

germany's **metamorphosis**
Memory and the Holocaust
in the Berlin Republic | ALISON LEWIS

Early in the twentieth century the German-speaking Czech-Jewish writer Franz Kafka wrote a disturbing story about the metamorphosis of an office worker. In *The Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*) the main protagonist, Gregor Samsa, awakens from troubled dreams to find himself transformed into a grotesque oversized form of 'vermin' (*Ungeziefer*).¹ No explanation is ever given for Gregor's misfortunes and he never awakens from the nightmare that his life has become. He dies a prisoner in the four walls of his home, unappreciated by all but his sister, a sad and pathetic victim of neglect and social ostracism.

It is not surprising that Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* is often read as a particularly prescient parable of the fate of the millions of European Jews who, like Gregor Samsa, found themselves turned into a race of verminlike creatures by National Socialist propaganda and racial policies. For millions of Jews too there was no awakening from the nightmare of the Third Reich, there was no redemption and liberation came too late.

Around the same time that Germany elected a Social Democrat (SPD) – Green government to power in 1998, Kafka's parable was subjected to a provocative new reading in which Gregor Samsa was compared not to the Jews but to the Germans at the end of the Second World War. The re-reading of *The Metamorphosis* occurred in the context of a very public speech delivered by one of Germany's most polemical contemporary writers, Martin Walser, on the occasion of his being awarded a prestigious prize. Walser was to be presented with German book trade peace prize at the Frankfurt Book Fair in the autumn of 1998, a prize awarded annually to a writer, artist, philosopher or scientist for an outstanding contribution to peace. Previous winners include Albert Schweitzer, Ernst Bloch, Yehudi Menuhin and

Jürgen Habermas, and the recipient in 2003 was Susan Sontag. The year before Walser was awarded the prize, the winner was Nobel prize winner-to-be Günter Grass, in many ways Walser's arch-rival, who had used the public occasion to deliver a hard-hitting speech about Germany's omissions with regard to asylum seekers. Hence, it came as no surprise that Walser set out to provoke with his acceptance speech and to attract maximum media attention. The speech was broadcast on national television and excerpts were printed in major daily newspapers. The congratulatory speech with its allusions to Kafka was given by Frank Schirrmacher, a prominent conservative journalist with a similar penchant for scandal to Walser. Schirrmacher was the journalist largely responsible for discrediting the entirety of East German literature and its writers from Christa Wolf to the Prenzlauer Berg group of underground poets after the fall of the Wall, calling more generally for an end to the post-war paradigm of *littérature engagée*.²

The controversy that both Walser's and Schirrmacher's remarks predictably sparked, now referred to as the Walser–Bubis debate, centred on 'Auschwitz'—as the term that Germans tend to use when referring to the Holocaust—and how Germans should remember the crimes of the Nazi past. At the time, the Walser–Bubis debate was widely seen as a disturbing sign of a conservative backlash that did not augur well for the in-coming Schröder government and the new Berlin Republic. Especially in the context of other contemporaneous debates about the building of a Holocaust memorial, it looked very much like a left-wing government had ushered in a conservative era in memorial politics, which threatened to undermine the decade-long struggles of the German Left for a more thorough and rigorous engagement with the Nazi past. For Germans, who had watched the previous Kohl government's clumsy and often half-hearted attempts at honouring the sufferings of the victims of the Holocaust, the Walser–Bubis debate was an unexpected throwback to the mid-1980s. It seemed as if the memory of the Nazi past was being contested yet again and from a section of society where one would least expect it. To an Australian observer, accustomed to the Howard government's extreme reluctance to acknowledge past guilt in relation to the stolen generations, the Walser–Bubis debate also came as a shock because it appeared to shatter all faith in the ability of the Left to confront issues of national guilt and shame head on. What seemed interesting about Germany back in 1998 was the way that a new left-wing European government approached the question of collective memory and a tainted national past in relation to national identity.

Schirrmacher's introduction to Walser's speech obviously called for its own set of polemics. In his remarks, Schirrmacher sets out to upset the dominant readings of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* by turning the story's putative referent on its head. He reads Kafka not as a prophet of the Holocaust and *The Metamorphosis* not as a story about the fate of the European

Jewry, a fate that, incidentally, also befell Kafka's sisters and family members. Instead, he brushes the tale against the grain of prevailing political correctness and reads it as a fable about the fate of ordinary Germans: Germans, that is, of the likes of Martin Walser.

Walser belongs to the generation of Germans that was just old enough towards the end of the Second World War to be called up for active service. Born in 1927, Walser was drafted into the army as a young man during the last stages of the war. He emerged from the experience virtually unscathed, with everything but his youthful innocence intact. It is for this reason, Schirmmacher argues, that Walser, like his characters, must surely know what it is like to lose one's identity overnight and wake up transformed into something as abject as Gregor Samsa. Schirmmacher's argument is that the metamorphosis of Germans, after the Second World War, into a nation of culprits was the formative experience of Walser's generation; those born in the 1920s and 1930s awoke from youthful illusions at the end of National Socialist rule to find themselves metamorphosed in the eyes of the world into 'something verminlike', into a nation of willing executioners, perpetrators and mass murderers.

At the end of his speech Schirmmacher goes on to include Walser's fictional heroes in his list of victims. A similar fate had befallen Walser's ordinary, mostly male middle-class heroes that had claimed the life of Gregor Samsa, he goes on to argue. 'No-one should be envied for waking up in bed as a Walser hero', he exclaims, since to be white, middle-class and male is, in Schirmmacher's eyes, obviously an unenviable fate.³ (One cannot help wondering whether this is because Walser's heroes have been afflicted with a curse far worse than death, possibly with the 'curse' of having to live on or simply with the shame of having survived the war. Or perhaps it is because life must go on for Walser's heroes, one way or another, as it did for Walser himself, something that Schirmmacher conveniently overlooks.) Schirmmacher is nothing but persistent in his rewriting of history and takes the increasingly preposterous Kafka analogy one step further. Like the somewhat sentimental characters in Walser's books, the middle-aged writers, lawyers and public servants—ordinary Germans—are victims too, he would have us believe, because like Gregor Samsa, Walser's heroes all have jobs to hold down and families to support.⁴

Schirmmacher's new mythology of victims and perpetrators is unsettling, not least because it obscures the ending of Kafka's story. Apart from the surface similarity of the shock of the rude awakening to a new identity, the analogy between the archetypal Walserian hero and Gregor Samsa soon strains credibility. By contrast with Gregor Samsa, who starves to death holed up in his room, and the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, Walser and his heroes have choices: choices between sleeping on or waking up from their nightmares, choices between life and death.

It was little surprise that Schirmmacher's metamorphosis of Kafka's famous story into a parable about ordinary Germans and Walser's speech that followed it incited a bitter debate

that was to attract much international attention. Jürgen Habermas described the whole affair as an embarrassing sign of ‘indigestion from an undigested past which regularly rises from the belly of the Federal Republic of Germany’.⁵ An undigested past was, as every German familiar with the writings of the Frankfurt School philosophers knows, likely to repeat itself on you; if not confronted it will return to haunt the nation in the form of the ‘return of the repressed’. The debate was seen as an omen of transformation in the way in which the Holocaust featured in collective memory in Germany. It spoke of the will to forge a new relationship to the past and possibly of a new reluctance on the part of Germans to remember the crimes of genocide. And yet the messages the debate sent were by no means clear-cut. On one hand, the Walser–Bubis debate looked very much like a telltale sign that the postwar German consensus about the Holocaust had begun to crack. If the Holocaust has figured, as Dirk Moses has suggested recently, as a negative myth of origins for Germans since the 1980s, and even longer for the German Left, then the debate appeared to challenge this negative myth of origins. The Holocaust, it seemed to be saying, might no longer be a source of historical legitimacy for the building of a new postwar German national identity.⁶ On the other hand, however, the dispute was open to interpretation. Was it not possible that this was evidence of how robust public rituals of memory in Germany were or, put another way, of how ‘normal’ the Germans as a nation of people had become? Were the memorial practices in question in fact not fragile but robust precisely because they were open to perpetual contestation? If this were the case, it would be wrong to infer from the Walser–Bubis debate that Germany is now prone to collective bouts of selective amnesia or that the Berlin Republic marks the inauspicious beginnings of a new culture of denial and forgetting. Are debates about memory of the Nazi past still about whether the crimes of National Socialism are unique in the history of civilisation, as was the case with the *Historikerstreit* (historians’ debate) of the mid-1980s? Or is there something else at stake in more recent debates about the Holocaust?

In the remainder of this essay I want to focus on two recent debates in Germany from the same inaugural period of Germany’s SPD–Green government, which both have as their focus the contestation of memory in relation to the Holocaust. In both debates the Holocaust serves as a negative myth of origin and a primal phantasmatic scene of guilt and shame around which German national identifications are organised. The first is the Walser–Bubis debate and the second the much more protracted but no less fierce debate about the building of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin, which peaked around the same time. Both debates are important in the German context because they come at the end of a long period of Christian Democratic (CDU) rule and at the beginning of a new SPD era in German politics. They are significant, moreover, because they appear to send contradictory messages about German self-understanding to the international community.

In the broader context of calls in the 1990s, particularly on the Left, for Germans to rediscover national pride and to embrace a more positive sense of national identity, any discussion of Auschwitz, or the Holocaust, goes to the heart of what it means to be German today. Both of the debates under discussion here demonstrate the tensions in forging a new, more positive sense of national identity that does not disavow the legacy of a genocidal past. They thus reveal the degree to which Germans struggle to attain 'normality' in the face of a past that explodes all myths of positive continuities between past and present. As part of the public process by which this so-called 'normality' is being negotiated today, the debates point to some of the problems that negative myths of origin have posed for Germans. They highlight some of the difficulties Germans have had in reconciling desires for 'normality' and 'normalisation' with a growing acceptance on both sides of politics of the need to respect and commemorate Holocaust victims' sufferings.

More generally, these two examples from Germany are instructive beyond the national context for the way in which they illuminate some of the difficulties that perpetrator nations, as well as nations with a recent criminal history such as Australia, can have in negotiating public memorial practices and managing their rituals of remembrance. The challenge facing the Berlin Republic is one that many nations with a tainted past face, as they seek to reconcile the demand for greater 'normality' and more positive symbols of national belonging, on the one hand, with the moral and ethical impulse to keep the memory of a criminal or shameful past alive, on the other. Moreover, the German case study is helpful in an Australian context because it offers insights into some of the difficulties a political generation with no first-hand experience of past crimes has in dealing with the legacy of this past and in fashioning its own distinctive culture of memory. Potentially, it also offers a way out of some of the dilemmas that successive political generations face when confronted with these questions.

In his acceptance speech, delivered to an audience of prominent members of the community in the Gothic surrounds of the Paulskirche in Frankfurt, Martin Walser raised the question of the uses and abuses of the Holocaust in the public arena. According to Walser 'Auschwitz' had been turned into 'moral club' that was wielded for political purposes.⁷ It had been instrumentalised in moral and ethical debates, he argued, trivialised by mass media representations, by empty ritualised forms of remembrance and insincere acts of lip-service: 'Everyone knows our historical burden, our everlasting shame,' and no day passes, Walser continues, 'on which we are not reminded of it'.⁸ Auschwitz was routinely staged as a threat, with the result that he had been forced to 'look the other way'. Indeed, he had found himself forced to 'look the other way' 'at least twenty times' or more in the face of the 'perpetual presentation of our shame'.⁹ The charge of looking the other way was, of course, the accusation levelled at ordinary Germans who turned a blind eye to the deportation, incarceration and

murder of the Jews during the Third Reich. Since the Holocaust, the gesture of looking the other way has become more or less synonymous with moral capitulation.

Walser's speech was greeted by unanimous applause from all of the invited guests bar one, the now deceased Ignaz Bubis (1927–99), the chairman of the Committee for Jews in Germany, who was sitting in the front row. While he refrained from spoiling the occasion, Bubis was quick to retaliate, accusing Walser later of committing 'intellectual arson'. In the weeks that followed, an embittered argument unfolded that was later to be described by Schirmacher, somewhat hypocritically since he had been one of the instigators of the feud, as the 'most painful' dispute of the 1990s. Walser was joined by politicians and prominent intellectuals, who had varying interpretations of Walser's agenda. Some saw it as a form of historical revisionism and sympathised with Walser, applauding his courage in voicing his frustration at the political correctness of the media. Some, like Monika Maron, a dissident writer from the former East Germany, even praised Walser for attempting to correct a moral imbalance between Jews and Germans and chastised Walser's critics for trying to censor him. Summarising the impact of the debate, Schirmacher wrote in 1999 that it appeared as if the major protagonists of the quarrel were taking their leave from the public stage. The controversy was like a last duel 'that left only injured behind but no victors or vanquished'.¹⁰ Indeed, for one of the participants, it was to be a final public intervention because a year later Bubis passed away.

To the frustration of his critics, Walser refused to name names and identify specific causes that had instrumentalised Auschwitz. Was he referring to the compensation claims of the labourers forced to work in German industry under the Nazis, which were under negotiation at the time, as Bubis had perhaps inferred? Or was Walser alluding to the instrumentalisation of Auschwitz in debates about euthanasia and the ethics of biotechnology and stem-cell research? And who were the elusive 'opinion soldiers' who wielded their moral clubs at the troops of reluctant mourners? Walser was irritatingly vague about what had forced him to look away time after time. It was only in reference to the planned Berlin memorial to the murdered Jews in Europe that Walser allowed himself to become concrete. The cementing of the 'centre of the capital city', he claimed, was a 'nightmare the size of a football field'. The monument was not merely a prime example of the 'perpetual presentation of our shame', it was 'a *monumentalisation* of our shame'. Memory in the public domain, he concluded, had become an 'obligatory exercise', an inauthentic form of penance that had lost its meaning. Only as a matter of private conscience, in the form of personal recollection, could memories of the Holocaust be kept alive and protected from the harsh world of politics.

The point about the misuse and instrumentalisation of the Holocaust in political debate is hardly new, as commentators were quick to point out.¹¹ Surely, his critics asked, Walser's

lament at the perpetual staging of Germany's disgrace in the media was not aimed at the preponderance of programs about the Third Reich on television. It is hard to see how the smattering of documentaries about the war and Jewish life on the French–German cross-cultural channel 'arte' could be seen as intrusive, especially when Walser had thirty other channels to choose from in the deregulated, privatised world of German television. Or, as one scathing commentator suggested, had one of his children stolen his remote control?¹²

Not only Bubis condemned Walser's plea for remembrance as a form of private confession and penance. For many observers, the pietistic politics of memory implied by Walser's inward-looking form of 'conscience-gazing' was only too reminiscent of the fateful stance taken by some intellectuals who stayed in Germany during the Third Reich. Walser's distinction between public and private reminded some of the distinction that Martin Heidegger drew between private, authentic forms of being and inauthentic (*uneigentlich*) acts of public remembrance.¹³

If memory, like one's conscience, is a private thing, as Walser would argue, this evades the real issue at stake in his speech about how nations are to organise their rituals of remembrance. Walser rather petulantly refuses to make a distinction between recollection as a private act and as a collective remembrance, between each individual's need to make peace with his or her own sense of guilt and the needs of a collective to commemorate official acts of heroism and shame. He implies, moreover, that there is complicity between public remembrance and forgetting. And more worryingly, he overlooks the need for solidarity with the victims of history and their right to preserve the memory of their suffering. In a bizarre twist of history, Walser appropriates the vulnerability of the victims for 'ordinary' Germans like himself. He blames the Holocaust industry for seeking to 'hurt' decent conscience-stricken Germans and for denying Germany the right to normality. Essentially, he tries to argue that normal Germans can lay claim to victimhood too, and that these ordinary 'victims' are the victims of the 'Auschwitz moral police'. Where Walser's outburst differs from other more recent reflections on the theme of Germans as victims, such as in Günter Grass's recent novel *Crabwalk*,¹⁴ is in the way he apportions blame for the omission. Whereas Grass wants to reproach himself for failing to address the topic of the sufferings of German refugees earlier, Walser singles out the Holocaust industry.

In many ways the Walser–Bubis debate represents a litmus test of changing levels of tolerance in the self-understanding of the German nation. It also marks a change in German–Jewish relations that has been welcomed by some as a more normal form of engagement with the Jewish community in Germany, but condemned by others as an unhealthy sign of the continuation of the 'negative symbiosis' that has characterised German–Jewish relations since the Enlightenment.¹⁵ Over the last two to three decades Walser has made quite a reputation for himself, not as the 'moral conscience of the nation', but more as an

impassioned keeper of the Holy Grail of the heart. He spoke of the longing to see Germany unified when it was unfashionable to mention the 'German question', admitted to having a 'feeling for history' and being obsessed by his 'Stuttgart-Leipzig-feeling', and talked openly of the loss of East Germany in terms of a phantom pain.¹⁶ His emotional outbursts over the years have invariably touched raw nerves, increasingly among members of his own political camp, who now see in him a renegade. Nonetheless, his speeches have come to serve much like a type of seismograph that records and relays shifts in the 'political unconscious' of the nation.¹⁷

It is no accident that Walser's seemingly unpolitical demand for private recollection of the war came at a time when Germany appeared to be displaying what Thomas Assheuer has called an almost 'obsessive desire for normality'.¹⁸ Since the historians' debate, 'normalisation' has generally connoted efforts by conservative historians to 'relativise' the Nazi past and the crimes of Auschwitz. For Habermas, speaking in 1992, talk of German 'normality' is fraught with dangers because it runs the risk of propagating a 'second existential lie ... that we have become normal again'.¹⁹ Habermas makes a distinction between 'normativity', which is a categorical norm of Western democracies, and 'normality', which he sees as a deformation of the democratic ideal of normativity.

Since German unification, however, 'normalisation' is no longer automatically equated with historical revisionism. It has become an explicit aim of successive German governments and chancellors, most recently Gerhard Schröder, who declared in 1998 that Germany is now a normal state with similar values to its neighbours in Europe.²⁰ The Walser–Bubis debate indicates, however, that the road to normality is by no means paved with gold, Deutschmarks or even Euros. What the debate has shown is that the National Socialist past and the Holocaust still represent the main stumbling blocks on the road to building national identity and achieving self-understanding.

More broadly then, the Walser–Bubis debate raises questions as to whether remembrance of the Holocaust and the memories of its victims can be reconciled with competing memory claims of, say, ordinary Germans like Walser and of the perpetrators, and if so how. Can collective memory in Germany accommodate the memories of the perpetrators alongside memories of the victims without negating or obscuring the suffering of victims of Nazi policies on race, ethnicity and difference? Is there such a thing as an overarching national story in Germany today and a collective memory of the Nazi past, or are there ever only individual, localised memories?²¹ And finally, what does the presence of a dominant perpetrator narrative and 'perpetrator trauma' mean for individuals whose memories and stories deviate from public memory or who feel that they are excluded from the dominant story?²²

The debate has highlighted the enormous difficulties in fashioning a coherent narrative of national identity that can include the ordinary experiences of ordinary Germans like Walser

alongside the extraordinary experiences of ordinary Jewish-Germans like Bubis. It raises, moreover, the question of how competing recollections and experiences of the Nazi past can be represented in national history, particularly where the memory of one event is perceived as the forgetting of another. The root of Walser's problem with the Holocaust is that he sees the commemoration of its victims as a threat to the validity of *his* story—as if the Holocaust story in some way interfered with the telling of his own memories, as if it were a threatening or hostile narrative. It is as if the story of the Holocaust corrupts the innocence of his childhood and renders it now sinister and impossible to remember.

As Germany's foremost memory scholars Aleida and Jan Assmann point out, the Holocaust can be a central pillar in German memory without this central status meaning a total or exclusive focus on the Holocaust. In their response to Walser's outburst, they point to three levels of memory that co-exist in a nation's history at any one time: the political-symbolic dimension of public rituals of memory, which necessarily has a symbolic, ritualised and even instrumentalised aspect to it; the social level of collective consciousness, which needs, in their view and that of others, the Holocaust as a negative yardstick against which to measure the achievements of post-Holocaust civil society; and the personal, which is the sort of memory that Walser is concerned with. As Klaus Neumann argues, collective discourses about the past are always shaped by individual acts of remembrance, and he is at pains to emphasise the role that individuals and their investments in the past can play in shaping public memory.²³ While each society must give space to what the Assmanns call an 'individual coming closer to the many, many dead', individualised acts of memory cannot be left up to the individual conscience alone. Especially for the generation that has no first-hand experience of crimes and genocide, neither public nor personal memory is adequately served by relegating the past to a matter of personal conscience. For the generations who have no experience of the Holocaust, the Holocaust is not a matter of conscience but a question of memory, and how this memory is to be transmitted and represented to future generations who will also have no first-hand knowledge of it.

In the late 1990s Walser was not alone in his plea for a sense of national belonging that could take justifiable pride in Germany's achievements. His remarks on the Holocaust memorial came at a time when politicians on the Left were also revisiting the Left-liberal consensus on memory. By the end of the 1990s there was a discernible shift on the left side of German politics as a new generation came to power that had no first-hand experience of the war.²⁴ Again it was remembrance of the Holocaust that presented the greatest obstacle to forging more positive symbols of national belonging. This time, however, the Holocaust was to be the central focus of a German memorial in the centre of Berlin to commemorate the crimes of National Socialism.

Jeffrey Herf recently remarked that American observers of Germany since 1945 frequently have a mental map in their heads that sets out clearly the relationship between politics and memory. The mental map neatly divides into Left and Right. On the Right side of the map are conservative politicians from Adenauer to Kohl, who have pursued 'policies of silence, judicial delay and erroneous comparisons' in relation to the Nazi past.²⁵ On the Left are members of the SPD from Kurt Schuhmacher to Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt, who saw memory as essential to rebuilding trust, to improving Germany's relations with Eastern Europe and to strengthening democracy.²⁶ The generation of 1968, so the story goes, put the Holocaust and the fascist past firmly back on the agenda, arguing that democracy needed 'more memory and more justice' with regard to the crimes of the Nazi past.²⁷ They challenged the complacency of their parents' generation, lobbied to bring the criminals to justice and called for an uncompromising reckoning with the legacy of the Nazi era. They took the business of memory or what the Germans call 'mastering the past' (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) seriously, rather than attempting to draw a 'line under the past' (*Schlussstrich*).

In the run-up to the German *Bundestag* elections in October 1998, an outsider observer with this mental map in her head would have become hopelessly confused. It was not the conservatives but the generation of '68 that appeared to be advocating drawing a line under the past. Especially disorienting was the fact that conservative politicians such as Helmut Kohl were now in favour of memorialising the victims of the Holocaust. Somewhere in the middle of the 1990s Herf's mental map had become skewed. The question was would it right itself or was the map now an obsolete way of conceptualising memorial politics in Germany?

Helmut Kohl had first lent his support to the proposal to erect a memorial in 1992. In 1995 he deemed the issue sufficiently important to intervene in the selection process, rejecting the winning entry in this first competition. The memorial was initially the idea of journalist and television celebrity Leo Rosh and historian Eberhard Jaeckel. Rosh announced in 1988, after a visit to the Israel national memorial in Yad Vashem, that there ought to be a Holocaust memorial in the land of the perpetrators. The suggestion became the subject of ten years of heated debate, which saw the setting up of a sponsorship group, a scouting commission, an adjudication commission, several parliamentary committees and two selection juries. Two international design competitions were conducted to find a winner: the first in 1994, the second in 1997. In 1997 a three-day public colloquium was organised by the Berlin Senate, with the participation of historians, architects, artists, politicians and intellectuals to further debate the key issues.

In 1995 Kohl declared Christine Jakob-Marks's winning entry unsuitable. It was for an eleven-metre high, 20,000-metre square, sloping gravestone. Far from withdrawing his support, Kohl affected a complete volte-face and encouraged the *Bundestag* to become more

closely involved in the selection process of a second competition. By 1998 he met with competitors and appeared determined to achieve a broad consensus for the memorial right up until the elections.²⁸ Kohl was anxious to avoid the international embarrassment caused by the Bitburg incident of the mid-1980s when he invited president Ronald Reagan to lay a wreath in honour of German war veterans at a military cemetery in Bitburg, which also housed graves of SS members. With the Bitburg incident, Kohl had engineered, according to Herf, 'yet another of the zero-sum games of recognition in the history of divided memory which pitted "Jewish" against "German" suffering'.²⁹ Keen to reverse some of the damage done by this incident, and with the upsurge of xenophobia after unification, Kohl came under pressure to improve his record in relation to memory of the National Socialist past.³⁰

The Holocaust memorial afforded Kohl an ideal opportunity, at an opportune moment in the history of the newly unified nation, to make a memorable symbolic gesture. By promising Rosh's group a Holocaust memorial to the Jews, Kohl could prove to the international as well as national community that he was capable of responding sensitively to the claims of memory, especially to the memories of Holocaust victims. It is certainly one of the ironies of German politics that Kohl, whose record in relation to memory of the Nazi past and the Stasi past had been severely blemished on several occasions,³¹ should place such key importance on building the Holocaust memorial.

The proposal to erect a memorial to Jewish victims of the Holocaust represented the most controversial aspect of the plan. The idea of a memorial honouring the memory of one group of victims met with vehement protests from Germany's Sinti and Roma community. Romani Rose, chairman of the Central Committee for German Sinti and Roma, claimed that Rosh's idea represented the 'establishment of a hierarchy of victims' creating 'first- and second-class genocide victims'.³² The singling out of the Jews for special treatment was reminiscent of the sort of arbitrary selection processes used by the Nazis. In another attack, Rose accused Ignaz Bubis of apartheid. Other groups too argued that it was inappropriate to erect a memorial to only one group of victims of the policies that emanated from the Gestapo headquarters. There were obviously other victims that needed to be remembered, such as homosexuals, Sinti and Roma, Slavs, Jehovah Witnesses, the victims of euthanasia, babies of forced labourers, and physically and mentally handicapped children. The notion that the 'Final Solution' was specifically directed at the Jews inscribed an intentional view of history that blamed the Holocaust on the will and intentions of Hitler.³³

The matter was resolved, albeit unsatisfactorily, in November 1989 when Leo Rosh and her supporters formed a group calling itself the Sponsorship Group for the Erection of a Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe, which specifically made mention only of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. When Kohl's government supported the group in 1992, pledging federal funds for the project, it lent tacit support to the proposal to single out one

group of victims.³⁴ Bubis made a strong case for commemorating the Jewish victims in isolation from other victims on the grounds that the mass murder of the Jews constitutes a crime *sui generis*, a point reiterated in the accompanying documentation of the second competition.³⁵ The text accompanying the second competition also seeks to justify erecting a memorial exclusively to the Jews on the grounds of their extraordinary contribution to German culture. The mass murder, it contends, did not merely annihilate approximately six million Jews, it ‘tore a 1000-year-old culture from the heart of Europe’, the loss of which was also to be mourned.³⁶ But as Henryk M. Broder was to point out, the reference to the Jewish contribution to German culture only exacerbated the uneasy feeling that many had that the memorial was quantifying degrees of victimhood. The implication was that ‘the Jews had made valuable contributions to German culture, had enriched Germany as a cultural nation from Heinrich Heine to Albert Einstein while the gypsies had at best a few jolly fiddlers to show for themselves’.³⁷

The issue of which victims were to be honoured was never adequately debated or resolved. There are obvious dangers in attempting to remember all the victims at one site, which inevitably raises the question as to whether ordinary soldiers are to be remembered at the site as well. Nevertheless Kohl’s decision to exclude other victims was generally seen as problematic. He had acted as an arbiter between competing claims to memory, drawing distinctions between greater and lesser claims, between worthier and less worthy victims, and effectively set up a ‘memorial hierarchy’.³⁸ While many people welcomed Kohl’s intervention because it involved the city of Berlin and the federal government in the competition, it was read by some commentators as an opportunistic attempt to rectify his earlier mistakes.³⁹

In the pre-election phase of 1998 the proposed Holocaust memorial inevitably became embroiled in the political debates of the major parties. Kohl’s decision to defer finalising the plans for the memorial until after the election failed to avoid the politicisation of the matter throughout the campaign.⁴⁰ In the lead up to the elections, questions were raised by the German Left as to whether the proposed memorial in the heart of Berlin was an appropriate signal to send the world on the eve of the Berlin Republic. It looked as if the Left had undergone a metamorphosis that was almost as mysterious and troubling as that which afflicted Gregor Samsa. Was the SPD about to awaken from the slumber of opposition and metamorphose into a party that no longer saw memory of the Holocaust as a ‘critical thorn in the side of German self-consciousness’ but as a ‘self-conscious staging of its growing power’, as critic and political commentator Richard Herzinger suggested?⁴¹ Would the new party emerge from its cocoon and let bygones be bygones? Would the ‘cashmir’ Chancellor Schröder break with the traditions of his SPD forebears and find the memory of the Holocaust incompatible with the self-image of an outwardly self-confident nation? The proposal to erect a memorial was, after all, premised on a paradox, as Caroline Wiedmer points out: ‘The

memorial is supposed to act at once as a public and official reminder of Germany's instigation of the greatest crimes in modern history, while also cementing a historical self-understanding that promotes the formation of a positive national identity'.⁴²

Prior to the 1998 election, the SPD chancellor candidate, Gerhard Schröder, and his advisor-to-be on cultural affairs, Michael Naumann, expressed their aversion to the memorial proposal. In the first week of the election campaign, Naumann emphatically rejected the idea of a memorial, as well as the winning model of the second competition by American architect Peter Eisenman. He saw no need for a memorial when there were other more 'authentic' sites of memory, such as Bergen-Belsen. Furthermore, he called the Eisenman's design monumental in size and scale and likened it to Albert Speer's Nazi architecture. The original plan designed by Eisenman and Sierra (who withdrew his support in 1999) was to build an undulating seascape of four thousand stone pillars of up to nine metres high. The 'field of graves' was designed to fill a large block of land (the size of two football fields) to the south of Potsdamer Platz and the Brandenburg Gate, once the site of the Ministerial Gardens during the Third Reich. Eisenman modified the size of the pillars in a subsequent model, which became known as Eisenman II.

Gerhard Schröder also distanced himself from Eisenman's model, which was not altogether surprising given that it was the model preferred by Kohl's Christian Democratic government. He explained that he had 'certain difficulties accepting that Eisenman's design was suitable and appropriate as a symbolic sign at that site'. He too expressed his preference for more 'authentic' sites of remembrance, for creating sites of memory in the places where the 'horror had taken place' (*an den Orten des Grauens*). He saw little point in constructing a monument that turned memory into an obligatory exercise or a ritualised school excursion. In an unfortunate turn of phrase, he declared in a television discussion that he wanted school children to *want* to visit the site. Germans of his generation and those 'who have no memory of the events' 'should be able to walk around without guilt complexes', he added.⁴³

By this stage of the debate Schröder was by no means alone in his reluctance to back the memorial. Early in 1998, eighteen prominent Left-liberal intellectuals, journalists and writers wrote an open letter to Kohl expressing their concerns about the proposed memorial. By this time the campaign had also found a more likely opponent—at least according to the wisdom of Herf's mental map—in the Christian Democratic mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen. Berlin was in danger of becoming 'the capital city of remorse', he argued, of shouldering 'the main burden of German history with all its dark sides'.

By Christmas 1998, the coordinates of memorial politics, which had seemed to be inverted during the previous year, gradually started to right themselves. Naumann became a passionate advocate of a new design, which became known as Eisenman III. He gained the agreement

of Eisenman to modify his proposal yet again to include a museum, centre for research, 'Wall of Books' (housing a library) and a 'Garden of Contemplation'. As laudable as Naumann's enthusiasm was, the new proposal required a budget some five or six times greater than originally planned. Not surprisingly, he was accused of muddying the waters by coming up with an unworkable alternative. Ignaz Bubis even went as far as to accuse Naumann of not wanting to build the memorial at all. Meanwhile, many in the other parties, as well as the SPD, now declared they were in favour of the original Eisenman model, that is, the scaled-down Eisenman II. While Naumann's intervention was designed to save the new government from international embarrassment, the prolonged debates and uncertainty did not help Germany's reputation abroad. The decision to make the final outcome dependent on a vote in the *Bundestag* may have been the government's salvation. On 25 July 1999 the parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of building Eisenman II plus an information pavilion—a memorial with brief 'user instructions', as it was commonly referred to.

In his address to the *Bundestag*, the president of the lower house, Wolfgang Thierse, reiterated the centrality of the memorial for German identity and for the image of the Berlin Republic. As a founding act of the newly elected government, the vote of the German parliament was intended to send an unambiguous signal to the international community, as well as to future generations about how it plans to position itself in relation to the most shameful chapter of its history. The debate has, however, left many questions unanswered. It is unclear what effect collective sites of remembrance of such a monumental scale will have on personalised acts of memory. Will the monument encourage memory and remorse, or will it facilitate a form of collective catharsis? No-one can predict what use future generations may find for the monument or how it will be understood. Even a memorial with 'user instructions' will not guarantee how future generations view the Holocaust and utilise the space. Nor will a memorial necessarily guarantee the centrality of the Holocaust in the nation's story in the future.

As Habermas has pointed out, the question of 'for whom' the memorial should be built has not been properly debated or understood. It would be a gross misunderstanding of the project if Germans thought they were building a memorial for the Jews of Europe. The memorial should be for Germans: 'with a memorial for the murdered Jews we can attempt to assuage our conscience', he argued in 1999.⁴⁴ Germans should build a memorial to the victims of German history while not forgetting that Germans today are the direct descendents of the murderous regime that claimed the lives of millions of Jews, homosexuals, gypsies and political opponents of the Nazi regime. Because of the change in perspective that this view of history entails, since German history is seen from the perspective of the victims, Habermas warns of the dangers of wanting to build a memorial for the victims of German history. In

the land of the perpetrators, for instance, the memorial could possibly be misunderstood, not as remembering guilt and shame but as honouring and therefore legitimising the sacrifice of victims.⁴⁵ It should not be a matter of simply viewing the past from the vantage point of the victims, or of identifying with the victims, if this means that Germans then forget that most of their forebears were on the side of the perpetrators. What is needed, in Habermas's view, is a form of commemoration that involves a type of 'self-critical crossing of borders'. This is one that allows the public gaze to settle on the 'victims whom the sins and omissions of one's parents and grandparents made into outsiders, excluded as enemies, humiliated as humans who were no longer considered human, violated and destroyed'. What is required is a double perspective, or a 'decentred form of collective self-understanding that incorporates the injured other' in a way that does not try to paper over the fissures and discontinuities in national history. The Holocaust should not become the new foundational myth of the Berlin Republic, nor should it be functionalised in the services of a particularist 'we'. Too great a concentration on the deed and the perpetrators to the exclusion of the victims could, he argues, easily prevent sympathy with the victims, while too great a focus on the victims could result in an instrumentalised view of the victims' sufferings. The Holocaust can only cease to be a stumbling block on Germany's chosen road to normality if the memorial becomes an 'expression of a civil mark of respect for the descendents of the victims' and if Germans accept the Holocaust as a rupture in the continuity of their country's traditions. The single most important condition for restoring Germans' sense of pride and faith in their traditions must be an acknowledgment of the Holocaust as a radical 'break in/with civilisation'.⁴⁶

Among the participants in the debates about the Holocaust memorial there was little agreement that a monument was the most appropriate means of representing this 'break in/with civilisation'. But as Habermas himself argued, other memory sites such as concentration camps and museums are not an alternative to a monument: 'Only a monument (*Denkmal*) can testify to the will and the message of its proponents'. This can best be served by artistic means, he contends. Just what type of art was needed to do justice to the project was, however, yet another contested point. The polarisation of the debate into those in favour of authentic sites and those advocating aestheticised forms of memory did not help to adequately highlight the differences between these quite distinct forms of remembrance. The task of educating the population and informing future generations will perhaps always be served best by the 'authentic places of horror'. A memorial, for instance, cannot document the lives of the victims who died in the Holocaust as can the archive currently being compiled by Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation. But a memorial can be witness to the 'will to remember' and it can encourage remembrance and contemplation of the event in other

ways. As Salomon Korn has repeatedly argued, a memorial need not stand in opposition or even in competition to authentic sites of remembrance; both forms of memory ought to augment and complement each other.⁴⁷

Eisenman likes to think of the monument as a place where private and public remembrance converge. It employs none of the habitual Holocaust symbolism and does not seek to represent the Holocaust in personalised, accessible ways, or through recourse to stereotyped figures of victims and liberators. The place has no centre, no focus, and there will be no guided tours available. Each individual must experience it alone, just as each Jew was subjected to the 'terror of loneliness' under the Nazis. From the outside it looks deceptive, like a field of corn frozen in time. Inside the maze, Eisenman hopes, the memorial will be unsettling and disorienting, and will thus be able to evoke a little of the experience of the Jews 'inside' the Third Reich.⁴⁸ Part of the criticism of the model stems from its unconventionality and abstractness, and because it appears to have no content. People often feel safer with memorial sites that have unambiguous messages and familiar iconography that can be easily understood. They often feel more at ease with monuments that leave nothing to chance, even if the messages are constantly rewritten and retold.

The metamorphosis of Germany's memorial culture into a culture of forgetting did not eventuate, as many feared, at the time of the Walsler–Bubis debate. As Habermas has reasoned, Germany was able to relieve itself of the 'indigestion from an undigested past' thanks to the intervention of a prominent Jewish businessman in Bubis. Habermas's point here is that only through constant and sustained public debate, as the means by which stakeholders articulate their interests, can the norms of the public sphere be negotiated.

Public debates about the past hold a special significance in the psychic life of the nation because contested memories of the past are always about the present and the future of the nation. As Aleida and Jan Assmann argue:

There are private, personal memories ... They often stand in opposition to what is being said in public discourse. On the other hand, we have to realise that memories always have a function in the public sphere ... What is remembered in the present always stands in relation to this present, one could say: it is always instrumentalised. The remembered past always serves to legitimate or to delegitimize the present.⁴⁹

Cultural memory (*das kulturelle Gedächtnis*) is, according to them, the contested terrain on which history's participants struggle over the right for representation.

In relation to the dispute about the Holocaust memorial, the Assmanns come to a similar conclusion to Habermas:

Our generation ... grew up with the formula 'consensus'. In the meantime we have got to the stage where we can recognise that it is the dispute (*Streit*) that binds us together. The pluralisation of positions, even in matters of the right form of memory, is, in itself, nothing harmful. I regard the potential for contestation that was recently unleashed by Walser as part and parcel of a functioning democratic disputational culture (*Streitkultur*).⁵⁰

Only through an open-ended process of debating and determining normativity, that is, through the ideal of open and 'powerfree' dialogue, which both Habermas and the Assmanns see as the hallmark of a functioning critical democratic public sphere, can Germany agree on its norms of public memory.

Pierre Bourdieu has pointed out that cultural disputes are the means by which certain sections of the political classes seek to assert their dominance, or social capital, over others. Debates about the Holocaust and its place in public memory are just one of the many and varied ways by which German intellectuals today seek to validate their ideological and political positions through telling their respective versions of the national story. They do so, according to Bourdieu, in power struggles aimed at the accumulation and assertion of symbolic capital over competing sections of the intelligentsia. The Walser–Bubis debate represents one recent attempt by German intellectuals and politicians to reformulate the terms in which the German national debate about the Holocaust has been cast.

The Walser–Bubis debate eventually proved that the debate was not about relativising the crimes of the Holocaust or about its singularity in modern history, as was the case with earlier revisionist debates. The debate was partially about the struggles among Germany's intelligentsia over symbolic capital; at its most primitive, it was about Walser versus Grass, and their respective politics and versions of the past. At its most sophisticated, the debate was about myths of origins. What Walser appeared to be objecting to were the mono-dimensional ways in which Germans are generally inscribed into the perpetrator trauma and primal scene of national identification of the Holocaust. The most charitable interpretation of Walser's speech is that he was arguing for greater plurality and inclusivity in the national story and for greater variation in the perpetrator story, much in the way that the Assmanns argue. At best, he could then be seen as putting the case for a more truly dialectical approach to resolving contradictions between personal and public memory, allowing for individual deviations to the dominant national narrative and for personalised responses to official versions of the past. Walser's remarks on the necessity for individualised forms of memory in the aftermath of his acceptance speech support this:

I will not allow myself to be told how to remember. Perhaps I did not make it clear enough that [I think] there should be public memory. But how every individual feels and what kind of conscience he and his family and children should have, that must be left up to him.⁵¹

Walser gives us no indication how personalised acts of remembrance stand in relation to public acts of memory: whether they are informed by the national template for remembrance or whether they are intended to challenge its hegemony.

At worst, Walser's speech can be seen as extreme disingenuousness. He was most certainly not talking in the Paulskirche in his capacity as a private individual, who finds his own personal history not adequately reflected in the national story. He was speaking as a public intellectual. As a writer of some considerable reputation and in possession of substantial amounts of symbolic and cultural capital, Walser was also seeking reassurance on his currency as a public intellectual. Thus in many ways, his intervention in the Paulskirche was an attempt to assert his symbolic capital (possibly against other stakeholders in the literary field, such as Günter Grass) and to shape the direction of national debates about Germany's past.

Schirmacher's role in the debate was to give Walser's speech a political context and to recuperate its revisionist tendencies for Schirmacher's own conservative agenda. Schirmacher instrumentalises Walser's speech in an effort to pull the terms of the debate about myths of origins back to the Right. After the regime change in 1998, Schirmacher may have had concerns that the Left-liberal consensus on the Holocaust, which had fought for dominance over the previous decades, would be given official legitimacy by the incoming government. By 1998, the Left-liberal consensus on the Nazi past was already firmly entrenched such that the only tactic available to Schirmacher was to argue that ordinary Germans too were victims of National Socialism. If we accept the view that the centrality of the Holocaust in public memory in Germany was no longer seriously in dispute in 1998, then Schirmacher's strategy after 1998 is not to dispute that the Holocaust happened or that it was the foundational experience for Germans in the postwar period. Instead, what he challenges is the content and make-up of the perpetrator trauma. He does so by calling for the inclusion of the trauma of ordinary Germans into the national phantasm.

Ultimately, the Walser–Bubis debate is less a troublesome sign of a political or anti-Semitic backlash than evidence of the 'disputational culture' (*Streitkultur*) that has been a dominant feature of postwar Germany. But both debates can be seen as evidence of the process by which norms about the nation and its memory are disputed and negotiated as Germans strive to achieve a sense of 'progressive normality' and a feeling of equal belonging in the international community of nations. But however healthy the process may be, there is always a good deal of fallout from public feuds and interventions such as these, and the loss of faith among Germany's Jewish community has been one of the least desirable effects of Walser's speech. Moreover, the desired normality of Germany is today still very much in contention, with many Germans decidedly uncomfortable about what this normality will look like and whether normality means that Germans will become less inhibited about articulating latent racism and anti-Semitism. Many American Jews, most notably James E. Young, have

welcomed the 'normalisation' of Germany, especially if it leads to Germany assuming greater moral responsibility on the international stage in preventing human-rights abuses and genocide.⁵² But as Germany's official pacifist stance on the Iraq war, and its Foreign Minister's repeated threat of a no vote on the UN Security Council have shown, Germany is a far cry from a normal nation with a normal history. Ironically, the Iraq war has shown that a majority of Germans are quite happy not to be considered a 'normal' nation with a normal past, particularly if this normalisation means that it must be expected to engage in armed combat without the legitimacy of a UN resolution. Indeed, the Iraq war offers a paradigmatic example of how a type of 'negative nationalism' that is rooted in critical memory of the past and an acknowledgment of past guilt can, paradoxically, contribute to fostering a sense of national pride, even in a shameful past. It has demonstrated that national pride and national self-understanding does not have to mean forgetting a tainted past and denying the discontinuities and ruptures in the nation's history. Curiously, the overwhelming support in Germany for not participating in the Iraq war illustrates Habermas's point that a negative myth of origins coupled with a sense of pride in the nation's recent democratic traditions, or what he has called, controversially, 'constitutional patriotism' (*Verfassungspatriotismus*), does not have to be a stumbling block in the search for a more positive sense of national identity.

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1. Franz Kafka, *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*, trans. and ed. Malcolm Pasley, Penguin, London, 2000.
 2. For a summary of the debates see Rob Burns (ed.), *German Cultural Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, p. 340 ff.
 3. Frank Schirrmacher, 'Sein Anteil: Laudatio', in Martin Walser, *Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede: Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels 1998*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1998, pp. 36–40.
 4. For a sample of Walser's works in translation see A. Leslie Willson (ed.), *Three Contemporary German Novellas*, Continuum, New York, 2001. This volume contains a translation of Walser's *Runaway Horse (Ein Fliehendes Pferd)*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1978); *The Swan Villa*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1982 (*Das Schwanenhaus*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1980); *Letter to Lord Liszt*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, 1985 (*Brief an Lord Liszt*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1982).
 5. Jürgen Habermas, 'Der Zeigefinger: Die Deutschen und Ihr Denkmal', *Die Zeit*, 5 April 1999.
 6. A. Dirk Moses, 'Coming to Terms with Genocidal Pasts in Comparative Perspective: Germany and Australia', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 25, 2001, p. 94.
 7. Walser, *Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede*, p. 20.
 8. Walser, *Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede*, p. 17.
 9. Walser, *Erfahrungen beim Verfassen einer Sonntagsrede*, p. 18.
 10. Frank Schirrmacher, 'Nachwort', in Frank Schirrmacher (ed.), *Die Walser-Bubis-Debatte: Eine Dokumentation*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1999, p. 681.

11. Richard Herzinger, 'Die Keulenschwinger', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 6 December 1998, (p. 1 of Kultur section); Heinrich August Winkler, 'Lesarten der Sühne', *Der Spiegel*, 24 August 1998, reprinted in Michael Cullen (ed.), *Das Holocaust-Mahnmal: Dokumentation einer Debatte*, Pendo, Zürich, 1999, p. 244.
12. Henry M. Broder, 'Halbzeit im Irrenhaus', *Der Tagesspiegel*, 24 November 1998, p. 24.
13. Herzinger, 'Die Keulenschwinger', p. 1.
14. Günter Grass, *Crabwalk*, trans. Krishna Winston, Faber & Faber, London, 2003.
15. See the speech given by Germany's Foreign Minister on the occasion of yet another dispute, the anti-Semitism debate in 2002 over the taboo of criticising Israel. Joschka Fischer, 'Deutschland, Deine Juden. Wider die Neue Sprachlosigkeit im Deutsch-Jüdischen Verhältnis,' *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 11 May 2002.
16. See Klaus Siblewski (ed.), *Martin Walser: Auskunft: 22 Gespräche aus 28 Jahren*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1991.
17. Like his political views, Walser's party affiliations have vacillated over the years. He campaigned in the early 1960s for the SPD, was in the late 1960s a one-time member of the Communist Party of Germany and a critic of the Vietnam War, and by the 1980s he was thought a renegade to the Left camp. He gained a profile during that time as something of an intellectual loose cannon. He defied political correctness on the Left in relation to the 'non-issue', at the time, of German unification in the mid-1980s, repeatedly voicing his wish to see East and West Germany re-unified. He refused to accept the division of Germany as a permanent fixture on the historical landscape of Europe, recalling it was a 'punitive measure' imposed by the Allies after the war—Klaus Siblewski (ed.), *Martin Walser: Auskunft: 22 Gespräche aus 28 Jahren*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt, 1991, p. 253. For years he resisted pressure and defied censure by speaking from the heart about the 'phantom pain' he felt personally from the division of Germany as if it were an amputated limb. He allowed himself to be unashamedly ruled by his 'feeling for history' and spoke openly about his affinity with East Germany in his 'Leipzig-Stuttgart-feeling' (Siblewski, p. 249). It was this emotional attachment to parts of Germany that lay in East Germany, for instance, that would not allow him to give up hope of one day being able to go to the theatre in Dresden, he proclaimed, years before German unification was a real possibility—Martin Walser, 'Über Deutschland Reden', in Manfred Kluge (ed.), *Schwarz-rot-gold: Ein Politisches Lesebuch*, Heyne, Munich, 1990, pp. 208–26.
18. Thomas Assheuer, 'Der Komplete Artikel: Streit um das Holocaust-Denkmal in Berlin: Mehrdeutigkeit Muß Sein', *Die Zeit*, 17 August 1999, p. 41.
19. Jürgen Habermas, 'Die Zweite Lebenslüge der Bundesrepublik: Wir Sind Wieder Normal Geworden', *Die Zeit*, 11 December 1992.
20. For a detailed discussion of the different usages of the concepts 'normalisation' and 'normality' in the context of normalising German–Jewish relations, see Ruth Starkman, 'Perpetual Impossibility? Normalization of German–Jewish Relations in the Berlin Republic', in Ruth Starkman (ed.), *The New Germany: Transformations of the New Germany: Into the Second Decade*, Palgrave/Macmillan, London, forthcoming.
21. Klaus Neumann argues that there is 'no "German" (or "non-Jewish German") approach' to the Nazi past. Instead he argues for the importance of site-specific acts of memorialisation and rituals of memory, stressing the local as the primary locus for the generation of memory. The ghosts of the past can reassert themselves in surprising ways in local communities, which can often be prompted to remember shameful aspects of their local history in ways that do not necessarily echo national trends or histories. See Klaus Neumann, 'Haunted Lands', *The UTS Review*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2000, p. 66; and Neumann, *Shifting Memories: The Nazi Past in the New Germany*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2000, pp. 13 ff.
22. For the use of the term 'perpetrator trauma', see A. Dirk Moses; and Cathy Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 1995.
23. Neumann, *Shifting Memories*, p. 241.
24. See Ruth Starkman, 'Perpetual Impossibility?'
25. Jeffrey Herf, "'A New Schlusstrichmentalität?": The Schröder Government, the Berlin Memorial and the Politics of Memory', <http://www.aicgs.org/After_the_1998_Election/herf/html>
26. Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1997, p. 344.
27. Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 334.
28. Michael Jeismann (ed.), *Mahnmal Mitte: Eine Kontroverse*, DuMont, Köln, 1999, pp. 242–3.
29. Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 352.
30. Caroline Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1999, p. 147.

31. Helmut Kohl embarrassed himself with regards to opening the Stasi files and using them to obtain retrospective justice for the victims, when, in 1993, he argued before the parliamentary inquiry into the effects of the GDR regime that 'we will get no satisfaction from them, and historians will not get any either'. This could, of course, be seen in retrospect because he had much to fear from the opening of the Stasi's secret police files on himself. Quoted in Jürgen Fuchs, 'Mißliche Wahrheit', *Der Spiegel*, no. 5, 1996, p. 51.
32. Romani Rose, '“Ein Mahnmal für Alle Opfer”: Im NS-Regime Gab Es Keine Verfolgung Erster oder Zweiter Klasse', *Die Zeit*, 28 April 1989, reprinted in Jeismann, pp. 60–5. See also Rainer Koselleck, 'Die Falsche Ungeduld', *Die Zeit*, 16 March 1998, reprinted in Cullen, p. 226.
33. See Wiedmer, p. 145, and Eberhard Jaeckel, 'An Alles und Jeden Erinnern?', *Die Zeit*, 7 April 1989, reprinted in Jeismann, pp. 56–60.
34. Wiedmer, p. 148.
35. Cullen, p. 266.
36. Cullen, p. 266.
37. Henryk M. Broder, 'Auf der Höhe der Zeit', *Der Spiegel*, 24 November 1997; reprinted in Cullen, p. 188.
38. Koselleck, p. 226.
39. In 1993 Kohl had intervened in the planning of a memorial at the 'Neue Wache' to the 'victims of war and violence'. By insisting on erecting an enlarged Pieta by expressionist artist Käthe Kollwitz on the site, he had effectively excluded Jewish victims. His choice of Christian symbolism alluded to the fallen German soldiers of war more than it did to the 'passive victims' of Nazi violence. Koselleck, pp. 222–3; Salomon Korn, 'Monströse Platte', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 July 1995, reprinted in Cullen, pp. 37–8; Wiedmer, p. 159.
40. Heinrich Wefing, 'Triumph über den Kleinmut', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 August 1998, reprinted in Jeismann, pp. 263–5.
41. Herzinger, 'Im Virtuellen Raum: Michael Naumann und die Mediale Erregungsgemeinschaft', *Die Zeit*, 30 July 1998, p. 34.
42. Wiedmer, p. 148.
43. Gerhard Schröder, 'Eine Offene Republik: Ein Zeit-Gespräch mit Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder über das Geplante Holocaust-Mahnmal, die Folgen der Walser-Bubis-Debatte und den Wiederaufbau des Berliner Schlosses', *Die Zeit*, 4 February 1999, pp. 33–5.
44. Habermas, 'Der Zeigefinger'.
45. Assheuer, p. 41.
46. Habermas, 'Der Zeigefinger'.
47. Korn, 'Die Tafeln Sind Zerbrochen', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9 February 1996, reprinted in Cullen, pp. 49–60.
48. Peter Eisenman, 'Kein Wort an der Stele: Ein Gespräch mit dem Architekten Peter Eisenman', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21 May 1999, p. 22.
49. Aleida and Jan Assmann, 'Niemand Lebt im Augenblick', *Die Zeit*, 3 December 1998, p. 43.
50. Assmann.
51. Walser, 'Wir Brauchen eine Neue Sprache für die Erinnerung', *Die Walser-Bubis-Debatte*, p. 446.
52. See Starkman on the response of the Jewish community in Germany and in America on Germany's normalisation, 'Perpetual Impossibility?'