DESPERATE AFFIRMATION: ON THE APORETIC PERFORMATIVITY OF *MEMORIA* AND TESTIMONY, IN THE LIGHT OF W.G. SEBALD'S STORY 'MAX FERBER': WITH A THEOLOGICAL RESPONSE

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Abstract

Is 'remembering' an intentional *activity*, residing in the subject's autonomy, or does it belong to the realm of *receptivity*, interrupting the subject? Or is it both at once? This jointly authored paper sets these questions in the context of a recently renewed interest in *memoria* in cultural theory and the humanities, as well as of an increasing pluralism in Western societies. The impossibility of sharing memories as a common good and a common truth is explored by putting the theme of historical *responsibility*, to which every gesture of *memoria* is tied, in a new light. The paper first demonstrates that the concept of *performativity,* as developed in particular by Jacques Derrida through a critical reading of Austin and Searle, can be a fruitful theoretical model in the analysis of *memoria* and of its double status: active and receptive at the same time. A reflection on the practice of *testimony*, again starting from Derrida, will further articulate this coherence between performativity and *memoria*. After this theoretical clarification, the value of performativity as a model for *memoria* will be tested through a detailed reading of the German writer W.G. Sebald's (1944–2001) story 'Max Ferber', focussing on the delicate way this story stages an impossible testimonial drama. The authors will, finally, enquire as to the relevance of the performative model for a *theological* view of *memoria* and testimony.

Zerstöret das Letzte die Erinnerung nicht—W.G. Sebald
(freely rendered from Hölderlin[1])

I. OPENING: MEMORIA BETWEEN ACTIVITY AND RECEPTIVITY

WHAT IS it to remember? What to commemorate and memorialise? What is memory? What, in short, is *memoria*, as the overarching concept that covers all these terms? These questions immediately lead to a further question, a fairly formal but not unimportant one: is *memoria* something that one 'does', or does it happen to one? Is it an *activity* of the human person as subject, or is it itself the subject of an activity that 'does us', so that *memoria* could better be spoken of as a sort of *receptivity*? Or—and this is the beginning of the quest of the writer W.G. Sebald (1944–2001), whose work we come to treat in some detail—is memory both at once?

In the following reflections and analyses we would like to set this question in the context of a recently renewed interest in *memoria* in cultural theory and the humanities, as well as of an increasing *pluralism* in Western societies, which challenges the idea of a stable collective memory shared by all. For what exactly can be *shared* in and as *memoria*? In this article we explore the impossibility of sharing memories as a common good and a common truth, and hope thereby to put the theme of historical *responsibility*, to which every gesture of *memoria* is tied, in a new light (II). We will then show that the concept of *performativity,* as developed in particular by Jacques Derrida through a critical reading of Austin and Searle,[2] can be a fruitful theoretical model in the analysis of *memoria* and of its double status: active and receptive at the same time. A reflection on the practice of *testimony*, again starting from Derrida, will further articulate this coherence of performativity and *memoria* (III).

After this theoretical clarification of the concept of performativity, in the three remaining sections, we test the value of this concept as a model for the analysis of *memoria*. We do this through a detailed reading of Sebald's story 'Max Ferber', focussing on the delicate way this story stages an impossible testimonial drama.

First, we explain why the reading of this story—and in fact of any literary text—is not simply an illustration of theorising. As a 'hermeneutic drama' between writer and reader, the story is itself both a *form of* performative *memoria* and a *reflection upon* the performativity of *memoria* (IV). From this premise we turn to the reading of Sebald's story (V). Finally, we enquire as to the relevance of the performative model for a *theological* view of *memoria* and testimony (VI).

II. THE REVIVED CONCERN FOR MEMORIA
IN SCHOLARSHIP AND SOCIETY

Since the end of the eighties, research on memory—research that for the sake of convenience we bring under the broad term *memoria*—has again been high on the agenda of cultural scholarship. The titles of publications betray an equally clear shift in the focus of research.[3] Memory as one of the powers of an individual consciousness is no longer the primary consideration; the main focus of research is, rather, on the material, cultural and historical structures and forms of representation in which and by which something like memory becomes possible in a particular community. That is to say, memory as technique and as politics. There are ever more studies of how particular rhetorical techniques and strategies are used to preserve the past, or (deliberately or not) to forget it; how what has happened is given a place, or not. Alongside the revival of research into *memoria* in cultural scholarship, there has also been a great increase in sociopolitical interest. The erection of monuments or installations to commemorate disasters, for instance, or genocides, is the public expression of an increasingly important culture of commemoration; the careful collecting, archiving and exhibiting of traces from the past has long been more than an 'auxiliary science'. The often fierce debates on the subject (one can think of the discussion about the *Holocaust-Mahnmal* in Berlin) show that reflection upon the modalities or forms of remembrance, that is to say upon memory as a determined act in space, time and language, is not a side issue, but always part of what it means to remember. In short, the realisation is again ascendant that remembering, and in particular *memoria*lising, has a material and public character rather than being the result of a solely interior process.[4]

   We say ascendant *again* because the emphasis on this material, outward character draws upon the ancient and premodern *ars memoriae*, the art of remembering in which central concerns were precisely the spatiality of memory, the localisability of what was done and lost, and the techniques of remembering. However, whereas this premodern *ars memoriae* saw *forgetting* as an external threat to be resisted in endlessly repeated techniques and rituals, the most successful forms of the modern art of remembrance and commemoration expressly attempt to build or write into all their expressions—techniques and rituals indeed—an irremovable tension with forgetting. In this tension we include all the sorts of limitation which beset remembrance, from within and from without. Forgetting becomes something unavoidable *and* unacceptable, and is experienced as the limit of *memoria* haunting it from within.

We began by noting a shift from individual and subjective memory as an inner act of consciousness, to cultural and historical memory as a largely external, spatial, public—and from there, communal—event that takes place in acts of reading and writing. This shift is naturally related to a more fundamental turn in the contemporary humanities, namely in philosophy. The cultural critical reflections upon *memoria* in the work of, for instance, Heidegger, Blanchot or Derrida form just some of the many examples of a decentering of the individual subject. This subject has, in the course of the last century, lost its central, all-controlling position, both through scholarly insights into the fundamental determination of consciousness by, among other things, language, the unconscious, social mechanisms, and the media, and through drastic, traumatic historical events—in the first place, not coincidentally, the Holocaust. The new position also means that the subject can no longer withdraw itself from the many private and collective relationships, ties, networks and systems of signification in which it is situated and actively has to situate itself, and of which it is, in a complicated way, the always singular result.

A New Concept of Responsibility

Various critics of this view have incorrectly posited that it leads to a situation in which the individual could no longer be held responsible for his or her relationship to the world, to others or to history. Individual consciousness would only be an 'effect' of relations beyond the grasp or control of the self, to which it would largely be delivered over. Furthermore, the 'other' historical or contemporary world would itself be simply a 'representation' without origin. The fierce disagreements about this issue often ran and still run along the same lines as research into *memoria*. For what does it mean to remember, if the subject of that memory has no control over the process of remembering and so does not 'itself' remember, since it is being directed by the patterns, schemes and vocabularies of the many historical discourses in which it is inscribed; or if the thing remembered is in any case only 'one' representation, the effect of all sorts of—again the same—rhetorical strategies, narrative schemes or other mediative (filmic or photographic) dramatisations? Is it possible to refer to anything but a fictitious representation of reality?

In the meantime the realisation has grown that the first move towards another view of memory lies precisely in the desperate *undecidability* of these almost rhetorical questions. Together with this there arises another concept of *responsibility*, no longer rooted in a 'strong', autonomous and transcendental ego that decidedly (and decisively) acts in and over against a world (including other people) which is clearly distinct as the object of

that action.[5] A close analysis of the way in which the subject is entangled or inscribed in all sorts of networks and discourses that shape the texture of the world and of history seems best served by a model in which the undecidability of on the one hand autonomy (writing and reading oneself) and on the other heteronomy (being read and written) is a structural *a priori* of fiction and reference rather than a deficiency to be worked away.

III. PERFORMATIVITY AS MODEL AND EVENT

In our view this model is provided by a concept that has, in recent decades, played a groundbreaking role in language theory, in cultural scholarship and in philosophy: that of *performativity*. The notion of 'the performative' was given its first philosophical formulation in 1962 by Austin, and was revised not much later by Searle.[6] Austin's approach was from the philosophy of language: 'It was far too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a "statement" can only be to "describe some state of affairs", which it must do either truly or falsely.'[7] Speech acts that failed to fit this model were, according to Austin, regarded as insignificant exceptions or as 'pseudostatements'. He criticised this reductive view of speech acts and proposed a distinction between constative utterances, which describe a state of affairs, and utterances which are neither true nor untrue, but which 'do' or 'are' (or 'perform') that to which they refer: performative utterances. Opening a meeting, making a promise or a confession, testifying to something, saying a prayer, none of them are descriptions of some state of affairs: the speech act is itself the action that 'says', in which saying and doing are one. The truth of the utterance is not objectifiable; it is rather nothing other than the reality (event, act) that is evoked.

The performative act thus disrupts the relationship of language to reality and of words to things. It refers not to something beyond itself in order to demonstrate its objectivity, but is its own truth and legitimacy. It is in a fundamental sense creative and experimental, since it does not have to be concerned with oppositions such as true and untrue, or good and bad. Performatives thus challenge modern ideas of truth, rationality, identity and responsibility.

Austin's distinction, and also its revision by Searle,[8] do, however, remain indebted to a Cartesian understanding of subjectivity, in which language is seen as the medium by which the subject makes real its intentions and shapes the world. In contemporary philosophy and in literary scholarship the meaning of performativity has changed utterly. Poststructuralist theory, in particular, with its resistance to an instrumental understanding of language,[9] contributed to this change. Performativity is now considered a moment,

a situation, a relationship and an *event* in which the subject is always already included, instead of a speech act where the subject stands outside.[10] Performativity refers to an aporia in which every utterance and action is trapped. On the one hand we constitute ('perform') the identity by which we are able to relate to the world and can structure and order it: in doing so we inscribe ourselves in existing discourses, where necessary changing them. On the other hand, because we are a part of the 'performances' that we enact by speaking and acting in order to be who we are, and the world to be what it is, we can never entirely control them. Understood in this way, the performative moment or *event* of our speaking and acting points towards an original *ambivalence* in which autonomy and heteronomy, the construction *and* the decentering of the subject, alternate and their distinction ultimately becomes as necessary as it as untenable.

It is this performative aporia that, in our view, is an important feature of *memoria*. In the performative event that, memory, every commemoration, *is*, the autonomy of speech and action is interrupted or even disrupted by a specific heteronomy: in this disruption performativity and *memoria* meet. The heteronomy of reception, that is, of receiving the past, coincides with the autonomy of action, that is, of enacting the past by memorising it. This is why *memoria*, as we pointed out above, is a complex act of writing and reading acts that, in a way, lose their firm ground as straightforward action, in order to enter the realm between autonomy and heteronomy, that is, between activity and receptivity. If we pursue this idea consequently, the only heteronomy—in the sense of a radical otherness or *alterity*—that is left, is the heteronomy of this event *between* autonomy and heteronomy. Heteronomy would then be nothing outside this event.

Memoria and Testimony

Derrida explores this coherence of *memoria* and performativity by means of an exemplifying practice: that of *testimony*, being one of the prime practices of *memoria*.[11] In a testimony, the I loses itself and touches upon the limit of its subjectivity; the relation between act and actor, as well as between content and event—the testified and the one who testifies: the witness—is deregulated here. According to Derrida, there cannot be a self-evident and pre-existing I in a testimony, nor can there be an object, a 'what' or 'whom', that is to be testified to (any particular moment or feature in the past, e.g. a person, a victim, a tragedy, a sin, a crime, a horror). As soon as the I creates a distance between itself and the event of the testimony, for example, by simply stating 'I testify', this I exonerates itself, for it says essentially: I am not the same as what I am testifying to. According to Derrida, this distance would already mean we refuse responsibility for the testified. There is no neutral position the

witness could take facing the testified, no instrumental position facing his or her testimony: we are always engaged in a complicity with what or who is testified to. Lacking this engagement, there can be no testimony.[12]

In a testimony—and this points at its performative structure—one *is* what one testifies to, one is the event proper of the testimony. Nevertheless, one loses oneself in the act that one executes at the same time. After a testimony one cannot save one's autonomous self from this loss. But neither is this self hopelessly lost, for it affirms itself *in* and *as* this loss.[13]

Obviously, this philosophical view on confession as an event between autonomy and heteronomy reflects the structure of *memoria* sketched out earlier. Every testimony is a form of performative *memoria*, in which some past is re-enacted in the present, saving it from oblivion, but also—that is Derrida's provocative point—saving it from any attempt to reconcile with this past, and excuse oneself. The past is inappropriable and, in a way, always unforgivable. It has to be forgotten—it has to be remembered.

The being infinite and 'out of control' of testimony, seen as a performative act of *memoria*, this infiniteness also problematises Levinas' famous duality of the '*dit*' and the '*dire*', the said and the saying, as developed in particular in *Otherwise than Being*.[14] Derrida problematises this duality by stating that, contrary to what Levinas hopes for, there is no pure, nonviolent, absolute saying in the sense of a pure heteronomous event, opposing the realm of the said that would rather be the domain of the violent constitution of identity, of the autonomous self. Testimony escapes this duality; as a consequence, there is no pure testimony that in a way would 'succeed' in doing justice to the past. Testimony's structure of loss precludes any 'success'. Its '*dire*' is always contaminated and violated[15] by its '*dit*', its performative is always at the same time a 'perverted' performative.[16] As we will demonstrate, 'Max Ferber' can be read as a long testimony testifying to this self–contamination of testimony; the more the narrator visits, photographs, reads, listens, the more he discovers his testimony will be a failure. His story will turn out to be a testimony *to* this failure.

IV. PERFORMATIVITY AS TEXTUAL EVENT

If we now immediately turn to the reading of a literary text, Sebald's 'Max Ferber', to clarify the performative structure that we are pursuing in *memoria*, then this is no merely illustrative gesture. Nowadays art and, in particular, literature have acquired an undoubtedly central place in the humanities as a form of reflection *upon* as well as a form *of* cultural performativity. This is one of the results of the developments leading to the revived concern for *memoria* that we sketched in the first paragraph. Literary

texts and literary criticism or 'reading' dramatise complex acts of writing and reading, one might say *hermeneutic dramas*. In these the crucial indeterminacies that dominate our culture are enacted and in a sense affirmed. It is essential to understand the concept of text behind this view. Text is no longer considered a fixed representation of themes and meanings; what we call 'text' is just one moment in a complex process of communication, a *practice* that is essentially characterised by ambivalence instead of by the classic dualisms of, for instance, form and content, literal and figurative, fact and fiction, intention and coincidence. Literary performativity, meaning the events that occur in and through literature, is always situated between writing and reading, between the text and the act of reading, just as religious performativity always takes place between the ritual action and the actor. What happens in texts— and by that we mean not only what is narrated, but the narration itself, not only '*le dit*' but more especially '*le dire*', the discourse, the speech act—only comes to light in and by the act of reading. This should not be taken to imply that the reader simply constructs the text and its meanings or references, or that 'everything is fiction'. On the contrary, an act of reading demonstrates the subject's inability to come to terms either with the processes of signifi- cation or with the precise relationship to whatever historical facts may serve as 'matter'. The reader resumes a problem of interpretation—repeating it in an altered form. This problem takes the form of a dilemma that is already *in* the text, in the tension between 'the uttered' and 'the utterance'. But this resumption can be just the event that takes the reading subject unawares, throws him or her off balance and confronts them with an alterity—that perhaps changes him or her self, that is to say reinscribes them and brings them to write and read differently.

   We shall now look for this hermeneutic drama throwing us off balance in Sebald's story 'Max Ferber'. We discover that this remarkable text stages such a drama in the form of an encounter with an alterity that can never be pure otherness, and to which one can only testify in an impure way until, in the end, the only alterity—or heteronomy—left might be this impure event, this event of the impure, proper. We testify to alterity by testifying to the failure of our testimony.[17]

V. DESPERATE AFFIRMATIONS IN W.G. SEBALD'S 'MAX FERBER'

The textual fragment that we would now like to read is the final passage in the last story in the collection *The Emigrants* (1992) by the German-British author W.G. Sebald (1944–2001), a story in the original edition entitled 'Max Ferber'. It is beyond the framework of this paper to give a complete introduction to the author and his works. Suffice it to say that Sebald's work

has very quickly become one of the most discussed examples of contemporary *memoria* literature and that *The Emigrants* and Sebald's last novel, *Austerlitz* (2001), which in a sense form a single work, are the main reason for this. Sebald's oeuvre is a kaddish for a world that seems to have been irrevocably destroyed by the Holocaust. Nevertheless, this world is fascinatingly evoked and 'performed' for us: and not only for us, but in a sense from our perspective, that is to say, the perspective of those who were not there and have to carry on regardless. We were not there and the real witnesses are dying off, or silent, or severely traumatised. But Sebald turns this historical consequence into a more fundamental one: time or history confronts us with the fact that writing on and after the Holocaust and testifying to it *has always been* writing on an 'event-without-witness'.[18] The survivors—actually every-one who lives after the Holocaust—are consigned to a belatedness and de-location that can only be repeated. This repetition is at the heart of the literary performative that enacts the hermeneutic drama of (failed) commemoration.[19] As the title of the collection *The Emigrants* suggests, the main characters are always more or less exiles who escaped the inferno of the Holocaust. In the stories of 'Max Ferber' and *Austerlitz* another specifically historical dimension is added: in each case their parents sent them to England as children before the outbreak of war, the one from Germany, the other from Czechoslovakia (in *Austerlitz's* case on one of the infamous *Kindertransporte*). They never saw their parents again. By adoption they were given a second life in which the past, including their mother tongue, was either erased or faded away, until it catches up with them again and pitches them into deep melancholy and depression, madness or suicide. These micro-histories are reconstructed by a narrator who travels both across the European continent and through the places of exile in England and the USA. He visits and photographs people, places, buildings, cemeteries; he archives everything—including apparently insignificant souvenirs; he describes and photographs objects of which the function is no longer always clear; he reads letters, diaries, books, newspapers and magazines, making excerpts and summaries; he does a lot of listening and bears witness to what he has heard, but seldom gets to the bottom of the loss in the lives of those who themselves are wrestling with the dark emptiness in their memory.

Between, on the one hand, the historical reality that was what it was and from which, despite the many historical documents, we are irrevocably separated, and on the other, the attempts, well-meaning or not, to put ourselves into that world by means of, for example, literature or film, Sebald writes his texts. These are burdened with a weight of historical material, but at the same time they inscribe the remains and traces of the past in a close-knit network of fictionalised structures. This undermines the illusion of an unproblematic empathy and historical representation, and at the same

time confronts the reader with hermeneutic problems that are far from merely academic. The reader is drawn into the aforementioned hermeneutic drama that is also that of the narrators in Sebald's works, and which is thus already itself dramatised in the text.

What is 'Max Ferber' about? What sort of text is it? As is usual in Sebald's work, the story is told by a first-person narrator whose biography makes it difficult not to identify him with Sebald himself. In a few cases this is reinforced by photographs or other documents. 'Max Ferber' begins, not coincidentally, with the hallucinatory and probably largely autobiographical evocation of the night-time flight that carried the narrator from Germany to Manchester in the Autumn of 1966. The city repeatedly appears in the story as a ghost-town full of ruins, 'a necropolis or mausoleum', although in the 19th century it was the centre of the cloth industry, 'the industrial Jerusalem'. This is a reference to the fact that long before the Holocaust, Manchester was already a city of immigrants, and flourished in some part because of the numerous (mainly German) Jews in the city.

In this city the narrator meets—without the immediate occasion of the meeting becoming apparent—a painter of German origin, Max Ferber. Penetrating pages follow about the obsessional aesthetics of the tormented Ferber *in actu*: not creating, but scrapping, scraping away, painting over or redrawing, deleting and destroying are central to the artist's work. Ferber sees the ominously accumulating charcoal dust that gets everywhere as 'the true product of his continuing endeavours and the most palpable proof of his failure'. Nevertheless, his portraits, which emerge as though by accident, arouse in the viewer the impression 'that it had evolved from a long lineage of grey, ancestral faces, rendered unto ash but still there, as ghostly presences, on the harried paper'.

By a textual procedure that is also used in *Austerlitz*, a first series of meetings, in which the work of the main character is the focus of attention, is followed by a gap of about 20 years. Then comes a second series of meetings between narrator and painter, with intense conversations which almost have the character of psychoanalytic sessions. While Ferber had been very reserved about his origins 20 years before, now the narrator has to listen to the stream of memories largely concerning the circumstances around Ferber's leave-taking from his parents in 1939. At the end of these conversations Ferber gives the narrator a packet of loose sheets containing his mother's diary entries, in which she barely touches on the ever clearer calamity, and writes all the more and with moving meticulousness about her almost idyllic childhood, as though she knew that something was about to happen that would destroy that world forever. By reading and summarising the hundreds of sheets of entries, the narrator is for the first time truly gripped by Ferber's story, but his attempts to write it, he admits, are a failure.

There is a noticeable and significant analogy between Ferber's dramatic and drastic aesthetics of deletion and painting over, and the narrator's process of writing: 'I had covered hundreds of pages with my scribble, in pencil and ballpoint. By far the greater part had been crossed out, discarded, or obliterated by additions. Even what I finally salvaged as a "final version", seemed to me a thing of shreds and patches, utterly botched.' This failure is all the more poignant because the narrator is confronted with a constant 'mental impoverishment and lack of memory' in Germany, and not only at a visit to Bad Kissingen, where Ferber's family once lived, but also because Ferber himself is, at the end of the story, literally left speechless by a lung infection. This burdens the narrator with a responsibility of which he despairs. Ferber's memories cannot be commemorated and affirmed in a successful gesture of *memoria*. All that remains is desperate affirmation.

The issue that the story deals with culminates in a final scene which requires careful reading. The narrator wanders through the dilapidated, empty streets and neighbourhoods of a ghostly Manchester, and takes a room in the once legendarily luxurious *Midlands* hotel, now 'on the brink of ruin'. The hallucinatory atmosphere in the dusty and abandoned 19th-century palace of the moneyed makes the narrator, upon entering his room, 'think myself in a Polish city'. The memory of an exhibition that he had visited in Frankfurt a year before explains the association; it was an exhibition about the Litzmannstadt Ghetto, set up in 1940 in the Polish 'industrial metropolis Lódz, once known as *polski Manczester*'. The exhibition displayed colour photographs that had indeed turned up in a Viennese antique shop in 1987, and were the work of a certain Genewein, the German accountant of the ghetto, who had furthermore taken a shot of himself 'counting money at his bureau'. The other photos are sometimes portraits of German civilians or soldiers and high dignitaries, usually taken in family groups or at parties, but otherwise primarily photos concerning the 'exemplary organisation within the ghetto': 'the postal system, the police, the courtroom, the fire brigade, the sewer system etc.'; finally, there are photos documenting 'our industry'—the forced labour in the ghetto:

> Work is our only course, it was said. – Behind the perpendicular frame of a loom sit three young women, perhaps aged twenty. The irregular geometrical pattern of the carpet they are knotting, and even its colours, remind me of the settee in our living room at home. Who the young women are I do not know. The light falls on them from the window in the background, so I cannot make out their eyes clearly, but I sense that all three of them are looking across at me, since I am standing at the very spot where the accountant stood with his camera. The young woman in the middle is blonde and has the air of a bride about her. The weaver to her left has inclined her head a little to one side, whilst the woman on her right

is looking at me with so steady and relentless a gaze that I cannot meet it for long. I wonder what the three women's names were – Roza, Lusia and Lea, or Nona, Decuma and Morta, the daughters of night, with spindle, thread and scissors.

This closing tableau is intriguing and irritating because the reader is confused by a choreography of gazes and the textual staging. The photograph—incidentally one that really exists—was *not* included in the book. It shows, in Roland Barthes' formulation, 'what has been' and what is locked within that silenced, past, futureless moment that would make catharsis and transformation impossible. But still the narrator does not stop at this historical situatedness; he shows that the photograph is not or not only a 'view of something', but especially also 'something as viewed', to use Susan Sontag's distinction. The description transfigures the poignant factuality and anonymity of that which is depicted, constructs a relationship between the portrait and its maker, and guesses about names that do not so much personalise or individualise as ultimately shift the singular, historical ('what has been') to a mythological level. It is a procedure that seems as old as art and literature themselves: the transformation, the 'ennoblement' of the mortal and singular in the eternal and universal of the work of art.

Two Perversions in the Text

But this view of the position of the artist and the function of art is severely taken to task in 'Max Ferber', and unmasked as a *first perversion*. The narrator cannot but take the place of the accountant–photographer. In this sense he compromises himself as viewer of the photograph, but also on another level, namely as narrator/writer of this story. The perversity consists in the first place of the almost blasphemous reversal of roles that this mythologisation performs. For the young women at the loom are not the incarnations of fate; they do not dispose and are not almighty subjects determining the course and length of human lives. They are, quite the contrary, literally disposed as objects for the eye of the photographer, who requisitions their gaze, allows them to look up 'purposely and solely for fraction of a second that it took to take the photograph', as the text says. The gazes involved here do not document a moment of intersubjectivity, an exchange of glances, but are a being-exposed, an exposure to a technically calculated grid. The photographs made '*zu Erinnerungszwecken*' (as souvenirs) have little to do with *memoria*; they 'document' only 'our industry' as the Nazis did all the time.

It is no coincidence that the photographer is an accountant, who is himself portrayed on one of the photographs 'while counting money at his desk'. It is he who is really a representative and executive of the fate that is no mythic doom, but a machinery of destruction constructed and directed by human

beings: the exemplary internal organisation of death that Nazi ideologues such as Goebbels described as a work of art. Because the reader is in a certain sense dependent on this perspective and almost of necessity has to identify with the gaze of the narrator, he or she is also drawn into this 'conspiracy'. The indirect and implicit identification of the accountant ('*Rechnungsführer*') as an apparently innocent representative of what, since Hannah Arendt's account of the Eichmann trial, has been defined as the *banality of evil*, now touches the narrator, the writer and the reader. They too, we too, apparently continue to write this story of the banalisation of evil.[20]

Even so, the mythological naming articulates a *second perversion* that disrupts the simple reversal of the scheme of sublimation and thus further distorts the outrageous reversal of roles. For the description of (the viewing of) the photograph leads to a mythological naming; this gesture is, however, the result of an incident, an incapacity of the narrator/viewer to return the gaze. 'The steady and relentless gaze' of the third young woman is a surprise, since the narrator cannot really see her back-lit eyes. The back lighting breaks the horizon of the viewer's gaze, only to open another space that pushes the observing subject out of the role of sovereign and self-contained observer. This viewer becomes the 'viewed', without at first being able to look (back). This gaze is unbearable, because the subject is subjected in an uncontrollable way, and cannot return the gaze that comes out of the back lighting. The other/Other looks with eyes that the subject cannot see, let alone answer. The eyes must be cast down or averted in shame.

Morta, the name of the third woman, is in Greek *Atropos*. This literally means: the inescapable (death), impossible to 'see' and 'not to see', that is to say: the undeniable; but also: that for which no images or tropes are fitting, so that narration itself is interrupted and cut short. Finally, weaving is a well-established metaphor for writing. That the woman in the photograph herself brings about the end of the story, interrupting gaze and word, perhaps signifies a final moment of heteronomy for narrator and reader. But what could be (and indeed is) a radical critique of the manipulated gaze of the photographer, the viewer, the narrator and the reader, might itself be stage-managed by the writer. Is he not the god who stands above the Fates and allows them to cut the thread? Is this an underhand self-legitimisation through a self-staging of guilt, a reversal of the configuration of victim and criminal? And to drive the desperation to the ultimate point: is the reference to the geometrical and pictorial similarity of the cloth woven by the women and that of the household sofa (for which, incidentally, there are parallels in the mythological sources about the Fates) not an ultimate affirmation of fatalism: this had to be, you there, me here? Or does it rather mean: it should or might have been me there? But then, where?

The intangible ambivalence of this scene, leaving us with these questions, appears to convey to us how problematic the idea of a 'final' moment of heteronomy, of the sudden revelation of a pure other, is. 'Reflecting' in its own, unique way upon this problem, Sebald's text enters the performative realm between autonomy and heteronomy we articulated earlier, teaching us that testifying to violence can only be a radical practice of *memoria* if it opens itself to the event of its failure. In failing, testimony exposes itself as a practice of indecisive, desperate affirmation: it affirms the structure of the 'not yet', of the 'still to come'.

Returning once more to the very beginning of this article—the motto that is also the motto of the first story in *The Emigrants*, '*Zerstöret das Letzte / die Erinnerung nicht*'—this undecidability becomes obvious in still another way. Is it just an appeal to remember instead of erasing the traces of the past; or should it be read as a desperate rhetorical question that is itself ambiguous? Is memory, that is, the past, not always destroyed by what comes after it, the old erased by the new? But the question and the appeal are at least complementary: the desperate question makes the appeal necessary. However, both the English and the French translation—'And the last remnants/memory destroys'; '*Et le reste n'est il pas / par le souvenir détruit*'—are based on a completely different interpretation (in collaboration with Sebald himself), locating the danger of destruction *in the act of memory itself*. Does memory—as an autonomous performative act—not erase the traces of the past, the traces of otherness, by inscribing them into a story that 'makes sense' or—as is the case at the end of 'Max Ferber'—by inscribing them into a mythological or allegorical frame? How can we memorise the otherness of the past without appropriating it? Should we then try to subvert our own act of memorisation?

However, if this event of failure is the only heteronomy 'Max Ferber' leaves to us, what remains of the word and figure of 'God' but a 'singular performative instant',[21] what of religion but a continuous and continuously failing testimony—in writing and reading, in imagination and experience—to this instant? How would this performative instant interrupt the religious traditions we are part of and, more in particular, the Judeo-Christian traditions of *memoria passionis*, of remembering the suffering and 'failing' of God in Christ? In the final section we shall set out preliminaries for a certain *theological response* that is provoked by our analyses thus far.

VI. MEMORIA PASSIONIS

In an essay on the German writer Johann Peter Hebel (1760–1826), Sebald paraphrases a story of a boy and his father, passing a ruined castle.[22] The father

answers in the affirmative when the boy asks whether the same will happen to their house; the same will even happen to the city of Basel, and to the whole world. The boy, the father says, will after this life go to a city in the stars if he behaves himself. From there he will see the then scorched and ruined earth and see all the places where he was, where he played, where he lived, felt safe and happy. Thus Hebel changes the naive image of an eternal 'happily ever after' into one of perpetual awareness of loss. Sebald paraphrases how in Hebel's story there is a former schoolmate pointing out to the boy the places of irreparable destruction: *memoria* as remembrance of what will never be healed. Sebald seems to identify strongly with this boy and with Hebel as the narrator of this story.

How is Memoria (Im)possible? Rosenzweig and Benjamin

In his *Star of Redemption,* Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig (1886–1929) writes on the performance of the Jewish Day of Atonement:

> The individual in all his naked individuality stands immediately before God. Only his human sin is named in the moving recital of the sins 'which we have sinned', a recital which is far more than mere recital. It shines into the most hidden corners of being. [...] And so 'We' in whose community the individual recognises his sin can be nothing less than the congregation of mankind itself.[23]

Just as Rosenzweig considers the Jews in their confessions of guilt on Yom Kippur to represent humankind, Sebald in his performances of failing *memoria* represents the human condition in the history in which the Great Destruction (Shoa) of the Jewish people could happen and has happened. However, in Rosenzweig's philosophy the Jewish position of being aware before God of sin and guilt depends on God's redemption through God's love: this love is, in the words of Solomon's *Song of Songs* (8:6), 'strong as death'. The weaknesses of human attempts to realise a good life can be realistically considered and human guilt can be admitted, because they are always encompassed in God's life-enhancing love. This is precisely why, according to post-holocaust Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim, '(to) mention the accursed name of Hitler is to awaken from Rosenzweig's thought—profoundly philosophical, profoundly Jewish, profoundly modern—as if, nevertheless, from a dream'. In Auschwitz and the other death camps, the Jewish experience that Divine love is strong as death, and that in any catastrophe a remnant remains that continues the presence of God's people in history, broke down.[24]

How then is *memoria* possible? Jewish thinker Walter Benjamin, one of the main inspirations of Sebald, reverses the question, suggesting how *memoria*

is impossible. In the ninth of his famous theses 'On the Concept of History', Benjamin describes the angel of history:

> His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing in from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such a violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.[25]

By making use of the image of the angel of history, Benjamin locates his reflections on *memoria* in a religious space. *Memoria* is for Benjamin an almost ascetic religious praxis, breaking away from what he calls the 'politicians' stubborn faith in progress', while the angel of history turns his back to the future that is born from this faith in progress. At the same time, however, even the angel cannot resist the force of progress, He cannot remain with those who died and with what has been smashed, as he should in order to truly become the messianic presence of the Divine in history.[26] In this way, Benjamin's angel of history performs *memoria* as an impossibility, just as Sebald does. But, in Benjamin's case at least, it is a messianic impossibility.

Rethinking the Tradition of Memoria Passionis: Metz

Trying to reflect sincerely on the situation of this tradition 'after Auschwitz' and following Benjamin's suggestions, Catholic theologian Johann Baptist Metz has focussed on the tradition of the *memoria passionis* as the core of the Christian messianic tradition. Of course, memory has always been at the very heart of Catholic Christianity. '*Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis*': 'as often as you will do this, you will do it in remembrance of me'. These words traditionally ending the consecration in the so-called Roman Canon that was, between the Tridentine and the Second Vatican Councils, in the centre of the Roman Catholic celebration of the Eucharist, focus on the performance of *memoria*. It is not so much the duty or the task of the Church as the Christian community to remember, but the Church exists by and through an act that is and comes from remembrance—the ritual of the Eucharist is itself a *memoria* to its installation by Jesus—and calls forth remembrance. It is a form of remembrance first of all of the life and death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus, but through the remembrance of his history it is also the remembrance of the whole of the history of God with human beings. In the Eucharist, in the remembrance of Jesus' death at the cross, 'the work of our redemption is carried out' and 'the unity of the

believers, who form one body in Christ, is both expressed and brought about'.[27] *Memoria* represents what is remembered and creates the community that, united in what she remembers, is able to remember.[28]

Metz has placed this *memoria passionis* in the centre of Christian theology and practice. In Metz's view it is the task of Christians to remember the history of Jesus' suffering, and in this history all the unredeemed and unatoned suffering that characterises human history as a whole. *Memoria passionis* is a 'critical memory' according to Metz, in breaking the illusion that our world and our history are what they are supposed to be or, religiously speaking, that we live simply and straightforwardly in God's world.[29] Using Benjamin's notion that what we usually call progress is the storm blowing from paradise into the future, heaping up the corpses of the victims it leaves behind, Metz sees the *memoria* of Jesus' suffering as a *memoria* to a representative of these victims our history makes us forget.[30] After Auschwitz, and confronted with the dangers of forgetfulness, Metz considers it to be theology's task to contribute to what he calls a culture of anamnesis, '*eine anamnetische Kultur*'.[31] According to Metz, *memoria passionis* only makes sense, and ultimately is only possible, if the lives of those who suffer are restored by and in God. This has a double consequence. Firstly, it means that where *memoria* is successful, this is a sign and a real presence of the victory of life over death; the Christian tradition attributes this sign to the resurrection of Jesus from the death. Whenever Sebald—or anyone else—successfully breaks down the culture of amnesia and contributes to a culture of anamnesis, from the point of view of Metz's theology this means an anticipation of the ultimate victory of love over death Judaism and Christianity both hope for.[32] Secondly, whenever Sebald makes clear how *memoria* can only be performed as impossible and necessarily reveals its own failure at the very moment it is successful, from the point of Metz's theology this is a sign that God is still awaited.

Although Metz sometimes seems to think that the performance of *memoria passionis* is simply a matter of voluntary resistance to the culture of amnesia, ultimately it is for him a praxis of sharing in suffering. Metz pleads for a Christology of the suffering and dead Christ, a Christology of Good Friday. This means that we cannot be united with Jesus, and through him with God, by sharing his glory after his resurrection, but only by sharing his suffering and death and by thus awaiting the redemption that is proclaimed to be coming.[33]

Emil Fackenheim discusses how after Auschwitz the Christian idea of a death of God also has become part of Jewish thought. It should, he says, by no means be a way to surrender to despair. That would be a sin against what he considers to be the commanding voice of Auschwitz that forbids Jews 'to hand Hitler posthumous victories' and compels them to 'survive as Jews'. For Fackenheim, the fact that 'for nearly two thousand years [the Jews] have resisted the Christian Good News even at the price of continued exile,

it has been because acceptance seemed a betrayal of the Jewish post so long as this world was unredeemed'.[34]

From Metz Back to Sebald

Sebald's performance of *memoria* as an impossible act can be rephrased in Metz's language as an ongoing memory that the world is still unredeemed in two ways: it remembers the unredeemed and their usually forgotten or suppressed histories, and it remembers the impossibility to truly remember and thus redeem them, even for the time of the performance of the *memoria*. In Metz's vision, the Christian message is ultimately not a message of redemption: that would be a denial of the world being unredeemed. Precisely in its *memoria passionis* the Christian tradition remembers this very fact. Thus it is actively waiting and hoping for redemption. In performing *memoria passionis,* the believer becomes part of the redemption that is only present *sub contrario* in the performance of *memoria* itself: '*Haec quotiescumque feceritis, in mei memoriam facietis*'.

The point here, of course, is not to Christianise Sebald, *memoria,* or the Jewish experience. The point is to show how *memoria passionis* as thought by Metz is one of those concepts from the religious traditions that begs for translation in today's secularised culture. In 2001, the year of 9/11, Jürgen Habermas suggested that religious traditions reserve important notions that have not fully become part of the culture of late modernity. Therefore, a continuous translation of religious notions in late modernity's secularised culture is an important task, not only for representatives of religious traditions but also for secular intellectuals.[35] It is the religious concept of *memoria passionis* that helps to understand the aporia present in the performance of *memoria.*

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[1] This quotation is a slight alteration of F. Hölderlin's phrase '*Verzehret das letzte / Selbst die Erinnerung nicht?*' in M. Knaupp (ed.) *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe* Vol. I (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), p. 289 ('Elegie'). Sebald uses this as a motto above the first story in his *The Emigrants* trans. M. Hulse (New York: New Directions, 1996) orig. *Die Ausgewanderten* (Frankfurt a.M.: Eichborn Verlag, 1992) 'Max Ferber' is the fourth and last story in *The Emigrants*. See below for a possible English translation of the motto (authorised by Sebald himself).

[2] See esp. his *Limited Inc.*, trans. S. Weber and J. Mehlman (Evanston IL: Northwestern UP, 1988) also *The Postcard: from Socrates to Freud and beyond,* trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1987); orig. *La carte postale. De Socrate à Freud et au-delà* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980); and 'Ulysse Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce' in

D. Attridge (ed.) *Acts of Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 253–309.

3 Probably the earliest anticipation and announcement of this shift came already in 1966: F.A. Yates' well-known study *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge/Kegan Paul). Being much more than just an announcement, this work is a standard reference and major influence in the current debate on *memoria*. For the latter see, among others, the works of the Heidelberg research group of Jan and Aleida Assmann, e.g. *Mnemosyne – Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Entwicklung* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1991) and Aleida Assmann's monograph *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*, München: Beck 1992; also P. Nora et al., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Vol. 7 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992). For the crucial relation between memory, trauma and confession, which is at the heart of the contemporary debate on memory as well as essential to our own line of thought, see C. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and S. Felman and D. Laub, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psycho-analysis and History* (London: Routledge, 1992).

4 Throughout his work, and esp. in his *Theatricality as Medium* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), S. Weber has invented and developed the concept of *theatricality* for the way practices like *memoria* and, as we discover below, testimony, are fundamentally embedded in a spacial and temporal context. Indeed, we demonstrate that this crucial spatio-temporal condition of *memoria* is best thought in an *active, dynamic* sense: that of a drama performed in and on a certain, singular place or text (see section 3).

5 See on this undecidability as a condition for responsibility also D. Attridge's introduction to J. Derrida, D. Attridge (ed.), *Acts of Literature* (New York/London: Routledge 1992), pp. 1–29.

6 See J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words?* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), and J.R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

7 J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words?* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 1; orig. 1962.

8 Searle's modification of Austin's binary distinction between constatives and performatives (see above, Searle 1969) boils down to the claim that all utterances are a particular type of performative, since they all perform certain actions, including stating, describing and affirming.

9 See esp. M. Foucault's groundbreaking *The Order of Things: an Archeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge 2003); orig. *Les mots et les choses*, 1966. Or, later, R. Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* trans. R. Howard (London: Penguin 1990); orig. 1977.

10 It was particularly J. Derrida who introduced this new concept of performativity and experimented with it (see note 2). See also J. Butler's later refinements in this field, e.g. in her *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York/London: Routledge 1997).

11 For the theme of testimony, see respectively his work on P. de Man and on P. Celan: *Memories: For Paul de Man* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989); orig. 1988; 'Shibboleth: For Paul Celan' in A. Fioretos (ed.) *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 3–72; orig. 1986; and 'A Self-Unsealing Poetic Text: Poetics and Politics of Witness', in J. Derrida, *Sovereignties in Question: the Poetics of Paul Celan* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005, forthcoming), orig. in *Cahiers de L'Herne* 83, 2004. On Derrida and testimony, see in particular H. de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press, 2002), ch. II: 'Violence and Testimony'.

[12] According to Derrida, other practices like confession or prayer follow the same structure — the I *being* what it does and losing itself as such. On the coherence of *memoria*, testimony and confession, see e.g. his text 'Circumfessions' in J. Derrida and G. Bennington, *Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); orig. 1991; J.D. Caputo and M. Scanlon (eds) *Augustine and Postmodernism: Confessions and Circumfession* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005); and H. de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion* (Baltimore: John's Hopkins University Press 1999), p. 7.

[13] In *Inventions of Difference. On Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), R. Gasché demonstrates this double bind in testimony with regard to the subject by referring to Derrida's work on J. Joyce ('Ulysses Gramophone: Hear Say Yes in Joyce' in D. Attridge (ed.) *Acts of Literature* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 253–309). The famous 'yes' repeated obsessively in the final scene of *Ulysses* testifies to the advent of the other, breaking up the I, and at the same time it 'opens up the position of the I, which itself is the condition for performativity' (see 244; the author quotes Derrida here, 'Ulysses Gramophone', 300). See also G. Agamben in *Ce qui reste d'Auschwitz. L'archive et le témoin. Homo sacer* III (Paris: Rivages, 1999), p. 158 (English trans. *Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive. Homo Sacer III* (trans. D. Heller-Roazin; (New York: Zone Books, 1999); orig. Italian 1998). 'On ne peut dire autrement: *le sujet du témoignage est celui qui témoigne d'une désubjectivation*; mais à condition de ne pas oublier que « témoigner d'une désubjectivation » signifie seulement qu'il n'y a pas, au sens propre du terme, de sujet du témoignage (…), que tout témoignage est un processus ou un champ de forces traversé sans cesse par des flux de subjectivation et de désubjectivation.'

[14] E. Levinas, *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981); orig. 1974.

[15] In his famous study of Levinas, 'Violence and Metaphysics' (in *Writing and Difference* trans. A. Bass (London: Routledge, 2001 [1978]); orig. 1967), Derrida even develops the position that the violence of language, contaminated as it can only be by the '*dit*', should not be contested by some pure otherness 'beyond' (the '*dire*' of the other), but precisely by this violence proper. The violence of the '*dit*' should be directed against itself, so that this 'beyond' be protected against the worse violence of an ideal, pure nonviolence.

[16] In this context, Derrida has introduced the concept of the 'perverformative', e.g. in *La carte postale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), p. 148.

[17] Hence in our time the romantic pursuit of *authenticity*, implying an ideal of the total, spontaneous and ultimate representation of the past and therefore of a testimony that can escape failure, is in decay. In its place has come a strong emphasis on the irreducibly *textual* nature of remembering. *Memoria* takes place in complex dramatic acts of writing and reading, themselves no longer fully grounded, whether they take the shape of texts in the strict sense, or in architectural, pictorial, or other forms of inscription.

[18] See Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, referred to in note 3.

[19] See Bart Philipsen, 'Living on/ Writing after Auschwitz' in E. Borgman, B. Philipsen and L. Verstricht (eds) *Literary Canons and Religious Identity* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 97–105.

[20] See H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963).

[21] See H. de Vries, *Philosophy and the Turn to Religion*, p. 431.

[22] W.G. Sebald, *Logis in einem Landhaus: über Gottfried Keller, Johann Peter Hebel, Robert Walser und andere* (Munich/Vienna:

Hanser, 1998), 11–41: 'Es steht ein Komet am Himmel: Kalenderbeitrag zu Ehren des rheinischen Hausfreunds.'

23 F. Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1990), p. 361; cited according to *The Star of Redemption,* trans. W.W. Hallo (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985), p. 325.

24 E. Fackenheim, *To Mend the World: Foundations of Post-Holocaust Jewish Thought* (Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana Univerisity Press, 1994) (orig. 1982), p. 91; for his view on Rosenzweig, cf. *ibid.,* pp. 58–91.

25 W. Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 257–8.

26 Cf. G. Scholem, *Walter Benjamin und sein Engel: Vierzehn Aufsätze und kleine Beiträge* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1986).

27 Vatican II, Dogmatic constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (21 Nov. 1964), no. 3.

28 Cf. C. Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consumation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 254.

29 J.B. Metz, *Glaube in Geschichte und Gesellschaft: Studien zu einer praktischen Fundamentaltheologie* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünenwald-Verlag, 1977), pp. 104–19: 'Zukunft aus dem Gedächtnis des Leidens: Zur Dialektik des Fortschritts'; pp. 120–35: 'Erlösung und Emanzipation.'

30 For the relation between Metz's idea of *memoria passionis* and Benjamin, cf. P. Budi Kleden, *Christologie in Fragmenten: Die Rede von Jesus Christus im Spannungsfeld von Hoffnungs- und Leidensgeschichte bei Johann Baptist Metz* (Münster/Hamburg/London: Lit, 2000), pp. 257–77.

31 Cf. J.B. Metz, 'Für eine anamnetische Kultur' in H. Loewy (ed.) *Holocaust: Die Grenzen des Verstehens: Eine Debatte über die Besetzung der Geschichte* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1992), pp. 35–41; id., *Zum Begriff der neuen Politischen Theologie 1967–1997* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1997), pp. 149–55: 'Zwischen Erinnern und Vergessen: Die Shoah im Zeitalter der kulturellen Amnesie.' Cf. J. Habermas, 'Israel und Athen oder: Wem gehört die anamnetische Vernunft? Zur Einheit in der multikulturellen Vielfalt' in J.B. Metz (ed.) *Diagnosen zur Zeit* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1994), pp. 51–64.

32 Although, as we saw, E. Fackenheim considers this an illusion after Auschwitz, M. Raphael (*The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust,* London/New York: Routledge, 2003) shows how ongoing practices of love and care, especially by women, kept the presence of God's love alive even in the death camps.

33 J.B. Metz, 'Gotteskrise: Versuch zur "geistigen Situation der Zeit"' in id. (ed.) *Diagnosen zur Zeit* (see note 31), pp. 76–92; id., 'Auf dem Weg zur "geschuldeten" Christologie', in J. Manemann/J.B. Metz (ed.) *Christologie nach Auschwitz: Stellungnahmen in Anschluss an Thesen von Tiemo Rainer Peters* (Münster: Lit, 1998), pp. 99–103. Cf. M. Zechmeister, 'Karsamstag: Zu einer Theologie des Gott-vermissens' in J. Reikerstorfer (ed.) *Vom Wagnis der Nichtidentität: Johann Baptist Metz zu Ehren* (Münster: Lit 1998), pp. 50–78.

34 E. Fackenheim, *The Presence of God in History: Jewish Affirmation and Philosophical Reflections* (New York etc.: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 53.

35 See J. Habermas, *Glauben und Wissen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 2001).