent job', really promoting the local events and the recovery story with the general coverage in national media, they criticize the former's inefficacy in sharing public memory in news coverage which was highly inappropriate for those who were undergoing trauma. They also emphasize the need for greater community development in a wider frame to continue for a longer period than the two years after a disaster that NDRRA (National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements) envisaged. That is needed in order to build something more sustainable and to keep going follow-up

stories that give people the feeling that they were not forgotten so soon after a disaster which ‘can be just damaging for a community’ (114).

In the next interview, Mark Willacy, a foreign correspondent with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) who has reported numerous traumatic events from Israel, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, such as the conflicts in the Middle East, terrorism, wars, revolutions and big natural disasters, shares his unique international work experience and admits that it is normal for journalists in war or natural disaster zones to be constantly on the move and to repeatedly probe into victims’ painful memory. He recounts how his job affects his loved ones, especially his wife who, in a sense, is a silent witness to what he experiences every day, and the pressures he experienced to report Australian stories because of the Australian involvement in the respective event, a duty that he has not subscribed to. He criticizes commercial television news for not covering events professionally, because they think ‘the audience has a short-term memory’ (122) and discusses the importance of micro-blogging on Twitter which can be ‘a valuable tool’ if used properly and can get several thousand followers. He also speaks about the advantage of radio as a medium that needs to use persuasive techniques and evocative stories in a world which is too much ‘bombarded by images’ on You Tube, television, movies (123). Willacy finally relates his experience of writing his book which was a great tool to share his experiences with his readers, even if his experiences do not always end with the Hollywood closure that people expect, admitting that what he wants to do is ‘to remind people that victims of trauma don’t always have a happy ending’ (126).

In the light of the examples that showed ‘how public memory can be governed by bad habits: sensationalism, fickleness, sentimentality, intrusive curiosity and selective amnesia’ (127), the third part of the book addresses the need to bring critical theory and memory studies closer, through a more theoretical approach of the concept of public memory.

Lindsay Tuggle’s ‘Unburied Trauma and the Exhumation of History: An American Genealogy’ discusses two disaster memorials: Ground Zero built after 9/11 and New Orleans Memorial after Hurricane Katrina. What they have in common is their metaphoric resonance with a ‘poetics of dust’ (132). Ground Zero houses real corporeal remnants of several thousand unidentified casualties. The forensic experts have unearthed from the ruins of World Trade Center around 20,000 body parts, out of which only 292 intact corpses were found, thus around 1592, or more precise 58 per cent of the 2789 casualties were identified.¹² In an extremely interesting debate that builds its theory on Marita Sturken’s conclusions from *Tourists of History*¹³ as well as the work of prominent psychoanalyst (Sigmund Freud’s concept of ‘melancholia’¹⁴, Maria Torok and Nicholas Abraham’s theory of ‘incorporation’¹⁵ as well as Jacques Derrida’s notion of the spectre), Tuggle investigates the ‘disordered mourning’ at Ground Zero where the dust – ‘biologically rejected by the bodies it invades’, because it produces respiratory problems

¹² Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 178.

¹³ Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ (1917), in *On Metapsychology: The Theory of Psychoanalysis*, eds. Albert Dickson and Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey (New York: Penguin 1991), 251-68.

¹⁵ Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

– becomes both the material trace of the dead and the toxic mixture of the towers that fell (134). Thus, Ground Zero carries in itself both an ‘unrealisable’ loss and ‘the other is encrypted within the psyche’ (134). The dust it kept from World Trade Center enacts, ‘in Walter Benjamin’s words, the “multiplication of traces” via its dispersal as airborne biological particles. Conceptualising the dust as traces of the dead, the entire reconstruction and memorial project is engaged in the banishment or enclosure of those traces’ (135).

According to Tuggle, the labyrinthine structure of the memorial that Jeffrey Rouse designed three years after Hurricane Katrina also internalizes trauma, inherently memorializing entrapment. At the same time, the cemetery on the site which was purchased by Charity Hospital in 1848 and ‘has historically been used to bury the unclaimed from throughout the city including victims of several yellow fever and influenza epidemics’ (137) testifies to ‘a collective refusal to whitewash the history of New Orleans, conjuring Katrina’s ghosts in defiance of the nation that left them behind’ (139). Such a tendency towards exhumation and preservation is traced back to the nineteenth century America, after Lincoln’s death, when Americans domesticized mourning in very personal ways. For Tuggle, at Ground Zero and New Orleans there is a whole ‘souvenir fetishisation industry’ (143). In fact, the feelings that one gets when confronted with the ‘poetics of dust’ can be framed in what Bryoni Trezise, the author of *Performing Feeling in Cultures of Memory*, called ‘memory practices that have, and are, particular cultural affects’.¹⁶ Although not naming Trezise’s work, since that deals especially with virtual museums that recreate the familiar tropes of existing museums and memorials, when Tuggle gives a full account of the souvenir shops at Ground Zero and on Bourbon Street¹⁷ and of the ‘sacred preserv[ation]’ of Lincoln’s corpse, she actually describes what Trezise called ‘memory affect’. Indeed, perhaps what is missing from this collection of essays which claims to take into account that ‘[i]n a digital age of virtual worlds and instantaneous global communications it seems obsolete to insist on embodied presence for the constitution of a public’ (5) is precisely a chapter on the way in which emotions as cultural practices emerge in ‘virtual traumas’ which Trezise defined as ‘those cultural texts that have been produced by digital media in response to traumatic events’.¹⁸

Lindsay Barrett’s ‘The Atrocity Tour’ charts complex spatial and temporal intersections of traumatic paths, starting from Alexander Platz, which in 1945 was a place in ruins where people used to walk down the streets as if nothing had happened (147), shortly visiting the city of Kassel, a former beautiful medieval town destroyed during the war by the British and the Americans ‘until it was *ganz kaputt*’, because in Hitler’s time it had become one of the Nazi Reich’s biggest and most important tank factories (148) to stop for a while at another place of atrocity: Wilhelmshöhe, a banal railway station where an unimaginable cannibalism case took place. Here Armin Meiwes, 40, who had picked up the announcement that Bernd Jürgen Brandes, aged 43, placed on a website called the *Cannibal Café*, came to meet his victim who wanted to be slaughtered and eaten. Barrett gives all the details of this horrible affair that ended up in Meiwes’s arrest at his next attempt to devour another victim, having as evidence the whole process of killing and butchering Brandes recorded. In this horrifying story, Barrett is not interested into

¹⁶ Bryoni Trezise, *Performing Feeling in Cultures of Memory* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 3.

¹⁷ ‘9/11 souvenirs, including commemorative books, postcards, T-shirts, coffee mugs and playing cards’ and Katrina memorabilia consisting of ‘photography collections that capture residents stranded on rooftops, bodies littering the streets, displaced domestic objects strewn across the landscape’ (138).

¹⁸ Trezise, 116.

investigating this case of Meiwes's serious mental illness¹⁹ but rather puzzled by an enthralling detail; while waiting for his victim to die in a warm bath, after the latter's penis was cut off, Meiwes went downstairs and behaved as if nothing happened; he read peacefully a *Star Trek* novel, which reminds Barrett of a detail from the case of mass murderer Adolf Eichmann: while being judged in Jerusalem, Eichmann was given *Lolita* to read. As Hannah Arendt recalled in *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Eichmann found Nabokov's novel 'a most unwholesome book'.²⁰

However, the tour does not stop here, but continues with what Barrett calls 'a site of infinitely greater horror than anything concocted by the lunatic, flesh-eating Trekkie Meiwes', which is one hour away from Kassel, the remains of the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp where the Nazis had 'their underground rocket factory in which tens of thousands of slave labourers were starved, beaten and worked to death by the morally bankrupt Nazi state' (152) under the command of the SS *Sturmbahnführer* Wehrner Von Braun, who is also mentioned in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity Rainbow*. According to Barrett, Wehrner 'was a genius when it came to rocket science' (152-3). That is why after the defeat of the Nazi Reich, he was hijacked by the Americans and put in charge of the American's rocket design, being directly responsible two decades later for Neil Armstrong's small step on the moon (153), an atrocity in itself when we think how Americans appropriated some Nazi brains, giving murderers the possibility to subtract themselves from trials for the crimes against humanity that they committed. When stating in passing that Eichmann was sincere when he asserted in court in Jerusalem 'that he was an honest man who always did the right thing and told the truth' (153), although not mentioning Hannah Arendt's work, Barrett demonstrates a thesis she phrased in *The Banality of Evil*:²¹ what was most striking in the trial was that the Nazi criminal profile was neither a psychopath nor different from what we like to call a 'normal' person. Going on this tour while reading Jonathan Littell's historical fiction novel *The Kindly Ones*²² which is narrated by the fictional protagonist Maximilien Aue, a former SS officer who helped the Nazi to carry out the Holocaust, Barrett considers the end of this 'oneman sadomasochistic orgy in the Baltic hinterland [...] both an homage to and a transcendence of Bataille's classic *The Story of the Eye*,²³ which in Jean Paul Sartre's view epitomized 'the "destroying of all Literature"' (155). Barrett's conclusion is that a literary text is 'just like a railway station, it's a space of exchange, connection and transference, and the more effective these processes, then the more powerful the text' (156). In this atrocity tour, the reader is finally dropped at Berlin's Hauptbahnhof from where he arrives in front of the Natural History Museum with its piece representing 'the most successful dinosaur excavation of all time', the skeleton of a 13.27 metre-high and which can be a free ticket to what Barrett calls 'an animal holocaust' (158). Here the author encounters a busy

¹⁹ 'Serious mental illness' was defined as 'diagnosable mental, behavioral or emotional disorder [...] of sufficient duration to cause serious functional impairment in an individual's major life activities.' Among serious mental illnesses SAMHSA includes 'major depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder, and other mental disorders that cause serious impairment.' (See <https://www.samhsa.gov/disorders> [accessed 20 October 2018].)

²⁰ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Penguin, 1963), 49.

²¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Banality of Evil*, Intro. Amos Elon (New York: Penguin, 2006).

²² Jonathan Littell, *The Kindly Ones* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2009).

²³ George Bataille, *The Story of the Eye*, trans. Joachim Neugroschal, with essays by Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes (London: Penguin, 2001). The story focuses on the gradually unusual sexual perversion of a pair of teenagers, a late adolescent male narrator who remains unnamed and Simone, his primary sexual partner.

ornithologist who identifies and classifies some of the ‘thousands of the surviving dead birds collected from the rubble’, seventy years after the war. At the end of this tour, the reader is almost relieved when the author declares: ‘I’ve had enough of this particular atrocity tour’ (161), a tour that caused reflections on the permanent need ‘to remember and acknowledge the traumas that live there, because they aren’t going to go away, and in the long run trying to repress them only makes their impact worse’ (161).

Robert Mason and Geoffrey Parkes’s ‘Regaining Lost Humanity: Dealing with Trauma in Exile’ draws upon the writings of the Cuban author Reinaldo Arenas, whose writings and openly gay life brought him into conflict with Fidel Castro’s communist government and made him end in jail because of his ‘ideological deviation’ and his publishing abroad without official consent. After a failed attempt to escape, he was imprisoned in the notorious El Morro Castle where murderers and rapists were detained, a place out of which he tried to smuggle his work. In 1976 he was released and in 1980 he fled to the United States. Mason and Parkes analyse Arenas’s novellas written while he was in Cuba: *Old Rosa* and *The Brightest Star*, his novels *Farewell to the Sea* (entirely rewritten after prison guards destroyed the sole manuscript (169)). They also investigate the way in which the novels he wrote in the States, *Before Night Falls* and *The Color of Summer*, testify to the multiple traumas that Arenas had experienced. Mason and Parkes reject ‘the idea that trauma is a singular event’ and they contest that ‘trauma by definition necessarily involves dissociation’ (164). Political persecution prevented Arenas to share ‘a communal space of mourning’ but literature became for him ‘a testimony to the geographic and psychic effects of his trauma’ (164).

Victor Emeljanow’s ‘Popular Entertainments as Survival Strategies in Prisoner-of-War Camps During World War II’ discusses survival strategies used by war prisoners belonging to the British and Commonwealth troops to deal with psychological effects of trauma. When incarcerated in German camps, some succumbed, while others ‘developed strategies of mutual reinforcement’, by creating ‘communities of interest within which memory, both in its collective and public manifestations, played a key role’ (174). The most available means of keeping themselves tied to a community was the world of the theatre that ‘has traditionally served as a site for remembrance and togetherness’ (174), as well as improvised cabaret with songs, poems, jokes (179). Even if one did not expect humour to have been one ingredient to temporarily forget the traumatic experiences of war camps, humour often made the difference between life and death and helped prisoners not to commit suicide or to go mad (180). Presenting journalist Noel Barber’s 1944 first readily accessible account of materials about prisoner-of-war camps, Emeljanow classifies and analyses the different plays that were performed in concentration camps. In the editors’ Introduction to Section 3, Emeljanow’s essay is presented as a ‘counterpoint’ for the volume, because it offers the reader a ‘case study of how the work of resistance may be conducted in a lighter register, through communally performed entertainments, and shows how the relationship between traumatic experience and public memory can cut both ways: there are situations in which public memory, far from offending against the traumatised subject, can provide a resource and a psychological support structure’ (128). Emeljanow’s work might be a valuable addition to work that has already been done on gallows humour at concentration camps.²⁴

²⁴ See Chaya Ostrower, *It Kept Us Alive: Humor in the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad-Vashem, 2014), and Lucia Ispas, ‘(Mis)Representing Trauma through Humour? Roberto Benigni’s *La vita e bella*’, in *Arts of*

Section 3 ends with Richard Gerhmann's 'A Soldier's Perspective on Serving in Iraq and Afghanistan' including reflections on his experience as an Australian soldier serving in Afghanistan and Iraq. Reading his essay shaped as a diary, we are just in the middle of tragic events,²⁵ but also on the very reflexive side of things, since he is an academic, as he declares, probably the only one 'who looked on the United Nations (UN) website to reassure themselves that their presence was in accordance with legally binding internationally endorsed UN Security Council resolutions' (186). He tells us the story of the late Mathew (Hoppy) Hopkins²⁶, differentiating between the private side of things (his colleagues', his relatives' feelings) and the public memory of his funeral attended by Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard, as it was covered by television news. He also reflects on all recurrent traumatic flashbacks that war veterans live with and for which no clear remedies were found and about the soldiers' need to see public recognition of 'their sacrifice, trauma and suffering' (201). Gerhmann's conclusion is that in spite of the different categories of shared memory for veterans, for their families and friends, and for the wider community, there is always a common memory that is shaped (205).

At the end of the book, readers are somehow overwhelmed by the essays included in this collection, especially in the third part of the book which gave them a permanent sense of loss and suggested to them that the past intrudes belatedly upon the present through the numerous atrocities and disasters that were recapitulated in front of their eyes. Although readers were never there, they were given a sense of what Marianne Hirsch has called 'postmemory' which is the remembrance of things not witnessed.²⁷

The feeling we have when closing the book is well described by Robert D. Hicks²⁸ in the book blurb: '*Trauma and Public Memory* breaks the comfortable and distanced mold of media-circumscribed public memory and exposes us to the complex, contradictory, and seemingly ineffable ways in which personal experiences of the traumatic become collective ones. We read of events so challenging as to defy naming, of events so searing that public memory demands a reassuring narrative, the harm obscured.' Yet, when reflecting on how public memory represents trauma, we cannot avoid being confronted with events that take us out of our comfort zone and push us into an effort to come to terms with the negative legacy of the past and to learn its lessons if that is possible.

This book deserves a wide readership, proving to be equally beneficial to many other fields of study apart from memory and trauma studies like anthropology, history, sociology, psychoanalysis, to name only a few. With its potential to go beyond the realm of the academic research through Section 2, it charts new directions for a trans-disciplinary field of the study of trauma.

Healing: Cultural Narratives of Trauma, eds Arleen Ionescu and Maria Margaroni (London: Rowman and Littlefield, forthcoming 2020).

²⁵ As he informs us, 'most soldiers don't kill, don't see the dead, and don't tend wounded – but they are soldiers nonetheless, and they are still part of the big military machine' (197).

²⁶ See <http://www.defence.gov.au/vale/CplHopkins/> for the whole public story of Corporal Mathew Hopkins. [accessed 30 October 2018].

²⁷ Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA and London, 1997).

²⁸ Director, Mutter Museum/Historical Medical Library, Philadelphia.

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Rezumat

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