
Article

‘After Auschwitz’: Writing history after injustice in Adorno and Lyotard

Javier Burdman

University of Strasbourg, Strasbourg 67081, France.

burdman@unistra.fr

Abstract Political philosophy in the last decades has turned away from universal narratives of progress, on grounds that these narratives produce exclusion and justify domination. However, the universal values that underlie emancipatory political projects seem to presuppose universal history, which explains its persistence in some contemporary political philosophers committed to such projects. In order to find a response to the paradox according to which universal history is inherently exclusionary and yet necessary to uphold universal values, I examine the contrast between Adorno’s and Lyotard’s perspectives on the problem of writing history ‘after Auschwitz’. For both philosophers, Auschwitz interrupts our fundamental normative and cognitive values, because any attempt to identify the meaning of the camps by means of these values misunderstands the suffering that took place in them. Yet this interruption produces a feeling that calls for the institution of new universal normative values. For Adorno, this value is a purely negative command to act in such a way that Auschwitz does not repeat itself. For Lyotard, by contrast, it is the demand to invent new idioms that make it possible to find meaning in Auschwitz.

Contemporary Political Theory (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-020-00456-8>

Keywords: history; injustice; Adorno; Lyotard; Auschwitz

Although totalizing philosophies of history have fallen into disrepute, it is unclear how universalist political projects can leave them aside. On the one hand, universal narratives of progress have been traditionally complicit with domination and oppression, because they put certain groups in the position of underdeveloped populations in need of tutelage. On the other hand, without a universal narrative, universalist politics seems to lack orientation: how can we affirm and defend universal values such as freedom, autonomy, equality, and so on, without at the same time affirming the historical process that led to their recognition and partial implementation? This is what I call in this article ‘the paradox of history’, which can be summarized in Wendy Brown’s (2001, p. 3) claim that ‘while many have



lost confidence in a historiography bound to a notion of progress or to any other purpose, we have coined no political substitute for progressive understandings of where we have come from and where we are going' (see also Ferry, 1987, p. 16). The paradox explains the persistence of narratives of progress in political theories with normative aspirations. Amy Allen (2015, chs 2 and 3) has recently criticized the reliance on such narratives in the work of Jürgen Habermas and Axel Honneth, which limits their attempts to make European social philosophy more sensitive to cultural pluralism (see Habermas, 1984, ch. 2; Honneth, 1995, ch. 9). John Rawls (2000, pp. 127–128) has also argued for a universal narrative of progress that supports the values of political liberalism.

Critiques of contemporary narratives of progress and their exclusionary implications argue for the need to open up normative universalism to a multiplicity of historical trajectories. Allen and historian Dipesh Chakrabarty claim that, given its importance for universalist political projects, we should not abandon universal history altogether, but rather overcome the alternative between a totalizing history centered on the West and a plurality of histories unfolding across multiple cultures. Both Allen (2015, pp. 209–219) and Chakrabarty (2000, pp. 249–255) acknowledge that without some unifying narrative connecting multiple histories, we would be unable to link different histories to universal norms. The norms of each society at each historical moment would look like the effect of a contingent development, no different from particular habits. In order to avoid the potential undermining of universal values implicit in a wholesale rejection of universal history, Allen and Chakrabarty seek to pluralize universalist narratives. In their view, instead of choosing between universal history and particular histories, we need a back and forth movement that is attentive to both the universalist aspects of Western history and its exclusion of other historical trajectories toward normative universalization.

While I agree that one central problem of narratives of progress is the exclusion of alternative historical paths to normative universality, critiques of these narratives have paid less attention to the internal exclusions produced by them. Totalizing narratives of progress are exclusionary not only because they universalize one historical trajectory to the detriment of others, but also because they silence perspectives that, within this trajectory, are not represented by the predominant narrative. To be sure, Allen and Chakrabarty do not dismiss the problem of the internal exclusion produced by universal historical narratives. However, they do not examine how these narratives silence certain voices and perspectives that are supposedly part of them. This is an important issue because, as Alasia Nuti's (2019) and Peter J. Verovšek's (2020) recent studies on historical injustice and collective memory have shown, past injustices and historical turning points generate a present burden on political actors to develop new narratives that reconstitute a sense of normative commonality. These historical narratives, as David Myer Temin and Adam Dahl (2017, pp. 907–908) claim, 'are not pre-political inputs but are offered up, negotiated, and contested in the course of contemporary political struggles'. If



this is the case, then any historical narrative involves from the beginning exclusions produced by the imposition of certain viewpoints over others. Universal narratives of progress disavow this internal exclusion by presenting one particular perspective on history as the only valid one, neglecting or silencing other possible interpretations of historical events. In the face of internal exclusion, the paradox of history takes the following form: on the one hand, universal history excludes certain perspectives by presenting one viewpoint on history as the only valid one; on the other, universal history is necessary to support the value that all viewpoints should be able to express themselves.

This article attempts to find a way out of this paradox by examining the relationship between the internal exclusion produced by universal history and the source of the universal normative claim that excluded perspectives ought to be heard. I address this relationship by examining a thesis present in the works of Theodor Adorno and Jean-François Lyotard around the idea of 'after Auschwitz': the writing of history is inherently interrupted by voices that cannot be heard, leaving a silence that is felt as a demand to invent new ways of describing the past. The thesis emerges as a response to the problem of finding the meaning of Auschwitz in terms of a universal narrative. Auschwitz interrupts history because any meaning that we can find for it betrays the suffering of the victims, which is why for both authors 'after Auschwitz' designates a historical time characterized by the impossibility of endowing history with meaning. Yet the suffering of the victims, whose meaning we cannot adequately grasp, generates a feeling that a voice remains to be heard. Adorno and Lyotard agree that this feeling is the source of a universal normative demand to resist exclusion, but they disagree on the content of such demand. While Adorno believes that the only possible moral imperative in the face of the meaninglessness of Auschwitz is to think and to act in a way that avoids its repetition, Lyotard believes that it is possible to invent languages that overcome such meaninglessness. In the conclusion, I argue that Lyotard's view provides a more adequate representation of the political dynamics involved in the writing of history after cases of injustice.

Auschwitz as Impasse in Meaning

Adorno's conception of history is decidedly influenced by the decay of the Enlightenment into totalitarianism. This influence crystalizes into two main ideas about history. The first idea predominates in Adorno's early texts, such as *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Minima Moralia*, and has received broad scholarly attention (Bernstein, 2001, pp. 372–384; Silberbusch, 2018, pp. 14–26; Gandesha, 2019). It is the view that after totalitarianism history can only be described in terms of a reversal of progress into regression, as a sort of negative narrative in which universal normative and cognitive categories turn into their opposite. In this



narrative, the promise of reconciliation between reason and nature turns into the obliteration of the non-identical and the absolute subordination of nature to instrumental rationality that are essential to totalitarianism. The most prominent reversal in Adorno's account of history is that of Enlightenment into myth: 'the myths which fell victim to the Enlightenment were themselves its products', because 'myth sought to report, to name, to tell of origins – but therefore also to narrate, record, explain' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002, p. 5). Totalitarianism is an effect of the reversal of Enlightenment into a myth of complete domination over nature by means of scientific explanation and calculation: 'the totalitarian order has granted unlimited rights to calculating thought and puts its trust in science as such' (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002, pp. 67–68). Another prominent example of the reversal of reason into its opposite is the decay of autonomy into nullity described in *Minima Moralia*: 'the subject still feels sure of its autonomy, but the nullity demonstrated to subjects by the concentration camp is already overtaking the form of subjectivity itself' (Adorno, 2006b, p. 16). For Adorno, the normative category of autonomy has become a mere function of the commodity exchange, where objects as well as individuals are quantifiable values. The camps realize the nullity that individuals have become under this distorted version of autonomy. These examples illuminate a general view underlying Adorno's conception of history: given that the main categories of the Enlightenment have been complicity with totalitarianism, we must distrust them as a source of normative and cognitive orientation.

The second idea about history in response to the experience of totalitarianism, which is more influential in Adorno's notion of 'after Auschwitz', is that universal history is interrupted by voices that cannot be heard. This idea plays a less systematic role in Adorno's work and has received scarce scholarly attention. However, as Burkhardt Lindner (1998) has argued, it is essential for understanding the meaning of 'after Auschwitz' – which does not imply, as I will claim further down, that the negative narrative of the decay of the Enlightenment into totalitarianism does not play an important role as well, as Lindner suggests. Brian O'Connor (2014, p. 180) has argued that Adorno reshaped his views on history in the late forties, once the magnitude of the Holocaust became clear. Awareness of this magnitude led Adorno to become concerned with the problem of discontinuity in history, by contrast to his earlier concern with the reversal of the Enlightenment into myth. In his 1964 lectures titled *History and Freedom*, he criticizes Hegel's attempt to reconcile individual suffering with the higher meaning of historical events claiming that 'it is unreasonable to ask the victim, the individual who has to put up with the consequences, to find comfort in the circumstance that the irreconcilable principle of the way of the world should govern his own private fate' (Adorno, 2006a, p. 42). The idea of 'after Auschwitz', I believe, represents an inquiry into this lack of reconciliation between historical meaning and the victim's fate. Specifically, 'after Auschwitz' designates a historical time marked by the



impossibility of finding meaning for the suffering of the victims of the camps on the basis of existing normative and cognitive categories. Auschwitz interrupts history because it involves a kind of suffering that we cannot accurately describe by means of the categories with which we write history.

Adorno introduces the idea of 'after Auschwitz' in the last part of *Negative Dialectics*, in the context of a discussion of the relationship between metaphysics and history, which is closely connected to the relationship between the eternal and the temporal. Auschwitz is a historical–philosophical turning point in this relationship because it marks the impossibility of reconciling metaphysics and history:

After Auschwitz, our feelings resist any claim of the positivity of existence as sanctimonious, as wronging the victims; they balk at squeezing any kind of sense, however bleached, out of the victims' fate. And these feelings do have an objective side after events that make a mockery of the construction of immanence as endowed with a meaning radiated by an affirmatively posited transcendence (Adorno, 2004, p. 361).

The first sentence in the quotation makes clear that 'after Auschwitz' refers to a time where our feelings indicate that any claim about the positivity of existence, such as a claim about why Auschwitz took place and what we can learn from it, wrongs the victims. The incommensurability between what happened and what we can say about it makes any claim sound sanctimonious, by which Adorno seems to mean that it sounds like a non-credible attempt to draw moral conclusions where there are none. The second sentence in the quotation claims that these feelings have an objective side. This means that the feelings express not only a subjective sensation, but also the objective impossibility to reconcile immanence and transcendence. The feeling that any meaning that we can find for Auschwitz wrongs the victims expresses the objective fact that the suffering of Auschwitz has made this reconciliation impossible. 'After Auschwitz' is then a historical time marked by the impossibility of endowing at least one historical event with meaning on the basis of transcendent categories. Lacking any metaphysical category that corresponds to it, Auschwitz remains a pure experience that resists conceptual thinking, and thus meaning altogether.

The question that follows is why Auschwitz, as a specific historical event, resists meaning in terms of transcendent ideas. Oshrat C. Silberbusch (2018, pp. 64–65) has recently argued that Adorno does not and indeed cannot explain this resistance, because it is based on a 'pre-philosophical experience' of horror against human suffering. In my view, however, Adorno does provide an explanation of why the suffering of Auschwitz in particular resists meaning, which is that the suffering was produced in such a way that the victims themselves experienced it as meaningless. Adorno claims that the extermination in the camps was unrelated to any individual characteristic or action performed by the victims: 'what the sadists in the camps



foretold their victims, “Tomorrow you’ll be wiggling skyward as smoke from this chimney”, bespeaks the indifference of each individual life that is the direction of history’ (Adorno, 2004, p. 362). Dying in the camps has nothing to do with anything the victims have done, and which could justify their death, however falsely, in terms of an idea. Instead, people die in the camps in order to fulfill the tendency to make individuals fungible and replaceable: genocide ‘is on its way wherever men are leveled off... until one exterminates them literally, as deviations from the concept of their total nullity’ (Adorno, 2004, p. 362). The individual characteristics of the victims of the camps are eliminated so that they can die as if they were no individuals at all, but mere ‘nullity’. While in previous cases of mass murder the perpetrators at least felt the need to justify it, however falsely, on the basis of what the victims were or had done, death in the camps is indifferent to anything particular about the victims. This point is well illustrated in the following words by Primo Levi (1959, pp. 21–22):

imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same time of his house, his habits, his clothes, in short, of everything he possesses: he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself. He will be a man whose life or death can be lightly decided with no sense of human affinity, in the most fortunate of cases, on the basis of a pure judgment of utility.

Levi’s remarks stress a point that is essential for Adorno, namely, that no idea was used to justify the suffering and dying that took place in the camps. For the victims, such suffering and death had no meaning precisely because it lacked any attempt at justification or explanation whatsoever, which explains why any meaning that we can find for them will betray their true nature.

We can see that the expression ‘after Auschwitz’ refers to two interrelated historical–philosophical impasses that follow from the nullification that took place in the camps. On the one hand, ‘after Auschwitz’ refers to the impossibility of finding meaning in the normative principles that we have inherited from the Enlightenment after they have proven complicit with myth and total domination. This is a continuation of the idea that Adorno begins to develop in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Minima Moralia*, as we have seen. On the other hand, as Adorno suggests for the first time in *Negative Dialectics* (although there are hints of this idea in *History and Freedom*), ‘after Auschwitz’ refers to the impossibility of finding a meaning that does not wrong the suffering experienced by the victims of the camps by subordinating it under a concept that distorts it. The two impasses are different but interrelated: the transcendent categories of the Enlightenment have been complicit with the production of meaningless suffering, and as an effect of this complicity, we are unable to endow the suffering of the victims of the camps with meaning. To use categories that have been complicit with that suffering to endow it with meaning would only mock the suffering. Therefore, ‘after



Auschwitz' our categories encounter an insurmountable limitation in their capacity to endow the world with meaning. The experience of the camps plays thus a central role in what Fabien Freyenhagen (2013, pp. 4–5) has characterized as Adorno's 'negativism', that is, the idea that, given that the world has proven to be fundamentally bad ('substantive negativism'), we are unable to know what the good is or could be ('epistemic negativism'). 'After Auschwitz' designates a historical–philosophical context of negativism, because Auschwitz has exposed our normative and cognitive categories as complicit with meaningless suffering.

The impossibility of endowing Auschwitz with meaning plays an important role in Adorno's turn to negative dialectics. Given that any meaning would distort the nature of Auschwitz, thinking after Auschwitz can only dwell in the impossibility of finding meaning. This point is important because it is the focus of Lyotard's critique, as we will see further down. At the end of the section 'After Auschwitz', Adorno (2004, p. 365) explains that 'if negative dialectics calls for the self-reflection of thinking, the tangible implication is that if thinking is to be true – if it is to be true today, in any case – it must also be thinking against itself'. Otherwise, if thinking does not measure itself by what eludes it, it is like 'the musical accompaniment with which the SS liked to drown out the screams of its victims'. The challenge of thinking about Auschwitz is that any meaning that we can find for it betrays its true meaning, which is meaningless suffering. Therefore, instead of looking for the positive meaning of Auschwitz, Adorno believes that thinking should turn against itself: it must criticize all its fundamental categories, dispelling the illusion that some of them may contribute to make history meaningful.

Universal Norms after Auschwitz

Although 'after Auschwitz' designates a specific historical time connected to the experience of the camps, Adorno's analysis has broader implications for our understanding of universal history. As I mentioned at the beginning, one problem with totalizing narratives of progress is that they exclude certain voices and experiences. Adorno's analysis of 'after Auschwitz' shows that the exclusion produced by universal history is not only external, in the sense that it affects alternative histories, as Allen and Chakrabarti point out, but also internal. By 'internal', I mean that the fundamental categories by which we write history are complicit with the practices and structures that prevent that we hear certain voices. Metaphysical categories do not simply 'fail' to hear the suffering of the victims of the camps, but also, and more fundamentally, they actively silence it. This is why 'Auschwitz' is an intractable experience for universal history: it designates a suffering that we cannot but conceal and prolong. We cannot overcome this silence by simply listening to the victims, because it is in the very essence of the crime to eliminate the capacity to meaningfully describe the suffering produced by it. Even



the survivors of the camps, as Giorgio Agamben (1999, pp. 33–34) has shown in his analysis of their testimonies, feel unable to provide an adequate account of what happened in them (see also LaCapra, 1998, especially ch. 1). The problem posed by Auschwitz is thus the problem of finding the meaning of an event that blocks our capacity to endow events with meaning, because the very categories by which we endow meaning exclude certain voices and prolong their suffering.

Although Adorno (unlike Lyotard, as we will see) believes that it is impossible to overcome the meaningless character of the suffering that took place in the camps, he also believes that meaningless suffering as such generates a normative commitment to prevent its repetition. As we have seen, the impossibility of reconciling the suffering of the victims with transcendental categories produces a feeling with an objective side. This feeling with an objective side is what Adorno calls 'a bodily sensation of the moral addendum', which consists in 'practical abhorrence of the unbearable physical agony to which individuals are exposed even with individuality about to vanish as a form of mental reflection' (Adorno, 2004, p. 365). The moral addendum is the ground for the 'new categorical imperative' that Hitler imposed upon an unfree mankind: 'to arrange their thoughts and actions so that Auschwitz will not repeat itself, so that nothing similar will happen'. Martin Shuster (2014, pp. 73–79) and Samir Gandesha (2019) have pointed out that the moral addendum, as a core of materiality that resists thinking and exposes it to the non-identical, serves as a source for an alternative normative orientation to the logic of identity characteristic of modern capitalism and totalitarianism. However, their analyses leave aside Auschwitz as a historical instance of moral addendum that serves as a ground for a new categorical imperative. As a historical event, Auschwitz is a moral addendum because it produces a bodily feeling of abhorrence that interrupts our capacity to endow historical events with meaning.

The relationship between Auschwitz as a historical moral addendum and the new categorical imperative is important for understanding how exclusion in history can generate universal normative values. The crucial point is that the suffering of Auschwitz interrupts metaphysical categories, because it is both the antithesis of such categories and produced by them. Adorno explains this idea in the following passage:

The course of history forces materialism upon metaphysics, traditionally the direct antithesis of materialism. What the mind once boasted of defining or construing as its like moves in the direction of what is unlike the mind, in the direction of that which eludes the rule of the mind and yet manifests that rule as absolute evil. The somatic, unmeaningful stratum of life is the stage of suffering, of the suffering which in the camps, without any consolation, burned every soothing feature out of the mind, and out of culture, the mind's objectification (Adorno, 2004, p. 365).



Auschwitz is a historical instance of culture, or the mind's objectification, producing its exact opposite, suffering as an unmeaningful stratum of life. There seems to be no possible further justification of why Auschwitz should not repeat itself, for it is self-evident that normative values should not turn into their opposite. If acting on the basis of metaphysical ideas such as reason, freedom, and autonomy leads to a suffering that is utterly meaningless in terms of these ideas, it is evident that we should reconsider them in such a way that the suffering is avoided. At the same time, given that normative values have been complicit with meaningless suffering, the imperative that this suffering ought to be avoided is more fundamental than the imperative to realize such values. This is why the meaningless suffering of Auschwitz, rather than any metaphysical idea, is the ground for a universal norm that it ought not to repeat itself.

The new categorical imperative grounded on the meaningless suffering of Auschwitz represents Adorno's response to what I have called the paradox of history. This paradox designates the fact that universal historical narratives exclude certain voices, yet we need them in order to ground universal normative values, including the value that exclusion ought to be overcome. For Adorno, there is no transcendent idea that could endow Auschwitz with meaning and thus ground a universal historical narrative that does justice to the suffering of the victims. However, the very impossibility of endowing Auschwitz with meaning produces a feeling that serves as a ground for a universal normative value, namely, that Auschwitz ought not to take place again. We cannot overcome the meaninglessness of the suffering that took place in Auschwitz, but as long as we accept this meaninglessness as insurmountable, we are at least capable of drawing a normative implication from it that does not misrepresent the suffering. This way, the very interruption of universal history serves as a ground for a new narrative on the basis of this interruption, which in its turn serves as a ground for a new universal normative commitment. Instead of attempting to overcome the meaninglessness of Auschwitz in order to reconstitute universal history, Adorno believes that acknowledging such meaninglessness serves as a ground for the imperative that meaningless suffering ought to be avoided. The imperative remains negative (it tells us what to avoid, rather than what to achieve), precisely because there is no positive value that we could defend 'after Auschwitz'. The only possible universal norm after Auschwitz is a negative norm. It is this negativity that is at the core of Lyotard's response to Adorno.

Lyotard's Response to Adorno

As in Adorno, a central concern in Lyotard's work is the end of narratives of progress, which is condensed in his famous thesis of the 'end of grand narratives'. The thesis is well known, yet the question of what history is for Lyotard, and what



it could be after the end of grand narratives, has received almost no attention in the scholarship (Burger, 1996; Williams, 2000; Pagès, 2011; Bamford, 2017), with the exception of Michèle Cohen-Halimi's (2014) thorough study. One reason for this lack of attention is probably that there are few systematic reflections on history in *The Postmodern Condition*, where the thesis is presented. In the context of this book, 'the end of grand narratives' stems from a diagnosis of the multiplication of language games and of the changing role of scientific knowledge in contemporary societies (Lyotard, 1984, pp. 14–17). However, the question of what history is and how we can narrate it plays a central role in Lyotard's earlier book on phenomenology (Lyotard, 1991, ch. 7), as well as in his later book *The Differend*. As we will see in this section, Lyotard develops his view on history partly through a polemical response to Adorno on the problem of writing history 'after Auschwitz'. At the core of this response is a rejection of negative dialectics as a proper response to the paradox of history. While Lyotard agrees with Adorno that Auschwitz interrupts our fundamental cognitive and normative categories, producing a feeling that signals their complicity with injustice, he believes that responding to this feeling entails inventing new languages that allow us to listen to the voices that cannot yet be heard. Inventiveness, rather than negativism, is Lyotard's response to the paradox of history, that is, to the need for a universal narrative that upholds universal values, even though universal history seems to be inherently exclusionary. In order to understand the normative value involved in the invention of new languages for the writing of history, I turn now to the contrast between Lyotard and Adorno. Given the complexity of Lyotard's perspective, I devote this section to reconstructing his argument. In the next section, I will analyze its implications for responding to the paradox of history.

Lyotard's analysis of Auschwitz shares Adorno's concern with the difficulty of grasping the meaning of the camps as a historical event, but his conclusions are different. Like Adorno, Lyotard believes that Auschwitz poses a difficult problem for the writing of history, that is, the problem of describing an event that seems to be utterly meaningless in terms of any metaphysical category. Any concept that we use to describe Auschwitz betrays its true meaning, which is why no historical narrative can do justice to it. But while Adorno believes that negative dialectics is the only path available for thinking 'after Auschwitz', Lyotard believes that another path is both possible and desirable. It is desirable because a negative dialectics, or a dialectics that does not lead to a positive meaning, cannot be anything but nihilism, in his view:

Is the anonym 'Auschwitz' a model of negative dialectics? Then, it will have awakened the despair of nihilism and it will be necessary 'after Auschwitz' for thought to consume its determinations like a cow its fodder or a tiger its prey, that is, with no result. In the sty or the lair that the West will have become, only that which follows upon this consumption will be found: waste



matter, shit.... We wanted the progress of the mind, we got its shit (Lyotard, 1989, p. 91).

According to Lyotard, a negative dialectics is a dialectics of shit: it produces nothing that is worth preserving, but turns everything into waste. This is what takes place in Adorno's dialectics, according to Lyotard: unable to find the meaning of the name 'Auschwitz', that is, unable to find its 'result', dialectics turns into the negation of all meaning: nihilism. Thus 'after Auschwitz', modernity is nothing but waste – 'all post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critique, is garbage', Adorno (2004, p. 367) famously claims. As Michèle Cohen-Halimi (2014, pp. 105–116) argues, Lyotard's critique is aimed not only at Adorno, but also at dialectics as a method to cope with history 'after Auschwitz'. In this regard, it is worth noting that Lyotard's critique of Adorno's insistence on preserving dialectics as a philosophical method, even with a 'negative' turn, dates back to his early writings (Lyotard, 1994, pp. 99–100).

In terms of the paradox of history that I have been examining, Lyotard's concern is that, when confronting an experience that cannot be interpreted in terms of any metaphysical principle, dialectics cannot but negate the possibility of cognitive and normative universality altogether. In this regard, Lyotard shares Freyenhagen's (2013, p. 5) reading according to which Adorno is a 'substantive negativist', in the sense that he sees modern society as fundamentally bad. However, while this negativism, as Freyenhagen points out, does not preclude Adorno from inferring some positive orientations for thinking and action (such as the new categorical imperative), Lyotard is skeptical that dialectics, even with a negative turn, can successfully provide such orientation. If dialectics cannot find the transcendent meaning of historical events, then by the same token it is deprived of transcendent principles by which to ground universal normative claims. Dialectics does not provide a response to the paradox of history, but remains stuck in it: either history has meaning in terms of transcendental principles, or it lacks meaning and there are no valid transcendental principles whatsoever. In the face of the meaninglessness of Auschwitz, a consistent dialectics cannot but turn into nihilism, in the sense of rejecting the validity of all transcendental principles that could ground universal claims.

In order to avoid nihilism, Lyotard believes, it is necessary to move beyond dialectics. Instead of remaining stuck in the impossibility of finding meaning for Auschwitz within dialectics, Lyotard asks why dialectics cannot find meaning for Auschwitz. The fundamental problem is that Auschwitz is not the name of an event, but rather of two events: one for the Jews, one for the SS. There is nothing we can say about Auschwitz that would connect these two events, because Auschwitz is precisely the destruction of the collective subject, of the 'we' for whom the event could at least potentially mean one and the same thing:



What determination would Auschwitz be lacking so as to turn it into an experience with a *Resultat*? Would it be that of the impossibility of a *we*? In the concentration camps, there would have been no subject in the first-person plural. In the absence of such a subject, there would remain 'after Auschwitz' no subject, no *Selbst* which could prevail upon itself to name itself in naming 'Auschwitz' (Lyotard, 1989, pp. 97–98).

The reason why it is impossible to find meaning for Auschwitz is that there is no collective subject in the concentration camps, that is, no subject in the first-person plural. As a consequence, nothing people can say about Auschwitz can be validated as part of a shared experience. As Gérald Sfez claims in a thorough interpretation of Lyotard's remarks, 'in Auschwitz we saw the putting into question of the "we" of men, a fission of the "we" that must lead us to interrogate it and rethink it' (Sfez, 2017, p. 297, my translation). In order to understand how this shattering of the 'we' is produced, it is first necessary to understand how a 'we' is constituted to begin with.

In modern Western societies, according to Lyotard, the 'we' has in most cases a republican form. This 'we' is an effect of what Lyotard calls the 'discourse of authorization', which links obligations with their corresponding legitimation: 'the republican regimen's principle of legitimacy is that the addressor of the norm, *y*, and the addressee of the obligation, *x*, are the same. The legislator ought not to be exempt from the obligation he or she norms' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 98). This means that the legitimation of obligation in a republic is grounded on the principle of autonomy: a law is valid insofar as the legislator does not exempt himself from it and those who obey it participate in its promulgation. When the first-person plural declares 'we, the French people, decree as a norm that...', it constitutes the prescription 'we, the French people, ought to carry out act *a*'. But the two 'we', Lyotard explains, are heterogeneous: even if they share a name ('the French'), the instance of the declaration of the norm does not coincide with the instance of being obligated by it. This gap threatens the unity of the 'we': 'it is not surprising that, in the "currentness" or "actuality" of obligation, the we that reputedly unites obligee and legislator is threatened with being split' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 99). The declaration of the norm constitutes both the 'we' that declares the norm and the 'we' that is obligated by it. Once the norm is declared, however, it is the responsibility of the latter 'we' to respond to this obligation. The republican 'we' therefore depends on the permanent actualization of the linkage between the 'we' that declares the norm and the 'we' that receives the obligation to comply with it.

In extreme cases where the tension between the two 'we' threatens the unity of the collective subject, the linkage of last resort is what Lyotard calls the 'reason to die'. Ultimately, the question of whether individuals belong to the collective name that declares the norm depends on whether they can die in accordance with it. Lyotard calls this kind of death, borrowing Hegel's expression, 'beautiful death'. In



dying in compliance with the norm, one actualizes it and becomes part of the collective subject that outlives her death: 'the collective name is what assures the perennality within itself of individual proper names' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 100). In dying in accordance with the norm of the collective, one's individual proper name becomes attached to the name of the 'we': 'I', 'Robespierre', am 'French'. From that point on, the individual transcends his death, and what 'the French' do and say in the future will also be done and said in his name. Of course, this does not mean that we only belong to the collectivity insofar as we sacrifice ourselves for its norm. The point is rather that a republican collectivity demands compliance with the norm over the preservation of life as a condition for belonging to it. The possibility of a 'beautiful death', that is, of dying in agreement with the norm that 'we' prescribe to ourselves, constitutes the link of last resort between individuals and collectivity. To those who transgress the norm, the norm commands 'you must die'. This way, 'beautiful death' bridges the split between the two 'we': those who are obligated to die for transgressing the norm are still part of the 'we' that declares that it is a norm that they must die. The command to die allows the 'we' that legislates to integrate those who transgress its norm by making them comply with the norm that they die.

By contrast to what takes place in a republic, even under the extreme circumstances of terror, 'Auschwitz is the forbiddance of the beautiful death' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 100). This means that those who die in Auschwitz are not the addressees of a norm, and therefore they are not obligated to die. Instead, they die on the basis of a norm that is not addressed to them. As Lyotard explains, 'the canonical formula of "Auschwitz" cannot be *Die, I decree it*, a phrase that allows the equivocation of a possible substitution of I for you to hover. Rather, the formula would be, if we focus on the SS as "legislator": *That s/he die, I decree it*; or, if we focus on the deportee as the one "obligated": *That I die, s/he decrees it*' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 100). Missing in both formulas is the pronoun 'you'. The SS decree that the Jews must die, and the Jews know that the SS decree it, but this norm has no authorization, that is, no aspiration to generate a link between the subject of legislation and the subject of obligation: 'The SS does not have to legitimate for the deportee's benefit the death sentence it apprises him or her of. The deportee does not have to feel obligated by this decree. The universe of the two phrases *That s/he die, I decree it* and, *That I die, s/he decrees it* have no possible common application' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 101). The norm that the Jews die does not create an obligation to die, which means that dying in Auschwitz does not take place in agreement with a norm. Rather, the norm that the Jews must die only creates an obligation for the SS who kill them. Only the SS are a 'we' constituted by the principle of autonomy: they are obligated by a law of which they are themselves the legislators. The Jews, on the other hand, must simply die so that the SS fulfill their obligation.

In order to better understand Lyotard's view, I wish to briefly point out some connections with Dori Laub's analysis of the problem of testimony by the survivors



of the Nazi camps. Laub's perspective is influenced by Martin Buber's analysis of the I–Thou relationship, which Lyotard references in some sections of *The Differend* and is likely influential in his remarks on Auschwitz. According to Buber, there are two fundamental attitudes toward the world that correspond with two fundamental pair of pronouns: 'I–It' and 'I–Thou'. While the first dyad characterizes the world of experiences, the second dyad institutes a world of relation (Buber, 1937, p. 6). In saying 'thou', the I becomes part of a relation, and so does the 'thou' in responding to the call of the I (Buber, 1937, p. 39). According to Laub, partly in agreement with Lyotard on this point, the reason why the camps lack a witness is that their victims were not addressed as 'thou'. As a consequence, the very possibility of addressing others and being addressed (in Buber's terms, of taking part in the 'I–Thou' relation) was removed from them: 'the historical reality of the Holocaust became... a reality that extinguished philosophically the very possibility of address, the possibility of appealing, or of turning to, another. But when one cannot turn to a "you" one cannot say "thou" even to oneself' (Laub, 1995, p. 66). The victims of the camps cannot bear witness to them because the camps destroyed the fundamental relational structure by which people are capable of bearing witness to begin with, that is, being addressed and addressing others as 'you'. As we have seen, Lyotard believes that the absence of a 'you' linking the command of the SS ('s/he must die') and the obligation of the Jews ('I must die') is essential to the absence of a witness of the camps. In his view, however, this produces not one silence, but two: by eliminating the 'you' of obligation and thus any community of obligation linking them to the Jews, the SS also become unable to bear witness to the camps as a collective experience.

The reason why, after the camps, 'Auschwitz' resists meaning is that there is no phrase that can mediate between the experience of the SS and the experience of the Jews. This is so precisely because Auschwitz is the destruction of the 'we', to the point that there is no collective witness to describe it. For the Jews, Auschwitz is where they go to die on the basis of someone else's obligation to kill them. For the SS, Auschwitz is where they fulfill their obligation to kill the Jews. There is no link between the two experiences, because the SS do not legitimate their norm in terms of an idea that the Jews could at least potentially understand. It cannot even be said that, in the camps, both the SS and the Jews are 'human'. In the absence of a shared norm to which 'we', as humans, are obligated, there is simply a multiplicity of 'he' and 'she', and so 'were this *we* called humanity ... then "Auschwitz" is indeed the name for the extinction of the name' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 101). Auschwitz is the name for the extinction of the possibility of a collective subject, even under its most general name: 'humanity'. The experience of the SS, expressed by the phrase 'That s/he must die, I decree it', and the experience of the Jews, expressed by the phrase 'that I must die, s/he decrees it', lack a linkage, which is why Auschwitz has no shared meaning. This is of course not an accidental consequence of the crime committed in Auschwitz, for it is precisely the point of the crime to eliminate any



linkage between the Aryans and the Jews. 'After Auschwitz', the collective subject that was destroyed by it remains broken, which is why 'we', the addressees of the past event, cannot find a meaning for it.

'Auschwitz' as Feeling

Having examined Lyotard's rejection of Adorno's turn to dialectics in order to address the paradox of history in the face of historical injustice, let us now contrast their perspectives. First, we should note that both Adorno and Lyotard believe that Auschwitz, as an extreme case of historical injustice, exposes this paradox. Auschwitz marks the elimination of any principle by which we could identify the universal meaning of an historical event, that is, a meaning that can be understood by everyone. As a consequence, Auschwitz also marks the elimination of the possibility of writing a universal historical narrative. Adorno, as we have seen, claims that Auschwitz 'forces materialism upon metaphysics', in the sense that the suffering that takes place in the camps cannot be explained in terms of any transcendental idea. Lyotard agrees on this point: the SS kill the Jews without any need to legitimate such killing under universal principles that would make dying in the camps at least potentially justifiable, and therefore meaningful. This is the crucial difference between 'Auschwitz' and terror. In terror, killing people takes place under a universal idea, which means that those responsible for it believe that it is necessary to justify their actions in terms that everyone could at least potentially understand. Consequently, it is possible to refute terror the way Hegel refutes the 'fury of destruction' characteristic of the French Revolution in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, namely, by showing that it stems from a false, one-sided understanding of freedom. The Nazis, by contrast, give nothing to refute, because their actions are not based on any principle that aspires to be understood by non-Nazis. Auschwitz interrupts universalism altogether, and the possibility of universal history along with it.

A second point of connection between Adorno and Lyotard is that this interruption of universalism produces a feeling with a universal normative force, although their understandings of this feeling are different. Adorno, as we have seen, describes this feeling as a somatic sensation stemming from the meaningless suffering of the victims. Although we cannot explain this sensation, its interruption of meaning is experienced as a categorical imperative to arrange one's thoughts and actions in such a way that Auschwitz does not repeat itself. For Lyotard, the impossibility of finding meaning for Auschwitz is also experienced as a feeling. Its source, however, is not the physical suffering of the victims, but the two silences that remain after the camps, namely, the silence of the SS and of the Jews who, as we have seen, lack a common idiom. The event of Auschwitz thus results in the feeling produced by the impossibility of giving voice to these silences:



Far indeed from signifying these silences in the phrase of a *Resultat*, 'we' deem it more dangerous to make them speak than to respect them. It is not a concept that results from 'Auschwitz', but a feeling, an impossible phrase, one that would link the SS phrase onto the deportee's phrase, and vice-versa (Lyotard, 1989, p. 104).

Because Auschwitz is the name for the destruction of a collective subject, 'we', the ones who listen to the witnesses, cannot find a common meaning for it—precisely because the absence of a common meaning is the very essence of Auschwitz. This impossibility of a meaning produces the feeling that a phrase is missing: 'our language lacks words to express this offence', in the words of Levi (1959, p. 21). 'Auschwitz' is the name of this feeling: something happened which we lack the means to talk about. The paradox of history (universal history excludes certain voices, yet we need universal history in order to legitimize the normative commitment to overcome exclusion) can be felt, even if it cannot be conceptually solved.

Although Adorno and Lyotard agree that Auschwitz is the name of a feeling rather than a concept, they disagree on the practical implications of such feeling. According to Adorno, we cannot say anything meaningful about Auschwitz without betraying its true meaning. Therefore, all that is left is the feeling of this negative experience, which serves as a non-conceptual ground for the imperative that it shall not repeat itself. Unable to say anything meaningful about Auschwitz, we can reconstitute the collective 'we' by turning this negative experience into a new universal principle: the new categorical imperative. Lyotard, as we have seen, rejects this idea on the basis that it leads to skepticism: unable to find a meaning for Auschwitz, all we can do is turn negativity into a new universal. But is it not possible to invent new phrases that make Auschwitz meaningful? This is what the feeling left by Auschwitz calls us to do, according to Lyotard (1989, p. 57):

The indetermination of meanings left in abeyance, the extermination of what would allow them to be determined, the shadow of negation hollowing out reality to the point of making it dissipate, in a word, the wrong done to the victims that condemns them to silence – it is this, and not a state of mind, which calls upon unknown phrases to link onto the name of Auschwitz.

Auschwitz is the name of an indetermination of meaning that is felt as a call for unknown phrases to link onto it. Rather than remaining within the impossibility of finding meaning, the feeling calls us to institute new ways of finding meaning so as to overcome the silence.

Lyotard's perspective is not opposed to that of Adorno, but it stresses a different aspect. Both authors are concerned with the possibility of constituting a collective subject after an experience that seems to ruin all universal principles. Can we say something universally meaningful about an event whose very essence is the



destruction of universal principles? Adorno's answer is that only the imperative to think and to act in such a way that the event does not repeat itself has universal value. The feeling of abhorrence against the senseless suffering that took place in the camps is the only ground for universally shared meaning. Lyotard does not agree on this point. Without the possibility of saying anything about Auschwitz, there is no 'we', not even one grounded on the negative dialectics triggered by this event: 'the dispersive, merely negative and nearly analytical dialectics at work under the name of "Auschwitz", deprived of its "positive-rational operator", the *Resultat*, cannot engender anything, not even the skeptical we that chomps on the shit of the mind' (Lyotard, 1989, p 101). As we have seen, Lyotard believes that it is rather in the search for new phrases about Auschwitz that the silence it has imposed on us may be overcome. If culture after Auschwitz is garbage, as Adorno claims, then the silence left by Auschwitz is felt as a command to transform culture in such a way that this silence may find a way to express itself. In Lyotard's terms, Auschwitz demands the invention of new phrases that make such expression possible.

Conclusion: Writing History After Injustice

Adorno's and Lyotard's reflections on 'after Auschwitz' show us the essential challenge of producing an historical narrative that sustains universal normative values in a way that does not prolong the injustice with which such values have been complicit in the past. Auschwitz is certainly a limit case of historical injustice, but it is not for that reason any less relevant. On the contrary, precisely because Auschwitz represents an extreme case of historical injustice, it shows with shocking clarity the difficulties involved in describing such injustice without relying on universal categories that may be complicit with it. All cases of historical injustice, such as slavery, colonialism, segregation, and discrimination, involve the exclusion and silencing of certain voices. Auschwitz is a paradigm of injustice because this silencing is absolute: in the camps, people were eliminated along with the possibility of finding any meaning for their elimination. Therefore, 'after Auschwitz', any meaning that we can find for the camps betrays their true character. Without necessarily going to this extreme, victims of other instances of injustice may experience a similar kind of silencing: not only do they suffer, but also they are deprived of the means to express their suffering. Their suffering is at least partly 'meaningless', in the sense that it seems to have taken place for no reason, either valid or invalid, that can be communicated and be the subject of a dialogue with others. In the face of this silence, Adorno believes that we can only turn thinking against itself. If our most universal categories, such as truth, freedom, autonomy, equality, and so on, are complicit with domination and suffering, we can only do justice to those who suffer by ruthlessly criticizing such categories.



Liotard, by contrast, believes that we need to invent new phrases. If we lack the words to describe a case of injustice without reproducing the injustice, it is only because we still do not have the adequate phrases for it. But we cannot prejudge whether such phrases are possible or not.

Following Lyotard, then, the normative commitment involved in the writing of history after injustice consists in the identification and subversion of silenced voices. History is not only constituted by events, but also by silences that are felt as an interruption of our normative and descriptive categories. As a consequence, anyone concerned with the meaning of historical events cannot escape politics, that is, she cannot remain indifferent to the exclusions and asymmetries of power involved in the writing of history. As Lyotard puts it, when confronted with the feeling left by a silenced voice, 'the historian must break with the monopoly over history granted to the cognitive regime of phrases, and he or she must venture forth by lending his or her ear to what is not presentable under the rules of knowledge' (Lyotard, 1989, p. 57). This idea resonates with Brown's claim, in reference to the Holocaust as well as to other cases of historical injustice, that 'the complex *political* problem of the relation between past and present, and of both to the future, is resolved by neither facts nor truth' (Brown, 2001, p. 141). The meaning of unjust historical events cannot be settled by means of cognition. We cannot establish the meaning of colonialism, slavery, or segregation the way we establish whether a proposition is true or false. We cannot determine that a past event was 'unjust' on the basis of an unproblematic conception of justice, because it is likely that our conception of justice is somehow complicit with what we perceive as unjust, and conceals the voices of those who suffered injustice. In order to hear the voices that have been silenced, it is necessary to explore how the silence interrupts our present cognitive and normative categories. In Brown's words, inspired by Derrida, it is necessary to remain attentive to the 'ghosts, haunting, and conjuration' that escape narratives of systematicity and periodicity (Brown, 2001, p. 143).

The analysis of Adorno's and Lyotard's perspectives also shows why universal narratives of progress are unable to properly address historical injustice. As I pointed out in the introduction, narratives of progress not only exclude other historical narratives, as Allen and Chakrabarty point out, but also they exclude perspectives within a particular narrative. By interpreting past injustices as deviations from an otherwise unproblematic normative standard, narratives of progress conceal the complicity of such standard with the structures that produce and legitimate injustice. The problem is not (or not only) that those who committed injustice failed to live up to their own values, but rather that the values themselves were functional to injustice. If the Enlightenment opens the door to totalitarianism, then we cannot do justice to its victims by lending them the values of the Enlightenment so that they can express their suffering. Instead, we must scrutinize the complicity of these values with such suffering. Adorno and Lyotard agree on this point.



But Lyotard, by contrast to Adorno, believes that we can do more than dwell on the interruption of our values – we can invent new idioms that overcome the silence imposed upon the victims of injustice. In this sense, the writing of history is not merely a cognitive or philosophical practice, but also a political one. In order to respond to historical injustice, scholars and activists cannot simply look for an accurate description of past events, nor judge such events in terms of secured values. They must rather be ready to invent and subvert cognitive and moral categories so that silenced voices can be heard. There is of course no pre-given procedure guiding this invention and subversion. The only orientation is the feeling experienced on the face of events that have left certain people or groups without the ability to express past experiences of suffering. It is on the basis of this feeling that we may approach history as a field of voices and silences, and displace the boundary between what can and cannot be heard.

Acknowledgements

This article is part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Action ‘Universality, Conflict, and Social Critique’, funded through the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 841825. I want to thank Alasia Nuti, Maïté Marciano, and two anonymous reviewers of *Contemporary Political Theory* for their comments on earlier versions of this article.

About the Author

Javier Burdman is Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at the Department of Philosophy of the University of Strasbourg, and Associate Fellow at the Research Centre ‘Normative Orders’ of the Goethe University Frankfurt. His work on modern German and French political philosophy and postcolonial thought has been published in *History of Political Thought*, *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, *European Journal of Political Theory*, *Constellations*, and other outlets. He is currently working on a book manuscript on the problem of evil in politics and its impact on modern theories of political action and judgment.

References

Adorno, T. W. (2004) *Negative Dialectics*, Translated by E. B. Ashton. New York: Routledge.



- Adorno, T.W. (2006a) *History and Freedom: Lectures 1964-1965*, Edited by R. Tiedemann, Translated by R. Livingstone. Cambridge: Polity.
- Adorno, T.W. (2006b) *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, Translated by E. F. N. Jephcott. London: Verso.
- Agamben, G. (1999) *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, Translated by D. Heller-Rozen. New York: Zone Books.
- Allen, A. (2015) *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bamford, K. (2017) *Jean-François Lyotard*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Bernstein, J.M. (2001) *Adorno: Disenchantment and Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, W. (2001) *Politics Out of History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Buber, M. (1937) *I and Thou*, Translated by R. G. Smith. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- Burger, D. (1996) *Die Genese des 'Widerstreits': Entwicklungen im Werk Jean-François Lyotards*. Vienna: Turia + Kant.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2000) *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen-Halimi, M. (2014) *Stridence spéculative. Adorno, Lyotard, Derrida*. Paris: Payot.
- Ferry, L. (1987) *Le système des philosophies de l'histoire*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Freyenhagen, F. (2013) *Adorno's Practical Philosophy: Living Less Wrongly*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gandesha, S. (2019) Adorno, Ferenczi, and a new 'categorical imperative after Auschwitz'. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis* 28(4): 222–230.
- Habermas, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Translated by T. McCarthy. Boston: Beacon.
- Honneth, A. (1995) *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, Translated by J. Anderson. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T.W. (2002) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Edited by G. Schmid Noerr and E. Jephcott. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- LaCapra, D. (1998) *History and Memory after Auschwitz*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Laub, D. (1995) Truth and testimony: The process and the struggle. In: C. Caruth (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, pp. 61–75.
- Levi, P. (1959) *If this Is a Man*, Translated by S. Woolf. New York: Orion.
- Lindner, B. (1998) Was heißt: Nach Auschwitz? Adornos Datum. In: S. Braese, et al. (eds.) *Deutsche Nachkriegsliteratur und der Holocaust*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, pp. 283–300.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Translated by G. Bennington and B. Massumi. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1989) *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Translated by G. Van Den Abbeele. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota University Press.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1991) *Phenomenology*, Translated by B. Beakley. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1994) *Des dispositifs pulsionnels*. Paris: Galilée.
- Nuti, A. (2019) *Injustice and the Reproduction of History: Structural Inequality, Gender and Redress*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Connor, B. (2014) Philosophy of history. In: D. Cook (ed.) *Adorno: Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.
- Pages, C. (2011) *Lyotard et l'aliénation*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Rawls, J. (2000) *The Law of Peoples*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Sfez, G. (2017) Lyotard devant Auschwitz. *Revue d'Histoire de la Shoah* 207(2): 293–310.
- Shuster, M. (2014) *Autonomy after Auschwitz: Adorno, German Idealism, and Modernity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Silberbusch, O.C. (2018) *Adorno's Philosophy of the Nonidentical: Thinking as Resistance*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.



-
- Temin, D.M. and Dahl, A. (2017) Narrating historical injustice: Political responsibility and the politics of memory. *Political Research Quarterly* 70(4): 905–917.
- Verovšek, P.J. (2020) *Memory and the Future of Europe: Rupture and Integration in the Wake of Total War*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Williams, J. (2000) *Lyotard and the Political*. New York: Routledge.

Publisher's Note Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.