January 11, 2011

The Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) and the Center for Critical Inquiry and Cultural Studies (CCICS) are planning a research symposium entitled Memory & Countermemory: Monuments, Museums, Memorialization of an Open Future. The Philosophy, Rhetoric and Literature Cluster (PRL), a faculty group sponsored by the Center for Critical Inquiry and Cultural Studies, and the Center for Jewish Studies envision this gathering as a two-day symposium that will bring about fifteen invited and other ASU scholars from critical theory, cultural studies, memoir fiction, narrative non-fiction, rhetoric and aesthetics of memorials and counter-monuments, performance studies, and psychoanalysis to reflect on philosophical, political, legal, and religious perspectives on the construction of memory and countermemory. We have invited work in progress on contemporary conflicted places of memory from a variety of geographical as well as transdisciplinary approaches. The participants will discuss the dynamic relations between memorializing the past on behalf of victims, on the one hand, and the tendency to narrate the past as seamless heritage for the sake of the present.

The three day conversation will focus on three temporal axes:

**Haunting Memory**
- How do harms impact memory, how are their histories transmitted and evoked across generations?
- How does coming to terms with the past shape narratives and strategies of memorialization, monuments, museums?
- What is the dynamics between memorializing the past on behalf of victims and narrating the past for the sake of the present?

**Historical Present Memory**
- With what resources can contemporaries work through memory at war with itself?
- How can we learn to remember without homogenizing histories and idolizing seamless heritages?

**Memory of the Future**
- Which or whose memory makes our future possible, open, hopeful?
- Can transgenerational memory transform uninhabitable places and unlivable times that were weighted down by haunting legacies and conflicted heritages?
- Can succeeding generations remember human possibility without redemptive consolations of victory marches, monuments, museums, cheap grace?

The conference will focus on some of the following question-areas:

- The emergence and development of Holocaust, postcolonial, genocide, and trauma studies
- Memory at war – examination of some contemporary conflict zones, memorials, and museums coming to terms with or masking violent transgenerational legacies
- Liberation narratives and movements – how are we to remember the victims of history without rewriting their memory and yet keeping the traumatic past open to another future?

**Program**

- **Opening plenary session with Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer:** Sunday, November 6, at ASU, Tempe campus
- **A keynote address by Cathy Caruth,** Monday, Nov. 7 at ASU, West campus, La Sala ABC, *open to the public*
- **Research sessions** Sunday afternoon and evening, Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 7 and 8 at ASU, Tempe campus

Five to six panels will gather invited scholars to ASU. The main organizing and hosting Centers, CJS and PRL-CCICS, are composing two additional panels by invitation of ASU faculty specialists who teach and write in areas closely linked with the symposium theme. Faculty from the hosting units will also moderate and chair all sessions.

Among the scholars who have accepted the invitation are: Cathy Caruth, Yael Danieli, Alexander Etkind, Yael Feldman, James B. Gardner, Sandor Goodhart, Lewis R. Gordon, Marianne Hirsch, Abdul JanMohamed, Berel Lang, Lawrence L. Langer, Marilyn Nissim-Sabat, Gabriele M. Schwab, Leo Spitzer, and James Young.
Conjoint events may precede and grow out of the symposium

ASU-West hopes to host a new one-hour dramatic-staging-reading version of Robert Benjamin’s play, *Parted Waters*, brought to campus by AZ Jewish Theatre Co., Janet Arnold, Producing Director, and Charles St. Clair, fine arts specialist at ASU-West. The event is to be followed by a post-performance panel discussion.

The [Center for Jewish Studies](http://www.public.asu.edu/~havats) has extensive experience in running academic conferences and workshops. The faculty group in Philosophy, Rhetoric and Literature and the [Center for Critical Inquiry and Cultural Studies](http://www.public.asu.edu/~havats) at the New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences recently participated in a major interdisciplinary conference on Trauma Studies in October 2010. The Center for Jewish Studies aims to cover the participants’ travel expenses, room and board during the conference; the Center for Critical Inquiry and Cultural Studies will assume responsibility for developing the conference program and for additional expenses.* Other participating units will be supporting the event.

With best wishes,

**Martin Beck Matuštík**  
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*Pending final funding.*

Yael Danieli - a clinical psychologist in private practice, a victimologist, traumatologist, Director of the Group Project for Holocaust Survivors and their Children, which she co-founded in 1975 in the New York City area, and Founding Co-President of the International network of Holocaust and Genocide Survivors and their Friends. She has done extensive psychotherapeutic work with survivors and children of survivors on individual, family, group and community bases. She has studied in depth post-war responses and attitudes toward them, and the impact these and the Holocaust had on their lives. She has lectured and published worldwide in numerous books and journals, translated into at least 17 languages on optimal care and training for this and other victim/survivor populations, and received several awards for her work, the most recent of which is the Lifetime Achievement Award of the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ISTSS). In 2008 she was appointed Advisor on Victims of Terrorism for the office of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and helped organize the first Symposium on Supporting Victims of Terrorism at the UN. She was appointed Distinguished Professor of International Psychology at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology, helping to build the first Ph.D. program in international psychology. She has served as consultant to the ICTY and the International Criminal Court on issues related to victims and staff care, consultant to South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Rwanda government on reparations for victims, and has led ongoing Projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Promoting a Dialogue: “Democracy Cannot Be Built with the Hands of Broken Souls”), and in northern Ireland. Author of International responses to traumatic stress...; The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Fifty years and beyond; Sharing the front line and the back hills (Baywood) all published for and on behalf of the United Nations; International handbook of multigenerational legacies of trauma (Kluwer/ Plenum); and The trauma of terrorism: An international Handbook of sharing knowledge and shared care and On the Ground After September 11 [a finalist of Best Books 2005 Award of USA BookNews.com](Haworth Press).

Alexander (Sasha) Etkin - King’s College, Cambridge, Reader in Russian Literature and Cultural History, Department of Slavonic Studies, two PhDs, in Psychology from Bekhterev Institute, Leningrad, and in Slavonic Literatures from the University of Helsinki. Before coming to Cambridge, he taught at the European University at St.Petersburg and, as a visiting professor, at New York University and Georgetown University. He was also a resident fellow at Harvard, Princeton, and Wissenschaftskolleg in Berlin. Current research interests are internal colonization in the Russian Empire; narratology from Pushkin to Nabokov; and comparative studies of cultural memory. Author of “Post-Soviet Hauntology: Cultural Memory of the Soviet Terror.” Constellations. An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory 16/1 (2009): 182-200. “Bare Monuments to Bare Life: The Soon-to-Be-Dead in Arts and Memory.” Gulag Studies, vol.1 (2008): 27-33. "Soviet Subjectivity: Torture for the Sake of Salvation?" Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History 6, 1 (winter 2005) 171-186. Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia. Boulder - Oxford: Westview (translated by Noah and Maria Rubens, 1996). Published in Russian in 1993. Translated into French, German, Swedish, Hungarian, Serbian, Bulgarian. Current Group Project: Memory at War, an international collaborative project investigating the cultural dynamics of the ‘memory wars’ currently raging in Poland, Russia and Ukraine. Employing a collaborative methodology grounded in the analytical and critical practices of the humanities, the project seeks to explore how public memory of twentieth-century traumas mediates the variety of ways in which East European nations develop in post-socialist space. The University of Cambridge is leading this project, which will be accomplished in association with the Universities of Bergen, Helsinki, Tartu and Groningen. The project was launched in 2010 and will run for three years.

Sandro Goodhart - Director of Interdisciplinary Program in Classics, former Director of Jewish Studies, faculty in Philosophy and Literature Ph.D. Program, Purdue University. He is the author of Sacrificing Commentary: Reading The End of Literature (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) and Reading Stephen Sondheim (Garland, 2000). He is at work on two books: Moebian Nights: Literary Reading After Auschwitz and The Tears of Esau: Reading, Revelation, And The Prophetic. He has published articles in Diacritics, Philosophy And Literature, The Stanford Review, Modern Judaism, Contagion: Journal of Mimesis, Religion, And Culture, among other places. He is a member of the editorial boards of Modern Fiction Studies, Contagion: Journal of Mimesis, Religion, And Culture, and Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies. He offers graduate courses in "Biblical Reading: The Religious, the Ethical, and the Literary," "Structuralism and Poststructuralism," "Shakespeare," and "Greek Tragedy and Philosophy."

James B. Gardner, is Senior Scholar at the National Museum of American History and the National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Prior to his appointment at the Smithsonian, Dr. Gardner served as Deputy Executive Director of the American Historical Association and as Director of Education and Special Programs for the American Association for State and Local History. His professional activities have included service as president of the National Council on Public History, chair of the Nominating Board of the Organization of American Historians, and on the Board of Editors of The Public Historian. He currently serves as chair of the Smithsonian’s Ethics Advisory Board. Dr. Gardner has written and lectured widely on museums, memory, and September 11, including (with Sarah M. Henry) "September 11 and the Mourning After: Reflections on Collecting and Interpreting the History of Tragedy," The Public Historian (2002); "September 11: Museums, Spontaneous Memorials, and History," in Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death (2011); and "Preserving/Shaping/Creating: Museums and Public Memory in a Time of Loss," in Museum Theory: An Expanded Field (Blackwell International Handbook of Museum Studies, in development). Current projects include The Oxford Handbook of Public History (co-editor and contributor), Museums, Ethics, and the Public Trust (author), and Exhibiting the National Past in a Global Age (co-editor and contributor). Previous publications include Public History: Essays from the Field (revised edition, 2004), Ordinary People and Everyday Life: Perspectives on the New Social History (1983), and contributions to The Public Historian, Public History Review, Samtid & museer, and other periodicals. As a lecturer and conference speaker, he has appeared on the programs of such diverse professional organizations as the American Association of Museums, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Association of American Colleges and Universities; at symposia and conferences convened by the National Museum of Denmark, the International Congress of Maritime Museums, the University of Technology Sydney, the European Association of Social Anthropologists, and other national and international organizations; and at numerous meetings, conferences, and seminars sponsored by local, state, and regional groups.

Marianne Hirsch • Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University where she also has an appointment in the Institute for Research on Women and Gender. She has been a Guggenheim, ACLS, National Humanities Center, Rockefeller Foundation, and Mary Ingraham Bunting, Fellow. She served on the MLA Executive Council (1992-95); the ACLA, Advisory Board (1993-97); the Board of Supervisors of The English Institute (1997-2000); and the Executive Board of the Society for the Study of Narrative Literature, (1998-2001). She was the Editor of PMLA from 2003 to 2006 and is on the advisory boards of two new journals, Memory Studies and Contemporary Women’s Writing. Her recent publications include Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory (1997), The Familial Gaze (1999), a special issue on “Gender and Cultural Memory” (2002) and Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust (2004). Over the last few years, she has also published numerous articles on cultural memory, visibility and gender, particularly on the representation of the Second World War and the Holocaust in literature, testimony and photography. Her most recent book, co-authored with Leo Spitzer, is on the Romanian Holocaust, an area of the world that is just beginning to memorialize its lost Jewish past: is Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory (2010). See http://www.ghostsofhome.com

Lawrence L. Langer (1929– ). Professor of English Emeritus at Simmons College in Boston, is the foremost scholar of the Holocaust in the field of literature and testimony. Langer’s The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination (1975), his first work on the Holocaust, was followed by The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature (1978); Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit (1982); Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory (1991); Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays (1995); and Preempting the Holocaust. He is also editor of Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology (1995). Langer’s contributions to the field are many. In Versions of Survival, he coined the term “choiceless choices” to describe the unprecedented situations of conflict that Jews found themselves in during the Holocaust. Holocaust Testimonies, based on his study of survivors’ oral histories in the *Fortunoff Video Archives, won a National Book Critics Circle Award and was named one of the “Ten Best Books of 1991” by the New York Times Book Review. It was one of the first scholarly works to examine survivors’ testimonies as a basis for understanding the Holocaust. A hallmark of Langer’s analyses is the rejection of reading a redemptive message into study of the Holocaust, an understanding that he pursues with rigor against all attempts to soften our understanding. Initially, especially in his widely respected work The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination, Langer’s preoccupation was with literature, but gradually and perceptively his focus shifted. He became consumed by the task of understanding the Holocaust. Literature became his tool; in the hands of a master, the tool soon became a club for undermining some of the simple conventions of Western society. More and more, Langer’s work concentrated on memoirs and memory, telling of the assault against the individual that was at the core of the Shoah. More than any other student of literature, Langer insisted that the Holocaust was about atrocity. No simple meanings could be found, no reassuring sense of triumphant values, no invocation of Viktor Frankl’s “will to meaning” or Terrence Des Pres’ “life spirit.” For Langer, there was no escape from darkness, no way to sidestep the radical challenge posed by the Holocaust. His understanding of Holocaust testimonies was another exploration of the narrative of survival. Unlike literary memoirs or diaries, the testimonies are the products of ordinary people, often without great literary or intellectual sophisticated, who have lived through extraordinary events. Video testimonies are spontaneous and unrehearsed, they do not have the worked-through quality of literary creations. Often, the witnesses surprise themselves by what is recalled. Langer may have heard more of these oral histories than anyone alive, and he brings to this study decades of sensitivity toward the event and the literature. Yet, throughout the work he retains a keen ability to hear and resists the temptation to organize and categorize the material. Instead, the reader is treated to an extended essay on memory, deep memory, anguished memory, humiliated memory, tainted memory, unheroic memory (as the titles of his chapters go). What emerges is a refined understanding of the Holocaust as experienced by those who lived it, an uncovering of all levels of memory that falsify the event, that protect the individual from the full impact of this most painful experience. Like a great psychoanalyst, Langer strips away layer after layer of falsehood until the reader is forced to face the core experience – directly, faithfully, faithlessly. Having opted for early retirement, he left Simmons in 1992 after more than three decades of teaching and retired to write. He has written works on the art of Samuel *Bak that combine a keen analysis of his art
with an even more profound understanding of the subject matter of the art, whether it be Genesis or the shattered world in which post-Holocaust humanity dwells.

Abdul JanMohamed - UC Berkeley, Chancellor's Professor of English, writes about post-colonial fiction and theory; his work has explored the politics of literature and the nature of discourse in colonial and post-colonial cultures. Raised in Kenya, he witnessed efforts there to eliminate indigenous cultures; in early work he tried to demonstrate “the importance of accounting for . . . the cultural resistance of the colonized.” Author of The Death-bound-subject: Richard Wright's Archaeology Of Death (Duke UP, 2005). The book explores how Wright’s characters are shaped and coerced living with the constant threat of violent death. The founding editor of the journal Cultural Critique, he is also the author of Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa, and a coeditor, with David Lloyd, of The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse. He is currently working on a book about Black feminist neo-slave narratives, which are all concerned with retrieving the trauma of the past.

Berel Lang - Professor of Humanities at Trinity College, visiting Professor of Philosophy and Letters at Wesleyan University. Author of Philosophical Witnessing: The Holocaust as Presence (2009), Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics (2000), Post-Holocaust: Interpretation, Misinterpretation, and the Claims of History (2005); Heidegger’s Silence (1996), Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide (1990) and many other works bridging philosophy, aesthetics, ethics and history. Much honored for outstanding scholarship and teaching, he held fellowships from the N.E.H., ACLS, American Philosophical Association, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, and is a member of the American Academy for Jewish Research. He has taught at Wesleyan, Trinity College, SUNY at Albany, the University of Colorado, and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Professor Lang delivered at Wesleyan the annual 2010 Philip Hallie lecture, “Primo Levi, Writer (and Memoirist).”


Leo Spitzer - the Vernon Professor of History Emeritus at Dartmouth College and Visiting Professor of History, Columbia University. Born in La Paz, Bolivia to refugee parents who fled Nazi persecution in Austria, he now lives in the U.S., splitting his home residency between Norwich, Vermont and New York city. Trained in comparative history, he received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Brandeis University and his Masters and Doctorate from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His interests range widely – from questions concerning emancipation and reactions to exclusion and domination in Latin America, Africa, and Central Europe, to issues of historical memory, refugeehood, and representations of trauma in photography, film and video. He is the author of Hotel Bolivia: The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism; Lives in Between: Assimilation and Marginality in Austria, Brazil and West Africa; The Creoles of Sierra Leone: Responses to Colonialism; and is co-editor with Mieke Bal and Jonathan Crewe of Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present. A former Chair of the History Department and the founding Chair of the Jewish Studies Program at Dartmouth, he was the Lucius Littauer Fellow at the National Humanities Center (1992-93) and has been the recipient of John Simon Guggenheim, Ford, Social Science Research Council, American Council of Learned Societies, Whiting, National Endowment for the Humanities, and Rockefeller/Bellagio, and Bogliasco Foundation awards and fellowships. In 1996-98, he was a National Humanities Center Distinguished Lecturer. In collaboration with Marianne Hirsch his most recent book is Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory (2010). He has taught on "A History of the Jewish Immigrant Life in the United States, Latin America and Africa,"
"Representing the Holocaust: History, Memory and Survival," "Emancipation and Exclusion: the Jewish and Black Experiences in Europe and the Americas."

**James Young** - Professor of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he has taught since 1988. He most recently served as Chair of the Department of Judaic and Near Eastern Studies. author of At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture (Yale University Press, 2000), The Texture of Memory (Yale University Press, 1993), which won the National Jewish Book Award in 1994, and Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust (Indiana University Press, 1988), which won a Choice Outstanding Book Award for 1988. He was also the Guest Curator of an exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York City, entitled "The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History" (March - August 1994, with venues in Berlin and Munich, September 1994 - June 1995) and was the editor of The Art of Memory (Prestel Verlag, 1994), the exhibition catalogue for this show. In 1997, Professor Young was appointed by the Berlin Senate to the five-member Findungskommission for Germany's national "Memorial to Europe's Murdered Jews," dedicated in 2005. He has also consulted with Argentina's government on its memorial to the desaparecidos, as well as with numerous city agencies on their memorials and museums. Most recently, he was appointed by the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation to the jury for the World Trade Center Site Memorial competition, now under construction.

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