Oct 21

FEMINIST ETHICS

On Feminist Ethics and Politics

EDITED BY CLAUDIA CARD

Lawrenceville:

1999

10 / *The Uses of Narrative in the Aftermath of Violence*

SUSAN J. BRISON

Dori Laub quotes a Holocaust survivor who said, " 'We wanted to survive so as to live one day after Hitler, in order to be able to tell our story.' "[1] As Laub came to believe, after listening to many Holocaust testimonies and working as an analyst with survivors and their children, such victims of trauma "did not only need to survive in order to tell their story; they also needed to tell their story in order to survive" (Felman and Laub 1992, 78). Telling their story, narrating their experiences of traumatic events, has long been considered—at least since Freud and Janet[2]—to play a significant role in survivors' recovery from trauma. Despite many decades of clinical and theoretical work on the subject of trauma and narrative, just why narratives play such an important role in surviving the aftermath of trauma remains somewhat of a mystery. In this chapter I examine some of the ways in which telling, writing, reading, listening to, and, sometimes, embodying first-person narratives can play a significant role both in recovering from trauma and in researchers' and clinicians' arriving at a useful, if still contestable, understanding of it.

I mention at the outset that I am aware of risks of overbreadth and underbreadth in the use of the word "trauma." My use is influenced by the fourth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* and by Judith Herman, Jonathan Shay, Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, and others who talk about "trauma" in a wide range of groups.[3] What survivors of trauma have in common, on my account, is the experience of utter helplessness in the face of overwhelming, life-threatening violence of human origin (such as child abuse, rape, war, torture, the Holocaust). This use poses a serious danger of overbreadth, however: Why include in the same discussion such radically different forms of trauma as surviving a single incident of rape

and surviving the Holocaust? These events are incommensurable. The single rape is not as traumatic as—nor is it traumatic in the same ways as—the many horrific events experienced by individuals during the Holocaust. Nor is a single rape (as opposed to genocidal mass rape) accompanied by destruction of family, home, and community, as was experienced by Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. But there are similarities in what the survivors experience in the aftermath of violence, and similarities in the role narrative can play in the survivors' recovery. Nonetheless, it is politically, historically, and morally problematic to talk about such a diverse group of "survivors," and we must remain mindful of the crucial differences among survivors of different kinds. In this chapter, I focus most on the case of rape trauma.

There is also, in my use of the term "trauma," a risk of underbreadth: Why exclude trauma not of human origin, that is, trauma not intentionally inflicted? Although accidents and natural disasters can be traumatic, I do not discuss them here, because I think they affect the survivor's sense of self in a somewhat different way. They do not, typically, lead to a sense of betrayal by and inability to trust one's fellow human beings.[4]

What follows is divided into two sections. The first focuses on the role of narrative in studying trauma. I leave the term "narrative" vague because I want the term to encompass verbal and nonverbal (such as painted or physically enacted) accounts. A narrative tells the story of an event over time, situated within a larger temporal framework, though it need not be chronologically unidirectional. I consider Binjamin Wilkomirski's *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood* a survivor's narrative, even though it shifts back and forth in time.[5] Unlike passively experienced trauamatic memories, a narrative requires a narrator, an agent who makes choices about what to tell and how to tell it.

I argue, in this first section, that understanding trauma requires one to take first-person narratives seriously as an essential epistemological tool. (This approach may be obvious to many readers, but it goes against two millenia of philosophical teaching. In my training as a philosopher, I was taught to shun the literary and suggestive particularity of narrative for the ostensibly precise and universal persuasiveness of argument.) Here I also discuss epistemological and political pitfalls of the use of first-person narratives and suggest ways of attempting to avoid these hazards.

The second section discusses the role of narratives in recovery from trauma and analyzes the performative aspect of speech acts in recovering from trauma. Under the right conditions, *saying* something about traumatic memory *does* something to it: defuses it, renders it less intrusive, less disruptive, and transforms it into narrative memory that can be integrated into a self in the process of being rebuilt. I also look at the role of cultural memory in the experiencing of trauma and in the construction of trauma narratives as well as at limits of linguistic narratives in rebuilding a self undone by trauma. Other forms of action (such as learning self-defense) may be needed to facilitate recovery. These, too, may be viewed as telling a story, a nonverbal embodied narrative, in which the narrator has greater imaginative and physical control over the plot. It is not simply a retelling or a reenactment but a reworking and revising of the story, which resubjectifies the survivor, reviving her from the helplessness and objectification of the traumatic event.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
OF NARRATIVE IN UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

As a philosopher working on trauma, I have had to work my way through and defend myself against considerable bias within the discipline of philosophy against the particular, the concrete, the personal, and the narrative as useful in arriving at knowledge.[6] An excellent illustration of this disciplinary bias comes from Bertrand Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy*, a text that still frequently appears in anthologies used in courses introducing students to philosophy. In the main introductory philosophy text used at Dartmouth, it appears under the heading, "What Is Philosophy?":

> The free intellect will see as God might see, without a *here* and *now*, without hopes and fears, without the trammels of customary beliefs and traditional prejudices, calmly, dispassionately, in the sole and exclusive desire of knowledge—knowledge as impersonal, as purely contemplative, as it is possible for man to attain. Hence also the free intellect will value more the abstract and universal knowledge into which the accidents of private history do not enter, than the knowledge brought by the senses, and depen-

dent, as such knowledge must be, upon an exclusive and personal point of view and a body whose sense-organs distort as much as they reveal.[7]

What doesn't appear in introductory philosophy textbooks is the following from Nietzsche: "Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy so far has been: namely the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir."[8]

Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* was one of the first philosophy texts I read. It has taken me nearly twenty years to see the appeal of Nietzsche's view of philosophy as disguised autobiographical narrative. I was aware that for centuries philosophers had written in the first-person singular, but "serious" ones, such as Descartes, did so as part of an argumentative strategy to be employed by any reader to establish, ultimately, the same universal truths. They weren't really talking about themselves. As we so often tell beginning students of philosophy who write "I feel that" or "I think that," such self-descriptions have no place in "serious" philosophical argumentation. What the reader (the professor) wants to know is not what this particular author happens to feel or think and why, but rather what reasons any rational person has to accept the position in question. Those "accidents of private history," disparaged by Russell, must be put out of one's mind if one is to "see as God might see, without a *here* and *now*."

Now, of course, Russell, like Nietzsche, was an atheist, and so it is a bit of a mystery why he thought human beings could accomplish feats of this sort which, when attributed to God, made the idea of such a being incredible. But many, perhaps most, mainstream analytic philosophers writing today share Russell's view and consider the search for timeless, acontextual truths to be the sine qua non of the philosophical enterprise.

However, some philosophers—even some trained as I was in the analytic tradition (Anglo-American, not psychoanalytic)—have come to reject this view. Many feminist philosophers agree with Virginia Held that "the philosophical tradition that has purported to present the view of the essentially and universally human has, masked by this claim, presented instead a view that is masculine, white, and Western."[9] Having acquainted ourselves with feminist theorizing as

carried out in other disciplines, we are finding the traditional philosophical obsession with the impersonal and acontextual increasingly indefensible. As we find that the "accidents of private history," especially those connected with gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and class, are not only worth thinking about but are also inevitably (if invisibly) present in much of philosophy, we are beginning to write in the first person, not out of self-indulgence but from intellectual necessity.

Feminist ethics, in accepting subjective accounts as legitimate means of advancing knowledge, has made it more academically acceptable to write in the personal voice. In questioning the dichotomy between the personal and the political, insisting on the relevance of particular women's actual experiences, feminist methodology can reveal the bias in the exclusion of rape and other forms of sexual violence from the traditional concerns of ethics. As Held observes, whereas "traditional moral theory is frequently built on what a person might be thought to hold from the point of view of a hypothetical ideal observer, or a hypothetical purely rational being," feminist ethics relies on the actual experiences of concrete individuals, paying special attention to the formerly neglected experiences of women and other marginalized groups (1993, 34). Feminist theorists increasingly look to first-person accounts to gain imaginative access to others' experiences (in stark contrast to Ross Harrison, who asserted in one of the rare philosophical articles on rape in the mid-1980s, that "there is no problem imagining what it is like to be a victim"[10]). Such access facilitates empathy with others, valued by many feminist theorists as a method of moral understanding needed to complement more detached analytical reasoning.

The "accident of private history" that forced me to think about the "personal" as philosophical was a near-fatal sexual assault and attempted murder on 4 July 1990 outside of Grenoble, France, in which I was beaten, raped, strangled, and left for dead at the bottom of a ravine. Unlike Descartes, who had "to demolish everything completely and start again right from the foundations" in order to find any knowledge "that was stable and likely to last,"[11] I had my world demolished for me. The fact that I could be walking down a quiet, sunlit country road at one moment and be battling a murderous attacker the next undermined my most fundamental assumptions about the world. After my hospitalization, I took a yearlong disability leave from

teaching and found myself, like Descartes, "quite alone," with "a clear stretch of free time" in which to rebuild my shattered system of beliefs (Descartes 1984, 13).

As I carried out this process of cognitive, as well as physical and emotional, recovery, I was dismayed to find very little of use to me written by philosophers. It occurred to me that the fact that rape was not considered a properly philosophical subject, although war was, resulted not only from the paucity of women in the profession but also from disciplinary bias against thinking about the "personal," against writing in narrative form. Personal experiences of men have been neglected in philosophical analysis as well. The study of the ethics of war has dealt with questions of strategy and justice as viewed from the outside, not with wartime *experiences* of soldiers or with the aftermath of their trauma.[12]

In philosophy, first-person narratives, especially ones written by those with perspectives previously excluded from the discipline, are necessary for several reasons. I'll discuss just three. Such narratives are necessary to expose previously hidden biases in the discipline's subject matter and methodology, to facilitate understanding of and empathy with those different from ourselves, and to lay on the table our own biases as scholars.

First-person narratives can expose gender and other biases inherent in much traditional moral, legal, and political philosophy. They can serve to bear witness, to bring professional attention to injustices suffered by previously neglected or discounted groups. Such narratives can provide a basis for empathy with those different from ourselves, which, as Diana Meyers has argued, is crucial for an adequately inclusive understanding of certain moral, legal, and political issues.[13]

In other fields as well, first-person accounts can facilitate understanding cultural attitudes and practices different from our own, as anthropologist Renato Rosaldo demonstrates in "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage."[14] In that chapter, Rosaldo, who had previously published a book on head-hunting among the Ilongot (in the Philippines), describes how the experience of rage after the death of his wife, Michelle Rosaldo, gave him new insight into the rage Ilongot older men felt in bereavement. Before his own encounter with grief, Rosaldo writes, he "brushed aside" Ilongot accounts of "the rage in bereavement that could impel men to headhunt." He says he probably "naively equated grief with sadness." Only after "being repositioned"

by his own "devastating loss" could he begin to grasp that "Ilongot older men mean precisely what they say when they describe the anger in bereavement as the source of their desire to cut off human heads" (1989, 3). This is not to say that he fully comprehended or condoned the past head-hunting behavior of the Ilongots, but it became less foreign to him. His first-person narrative, likewise, makes the practice less foreign to us, his readers. As he explains, his "use of personal experience serves as a vehicle for making the quality and intensity of the rage in Ilongot grief more readily accessible to readers than certain more detached modes of composition" (1989, 11).

At other times, first-person narratives are used simply to put on the table one's perspectives and possible biases, which, of course, acknowledges that such things inevitably work their way into our research, however scrupulously "objective" we try to be. Susan Estrich begins her book *Real Rape* with an account of the rape she survived in 1974. To justify this radical and courageous introduction to a long-neglected legal subject, Estrich argues that if the rape wasn't her fault, if she's not ashamed, why shouldn't she mention it? "And so I mention it. I mention it in my classes. I describe it here. I do so in the interest of full disclosure. I like to think that I am an informed and intelligent student of rape. But I am not unbiased. I am no objective observer, if such a thing exists (which I doubt; I think the major difference between me and those who have written 'objectively' about the law of rape is that I admit my involvement and bias). In writing about rape, I am writing about my own life."[15]

As Held observes, feminists who doubt "that anyone can truly reflect the essentially and universally human, and [are] suspicious of those who presume to do so, . . . often ask that speakers openly acknowledge the backgrounds from which they speak so that their hearers can better understand the contexts of their experiences" (1993, 19). In *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society, and Politics*, Held overcomes her own "psychological inclination" and philosophical training and describes her personal and intellectual background, acknowledging explicitly that the feminist views presented in her book are not reflective of a wider range of feminist thinking, but rather emerge from her own "philosophical background and experience" (1993, 19–21). Likewise, in *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics*, Annette Baier includes a discussion of her development in the profession as a feminist philosopher as well as a series of anecdotes about

her experiences as a woman in a world in which trusting certain men can be dangerous. In her defense of these unusual philosophical moves, she acknowledges, "I know, however, that I will not convince many of my fellow moral philosophers" of their appropriateness, given that "the impersonal style has become nearly a sacred tradition in moral philosophy."[16] But to her credit she is not dissuaded by comments such as the one proffered by a "respected older mentor" after she gave a talk employing such anecdotes about trust: " 'This may all be great fun, but is it real professional work?' " (1994, 328 n. 20).

The above theorists who employ the personal voice all recognize a fundamental characteristic of feminist theory, which is that it takes women's experiences seriously. Likewise, trauma theory takes survivors' experiences seriously. And we cannot know what these are a priori. We need to tell our stories, making sure to listen to those of others, especially when they're at odds with ours.

First-person narratives in feminist philosophy and in trauma theory may seem to be of the same genre as Descartes's *Meditations*, but in spite of having superficially similar narrative structures, they differ radically in their intellectual aims. Feminists and trauma theorists writing of their own experiences do not claim, as did Descartes, that any rational person carrying out the same line of abstract reasoning will reach the same impersonal conclusions. Rather, we are suggesting that anyone in these particular circumstances, with this kind of socialization, with these options and limitations may (may, not must) view the world in this way. If first-person narratives are to help serve as an antidote to the obliteration of difference in theory, they must avoid the risk of overgeneralization.

Theorizing in the personal voice is not without its hazards, as the above discussion of the importance of acknowledging one's biases points out, but I think that with care these hazards can be largely avoided by those writing and reading such narratives. At the very least, they can be noted. They include: the dilemma of speaking only for oneself versus speaking, without warrant, on behalf of a larger group; taking statements of experience or remembered experiences at face value, as foundational; generating (unjustified) counternarratives of victimization; and perpetuating stereotypes about one's group.

The theorist who uses her own narrative of trauma or of victimization in her scholarship faces the dilemma, on one hand, of speaking only for herself, giving into self-indulgence or speaking about

experiences so idiosyncratic that her narrative is of no use to others, or, on the other hand, of presuming to speak for all members of a group to which she belongs (all trauma survivors, all rape survivors, all white, female, North American, middle-class rape survivors). However carefully the group is delineated, she risks overgeneralizing (and undergeneralizing). Although a survivor experiences, remembers, and narrates trauma as a member of at least one group, such a narrative should not be taken, in isolation, as standard for victimized members of that group. Furthermore, we need to rethink our (all or nothing) assumptions about identity, acknowledging the complexities of our multiple identities.[17]

The hazard of presuming to speak for all members of a group, such as all women (as white, middle-class academic feminists have been all too prone to do), can be avoided to some extent by making clear the background from which one writes and refraining from overgeneralizing in one's conclusions. Through my participation in a survivors' support group as well as in the antirape movement I discovered the many ways in which my race (white) and class (middle), in addition to my academic preoccupations, had distanced me from the concerns of many other victims of sexual violence. Although all of us in the support group (in center-city Philadelphia) had been raped, and we shared the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, these symptoms had a more devastating effect on some of us than on others because of our different backgrounds and present circumstances. I wondered whether I would ever function well enough to resume my teaching and research, while others worried about finding housing for themselves and their children, or about getting off drugs, or dealing with a racist legal system that takes black rape victims less seriously than white ones, or about supporting themselves (since they'd worked the night shift and were now too afraid to take public transportation to work after dark). We all struggled to get from one day to the next, but our struggles were not the same. It is important to bear in mind that we need not speak *for* other survivors of trauma in order to speak *with* them.

A second pitfall is to take experiences and narrated memories of subjective experiences at face value, as given or foundational. As Andreas Huyssen notes, "The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory. The fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representa-

tion is unavoidable."[18] Much recent psychological literature on memory stresses the construction that goes on in memory and argues against the "snapshot" (or "videotape" or "flashbulb") model of memory.[19] The tendency to take certain memories—traumatic memories— as simply given and retained as snapshots exists in trauma theory when traumatic memories are viewed as bodily, fragmented, sensory, intrusive, recurrent, uncontrollable, in contrast with narrative memories, which are viewed as linguistic, more coherent, more under control. Yet, traumatic memory, like narrative memory, is articulated, selective, even malleable, even though it may not be under the survivor's conscious control.

Furthermore, I would add to Huyssen's observation of the gap between experience and memory that there is, in addition, a gap between the event (which may be described in countless ways) and the experience of it. Here I reject a naive realist view of perception and of experience generally, a view that may be unwittingly evoked by those trauma theorists who emphasize the "snapshot" character of traumatic memory. (Yet not even snapshots capture "the given" as it is, without distortion and selection.)[20] Events are experienced by means of representations—sensory perceptions, bodily sensations, and linguistic classification (even if only as "something terrifying")— and these are all influenced by the perceived cultural meanings of the events. As Maurice Halbwachs notes, "It is in society that people acquire their memories."[21] I would add that this is so even when people are alone at the time the memories are acquired. "It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (Halbwachs 1992, 38) and again, I would add, even when they are alone during the process.

How one experiences a trauma, for example, depends on how one (often unconsciously) categorizes the event: is it life-threatening, is it human-inflicted, is it inescapable? These categorizations determine whether one feels fear, anger, hopelessness, and other seemingly unmediated emotions. How an experience is categorized depends on available models and metaphors. While I experienced my assault as a rape-in-progress, I attempted to enact a range of rape-avoidance scripts. When, after the first murder attempt, I experienced the assault as torture-resulting-in-murder, I recalled stories of Holocaust victims and heard my assailant speaking in what I later described as a "gruff, gestapo-like voice." Since I was not familiar with a literature of

generic attempted-murder victim narratives, I framed my experience in terms of a genre with which I was familiar. I do not advocate such appropriation of others' trauma narratives, however, as I am aware of the risks of misappropriation, especially of the Holocaust archetype. But inevitably events are experienced and later narrated through available archetypes. These, then, must be subjected to critical analysis.[22]

I recall first experiencing my assault as an incomprehensible random event, surely a nightmare. It reversed the epistemological crisis provoked by Descartes's question, "What if I'm dreaming?" Instead, I asked myself in desperation, "What if I'm awake?" When the sexual nature of the assault became apparent, I experienced it as a rape ("oh, so that's what this is") and tried to recall all I'd heard about what one is supposed to do in such a situation. When, after I "woke up," subsequent to being strangled into unconsciousness, I realized that I was being treated as a corpse (my assailant was dragging me by my feet to a creek bed at the bottom of a steep ravine), I redescribed the event as "a murder-in-progress." Each new categorization affected my perception of my assailant and my strategies of defense. And each inflects how I remember and would now describe the event: "I felt a sudden blow from behind, like being hit by a car"; "I was a victim of gender-motivated sexual violence"; "I survived a near-fatal murder attempt."

In light of these ways in which I experienced the traumatic event, I am puzzled by literary theorist Cathy Caruth's discussion of trauma as an "unclaimed" or "missed experience."[23] She writes that trauma is the result of "the lack of preparedness to take in a stimulus that comes too quickly. It is not simply, that is, the literal threatening of bodily life, but the fact that the threat is recognized as such by the mind *one moment too late.* The shock of the mind's relation to the threat of death is thus not the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience, the fact that, not being experienced *in time,* it has not yet been fully known" (1996, 62). There is a slippage, in Caruth's discussion, from a noting of the lack of preparedness for the threat of death to a claim that the experience of the threat of death is missing, which may be true in the case of some survivors. But research on trauma indicates that, at least in the case of a single traumatic event, the event is experienced at the time and remembered from that time, although the full emotional impact of the trauma takes time to absorb and work through (Herman 1992; Shay 1994; van der Kolk and van der Hart 1995).

The anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin notes that "the contents or evoked messages of memory are . . . ineluctably social insofar as they are acquired in the social world and can be coded in symbol systems which are culturally familiar."[24] The same can be said of experiences themselves. Historian Joan Scott rightly rejects the "appeal to experience as uncontestable evidence and as an originary point of explanation—as a foundation upon which analysis is based."[25] Such an appeal to experience not only weakens "the critical thrust of histories of difference," as Scott notes, but it also fails to capture the experience of experience.

Naomi Scheman has argued that even psychological states such as emotions are social constructs, which is not to say that anyone consciously constructs them or that one can choose not to have them.[26] As Scott puts it, "Subjects are constituted discursively, experience is a linguistic event (it doesn't happen outside established meanings), but neither is it confined to a fixed order of meaning. Since discourse is by definition shared, experience is collective as well as individual" (1992, 34). It is important to note the parenthetical comment she makes after stating that "experience is a linguistic event." She writes: "It doesn't happen outside established meanings." She is not implying, as some postmodernist theorists are uncharitably accused of thinking, that experiences such as rape or torture don't really happen, are all in the head, all in the culture, or all in the terms used to describe them. Events happen. But they can be described in countless ways, and they are experienced under some descriptions and not others.

To say that events are experienced only under descriptions (or, more broadly, representations) is to say more than that the experience must be viewed in context. Just as the experience is not simply given, neither is the context. Literary theorist Jonathan Culler's critique of the concept of context is useful here: "The notion of context frequently oversimplifies rather than enriches discussion, since the opposition between an act [or experience, I would add] and its context seems to presume that the context is given and determines the meaning of the act. We know, of course, that things are not so simple: context is not fundamentally different from what it contextualizes; context is not given but produced; what belongs to a context is determined by interpretive strategies; contexts are just as much in need of elucidation as events; and the meaning of a context is determined by events."[27]

Keeping in mind these caveats against taking the experience, its context, or its memory as given, we can avoid a third hazard of first-person narratives of trauma and victimization, which is the tendency to generate competing narratives of victimization, not all of which are justified. Legal theorist Martha Minow points out that "victim" tends to provoke counter-"victim talk" (note the recent rhetoric of the "angry white male victim" of affirmative action), and not all these narratives can be taken at face value, since they are often at odds with one another. She acknowledges that "individualized stories are essential to avoid the dehumanizing abstractions that allow people to forget or trivialize the suffering of others." But she warns that "there is a risk that emphasizing individual stories and stressing feelings can undermine critical evaluation and analysis of contradictory claims."[28] Once victims' stories are accepted as unassailable, unjustified reverse-victimization claims are harder to contradict, and ultimately no victimization claim can be taken seriously. The solution is not to silence (or ignore) all victimization claims but to evaluate them and attempt to overcome the difficulties of understanding experiences of those who are different from ourselves. Since perceptions of nondominant groups are commonly considered "biased" insofar as they depart from the norm, special efforts are required to evaluate them fairly. In order to do this, we need "to insist upon connecting personal stories with larger understandings of social structures within which those stories arise" (Minow 1993, 1437).

First-person narratives—of trauma or of other experiences of victimization—cannot be taken simply at face value. Consider, for example, the self-blame common among survivors of rape. No testimony is incorrigible. If a claim of victimization is made on behalf of a group, or because of one's membership in a group, the past and present victimization of the group in question needs to be critically examined. "Personal" testimonies must be framed by longer historical accounts and broader social and political ones.

It is also important, however, to avoid the trap of considering only discrete historical events to be traumatic. Historian Pamela Ballinger, for example, asserts that "war veterans and survivors of the Holocaust and the A-bomb" are distinguished from "survivors of incest and other abuse" by the fact that "in the case of abuse victims, no overarching historical 'event' (particularly that of state-sponsored violence . . .) exists within which individual memories may partici-

pate or contest. Rather, the event of abuse took place privately. Its recollection, however, is facilitated by a broad social environment obsessed with memory and in which groups may jockey for benefits through appeal to collective histories."[29] The moral relevance of such spatiotemporal considerations is never made clear, however. What Ballinger considers "private," that is, sexual abuse as opposed to collective violence, can be viewed instead as gender-motivated violence against women, which is perpetrated against women collectively, albeit not all at once and in the same place. The fact that rape occurs all the time, in places all over the world, may render it less noticeable as a collective trauma but does not make it an exclusively "individual" trauma.

When a traumatic event is viewed as "individual" or "private," it is viewed as politically insignificant, an isolated event best forgotten. (In contrast, there can also be political pressure to remember traumas, such as rapes, that are made part of a nation's story of victimization.)[30] I experienced, before and after my assailant's trial, considerable pressure to forget. During a pretrial trip to France, I went to Grenoble to look over legal documents and discuss the case with my lawyer. I also met with the avocat général, who had possession of my dossier and, with some reluctance, agreed to show it to me. It included depositions, police records, medical reports, psychiatric evaluations, and photos of my bruised, swollen face and battered body, my assailant's scratched face, neck, and genitals and his muddied clothes, the disturbed underbrush by the roadside, my belt found in the woods, and footprints in the mud at the bottom of the ravine. After our discussion of how the case would most likely proceed, as I was about to leave his office, the avocat général stunned me with these parting words of advice: "When the trial is over, you must forget that this ever happened." I protested that forgetting such a traumatic event is not an easy thing for a victim to do. He then looked at me sternly and said, "But, madame, you must make an effort." As if this had been simply an isolated event, of concern only to me.

A fourth hazard of narrating trauma, insightfully discussed by political theorist Wendy Brown in States of Injury, is to perpetuate one's self-definition as victim and others' stereotypes of one's group as weak and helpless (1995, 52–76). I lack space here to reply to her challenging critique of victim-based identity politics as a tool for liberation but will say simply that it is only by remembering and narrating the

past—telling our stories and listening to others'—that we can partic-
ipate in an ongoing, active construction of a narrative, not one that
confines us to a limiting past, but one that forms a background for the
present from which an imagined future can emerge.

THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE
IN RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA

I have been discussing the epistemological significance of narrative
in understanding trauma and victimization and will now examine the
psychological significance of narrative in recovering from trauma.
Although in this section I mainly discuss the constructive use of
narrative in recovering from trauma, I note that in the therapeutic
context as well as in the scholarly domain the employment of first-
person narratives is not without hazards. One hazard from the thera-
peutic standpoint, as noted below, is to take the narrative uncritically,
at face value, which can lead to unwarranted self-blaming. Another
is to confuse the epistemological role of narrative in understanding
trauma with the therapeutic role of narrative. To be epistemologically
useful, first-person narratives must be scrutinized critically. In incor-
porating a first-person narrative into my discussion of trauma, I am
doing scholarship, not therapy with an imagined audience, and I ex-
pect this scholarship to be treated as critically as any. My intent here
is to deflect the objection that narratives of victimization in scholar-
ship are "not fair" (that is, not fair game for criticism).[31]

The undoing of the self in trauma involves a radical disruption of
memory, a severing of past from present, and, typically, an inability
to envision a future. And yet trauma survivors often eventually find
ways to reconstruct themselves and carry on with reconfigured lives.
In this reconstruction, trauma narratives—what might be called
"speech acts of memory"—play an important role. Working through,
or remastering, traumatic memory (in the case of human-inflicted
trauma) involves a shift from being the object or medium of some-
one else's (the perpetrator's) speech to being the subject of one's own.
The act of bearing witness to the trauma facilitates this shift, not
only by transforming traumatic memory into a more or less coher-
ent narrative, which can then be worked into the survivor's sense of
self and view of the world, but also by reintegrating the survivor into

a community, reestablishing connections essential to selfhood. The
study of trauma, I suggest, provides support for a view of the self as
fundamentally relational—able to be constructed, destroyed, and re-
built through relations to others.

The study of trauma also supports the view of memory as multi-
form and often in flux. Memories of traumatic events can be them-
selves traumatic—uncontrollable, intrusive, and frequently somatic.
They are experienced by the survivor as inflicted, not chosen—as
flashbacks to the events themselves. (That they are experienced in
this way does not, however, give them epistemologically privileged
status, as snapshots of how things "really were.") In contrast, nar-
rating memories to others who are strong and empathic enough to
be able to listen enables survivors to gain control over traces left by
the trauma. Narrative memory is not passively endured; rather, it is
an act on the part of the narrator, a speech act that defuses traumatic
memory, giving shape and a temporal order to the events recalled, es-
tablishing more control over their recalling, and helping the survivor
to remake a self.

In order to recover, a trauma survivor needs to be able to establish
greater control over traumatic memories and other intrusive symp-
toms of post-traumatic stress disorder, recover a sense of mastery
over her environment (within reasonable limits), and be reconnected
with humanity. Whether these achievements occur depends to a
large extent on other people. By constructing and telling a narrative
of the trauma endured, and with the help of understanding listeners,
the survivor begins not only to integrate the traumatic episode into
a life with a before and an after but also to gain control over the oc-
currence of intrusive memories.

It is a curious feature of trauma narratives that in the right circum-
stances *saying* something about a traumatic memory *does* something
to it. A useful (although not complete) analogy can be drawn between
trauma testimonies and performative utterances as described by J. L.
Austin. Performative utterances are defined by Austin, in part, as
those such that "the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the
doing of an action, which . . . would not *normally* be described as, or
as 'just', saying something."[32] In the case of trauma testimonies, the
action could be described as transforming traumatic memory into
narrative memory, or as recovering or remaking the self. In the case
of both performative utterances and trauma testimonies, cultural

norms or conventions, as well as uptake on the part of some other individual(s), are required in order for the speech act to be successful ("felicitous," as Austin puts it).

There is also an important disanalogy, however, between performative utterances and trauma testimonies. According to Austin, performative utterances "do not 'describe' or 'report' or constate anything at all, are not 'true or false'" (1962, 5). This claim is controversial, however: one might argue that some performative utterances, such as "I do," do describe something and may be taken to be true or false. In any case, trauma testimonies do purport to describe events that actually occurred.

Claims of memory—of the form "I remember that p"—are ambiguous, however. In one sense of "remembering" (which might more appropriately be called "seeming to remember"), such claims are about a present act of consciousness and can be true regardless of any correspondence to any past experience or state of affairs. In another sense, one can correctly be said to remember only things that were once experienced. It may be that the performative, healing aspect of trauma testimonies is distinct from their functioning as reports of historical fact. That is, the same utterance could be (at least) two kinds of speech act: one of bearing witness (describing events as they occurred) and one of narrating (and thus transforming) traumatic memories. The latter might have a performative aspect not shared by the former. One speech act might succeed, even if the other fails. The description might succeed in describing the world as it was, even if the performative fails because of infelicitous conditions. Or vice versa. This controversial conjecture is too complex to explore here, but it is relevant to the collision between the roles of testimony in clinical settings and in courts of law in the "recovered memory" debates.

Although there are many varieties of trauma narrative, the form discussed most widely in the literature on trauma is that of a survivor telling her story to another person, often a therapist. Most psychologists writing about trauma hold that one has to tell one's trauma narrative to an empathic other in order for the telling to be therapeutic. Dori Laub writes, "Only when the survivor knows he is being heard will he stop to hear—and listen to—himself" (Felman and Laub 1992, 71).

But some survivors are helped by telling their stories to imagined others—to potential readers, for example, or to others kept alive in a

photograph (Felman and Laub 1992, 86–87). Narrating a trauma involves externalizing it, which can be done in a variety of ways. Writing in a journal can help externalize a trauma by temporarily splitting the self into an active (narrating) subject and a more passive (described) object. This process can help resubjectify a self objectified by trauma; it also can enable the survivor to gain greater empathy with herself.

Writing in others' imagined voices, as Charlotte Delbo has done in *Auschwitz and After*, can be another way of externalizing and hearing not only their narratives but also the writer's own.[33] Hearing other survivors' actual narratives in the context of group therapy can also be healing in ways that go beyond the capacity of individual therapy. It not only can enable a survivor to feel empathy for her traumatized self (by first feeling it for another who experienced a similar trauma) but also make possible appropriate emotions, such as anger, that she was not able to feel on her own behalf. By first feeling empathy with other survivors and getting angry with their tormentors, she is better able to get angry with her own. Hearing others' narratives can also help trauma survivors to move beyond unjustified self-blame. (Well, if she clearly wasn't to blame for her assault, why should I blame myself for mine?)

Arguably, the most serious harm of trauma is loss of control. Researchers on trauma have defined it as a state of complete helplessness in the face of an overwhelming force. Herman says the trauma victim "is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. . . . Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning" (Herman 1992, 33). The most daunting task faced by the trauma survivor is to regain a sense of control over her or his life, and not all survivors employ the same strategies to regain that control. As Michele Fine has pointed out, some refrain from taking control by going to the police or seeking the help of a social worker, since they may have reasons to doubt the efficacy of such approaches. She observes: "Taking control is undoubtedly a significant psychological experience; knowing that one can effect change in one's environment makes a difference. How individuals accomplish this, however, does vary by economic and social circumstance, gender, and perhaps personal style." From my readings and my experiences, I have gathered that the attempt to regain control by means of self-blame is common to many survivors of different races and classes.[34]

Trauma survivors (rape survivors, in particular, because they are frequently blamed for their assaults) are faced with an especially intractable double bind: they need to know there's something they can do to avoid being similarly traumatized in the future, but if there is such a thing, then they blame themselves for not knowing it (or doing it) at the time. They are faced with a choice between regaining control by accepting (at least some) responsibility—and hence blame—for the trauma, or feeling overwhelmed by helplessness. Whereas many have misunderstood, for example, rape victims' self-blaming as merely a self-destructive response to rape, arising out of low self-esteem, feelings of shame, or female masochism and fueled by society's desire to blame the victim, it can also be seen as an adaptive survival strategy if the victim has no other way of regaining a sense of control. At the same time, the fact that victims (especially rape victims) so readily blame themselves for what happened is another reason for not taking victims' narrative at face value.

The need for control reinforces, and is reinforced by, a fundamental assumption most of us share, which is our belief that we live in a just world in which nothing that is both terrible and undeserved will happen to us.[35] Even though many of us recognize the delusory quality of such a belief, our desire to make sense of our experiences, including our random bad fortune, often swamps our better judgment. Social psychologists have observed that not only do others tend to blame and derogate victims of crime and disasters of various kinds, but victims tend to blame and derogate themselves even when it should be obvious that they could not have brought on their misfortune. A striking example is the study done by Rubin and Peplau of fifty-eight draft-eligible young men who were informed by the 1971 lottery of their likelihood for being drafted into the armed forces (Lerner 1980, 140). They completed questionnaires designed to measure self-esteem before and after hearing the results of the lottery. Those with bad draft rankings showed lowered self-esteem; those with good ones showed enhanced self-esteem. Of course, depression can also lower self-esteem, and the subjects with bad luck were probably instantly depressed by the news.

One might think it would be easier (it certainly would be more appropriate) for victims of violence to blame their assailants. But a further reason for the prevalence of self-blame among rape survivors,

in addition to the need for control and the belief in a just world, is the difficulty so many have in getting angry with their assailants. I have met many rape survivors and have been stunned by how few are able to feel anger toward their assailants. It was not until after I had taken a self-defense course that I was able to get angry with the man who almost killed me. These observations led me to speculate that experiencing anger toward one's attacker is so difficult because it requires imagining oneself in proximity to him, a prospect that is too terrifying if one is still feeling powerless with respect to him.

The difficulty of directing anger toward their attackers exacerbates trauma victims' tendency to blame themselves in order to feel more in control of their fate. Although self-blame can help victims regain a feeling of control, not all varieties of self-blame do. Psychologist Ronnie Janoff-Bulman has distinguished between behavioral self-blame, which attributes victimization to modifiable past behavior, and characterological self-blame, which attributes it to unalterable (and undesirable) character traits. She found that behavioral self-blame facilitates recovery by giving victims a sense of control, whereas characterological self-blame leaves victims feeling vulnerable and leads to a greater incidence of depression.[36] This finding isn't surprising, since we tend to think that our behavior is under our control, whereas our characters, to a large extent, are not. They are, on the contrary, what control us. Characterological self-blame also usually contributes to the loss of self-esteem already suffered by victims who have been subjected to degrading treatment by their assailants. The exception may be the victim who is able to blame the assault on traits of a "former self," traits no longer possessed by a "current self."[37]

Behavioral self-blame, on the contrary, appears to lessen depression and facilitate recovery. Indeed, those victims who find themselves unable to engage in behavioral self-blame are left with feelings of extreme helplessness that can make recovery more difficult. Patricia A. Resick notes that "two studies have found that rape victims who appraised the situation as 'safe' prior to the assault had greater fear and depressive reactions than women who perceived themselves to be in a dangerous situation prior to the assault."[38] If there was nothing victims could have done to prevent the attack, such as avoiding certain dangerous settings or situations, there is nothing they could do to prevent a similar attack in the future. This

conclusion helps to explain the observation that trauma survivors who did not anticipate the trauma (and thus could not have done anything to prevent it) have a more difficult time recovering, other things being equal, than those who saw what was coming and experienced anxiety ahead of time. But even though behavioral self-blame can serve an adaptive function, it is a costly survival strategy for the victim, and it is not only fueled by but also contributes to society's erroneous and dangerous victim-blaming attitudes. Although this form of self-blame gives the victim the sense that she could avoid being assaulted again in the future by avoiding whatever "blameworthy" behavior "brought it on" in the past, it also leads to self-berating for her past "mistakes" and to unfair, and ultimately futile, self-imposed restrictions on her behavior in the future.

But given that the alternative to self-blame appears to be feeling helpless, which is harder to bear, how can self-blame be avoided? One way for rape survivors, in particular, to break out of the double bind of self-blame or helplessness is to take a self-defense course. Although learning self-defense does not guarantee that they will never be victimized again, it greatly increases their options for fending off assault[39] and enables them to feel in control of their lives without having to blame themselves or to restrict their behavior in ways never expected of men. And, perhaps even more important, it makes it easier for victims to put the blame where it belongs: on their assailants. This result is facilitated by the ability to feel appropriate anger toward the attacker once the terror induced by helplessness subsides. One group of researchers who studied women students who took a self-defense class "saw them discover that feeling angry was an alternative to feeling fearful or helpless. Learning to become angry with someone else rather than feeling frightened or helpless may enable the students to assume responsibility for the solution without blaming themselves for the problem."[40]

Of course, self-defense instruction is not a panacea. It does not eliminate the problem of violence and might even contribute to the common misperception of gender-motivated violence as an individual rather than a collective trauma. At best, it can give some people a greater chance of avoiding being victimized, most likely by deflecting the assailant's attention onto other targets. As C. H. Sparks and Bat-Ami Bar On have argued, self-defense tactics are "stopgap measures which fail to link an attack against one victim with attacks on

others." And, as they point out, "knowledge that one can fight if attacked is also a very different kind of security from enjoying a certainty that one will not be attacked at all."[41]

I have been discussing here simply the role of self-defense in helping a trauma survivor to carry on in the aftermath of a violent assault. My discussion of self-defense training points to one limitation of purely linguistic narratives in enabling recovery from trauma. It may be that in some cases a kind of physical remastering of the trauma is necessary. In learning self-defense maneuvers and then imaginatively reenacting the traumatic event—with the ability to change the ending—in space as well as in the imagination, a survivor can gain even more control over traumatic memories. As Janet notes, "Memory is an action: essentially it is the action of telling a story" (1984, 2:272). In recovering from trauma, a survivor may be helped not only by telling the story but also by being able to rewrite the plot and then enact it.

NOTES

1. Dori Laub, "An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival," in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 78.

2. See Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (hereafter SE), trans. under general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1953–1974), vol. 12 (1958 [1914]), pp. 145–56; Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in SE, vol. 14 (1957 [1917]), pp. 238–58; Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in SE, vol. 18 (1955 [1920]), pp. 3–64; Pierre Janet, *Les médications psychologiques*. 3 vols. (1919–1925; reprint, Paris: Société Pierre Janet, 1984).

3. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), pp. 424–29; Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Atheneum, 1994); Bessel van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart, "The Intrusive Past: the Flexibility of Memory and the Engraving of Trauma," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 158–182. "Trauma" here, in contrast with my use of the term, also refers to traumatic events not of human origin. My use of "trauma" is closer to Freud's implicit use in "traumatic neurosis" (defined by Laplanche and Pontalis as the "type of neurosis in which the appearance of symptoms follows upon an emotional shock generally associated with a situation where the subject has felt his life to be in danger") than it is to his use in "trauma (psychical)" (defined by Laplanche and Pontalis as "an event in the subject's life defined by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organisation"); J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 470 and 465.

4. I do, however, accept that psychic trauma has physical effects and that physical trauma has psychic effects. For discussion of this issue, see Susan J. Brison, "Speech, Harm, and the Mind-Body Problem in First Amendment Jurisprudence," *Legal Theory* 4 (1998): 39–61.

5. Benjamin Wilkomirski, *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, trans. Carol Brown Janeway (New York: Schocken Books, 1996).

6. The following discussion of philosophical bias against first-person narratives draws on my "On the Personal As Philosophical," *APA Newsletter on Feminism and Philosophy* 95.1 (1995): 37–40. I thank Eva F. Kittay and Diana T. Meyers (who edited that issue) and two anonymous reviewers for their comments. The earliest work in feminist philosophy of which I am aware that employs and defends the personal voice is Claudia Card, "Feminist Ethical Theory: A Lesbian Perspective" (unpublished manuscript), presented as a lecture in 1978 at the University of Minnesota and to the Feminist Inquiry Seminar at Dartmouth College.

7. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 160.

8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), p. 13. In invoking Nietzsche's view of the autobiographical aspect of philosophy, I do not intend to endorse his other philosophical positions.

9. Virginia Held, *Feminist Morality: Transforming Culture, Society, and Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 19.

10. Ross Harrison, "Rape—A Case Study in Political Philosophy," in *Rape: An Historical and Cultural Enquiry*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli and Ray Porter (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p. 51.

11. René Descartes, *Meditations*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 2, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 13.

12. As Claudia Card has pointed out to me, there was not even a body of abstract philosophical literature on rape (E. M. Curley, "Excusing Rape," *Phi-*

losophy and Public Affairs 5 (1976): 325–60, was an exception) prior to articles by Susan Griffin, Carolyn M. Shafer and Marilyn Frye, Pamela Foa, and Susan Rae Peterson in *Feminism and Philosophy*, ed. Mary Vetterling-Braggin, Frederick Elliston, and Jane English (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1977). Published the same year was Lorenne Clark and Debra Lewis, *Rape: The Price of Coercive Sexuality* (Toronto: Women's Press, 1977). Now there are several anthologies of philosophical writings on rape (including first-person narratives) and a growing literature from other disciplines. See, for example, the first-person scholarship on rape by anthropologist Cathy Winkler, including "Rape As Social Murder," *Anthropology Today* 7, 3 (1991): 12–14, and "Ethnography of the Ethnographer" (with Penelope J. Hanke), in *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival*, ed. Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C. G. M. Robben (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), pp. 154–84.

13. Diana Meyers, "Social Exclusion, Moral Reflection, and Rights," *Law and Philosophy* 12, 2 (May 1993): 125–26.

14. Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 1–21.

15. Susan Estrich, *Real Rape* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 1–3.

16. Annette C. Baier, *Moral Prejudices: Essays on Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 194.

17. For insightful discussions of the use of "we" in group identity politics, see Marianna Torgovnick, "The Politics of the 'We,'" in *Eloquent Obsessions: Writing Cultural Criticism*, ed. M. Torgovnick (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 260–77, and Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995).

18. Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 3.

19. See the recovered memory therapy debates, especially Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995); Elizabeth Loftus and K. Ketcham, *The Myth of Repressed Memories: False Memories and Allegations of Sexual Abuse* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994); and Lenore Terr, *Unchained Memories* (New York: Basic Books, 1995).

20. See Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976), pp. 14–16.

21. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 38.

22. For insightful discussion of the misappropriation of Holocaust narratives, see James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), especially pp. 83–133.

23. Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experiences* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

24. Elizabeth Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 112.

25. Joan W. Scott, "'Experience,'" in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 24.

26. Naomi Scheman, "Individualism and the Objects of Psychology," in

Discovering Reality: Feminist Perspectives on Epistemology, Metaphysics, Methodology, and Philosophy of Science, ed. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka (Boston: Reidel, 1983), pp. 225–44.

27. Jonathan Culler, *Framing the Sign: Criticism and Its Institutions* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), p. xiv.

28. Martha Minow, "Surviving Victim Talk," *UCLA Law Review* 40 (1993): 1435. Another common example of "victim-talk" generating counter-"victim-talk" is domestic violence litigation in which each partner may claim to be the victim (Claudia Card, correspondence).

29. Pamela Ballinger, "The Culture of Survivors: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Memory," *History and Memory* 10, 1 (Spring 1988): 121–22. For an excellent defense of the opposing view—that rape is a form of collective violence against women—see Claudia Card, "Rape As a Terrorist Institution," in *Violence, Terrorism, and Justice*, ed. R. G. Frey and Christopher W. Morris (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 296–319.

30. See Atina Grossmann, "A Question of Silence: The Rape of German Women by Occupation Soldiers," in *West Germany Under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era*, ed. Robert G. Moeller (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 33–52.

31. For a similar—and, I believe, similarly misguided—objection to so-called "victim art," see dance critic Arlene Croce's explanation of her refusal to attend and review Bill T. Jones's *Still/Here* in "Discussing the Undiscussable," *New Yorker*, 24 December 1994/2 January 1995, 54–60. For insightful analysis of the Croce article, see Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Fruits of Sorrow: Framing Our Attention to Suffering* (Boston: Beacon, 1997), pp. 133–56.

32. J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 5.

33. Charlotte Delbo, *Auschwitz and After*, trans. Rosette C. Lamont (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995).

34. Michele Fine, "Coping with Rape: Critical Perspectives on Consciousness," in *Disruptive Voices*, ed. M. Fine (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 73.

35. See Melvin J. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion* (New York: Plenum, 1980).

36. Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, "Characterological Versus Behavioral Self-Blame: Inquiries into Depression and Rape," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37, 10 (1979): 1798–1809.

37. In "Self-Blame in Victims of Violence," *Journal of Social Issues*, 39, 2 (1983): 150, Dale T. Miller and Carol A. Porter suggest that this splitting of the self may be a way of coping,

38. Patricia A. Resick, "The Psychological Impact of Rape," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 8, 2 (June 1993): 223–55. For the studies she cites, see E. Frank and B. D. Stewart, "Depressive Symptoms in Rape Victims: A Revisit," *Journal of Affective Disorders* 1 (1984): 77–85, and K. L. Scheppie and P. B. Bart, "Through Women's Eyes: Defining Danger in the Wake of Sexual Assault," *Journal of Social Issues* 39, 2 (1983): 63–81.

39. See Pauline B. Bart and Patricia H. O'Brien, "Stopping Rape: Effective Avoidance Strategies," *Signs* 10 (Autumn 1984): 83–101.

40. Louise H. Kidder, Joanne L. Boell, and Marilyn M. Moyer, "Rights

Consciousness and Victimization Prevention: Personal Defense and Assertiveness Training," *Journal of Social Issues* 39, 2 (1983): 153–68.

41. C. H. Sparks and B.-A. Bar On, "A Social Change Approach to the Prevention of Sexual Violence Against Women," *Work in Progress*, series no. 83-08 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies, Wellesley College, 1985), p. 3.