



Writing History, Writing Trauma (Parallax: Re-visions of Culture and Society)

By Dominick LaCapra

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Trauma and its aftermath pose acute problems for historical representation and understanding. In *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Dominick LaCapra critically analyzes attempts by theorists and literary critics to come to terms with trauma and with the crucial role post-traumatic testimonies—notably Holocaust testimonies—assume in thought and in writing. These attempts are addressed in a series of six interlocking essays that adapt psychoanalytic concepts to historical analysis, while employing sociocultural and political critique to elucidate trauma and its aftereffects in culture and in people. This updated edition includes a substantive new preface that reconsiders some of the issues raised in the book.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Intellectually complex yet lucid." -- Erik Weisengruber, Literary Research

"This is a comprehensive, informed and generously footnoted contribution to trauma studies... Writing History, Writing Trauma will thus important reading not only to trauma theorists and their critics, but to historians and literary critics of all persuasions invested in rethinking the relationship between trauma, history, and ethics." -- Debarati Sanyal, SubStance

"Thoughtful and compelling... LaCapra's discussions of historiography, philosophy, and psychoanalysis are extraordinarily lucid, and this book is a brilliant example of some of the capabilities of contemporary trauma theory in analyzing representations of trauma." -- James Berger, Tikkun

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Review

LaCapra's analysis of trauma is folded into an ambitious and compelling reflection on the possibilities for a genuinely cross-disciplinary theoretical dialogue on history... Important reading not only to trauma theorists and their critics, but to historians and literary critics of all persuasions invested in rethinking the relationship between trauma, history, and ethics.

(SubStance)

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(Tikkun)

The strength of LaCapra's text lies in its urgency, in the clarity of its commitment to historiographic adequacy and the constructive potential of a psychoanalytic mode of interpretation, and in its appeal to a sense of civic responsibility.

(Criticism)

Until now trauma studies lacked the kind of discerning metacommentary that would adjudicate among its emergent logics, truth claims, intellectual strategies, objects of analysis, and scholarly positions. That dream of totalization, however, is precisely what LaCapra casts doubt upon in his important new book.

(Modernism/Modernity)

Insightful and compassionate... LaCapra both uses and transcends contemporary critical theory in assessing the influence of trauma on present-day historical writing.

(Holocaust and Genocide Studies)

About the Author

Dominick LaCapra is the Bryce and Edith M. Bowmar Professor in Humanistic Studies emeritus at Cornell University. His books include *History and Its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence* and *History, Literature, Critical Theory*.

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