

THE IMPLICATED SUBJECT

Beyond Victims and Perpetrators

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“This vicarious responsibility for things we have not done, this taking upon ourselves the consequences for things we are entirely innocent of, is the price we pay for the fact that we live our lives not by ourselves but among our fellow men, and that the faculty of action, which, after all, is the political faculty par excellence, can be actualized only in one of the many and manifold forms of human community.”

HANNAH ARENDT,

“Collective Responsibility”

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Introduction

From Victims and Perpetrators to Implicated Subjects

This book emerges from a belief that our understanding of power, privilege, violence, and injustice suffers from an underdeveloped vocabulary. In particular, we lack adequate concepts for describing what Hannah Arendt called “this vicarious responsibility for things we have not done”: that is, for the manifold indirect, structural, and collective forms of agency that enable injury, exploitation, and domination but that frequently remain in the shadows.¹ As a contribution to such understanding, I offer here the category of the “implicated subject” and the related notion of “implication.” Derived from the Latin stem *implicāre*, meaning to entangle, involve, or connect closely, “implication,” like the proximate but not identical term “complicity,” draws attention to how we are “folded into” (im-plied in) events that at first seem beyond our agency as individual subjects.²

Implicated subjects occupy positions aligned with power and privilege without being themselves direct agents of harm; they contribute to, inhabit, inherit, or benefit from regimes of domination but do not originate or control such regimes. An implicated subject is neither a victim nor a perpetrator, but rather a participant in histories and social formations that generate the positions of victim and perpetrator, and yet in which most people do not occupy such clear-cut roles. Less “actively” involved than perpetrators, implicated subjects do not fit the mold of the “passive” bystander, either. Although indirect or belated, their actions and inactions help produce and reproduce the positions of victims and perpetrators. In other words, implicated subjects help propagate the legacies of historical violence and prop up the structures of inequality that mar the present; apparently direct forms of violence turn out to rely on

indirection. Modes of implication—entanglement in historical and present-day injustices—are complex, multifaceted, and sometimes contradictory, but are nonetheless essential to confront in the pursuit of justice.

An approach based on implication and implicated subjects can help illuminate a wide range of social and political struggles, as this book will attempt to illustrate, but such an approach has a particular affinity to questions of race and racism, as many of the case studies below will also attest. Forms of violence and inequality premised on racial hierarchy take shape in small-scale encounters and large-scale structures; they are also instantiated repetitively in the present yet burdened with active historical resonances. Focusing on the position of the implicated subject allows us to address these different scales and temporalities of injustice. In order to demonstrate more concretely the conceptual specificity and analytical purchase of the implicated subject—in contradistinction from the perpetrator, the victim, and the bystander—I begin with responses to one of the most infamous recent cases of racial violence: the 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin in Florida. Together with an unfathomably long list of killings of black Americans by police officers, vigilantes, and white supremacists, the murder of Martin helped spark a major political movement: Black Lives Matter.³ That long list of murders should also inspire thinking about collective responsibility among those positioned as implicated subjects—that is, those who occupy the histories and structures of racial privilege and white supremacy.

“We Are Not Trayvon Martin”

On the evening of February 26, 2012, Trayvon Martin, an African American teenager, was killed by a neighborhood watch vigilante while returning from a convenience store to the home of his father’s fiancée in a gated community in Florida. A year and a half later, the killer, George Zimmerman, was acquitted on all charges in the death of the seventeen-year-old high school student on the grounds that he was acting in self-defense. Among those outraged by the killing and subsequent acquittal, a first response was to express solidarity with Martin through acts of identification. Since Martin was killed while wearing a hooded sweatshirt, the “hoodie” quickly became a symbol of the case and of the racist power dynamics that made both the killing and the acquittal possible. Thousands of people posed in hoodies and posted their images on the internet, frequently with an accompanying slogan that declared “I am Trayvon Martin” or “We are all Trayvon Martin” (fig. 1).⁴

Such expressions of solidarity-via-identification have an honorable history in political discourse. In May 1968, for instance, French students expressed their solidarity with the allegedly foreign activist Daniel Cohn-Bendit with the slogan “Nous sommes tous des juifs allemands” (We are all German Jews).⁵ More recently, in a very different context, thousands of Turkish citizens adapted the slogan to the struggle against extreme nationalism and genocide denial by chanting the name of Hrant Dink, the murdered Armenian-Turkish journalist: “Hepimiz Hrantiz, hepimiz Ermeniyiz” (We are all Hrant, we are all Armenian). Meanwhile, the slogan “Je suis Charlie” (I am Charlie) swept the world after Islamists murdered journalists associated with the Parisian satirical weekly *Charlie Hebdo*, and many people in

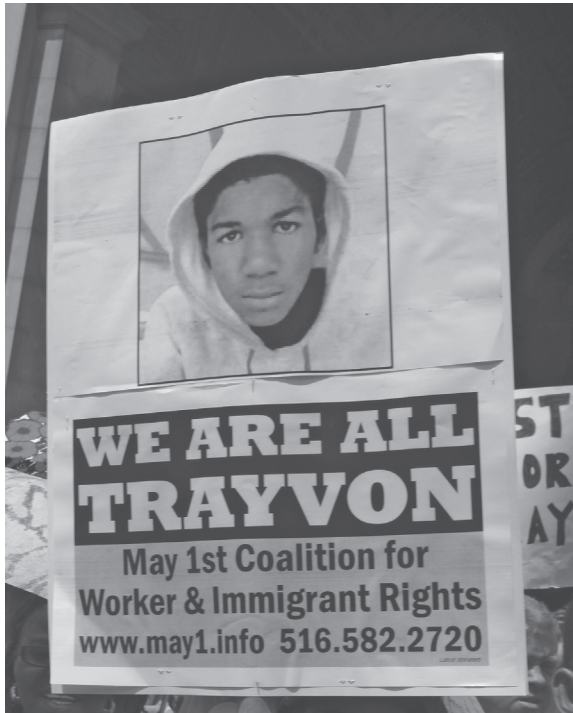


FIGURE 1. The logic of identification: “We Are All Trayvon.” Trayvon Martin rally, July 20, 2013, Manhattan, New York. Photograph by The All Nite Images, retrieved from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/otto-yamamoto/9361288107>. Used under Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>).

the US protested Donald Trump's 2017 executive order barring citizens of several Muslim-majority countries from entry into the country by declaring, "We are all immigrants!"

Such acts of solidarity-as-identification can successfully mobilize participation and attract attention, but they have limits and frequently come under criticism. The claim to universal immigrant status in the US, for instance, has been seen as erasing the presence of indigenous people and distorting the experience of Africans deported to the Americas in the slave trade. "No ban on stolen land," a counterslogan to "We are all immigrants," was coined by indigenous activists to mark the injustice of both Trump's "Muslim ban" and the ongoing fact of settler colonialism. When taken up, as it has been, by some nonindigenous speakers, the slogan tacitly acknowledges the speaker's own implication in settler colonial dispossessions. In the case of Trayvon Martin, it was not long before criticism arose regarding white Americans' identification with the murdered teen.⁶ White people, the convincing argument ran, do not in fact experience the kind of profiling and "justified" violence to which black people are daily exposed, nor can they necessarily comprehend easily the history of racialization and unfreedom—including slavery, Jim Crow, and lynching—that many see as lying behind contemporary experiences.

Those who took this critique seriously sought other means of expressing their outrage and solidarity. In abandoning—or shifting away from—the discourse of identification with Trayvon Martin, such public rhetoric might have taken up another possible slogan: "We are all George Zimmerman." Such an articulation would have offered one means of taking responsibility for the murder of Martin and the widespread existence of racism. Although less common than alignment with victims, other examples exist of claiming identification with perpetrators as a mode of resistance and solidarity with the victims. In the wake of the Abu Ghraib revelations during the Iraq War, for instance, the journalist Mark Danner asserted, "We are all torturers now."⁷ Such assertions stay within the logic of identification but shift its focus from victim to perpetrator. Yet, as Timothy Kaufman-Osborn argues in response to claims like Danner's, "such invocations of collective accountability" can end up granting legitimacy to what one seeks to criticize because they "help to manufacture the sort of popular sovereign, the 'we,' that is required in order to sustain the apparent legitimacy of [the] regime."⁸ In any event, whether or not such an argument could also be made in the case of a racist murder, this option

was not often taken up in the wake of Trayvon Martin's murder—at least not in antiracist discourse.⁹

Instead, in response to the critique of over-identification and appropriation in the claim “We are all Trayvon Martin,” a new slogan appeared that briefly attained prominence: “We are not Trayvon Martin.” This slogan, like “No ban on stolen land,” starts to move us toward recognition of the position of the implicated subject. Over the course of the days and weeks following the acquittal of George Zimmerman in July 2013, a website named “We Are Not Trayvon Martin” published hundreds of short autobiographical texts, sometimes accompanied by photographs (fig. 2).¹⁰ Those declaring themselves “not Trayvon Martin” were a diverse group: many of the texts and images came from white Americans recounting experiences of privilege or dawning awareness of being part of a racist society, but there were also posts by black women that drew attention to the gendered dimensions of racism and vulnerability and many posts that raised issues of class and geographical region.

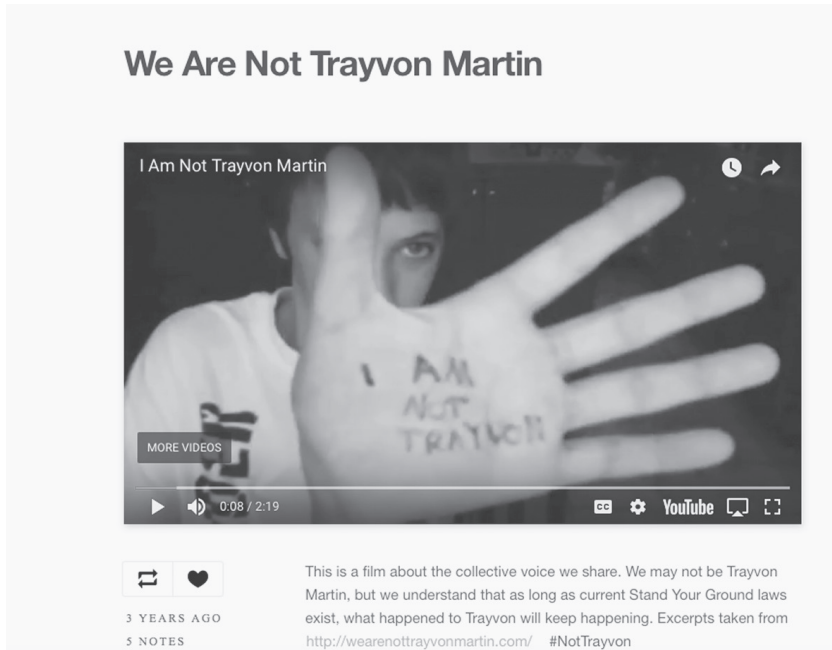


FIGURE 2. The logic of nonidentification: screenshot of “We Are Not Trayvon Martin” website. <http://wearenottrayvonmartin.tumblr.com>.

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As a slogan, “We are not Trayvon Martin” seems at first to flirt with a discourse of disidentification that distances its speaker from the victimized teenager. Such a framing also risks keeping the concerns of white people at the center of attention instead of offering a space for people of color to share their experiences. But beyond the fact that the website created a platform for a range of voices and was not meant to displace other possible responses to the events, its mobilization of an explicitly antiracist rhetoric transformed the potential distancing from the victim into something else. Rather than understanding this enunciation as an act of disidentification, I read the slogan as a way of resisting appropriation that has the potential to open up a new political space for examining unwelcome forms of implication.¹¹ At least in this context, asserting “We are not Trayvon Martin” brings the speaker into proximity to both Martin and Zimmerman without stepping into the shoes of either.

This alternative strategy differs from acts of disidentification, which distance speakers from the murder and leave them floating in an unmarked position of privilege.¹² But it also diverges from acts of identification with either the victim or perpetrator that grant the speaker a clear, delimited location. Neither identification nor disidentification, the slogan “We are not Trayvon Martin” becomes an occasion to mark another kind of belonging: the speaker’s implication in the conditions that contributed to Trayvon’s murder. For instance, one post on the website declares, “I am not Trayvon Martin—I am the poster girl for White privilege.”¹³ This fairly typical contribution illustrates that “We are not Trayvon Martin” is not just a negative enunciation; rather, it creates the opportunity to claim a kind of responsibility for Martin’s death and for the deaths of many others like him. Yet, it is a kind of responsibility that does not fit neatly into the victim/perpetrator binary that frames so much mainstream discussion of racist violence.¹⁴ Indeed, contributions to the “We Are Not Trayvon Martin” website testify to how complexly situated many people are in relation to the racism and racial violence that killed Martin. Consider the comment of another woman on the website, who leads with “I am not Trayvon Martin because I pass”: “My father’s family is from the Caribbean. My grandmother is of mixed African Descent. I have the privilege of sharing my family history when it feels safe to do so. When it will make me seem interesting and exotic.”¹⁵ In this case—but especially for the many self-identified white contributors to the website, including the one cited above—the particular form

of responsibility at stake involves enmeshment in the hierarchies of racial privilege and white supremacy.

Claiming that “we are not Trayvon Martin” can become an opportunity for acts of self-identification. Nevertheless, as the negative formulation under which those acts take place suggests, a clear vocabulary for describing political responsibility beyond that of the criminal perpetrator or direct agent of injustice does not come immediately to mind. Mainstream vocabulary remains limited by the individualist and legalistic assumptions of liberal culture and inadequate to the systemic forms of violence that surround us and become visible in cases such as that of Trayvon Martin—especially when his death is considered alongside those of Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice, and a whole host of other black Americans championed by Black Lives Matter who have died at the hands of police, vigilantes, and white supremacists. As a slogan, “We are not Trayvon Martin” is an attempt to break with those liberal assumptions, but its act of negation also suggests the limits of political imagination and organization beyond a legalistic, individualist framework.

The Martin case—as well as the others that have preceded and followed it—indicates the need to reflect on modes of responsibility and justice that exceed the legal frames in which crimes are usually adjudicated. It also demands that we take into account legacies of violence that spread beyond the stable categories of what I call “the victim/perpetrator imaginary,” a conceptual framework that anchors most explorations of traumatic violence.¹⁶ The acquittal of George Zimmerman heightened the injustice done in the murder of Trayvon Martin. But even if Zimmerman had been convicted on criminal charges of murder or manslaughter, that conviction would in no way have addressed the scope of the problems of race and injustice in the US that Trayvon Martin’s murder exposes. A limited focus on the trial and the criminal justice system fails to reflect on the figure of political responsibility brought to light by the “We are not Trayvon Martin” campaign, a figure who is neither the criminally responsible agent nor a mere innocent bystander to violence, namely, the implicated subject. This is not a subject who could be indicted by a court; rather, the implicated subject is an analytical category that can help us understand the kind of society that makes George Zimmerman and Trayvon Martin possible. As the historian and journalist Jelani Cobb wrote in a column reflecting on the causes of deadly police violence against African Americans, “The police [become] simply the

final and most lethal vectors of a much broader public suspicion” of black people.¹⁷ Within this broader, suspicious public can be found those who are neither Trayvon Martin nor George Zimmerman but whose “suspicion” and conscious or unconscious investment in white supremacy enabled the deadly scenario that unfolded on February 26, 2012, and continues to unfold daily. If there is a politics to “We are not Trayvon Martin,” it begins here: in making visible the way implicated subjects reproduce the everyday conditions of possibility for systemic racism and thus enable the “lethal vectors” of perpetration.

To be sure, simply declaring “We are not Trayvon Martin” on a website does not constitute an adequate politics, but such a declaration can open up a space of reflection that exceeds what arises from a sole focus on victims and perpetrators (as important as those positions remain). Thinking about the case beyond the focus on its two most familiar protagonists leads us into the realm of implication: a realm where people are entangled in injustices that fall outside the purview of the law and where the categories into which we like to sort the innocent and the guilty become troubled. Indeed, implication consists precisely of those discomfiting forms of belonging to a context of injustice that cannot be grasped immediately or directly because they seem to involve spatial, temporal, or social distances or complex causal mechanisms. It goes without saying that contexts of injustice are multiple and often contradictory, and that categories such as “perpetrator,” “victim,” and “implicated subject” are abstractions that serve analytical purposes but do not describe human essences. That is, it is best to think of the implicated subject (not to mention the victim and the perpetrator) as a position that we occupy in particular, dynamic, and at times clashing structures and histories of power; it is not an ontological identity that freezes us forever in proximity to power and privilege.¹⁸ In other contexts—with respect to other histories and other structures—we might also (or instead) be perpetrators or victims or descendants of victims. I call the coexistence of different relations to past and present injustices “complex implication” and focus on them especially in Part II of this book. Forms of implication are difficult to grasp not only because they are complex and shifting, however, but also because they are frequently rendered obscure by forms of psychic and social denial.¹⁹ Implicated subjects need not be conscious of their implication.

The Trayvon Martin case illustrates in addition how the kind of entanglement implication names almost always has a diachronic (historical) dimension

that intersects with a synchronic (contemporary) structure. I use the language of synchronic and diachronic implication throughout this book to signal an analytic distinction between forms of participation and responsibility that are keyed to present-day or to historical injustices, respectively. While this distinction clarifies the variety of ways in which implicated subjects find themselves entangled with power and violence in both past and present contexts, the two dimensions or axes are in reality inseparable. In Chapter 2 I introduce the concepts of “genealogical” and “structural implication” to name two different ways in which the past and present may entwine. Without a link to the present, historical injustices do not implicate us; they remain of strictly antiquarian interest. At the same time, what we consider the present is itself the outcome of historical processes that have created the world in which we live. As the theorist of history Berber Bevernage argues, how we think about the relation between past and present is the product of a politics of time: social practices that create different regimes of historicity, different relations between past, present, and future.²⁰ Bevernage’s account of the “irrevocable” nature of certain violent histories—histories that remain unresolved and thus trouble the distinction between a fully “absent” past and a fully “present” present—influences my approach to the relation of the synchronic and the diachronic: there is neither strict continuity between past and present nor a clean break between the two temporal dimensions. Rather, implication emerges from the ongoing, uneven, and destabilizing intrusion of irrevocable pasts into an unredeemed present. Nowhere are such intrusions—and the consequent entanglement of the synchronic and diachronic that follows from them—more visible than in the differential vulnerability of racialized subjects such as Trayvon Martin.

Part of the reason that a legal approach to racist violence fails to bring out the full dimensions of such cases is that it can focus only on a discrete, recent act (the killing of Trayvon Martin) and cannot easily address the collective, historical legacies of racism that frame that singular event: the echoes of lynching and Jim Crow, for instance, that Martin’s killing evoked. Indeed, debates about racism today have an unavoidable diachronic dimension to them. The resurgent interest in—and lively controversies around—reparations for trans-Atlantic slavery signals the burgeoning awareness of the historical dimensions of contemporary race politics.²¹ A phenomenon that connects various locations across what Paul Gilroy has called “the Black Atlantic,” the debate over reparations focuses attention on the problem of

how to calibrate responsibility for a transnational system of chattel slavery that was eliminated more than a century ago but that—like the more recent histories of lynching and segregation—continues to shape today’s unequal social relations.²² An approach through the idea of implication allows these different temporal dimensions to come into focus by drawing attention to the simultaneously historical and contemporary production of the scene of racialization and racial violence.

In the wake of Trayvon Martin’s murder and George Zimmerman’s acquittal, there is a need for mourning and there is a need for accountability. Mourning involves the recognition and remembrance of victims—not just Trayvon but also the legions of others who have fallen victim to racist violence and the impunity that too frequently follows it. Accountability, for its part, demands reckoning with perpetrators, whether through courts, truth commissions, or other social and political mechanisms. Victims and perpetrators are rightly part of our vocabularies for responding to violence.

But beyond the unavoidable categories of victims and perpetrators there is the need for a larger reckoning with both the structures of power that undergird such cases and the histories that continue to resonate as afterlives. Such a reckoning with what Lauren Berlant calls “the ordinary of violence” cannot take place if the conversation remains limited to victims and perpetrators, to attitudes of mourning and indictment.²³ Those of us who are white residents of the US—but also many others—possess another kind of responsibility: a responsibility to reflect on and act against our implication in a system of racial hierarchy that we enable and a history of aborted justice that we benefit from in manifold ways. Such forms of implication rarely rise to the level of indictable offense, but confronting them constitutes one of the most urgent political tasks for our time.

Such insights about the relation between racism and implication are not new, although they have not yet been elaborated at length. The rhetoric of implication appears, for instance, in the *Report of the National Commission on Civil Disorders* (1968)—the so-called Kerner Commission Report, written in the wake of the urban uprisings among African Americans and others in the 1960s. In its opening assessment of the situation that led to the uprisings, the commission writes: “Segregation and poverty have created in the racial ghetto a destructive environment totally unknown to most white Americans. What white Americans have never fully understood—but what the Negro can never forget—is that white society is deeply implicated in

the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.”²⁴ The report brings into focus three dimensions of my argument in this book. First, as the authors stress, implication does not require consciousness of one’s entanglement in injustice—in fact, implication is often unconscious or denied. Second, the report signals that implication is produced and reproduced diachronically and synchronically: segregation has a history, and overcoming it will require not just an end to policies of discrimination in the present, but also an active reconstruction of the historically sedimented layers of society. Third, in this struggle against the conditions that produce implication, memory can serve as a resource. African Americans’ memories of victimization—what they “can never forget”—can help make implication visible, especially when they are embraced as well by those who are implicated in that victimization and usually disavow their responsibility.

The Kerner Commission Report did not achieve its ambitious goals—neither politicians nor most white Americans were ready to take up the report’s recommendations or their own implication in the conditions that produced the unrest. For that very reason, a recent commentator notes, “some of the report’s assessments could—eerily and depressingly—have been written yesterday to describe America’s recent racial disturbances, in locales ranging from Ferguson, Missouri, to Baltimore, Maryland.”²⁵ The unequal conditions that the Kerner Commission highlighted—and that recent cases such as those of Trayvon Martin, Rekia Boyd, Mike Brown, and Freddie Gray confirm still exist—call for an approach attuned both to the urgencies of the present and the way that the present preserves and reproduces injustices past.²⁶

At its core, then, this book argues that the category of the implicated subject can help us conceptualize and confront both the legacies of violent histories and the sociopolitical dynamics that create suffering and inequality in the present. The category can help us understand both slavery’s ongoing impact and the systematic, structural racism brought to the fore by Martin’s killing and the Kerner Commission Report, but the book is by no means limited to the hugely complicated problem of racial slavery and its aftermaths in the US. Instead, *The Implicated Subject* also addresses other situations where contemporary and historical problems of responsibility intersect, such as the legacies of the Holocaust, the experience and aftermath of South African apartheid, struggles for national liberation in Vietnam and Kurdistan, and the persistent crisis of Israel/Palestine.

The wager of this book is that an approach based on implication can illuminate heterogeneous cases of historical and contemporary violence and injustice, including many pressing cases that—due to limitations of space and expertise—only receive passing mention here. For example, the workings of contemporary capitalism at a global scale depend on relations of exploitation that systematically produce inequality as well as psychic and physical harm. Privileged consumers in the Global North are not, however, best described as “perpetrators” of exploitation, but rather as implicated subjects, participants in and beneficiaries of a system that generates dispersed and unequal experiences of trauma and well-being simultaneously. Such an approach also helps us conceptualize collective responsibility in the age of what many have called the Anthropocene: we citizens of the Global North are not precisely perpetrators of climate change, yet we certainly contribute disproportionately to current and future climate-based catastrophes and benefit in the here and now from the geographically and temporally uneven distribution of their catastrophic effects.²⁷ Many other current examples whose analysis would benefit from such an approach come to mind as well, including sexual harassment and gun violence—examples where there are, of course, victims and perpetrators, but where perpetration is often facilitated by a network of implicated subjects (co-workers, friends, family members, lobbyists, politicians, etc.). An engagement with implicated subjects alongside victims and perpetrators in these and other contexts can lead not only to a rethinking of the dynamics of violence and injustice, but also to new ways of thinking about political solidarity. Indeed, a notion of “long-distance solidarity”—that is, solidarity premised on difference rather than logics of sameness and identification—constitutes the horizon toward which this work tends.

Figures of Implication

Moving from a discourse of victims and perpetrators to one of implicated subjects helps open up a broad, worldly terrain for thinking about social and political responsibility in the shades of gray that Primo Levi identified even in the Nazis’ “concentrationary universe” in his famous essay “The Gray Zone” (an essay I discuss in the first chapter). Within that terrain we find multiple implicated subject positions, multiple figures of implication. In the following chapters, several different avatars of implication will emerge—as they have already begun to do in this Introduction.

We will reflect on the descendant, the beneficiary, and the perpetrator, along with those who—like the internationalist—seek to overcome implication (if often with mixed results). The point is not to replace those other terms and roles (just as the point is not to do away with the categories of victims and perpetrators), but rather to demonstrate that common problems of (in)justice unite a disparate set of historical and contemporary concerns and that different modes of implication frequently converge and overlap. The implicated subject serves as an umbrella term that gathers a range of subject positions that sit uncomfortably in our familiar conceptual space of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders.

The term closest—semantically and etymologically—to implication is “complicity.” Sharing implication’s sense of folded-togetherness, complicity refers first to “being an accomplice” and to “partnership in an evil action” (*OED*). It carries with it a strong sense of legal wrongdoing, as in the *Merriam-Webster* definition, “helping to commit a crime or do wrong in some way.” Complicity, in other words, operates in proximity to notions of criminal guilt. In recent years, however, scholars from a range of fields from law to literature have opened up the concept of complicity in ways more fitting to its second definition as “states of being complex or involved” (*OED*). In the field of memory studies, Debarati Sanyal makes an especially strong and nuanced case for this alternative understanding of complicity as a “structure of engagement that produces ethical and political reflection across proliferating frames of reference.”²⁸ Kaufman-Osborn ably summarizes this recent work: complicity is not considered in the terms of “liberal legal doctrine” as “abetment and even collusion,” but is rather “predicated on a relational understanding of conduct, one that reminds us that human action is always *implicated* with as well as conditioned by the actions of others.”²⁹ As this quotation from Kaufman-Osborn suggests, various forms of the word “implication” appear frequently in contexts relevant to my concerns. All the same, however, in contrast to concepts such as complicity, “implication” generally remains an unmarked and thus untheorized term.³⁰ My use of this term shares the relational understanding of human action articulated by Sanyal and Kaufman-Osborn. Yet, despite the important work undertaken with the concept of complicity, I suggest that implication is both a more capacious and a more fundamental term for describing the forms of indirect participation illuminated here in this book. Complicity presupposes implication, but implication does not always involve complicity.

Two fundamental features distinguish complicity from implication, one relating to synchrony and the other to diachrony. First, complicity, as Iris Marion Young has remarked, remains too closely tied to legalistic models of responsibility in which causality functions in relatively direct ways. In this model, responsibility is understood as liability; but such an understanding is less illuminating for structural problems in which indirect agency and complex causality are at play. As Young writes, responsibility for structural injustices is not simply “an attenuated form of responsibility as complicity . . . but rather a different conception of responsibility altogether.”³¹ My concept of implication seeks to map that different conception of responsibility. But equally significant from my perspective is the diachronic issue: complicity works best as a term linked to unfolding processes and completed actions (such as the perpetration of a crime), but it works less well for describing the relationship of the past to the present. We are implicated in the past, I argue throughout this book, but we cannot be complicit in crimes that took place before our birth.³²

To capture the diachronic transmission of implication I take inspiration from those such as Marianne Hirsch and Gabriele Schwab who have thought about the transgenerational impact of traumatic histories.³³ Hirsch’s concept of “postmemory” has galvanized work across the humanities that focuses on the experience and cultural production of second (and subsequent) generations in the wake of a traumatic event. Hirsch focuses primarily on the legacies passed down, whether consciously or in more indirect, somatic ways, to the descendants of the victims (as well as to those who affiliate with the victims). Postmemory is not generally used to characterize the divergent experiences and memories of descendants of perpetrators, and I follow that convention here. While scholars have taken up the dilemmas of the heirs to and descendants of societies that have perpetrated genocide, colonization, expulsion, and other forms of extreme violence, these “haunting legacies,” in Schwab’s resonant phrase, demand further theorization. As with other modes of implication, we do not yet have an analytically illuminating name for those who occupy the position of the latecomer to histories of perpetration.

One way to capture diachronic implication is to speak of the beneficiary, a category that also illuminates synchronic contexts. The beneficiary profits from the historical suffering of others as well as from contemporary inequality in an age of global, neoliberal capitalism. In his vigorous critique of post–Cold War human rights discourse, Robert Meister argues that

contemporary discussions of mass political violence have paid insufficient attention to the position of the beneficiary. Recent human rights discourse, in particular, “focuses especially on the relations between former victims and perpetrators after an evil regime has been defeated” and occasionally includes discussion of “the justifiable anger former victims feel toward bystanders,” but it involves “very little discussion of the role of victims . . . in relation to the structural beneficiaries, those who received material and social advantage from the old regime and whose continuing well-being in the new order could not have withstood the victory of unreconciled victims.”³⁴ The “omission of the victim/beneficiary relation,” Meister suggests, “is not accidental” (26); to the contrary, it testifies to the antipolitical nature of contemporary human rights discourse. By privileging reconciliation over justice, human rights discourse demands that victims give up their claims on material redistribution and settle instead for a “moral victory” that declares that evil has already been overcome: “the cost of achieving a moral consensus that the past was evil is to reach a political consensus that the evil is past” (25).³⁵ Egregious perpetrators may be punished, but beneficiaries are given assurance that their inherited advantages will not be contested. For Meister, human rights discourse and the programs of transitional justice that accompany it thus represent “the continuation, by more benign means, of the counterrevolutionary project of the twentieth [century]—to assure that beneficiaries of past oppression will largely be permitted to keep the unjustly produced enrichment they presently enjoy” (31). In contrast, focus on the beneficiary can illuminate the nexus of past and present modes of implication and signal the need to resist closing the books on the past, instead keeping open questions of social justice.

Meister’s critique of post–Cold War human rights and his focus on the beneficiary help us conceptualize the implicated subject, but Meister himself would almost certainly refuse this category, since it emerges from a distinction he finds suspect: human rights discourse, he observes, “reinstate[s] the distinction between perpetrators and beneficiaries that revolutionary politics denies” (24). For Meister, it is only by refusing this distinction that a possibility of redistributive justice can emerge: the association between perpetrators and beneficiaries keeps alive material claims that would otherwise be relegated to the moral sphere and to the past. It thus follows that, from Meister’s perspective, insisting on a distinction between the two groups—one of the basic arguments of this book—entails taking part in a “counterrevolutionary” project.

Although I find Meister's critique of contemporary human rights discourse powerful and support his insistence on redistributive justice beyond the terms of truth and reconciliation commissions, I believe that his desire to collapse the distinctions between beneficiaries and perpetrators is wrong-headed and unnecessary for the formulation of radical political projects.³⁶ As Bruce Robbins writes in his account of the beneficiaries of global economic inequality, "If in a sense all of us are sinners, I'm not sure that 'perpetrator' is the most useful category in which to put us."³⁷ Mahmood Mamdani, whose work stands behind Meister's critique of reconciliation, also relies on the distinction between perpetrators and beneficiaries in reflecting on problems of justice. Adopting a comparative perspective on postapartheid South Africa and postgenocide Rwanda, he asks: "What would social justice mean in the South African context, where perpetrators are few but beneficiaries many, in contrast to Rwanda, where beneficiaries are few, but perpetrators many? Which is more difficult: to live with *past* perpetrators of an evil, or its *present* beneficiaries? If perpetrators and victims have a *past* to overcome, do not beneficiaries and victims have a *present* to come to terms with?"³⁸ As these questions suggest, Mamdani shares Meister's concern with the problem of beneficiaries, but by keeping the category of beneficiaries distinct from the category of perpetrators Mamdani is able to illuminate a number of postconflict dilemmas and the plurality of means necessary to achieve justice. In other words, historical violence and ongoing inequities demand a more differentiated analysis than that afforded by a collapse of beneficiaries into perpetrators; I open up a space for such analysis through the figure of the implicated subject.

The specificity of the beneficiary as a category is, as Robbins rightly notes, that it suggests a particular kind of causal relationship, a specificity that distinguishes it from humanitarian frameworks (a concern analogous to Meister's critique of human rights).³⁹ While humanitarian concern for the suffering of others need not involve reflection on one's own position in the story, Robbins argues, the "discourse of the beneficiary" fosters recognition that our well-being is contingent on others' suffering and impoverishment and that the world is connected by "causal and therefore moral relationships" (*Beneficiary* 6). In combining synchronic and diachronic dimensions, the category of the beneficiary provides a rich terrain for exploring the two intertwined axes of implication.⁴⁰ Yet, as with the case of complicity, I find that the semantic range of the concept does not cover all the cases that concern me as examples of implication. For instance, as much as acts of genocide can produce beneficiaries who profit from

the dispossession and murder of others, I do not believe that, say, contemporary Germans are best understood as “beneficiaries” of the Shoah, even as they remain implicated subjects responsible for the deeds carried out in the name of their nation. Nor is the case of diasporic implication in long-distance nationalism (of the sort that I explore in relation to Israel in Chapter 5) best described through the category of the beneficiary, although, again, the category is not wholly irrelevant, either. Diasporic nationalist subjects don’t (just) benefit from links to their homelands (or purported homelands). They help to *perpetuate* nationalist projects that are based on the subordination of others. The causal factors in these latter two cases diverge from those in the stricter case of beneficiary status—global inequality—that concerns Robbins.

The wager of putting forth a broad category like that of the implicated subject is that it will illuminate convergences—as well as contradictions—between different dilemmas: namely, the entanglement of the diachronic and synchronic, the impure positionings that render subjects fundamentally complex, and the way different forms of power interact and build on each other. Because it allows us to survey a large array of cases, using a broad category paradoxically enables a high degree of differentiation within an overarching force field of power.

The Stakes

The realm of implication is broad and deep, and the position of the implicated subject can help illuminate a range of historical, theoretical, and structural dilemmas and cases of injustice. But the stakes of this book are also deeply personal, even if my preferred mode of writing is not autobiography and I often choose to approach these questions from oblique angles. The matter of implication emerged for me decades ago—and long before I had a word to name it—when I contemplated what my position as a white Ashkenazi Jewish descendant of early twentieth-century immigrants to the US implied about my responsibility for the foundational crimes of genocide and slavery that had taken place on the North American continent, crimes perpetrated in the centuries before my ancestors arrived here fleeing poverty and antisemitism in Eastern Europe. I found myself arguing against peers with similar backgrounds—sometimes more recently arrived—who claimed what the German chancellor Helmut Kohl once described as the “mercy of late birth”: a seeming exoneration from responsibility based on belated arrival at the scene of the crime.

Such responses, it seemed clear to me even then, confused two forms of responsibility: direct and indirect. When I later discovered the writings of Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt, it became easier to see that at stake was the difference between what Jaspers called “criminal guilt” and what Arendt called “collective responsibility” (see the discussion in Chapter 1). But not even the category of collective responsibility, premised as it is on mere membership in a polity, accurately captures the unevenness of our relations to the past and present, the differentiated nature of our social positions, and the ironies of belatedness that mark cases such as these. The racial hierarchies that define the contemporary US entail that even people fleeing from traumatic histories may find themselves implicated in the “distant” crimes of slavery and genocide, especially if they are able to benefit from inclusion in the category of whiteness. Such questions of responsibility are by no means limited to the US context, of course. The Turkish-German writer Zafer Şenocak, for instance, famously posed the dilemma of “guest workers” brought to post-National Socialist Germany by asking, “Doesn’t immigrating to Germany also mean immigrating into Germany’s recent past?”⁴¹ Despite the fact that most such immigrants are not accepted into the ethnic and racial categories of the dominant majority, Şenocak still thought that a responsibility to acknowledge history came with the fact of being in Germany so soon after a genocide perpetrated in the name of the nation.⁴²

My desire to confront what I would eventually call implication did not arise only from reflection on what it means to be white in a society still shaped by settler colonialism and the aftermaths of slavery. A very different question began to trouble me as well: what it means to be part of the Jewish diaspora in the face of the ongoing struggle over Israel and Palestine. My critical perspective on Israel will soon be apparent—especially in Chapter 5—but I also believe that Jews of opposed political persuasions (and of course many non-Jews) feel a similarly strong sense of implication in this political conflict. The sources of this implication are surely different from those noted above with respect to slavery and settler colonialism: here it is less a matter of being a beneficiary (though that is not entirely irrelevant given the Israeli “right of return”) and more a matter of our ideological interpellation as Jews into relation with the State of Israel and of the affective bonds that accompany such interpellation. In addition, a more material form of implication characterizes those of us—of all religions, ethnicities, and political persuasions—who pay taxes to the government of the US and thus help to fund the Israeli army

and its occupation. As taxpayers, we are indeed all implicated in the actions of our government, whatever our ideological opposition to or affective disengagement from particular policies. The powerful—or as it sometimes feels to me, uniquely powerful—affects that accompany the question of Israel and Palestine, especially but not only in the Jewish diaspora, also highlight one feature of implication's complexity: the fact that most of us feel torn by our relation to divergent, intersecting histories—in this case, histories of antisemitism, genocide, and occupation. A theory of implication allows us to retain our sense that situations of conflict position us in morally and emotionally complex ways and yet still call out for forms of political engagement that cut through complexity to remain on the side of justice.

Recognizing ourselves in the position of the implicated subject—even in the multiple positions of implication that many of us occupy—will not automatically make us better people; such self-reflexivity can indeed become a form of narcissism or solipsism that keeps the privileged subject at the center of analysis.⁴³ Self-reflexivity alone will not lead directly to a political movement that can dismantle the conditions of implication. The burden of history will not simply evaporate once we see our place in its long- and short-term legacies. Precisely because it involves negotiating with the past, the confrontation with historical violence is ongoing, its expiration date uncertain. Nor will systemic forms of violence and exploitation precipitously collapse because of a revolt of implicated subjects. Still, acknowledging one's implication is a necessary step in refusing “violent innocence,” which Carrie Tirado Bramen describes as “the psychological mechanism necessary to create a white Christian settler nation, where innocence is regenerative and disavowal represents a habitual mode of thinking.”⁴⁴ This book argues that the insights derived from the lens of implication outweigh the risks of narcissistic forms of self-reflexivity and that it is worth training our analytic powers on a terrain that too often remains invisible yet is central to the production of injustice.⁴⁵ Still, the most basic questions remain: What can a theory of implication provide? What does it offer to the theory of collective responsibility and the practice of politics?

The primary contribution I hope to make to a just politics is a reorientation of the conceptual vocabulary with which scholars and activists (and scholar-activists) approach injustice and historical and political responsibility. In place of a primarily binary design—perpetrators versus victims or similar terms—and in place of the weak triadic model that sometimes

supplements it with the category of “bystanders,” I expand the conceptual field by joining those who are theorizing figures such as beneficiaries and accomplices. I offer the new umbrella category of the implicated subject, the one who participates in injustice, but in indirect ways. Above all, this figure contributes to analysis and critique: it gives us a more complete picture of the workings of violence, exploitation, and domination by teaching us how “the things we are experiencing are ‘still’ possible” despite our collective memory of injustice.⁴⁶ That is to say, a fundamental argument of this book is that such things are “still” possible not because some restricted group of demonic individuals continues to perpetrate extreme evil, but because most people deny, look away from, or simply accept the benefits of evil in both its extreme and everyday forms. Implicated subjects are often versions of the obedient and complacent “mediocre” subjects theorized by the philosopher Simona Forti in *New Demons*.⁴⁷ The things we are experiencing are “still” possible as well because most people refuse to see how they are implicated in—have inherited and benefited from—historical injustices: synchronic and diachronic injustices are intertwined. Collective memory that avoids such a sense of implication tends toward empty rhetoric and platitude, but what I call the “multidirectionality” of memory can also facilitate awareness of implication in the present as well as the past. Multidirectional memory describes the way collective memories emerge in dialogue with each other and with the conditions of the present; such dialogue can create solidarity even as it reveals implication.⁴⁸

I hope that the analytical clarity provided by a theory of implication can carry over into unresolved real-world scenarios of injustice. Besides providing an alternative footing for discussions that—in academic as well as nonacademic contexts—often turn on binarized identities and the victim/perpetrator imaginary, the framework of implicated subjects can open up a space for new coalitions across identities and groups. It has the potential to do this, I propose, because it does two things simultaneously that stand in tension with each other: it both draws attention to responsibilities for violence and injustice greater than most of us want to embrace and shifts questions of accountability from a discourse of guilt to a less legally and emotionally charged terrain of historical and political responsibility. If the former action seems to increase our ethical burden, the latter loosens the terms of that burden and detaches it from the ambiguous discourse of guilt, which often fosters denial and defensiveness in proximity to ongoing conflicts and the unearned benefits that accrue from injustice. By foregrounding the “impurities” that

characterize all identities, the framework of implication de-moralizes politics and encourages affinities between those who are positioned as victims and those who have inherited and benefited from privileged positions. A politics of implicated subjects will necessarily take part in what Robbins has called “the paradox of empowered dissent.” “The process of global democratization,” Robbins writes, “cannot afford to do without the input of those who are empowered (that is, who *are* beneficiaries) and yet who also dissent from and even denounce the system that empowers them.”⁴⁹ I would not argue that an implicated politics of “empowered dissent” is the only politics we need, but I agree with Robbins that by taking advantage of opportunities to redirect power against the systems that produce it, such dissent can serve as an important complement to more familiar and still necessary forms of politics from below. Recognizing collective responsibility, in other words, can lead to new versions of collective politics that build on alliances and assemblages of differently situated subjects.

If I identify the pursuit of justice as the aim of such collectivities, I do not seek to offer a fixed, unitary, or holistic definition of what justice would amount to; rather, I suspect that such aims need to emerge out of particular struggles and against the backdrop of particular conjunctures and histories. Still, I derive a few points from the theory of implication and implicated subjects. It should be clear by now that the particular angle such a theory offers is one primarily focused on neither perpetrators nor victims. Although it does not propose abandoning the field of criminal justice, the theory of implication does underline the radical insufficiency of that field and the consequent necessity of broadening justice beyond matters that can be laid to rest through a focus on indictable perpetrators. Additionally, as I discuss in the conclusion to Chapter 2, I follow Meister’s proposal to shift from a “loss-based” to a “gain-based” theory of redress, that is, from a primary concern with how to compensate someone for loss to how to assess what beneficiaries and other implicated subjects *owe* (see Meister 234–35). Thus, without discounting either the claims of victims and their heirs or the need to reckon with perpetrators, an approach to justice derived from an account of implication foregrounds instead the responsibilities of more ambiguously situated participants and descendants.

Implication, however, comes in multiple forms, and even within any single scenario, injustices are rarely singular. Nancy Fraser—whose ideas will play a role in Chapters 2 and 3—provides a useful grid for mapping multiple forms of (in)justice: she distinguishes between injustices of distribution,

recognition, and representation, and thus between realms of material well-being, culture and identity, and political organization, respectively. Like the distinction between the synchronic and the diachronic, these are analytic distinctions that lend clarity to what the Combahee River Collective describes as interlocking systems of oppression (see Chapter 1). Framing implication broadly so as to encompass questions of race, exploitation, colonialism, ecological destruction, and more allows us to perceive the clashing, “abnormal” scenarios of injustice that Fraser identifies and to seek in response more “reflexive” modes of justice.

Outline of the Book

Foregrounding the role of implicated subjects does not mean reproducing an exclusive focus on privileged subjects who would then be kept at the center of concern to the detriment of those who typically remain out of view. First, as a relational methodology, the analytical lens of implication necessarily keeps in view differently situated subjects, including victims and perpetrators. Second, because implicated subjects are subjects who occupy particular positions at particular junctures in space and time, the implicated subject is not an ontological category and does not always or necessarily correspond to our stereotypical images of privilege (the “straight white cis-gendered man,” for instance). The implicated subjects considered here include survivors of genocidal violence and artists and intellectuals of color along with more expected avatars of privilege. Even so, the theory of implication does not relativize structures and histories of power. Instead, it reveals the way power functions through complex and sometimes contradictory articulations, through the construction of what Primo Levi called “gray zones.”

The Implicated Subject traces a conceptual arc from what Part I calls “Long-Distance Legacies” to what Part III calls “Long-Distance Solidarity,” that is, from the varieties of implication to their self-conscious exploration in projects of internationalist activism. Throughout the book, the focus remains primarily on how we conceptualize different forms of implication and different figurations of the implicated subject. In a short conclusion meant to set the stage for further debate, I synthesize the argument of the book in eleven theses while reflecting on what it means to think of implicated subjects as “figures.” This is not a sociological or historical study, but one grounded primarily in engagement with cultural materials—including philosophical reflections and aesthetic productions along with some activist

projects (such as the “We are not Trayvon Martin” social media campaign). I do not treat these cultural materials as “evidence” of implication, but rather as implicit or explicit theoretical acts that help us advance thinking about political responsibility and solidarity.

Especially in the aesthetic realm, revealing the conceptual contributions of these materials entails reading them closely: their most powerful contributions to conceiving and responding to implication emerge not primarily from their content but from their form, whether it be a mode of literary address, a particular technique of animation or sound recording, the manipulation of still images, or a video montage. Although there is no single formal feature that dominates the explorations of implication I discuss throughout the book, several of the chapters focus on aesthetic projects whose political purchase emerges from the way the endeavor unfolds across a series of works and often across several media (see Chapters 3, 5, and 6 on William Kentridge, Marceline Loridan-Ivens, and Hito Steyerl, respectively). Exploring implication is a messy business, and the form of the serial project allows these artists to grapple with several things: historical change, the possibility of political error and the consequent need for recalibration, and the difficulty of unseating entrenched powers of state and capital.

Although I approach the question of implication from a cultural angle, *The Implicated Subject* draws on and is in dialogue with thinkers from a variety of fields—from legal studies and political theory to critical race studies and memory studies. Since the concepts I develop here are new ones—although growing out of and engaged with important precedents—I hope that the field of investigation I sketch will be taken up, revised, and advanced in further theoretical work as well as empirical case studies.

Part I begins with a theoretically oriented reflection that offers a genealogy of thinkers who have helped me give definition to the concept of the implicated subject. In Chapter 1, “The Transmission Belt of Domination: Theorizing the Implicated Subject,” I draw on the black feminist theory of intersectionality (in particular the Combahee River Collective Statement) as well as several thinkers deeply influenced by the experience of National Socialism and the Holocaust (Primo Levi, Karl Jaspers, Hannah Arendt, and Simona Forti). A key role is also played by the political theorist Iris Marion Young, who, in her final book, *Responsibility for Justice*, developed a theory of responsibility for cases of structural injustice. This chapter argues that the concept of implication allows us to grasp the subject as a “transmission

belt” of domination (to use Forti’s term), and to respond to an apparent gap—identified by Mamdani, Meister, Robbins, and Samuel Moyn, among others—between movements for human rights and those for social and economic justice.⁵⁰

Chapter 2, “On (Not) Being a Descendant: Implicated Subjects and the Legacies of Slavery,” continues the theoretical exploration begun in the previous chapter by turning to the aftermaths of transatlantic slavery, a field of violence that powerfully condenses problems of historical and present-day implication. Here I explore what it means *not* to be the descendant of slaves but instead to “inherit” the legacies of slave ownership, whether one has genealogical ties to slavery or not. I work with the database of the innovative Legacies of British Slave Ownership project, spearheaded by historians Catherine Hall and Nicholas Draper, and I put that database into dialogue with Jamaica Kincaid’s acerbic essay *A Small Place*. Usually read as a critique of tourism and neocolonial relations in Antigua (and, by extension, the formerly colonized world), *A Small Place* also forcefully addresses white readers in a way that mobilizes the discomfiting memory of slavery. Kincaid offers a paradoxical account of what it means to be (and not to be) a descendant of slavery as she creates an awareness of implication that goes beyond cognitive models and encompasses bodily sensation. Read together, Kincaid’s text and Hall and Draper’s project help us reflect on—and distinguish between—the genealogical and structural forms of implication that constitute the legacies of slave-ownership. In my account, genealogy and structure name different “mixtures” of diachronic and synchronic implication.

The two chapters of Part II, “Complex Implication,” focus on cases in which subjects implicated in histories of perpetration also possess genealogical connections to or postmemories of victimization. In Chapter 3, “Progress, Progression, Procession: William Kentridge’s Implicated Aesthetic,” I consider the provocative visual connections that emerge between slavery, apartheid, and the Holocaust in the work of the South African artist William Kentridge. These connections illuminate the ambiguous position of South African Jews caught between varieties of racism and vacillating between accommodation and resistance to the apartheid regime. Focusing especially on Kentridge’s unusual, hand-drawn animated films, I trace how the artist’s minimal narratives figure what it means to be implicated in the transition from an overtly racist state to a formally democratic but structurally unequal society. I read Kentridge’s open-ended film series *Drawings for Projection* as simultaneously a reflection on the possibilities and limits

of transitional justice in postapartheid South Africa and a grappling with deeper histories of violence, including slavery, the Holocaust, and structural racism. Besides reflecting on the phenomenon of simultaneous implication in historical and contemporary forms of injustice, Kentridge also explores the complexities of shifting modes of implication. Through the creation of dual alter egos, Kentridge addresses in an indirect but illuminating way what it means to be Jewish in twentieth-century South Africa. As with the “We are not Trayvon Martin” campaign, Kentridge’s art does not occupy the position of the oppressed through identification, but rather marks the artist’s privileged distance from the suffering of the masses. In his work of the last few decades, he often uses the form of the procession to stage the implicated subject in proximity to—but also at a distinct distance from—the mobilized masses.

Chapter 4, “From Gaza to Warsaw: Multidirectional Memory and the Perpetuator,” further explores questions of complex implication by turning to the Israel/Palestine conflict zone. I argue that implication provides a productive framework for thinking especially about the relation of diasporic Jewish communities to the Israeli occupation of Palestine: the kind of “long-distance nationalism” (Benedict Anderson) often expressed in diaspora constitutes less an active perpetration than a form of indirect and distant participation. Many Jewish intellectuals, activists, and artists who are critical of such forms of implication engage with contemporary events against the memory of the Nazi genocide of European Jews—that is, like Kentridge, they make multidirectional links between a current crisis and a past trauma. In this chapter, I return to some of the material I explored in *Multidirectional Memory* and argue that there has been a persistent mnemonic connection between the Warsaw Ghetto as a site of memory and other histories of racialized violence. I then zero in on more recent connections made between Nazi-occupied Warsaw and the occupation of Palestine. Critically engaging with diverse articulations of the Warsaw/Palestine trope allows me to distinguish different reverberations of multidirectional memory on a grid that maps an axis of political affect (solidarity vs. competition) against an axis of comparison (equation vs. differentiation). In the hands of intellectuals and artists with a desire to intervene politically, multidirectional memory work of this sort can explore personal and communal implication from a “complex” perspective—one that recognizes both past victimization (a form of postmemory) as well as present affiliation with perpetration. Implication, I conclude, offers a more productive framework for confronting the Israeli

occupation from a diasporic position than either that of shared “precarity” and “vulnerability” (as exemplified by the work of Judith Butler) or that of critical identification with the perpetrators (as in the work of Ariella Azoulay). The implicated subject, in this case, is a “perpetuator” of injustice rather than a perpetrator or precarious subject.

As Part II suggests, the multidirectionality of memory appears in *The Implicated Subject* as an arena of possibility, but also an arena of danger: the potential for creating a differentiated solidarity is buffeted by temptations to move toward antagonistic competition, toward facile equation between different experiences, or toward versions of politics that drown the ambiguities of memory in the dogmatism of a presentist program.⁵¹ Thinking in terms of implication also helps draw further attention to how practices of memory—even multidirectional practices—intersect with power dynamics, forms of complicity and distancing, and risks of forgetting. Yet, tracking the multidirectionality of memory also illuminates the position of implicated subjects, because the border-crossing nature of remembrance alerts us to unexpected layerings of history and indirect forms of responsibility.

Without ignoring the difficulties of creating alliances in an uneven world, Part III, “Long-Distance Solidarity,” explores possibilities for internationalist allegiance forged through activist aesthetics. In Chapter 5, “Under the Sign of Suitcases: The Holocaust Internationalism of Marceline Loridan-Ivens,” I return to filmmaker and Holocaust survivor Loridan-Ivens (1928–2018), whose Algerian War-era testimony in Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin’s *Chronicle of a Summer* inspired the concept of multidirectional memory. I follow Loridan-Ivens’s trajectory as she leaves behind the position of surviving victim and fosters surprising new multidirectional forms of solidarity, though at some political and psychic cost. I focus in particular on one of the films she made with her partner, Joris Ivens, the Dutch communist documentarian, as well as on some later autobiographical writings. In *The 17th Parallel*, filmed under falling American bombs during the Vietnam War, Loridan-Ivens repurposes some of the cinematic techniques deployed in *Chronicle of a Summer* to serve as vehicles for the testimony of Vietnamese villagers fighting against the Americans. Although she came to cast retroactive doubt on some of her socialist commitments, the film represents an extraordinary attempt to shift positions from victim to ally in an internationalist struggle. In her memoir *Ma vie balagan*, Loridan-Ivens finds a nonredemptive metaphor through which to combine the various facets of her lifelong testimonial project. Describing her life as lived “under the sign

of suitcases,” she concatenates the deep imprint of trauma and the itinerancy of long-distance solidarity.

Remaining with the theme of internationalism as a form of self-conscious implication, the final chapter, “‘Germany Is in Kurdistan’: Hito Steyerl’s Images of Implication,” considers an ongoing, multimedia project by a leading contemporary artist and theorist from Germany. In 1998, Hito Steyerl’s friend Andrea Wolf was murdered while fighting with Kurdish militants in southeastern Turkey. Renamed “*Şehî Ronahî*” (Martyr Ronahî), Wolf has been transformed into a *lieu de mémoire* of the Kurdish cause and of socialist internationalism through the production of books, posters, and videos and the dedication of a massive tomb to her memory in the region near Van where she died. In a series of videos, texts, and performances over the past decade and a half, the artist Steyerl has both participated in these acts of memorialization and created a counter-memory of Wolf by interrogating the processes of remediation and heroization that followed her death. Simultaneously a personal act of mourning and the occasion for a complex reflection on internationalist politics and the contemporary regime of “traveling images,” Steyerl’s work illustrates how art and political violence are implicated in each other. In the Wolf series, both the artist and her friend are implicated subjects, and the interrogation of their implication leads Steyerl to develop a critical internationalism that rigorously examines failed elements of the socialist project while committing to new forms of solidarity in Kurdistan and beyond.

The murder of Andrea Wolf by the Turkish state could not be more different from the murder of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman, but I use these two cases to frame my discussion of the implicated subject because both cases expose the complexities of historical and political responsibility. Like the “We are not Trayvon Martin” campaign, Steyerl’s Wolf series exemplifies how the possibility of solidarity can accompany the exploration of ongoing implication along with the recognition of some subjects’ radical vulnerability in the face of violence. The Kurdish cause for which Andrea Wolf fought—and the geography in which she fought for it—remains contested to this day. The ongoing nature of the conflict is primarily of human and political concern, but it also raises methodological questions about how to think about and respond to implication amid rapidly changing, still-unfolding events. The as yet unanswered Kurdish question provides an appropriate terminus for this book excavating the implicated subject. Caught between various secular nationalist and religious projects

of domination, the Kurds remain among the largest populations of people without a state. Yet, despite a recent romance with the autonomous zone of Rojava and the struggle against ISIS, the international public remains mostly silent about their predicament. I thus cannot suppose that most of my readers will be deeply knowledgeable or concerned about the Kurdish cause. Nor is the history of the Kurds a history of pure innocence and permanent victim status—consider, for instance, the complicity of Kurdish perpetrators in the Armenian genocide or the violent and dogmatic leftism of the older PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). At the same time, the Euro-American world is not innocent of implication in the plight of the Kurds, either: to the contrary, US and European policies continue to exacerbate the Kurds' vulnerability. It is out of such political complexity, with which we may be intertwined even without knowing it, that a new politics must emerge: one that admits implication in collective scenarios of violence, recognizes the asymmetry of vulnerability, and builds differentiated solidarities across and beyond nation-states.

Notes

INTRODUCTION: FROM VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS TO IMPLICATED SUBJECTS

1. See Hannah Arendt, "Collective Responsibility," in *Responsibility and Judgment*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken, 2003), 157.
2. See the *OED* entries for *implication*, *implicate*, *implicated*. For an emphasis on complicity as folding, see Mark Sanders, *Complicities: The Intellectual and Apartheid* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002). I return to the relation of implication and complicity below.
3. Black Lives Matter is a decentralized movement catalyzed for the most part by black women (and especially queer black women). Thinking about implication can contribute indirectly to such a movement by offering an analytic perspective to those who are not generally victims of racist violence, but rather are enmeshed in the culture of white supremacy against which Black Lives Matter struggles. For extended considerations of the history and politics of Black Lives Matter, see Keeanga-Yamahitta Taylor, *From #BLACKLIVESMATTER to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2016); Christopher Lebron, *The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); and Barbara Ransby, *Making All Black Lives Matter: Reimagining Freedom in the Twenty-First Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018).
4. Among many possible examples, see <http://iamtrayvonmartin.tumblr.com>; "We Are All Trayvon Martin': Photos and Video from the Million Hoodie March," *Mother Jones* (March 21, 2012), <http://www.motherjones.com/mojo/2012/03/photos-million-hoodie-march-trayvon-martin>; and Otis Moss III, "We Are All Trayvon Martin," *The Daily Beast* (April 13, 2012), <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/04/13/we-are-all-trayvon-martin.html>. The cover of Claudia Rankine's award-winning poetry collection *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2014) also features a work of hoodie art. Although created before Trayvon Martin's murder, the choice of that image for the cover clearly references Martin's recent killing. The volume itself focuses especially on the kinds of everyday racism that implicate privileged white subjects on an ongoing basis. I'm grateful to Bill Maxwell for reminding me of the relevance of Rankine's cover image.

5. Cohn-Bendit was born in France to German-Jewish refugee parents and was educated in both Germany and France. Alain Finkielkraut has famously criticized the May '68 slogan in his book *Le juif imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1983). For defenses of that claim to identification, see Jacques Rancière, "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization," *October* 61 (1992): 58–64, esp. 61–62; and Sarah Hammerschlag, *The Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). As Rancière asserts, "Politics is about 'wrong' names—misnomers that articulate a gap and connect with a wrong" (62). Neil Levi offers a critical perspective on this politics of identification with the figure of the Jew that is consonant with my own stress on implicated subjects. See his *Modernist Form and the Myth of Jewification* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 202–3n20.

6. See, for example, the anonymous YouTube video posted by 13emcha (a young white woman) on March 31, 2013, called "I Am Not Trayvon Martin," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBRwIUJ8K7w>. Asam Ahmad goes even further and offers a critique of the identification of non-African American people of color with Martin. See Ahmad, "We Are NOT All Trayvon: Challenging Anti-Black Racism in POC Communities," *Black Girl Dangerous*, July 16, 2013, <http://blackgirldangerous.org/new-blog/2013/7/16/we-are-not-all-trayvon-challenging-anti-black-racism-in-poc-communities>.

7. Mark Danner, "We Are All Torturers Now," *New York Times*, January 6, 2005, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/06/opinion/we-are-all-torturers-now.html?_r=0.

8. Timothy Kaufman-Osborn, "We Are All Torturers Now: Accountability after Abu Ghraib," *Theory and Event* 11.2 (2008): n.p. Kaufman-Osborn offers an incisive critique of the logic of Danner's approach.

9. While certainly not frequent, the claim "I am George Zimmerman" was not completely absent from antiracist arguments. See, for example, <http://wearenottrayvonmartin.tumblr.com/post/56222710418/i-am-george-zimmerman>, July 23, 2013. The YouTube video by 13emcha cited above also offers "I am George Zimmerman" as a "more accurate" slogan than "I am Trayvon Martin."

10. See <http://wearenottrayvonmartin.tumblr.com>. The website describes its mission this way: "It's not enough to know you aren't Trayvon. What will you do to change our country? Hi, we are Joseph and Tobias and we are here to recruit YOU in the fight against racism." Originally found at the address wearenottrayvonmartin.com, the website eventually moved to a tumblr site.

11. See also those campaigns organized under the slogan "Not in my name," a refusal of identification that has been used by everyone from Jewish critics of Zionism to Muslim critics of the Islamic State. By distancing itself from forces considered oppressive, "Not in my name" lies closer to explicit disidentification than does "We are not Trayvon Martin," which seeks to avoid appropriation of the experience of a victim of racism. Yet, as in the Trayvon Martin case, "Not in my name" also implicitly suggests the speaker's proximity to the problem it "names" and thus the

inability to fully disengage oneself from it. In other words, the productivity of the assertion "Not in my name" derives from the implication that in fact something *is* being done in my name.

12. By "disidentification" I mean something different from what José Muñoz has theorized. Muñoz shows how disidentificatory practices function as "a survival strategy" that allows minority subjects "to resist and confound socially prescriptive patters of identification" by "work[ing] on and against dominant ideology." In contrast, I invoke disidentification as a possibility for the dominant subject. The dominant subject does not have the same access to the subversive form of disidentification described by Muñoz; rather, I suggest, privileged subjects can foster a productive nonidentification that creates critical distance between their position and those of both minority subjects and dominant ideologies. It thus brings the zone of implication into view. See José E. Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Politics of Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

13. See <http://wearenottrayvonmartin.tumblr.com/post/56227679579/i-am-not-trayvon-martin-i-am-the-poster-girl-for>, July 23, 2013.

14. The victim-perpetrator-bystander categorization derives from Holocaust studies but has a more extended influence in popular understandings of trauma and violence. This book contests the individualizing and reifying nature of this categorization even as it recognizes the usefulness of those categories in certain circumstances and for certain purposes. In Mahmood Mamdani's account, the individualizing approach derives from the focus on particular, high-ranking perpetrators in the Nuremberg trials. See his critical account in "Beyond Nuremberg: The Historical Significance of the Post-Apartheid Transition in South Africa," *Politics & Society* 43.1 (2015): 61–88.

15. See <http://wearenottrayvonmartin.tumblr.com/post/56143401288/i-am-not-trayvon-martin-because-i-pass>, July 22, 2013.

16. I do not assume that "victim" and "perpetrator" are fixed or clear-cut categories; rather, they are abstractions and generalizations, albeit useful ones. The point of introducing the "implicated subject" is to draw attention to ambiguous spaces that do not fit neatly into our scripts for explaining violence and injustice. To assert the importance of interrogating the space between and beyond the categories of victims and perpetrators, however, should not be taken as a call to forgo these categories or to collapse them into each other (though it is possible to occupy both in succession). It is sometimes, especially in the legal realm, essential to hold on to clear-cut distinctions; yet, much remains to be explained beyond those categories.

17. Writing about the John Crawford and Tamir Rice cases, Cobb emphasizes how a broader public—that is, implicated subjects—contributes to the disproportionate number of black people killed by police officers: "It's easy to think of these circumstances as matters of policing, but in both cases the police were acting upon the perceptions of callers who saw armed black men and deduced

a criminal threat." See Jelani Cobb, "Tamir Rice and America's Tragedy," *New Yorker*, December 29, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/tamir-rice-and-americas-tragedy>.

18. Aliza Luft offers a "dynamic theory of action" to explain how people move in and out of roles such as perpetrator in genocidal situations. Even in a genocidal context, she shows, the position of "perpetrator" does not remain fixed. Although she does not discuss questions of implication directly, her relational account of genocide demonstrates how those who do not directly participate can nonetheless be implicated in the unfolding events. See Aliza Luft, "Toward a Dynamic Theory of Action at the Micro Level of Genocide: Killing, Desistance, and Saving in 1994 Rwanda," *Sociological Theory* 33.2 (2015): 148–72.

19. On denial, see Stanley Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing about Atrocities and Suffering* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001); and Catherine Hall and Daniel Pick, "Thinking about Denial," *History Workshop Journal* 84 (Autumn 2017): 1–23. Ann Laura Stoler usefully conceptualizes "colonial aphasia" as a means of discussing "the confused and clogged spaces in between" knowledge and ignorance. See "Colonial Aphasia: Race and Disabled Histories in France," *Public Culture* 23.1 (2011): 121–56; 122.

20. See Berber Bevernage, *History, Memory, and State-Sponsored Violence* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

21. For controversies about reparations, see, for example, the claims by the Caricom Reparations Commission and the controversy that erupted when British Prime Minister David Cameron visited Jamaica in 2015, or the attention garnered by the journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates's writings on reparations and his critique of Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders. I return to the question of reparations in Chapter 1. On Caricom and Cameron, see Rowena Mason, "Jamaica Calls for Britain to Pay Billions of Pounds in Reparations for Slavery," *The Guardian*, September 28, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/29/jamaica-calls-britain-pay-billions-pounds-reparations-slavery>. For Coates and Sanders, see Ta-Nehisi Coates, "The Case for Reparations," *The Atlantic*, June 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>; and Coates, "Why Precisely Is Bernie Sanders against Reparations?," *The Atlantic*, January 19, 2015, <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/01/bernie-sanders-reparations/424602/>. The Coates-Sanders debate led the *New York Times* to offer a "Room for Debate" forum on the topic. See "Racial Reparations and the Limits of Economic Policy," *New York Times*, January 28, 2016, <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/01/28/racial-reparations-and-the-limits-of-economic-policy>.

22. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). In "Case for Reparations," Coates emphasizes the links between slavery and postslavery histories of segregation and housing discrimination. On the actuality of slavery's legacies, see also Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007); and Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*

(Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016). Neither Hartman nor Sharpe poses reparations as the most adequate response to slavery's ongoing presence. Despite their many differences, Coates, Hartman, and Sharpe all demonstrate a commitment to the "irrevocable" nature of the past conceptualized by Bevernage, a conception that disrupts the binary opposition between past and present.

23. Berlant uses this phrase in "Without Exception: On the Ordinarity of Violence," an interview with Brad Evans published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, July 30, 2018, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/without-exception-on-the-ordinarity-of-violence/#1>. See also Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), for more extended reflection on the "structural and ongoing" nature of violence (7).

24. Otto Kerner et al., *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (Washington, DC: 1968), 1. For a history of the commission released on its fiftieth anniversary, see Steven M. Gillon, *Separate and Unequal: The Kerner Commission and the Unraveling of American Liberalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2018). The report offered a more radical indictment of white racism and the "separate and unequal" conditions of American society than President Johnson had anticipated in establishing the commission. While Black Power advocates initially dismissed the commission, H. Rap Brown later wrote: "They're saying essentially what I've been saying." Quoted in Justin Driver, "The Report on Race That Shook America," *The Atlantic*, May 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/05/the-report-on-race-that-shook-america/556850/>.

25. Driver, "Report on Race."

26. See also Richard Rothstein's account of the enduring legacies of de jure (not just de facto) segregation in *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York: Liveright, 2017).

27. I discuss the cases of globalized labor and climate change at somewhat greater length in "Beyond Tancred and Clorinda: Trauma Studies for Implicated Subjects," in *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*, ed. Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant, and Robert Eaglestone (New York: Routledge, 2013), xi–xviii. See also Richard Crownshaw, "Cultural Memory Studies in the Age of the Anthropocene," in *Memory Unbound: Tracing the Dynamics of Memory Studies*, ed. Lucy Bond, Stef Craps, and Pieter Vermeulen (New York: Berghahn, 2017), 242–57.

28. Debarati Sanyal, *Memory and Complicity: Migrations of Holocaust Remembrance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 17. In formulating a new concept of complicity, Sanyal draws on several works that have also proven valuable for my work, including Sanders, *Complicities*; Christopher Kutz, *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); and Naomi Mandel, *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

29. Kaufman-Osborn, "We Are All Torturers Now," n.p.; my emphasis. Kaufman-Osborn is drawing on Kutz, *Complicity*.

30. Numerous other examples, also from work that has inspired my own, could be added here. For instance, in outlining her project on the “burdens of political responsibility,” Jade Larissa Schiff concludes: “I seek to understand how the stories we tell, and how we listen to them, mediate our encounters with the face of the Other; and how those stories operate not as commands (as they might for him), but as invitations to face up to our *implication* in others’ suffering.” See Schiff, *Burdens of Political Responsibility: Narrative and the Cultivation of Responsiveness* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 26; my emphasis. Such examples, which could easily be multiplied, suggest to me that critics recognize the ubiquity of implication but have yet to formulate it as a problematic deserving its own conceptualization.

31. Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 103–4.

32. Consider the frequently referenced example of non-Jewish Germans growing up after the Holocaust. Not only does it make no sense to describe them as “guilty” of the Holocaust; it also makes no sense to say that they are “complicit” in it—although they could, for example, be complicit in Holocaust memory’s relativization, denial, or instrumentalization. Note, however, that these last actions are all ones that involve the current image of the Holocaust and not the weight of the past as such. I think the distinction is worth maintaining. Drawing on Mandel, Sanyal makes a strong case for linking current practices of memory with complicity (see esp. 14), but a hypothetical connection between history and complicity remains elusive and less convincing to me.

33. See Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); and Gabriele Schwab, *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010). For a comparative approach, see Erin McGlothlin, *Second Generation Holocaust Literature: Legacies of Survival and Perpetration* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006).

34. Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 25–26.

35. Bevernage develops this insight in “The Past Is Evil / Evil Is Past: On Retrospective Politics, Philosophy of History, and Temporal Manichaeism,” *History and Theory* 54 (October 2015): 333–52.

36. I make a related argument in response to the cultural theorist Ariella Azoulay in Chapter 4, where the matter at hand is the question of Israel and Palestine.

37. Bruce Robbins, *The Beneficiary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 9.

38. Mahmood Mamdani, “Reconciliation without Justice,” *Southern African Review of Books* (November/December 1996): 3–5; 5.

39. Since Robbins argues, as do I, that the category of the beneficiary is distinct from that of the perpetrator, this notion of causality must also be distinct from the notion associated with the perpetration of a deed. The causality of perpetration

accords with the direct form of responsibility that Karl Jaspers calls “criminal guilt” (and which I discuss in the next chapter), but the causality associated with beneficiary status must be more complex. See Young, *Responsibility for Justice*, and my discussion in the next chapter.

40. Robbins, in contrast, argues that the emphasis on the historical dimension of beneficiary status distracts from the (to him) more fundamental problem of current global inequality.

41. Zafer Şenocak and Bülent Tulay, “Germany—Home for Turks?,” in Zafer Şenocak, *Atlas of a Tropical Germany: Essays on Politics and Culture, 1990–1998*, tr. and ed. Leslie A. Adelson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 6. I have slightly altered Adelson’s translation in this case. See Z. Şenocak, *Atlas des tropischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Babel Verlag, 1993), 16.

42. The complex question of immigrants’ relation to Holocaust memory in Germany is the subject of the book I am coauthoring with Yasemin Yildiz, *Inheritance Trouble: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance* (under contract with Fordham University Press).

43. In *The Beneficiary*, Robbins addresses his audience directly: “Who is a beneficiary? You are, probably. If you had not benefitted from some ambitious higher education, it seems unlikely that you would be dipping into a book with so earnest and unpromising a title as this one” (6). Although I do not seek to address my reader as directly as does Robbins, much the same could be said about the implicated subject: most (all?) readers of this book will be implicated subjects. Indeed, the institutions of higher education Robbins mentions are themselves vectors of implication, as recent explorations of American universities’ complicity in the slave trade illustrate. More generally, universities—while serving as important, indeed necessary, sites of counterdiscourse—have traditionally produced knowledge that contributes to militarization, racial hierarchies, and more. Yet, this book is ultimately not addressed to “implicated subjects” as an identity group—one of my arguments is, in fact, that we shift in and out of positions of implication depending on context—but rather at those who are interested in exploring and contesting the fact of implication.

44. Carrie Tirado Bramen, *American Niceness: A Cultural History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 25. Bramen is drawing on the psychoanalyst Christopher Bollas’s idea of “violent innocence.” See Bollas, *Being a Character: Psychoanalysis and Self Experience* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992).

45. Writing in the wake of the 2016 US election, artist and theorist Andrea Fraser draws on Bourdieu’s account of the field of power to make a case for the uses of reflexivity on the political left. See Andrea Fraser, “Toward a Reflexive Resistance,” *X-tra*, March 2018, <http://x-traonline.org/article/artist-writes-no-2-toward-a-reflexive-resistance/>.

46. I cite Walter Benjamin’s well-known eighth thesis: “The current amazement that the things we are experiencing are ‘still’ possible in the twentieth century is

not philosophical. This amazement is not the beginning of knowledge—unless it is the knowledge that the view of history which gives rise to it is untenable.” See Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” tr. Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings*, vol. 4: 1938–1940, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 392.

47. Simona Forti, *New Demons: Rethinking Power and Evil Today* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014). See also Robert Eaglestone’s complementary discussion of Arendt and the banality of evil in *The Broken Voice: Reading Post-Holocaust Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 31–40.

48. This book arises out of continued reflection on issues I began thinking about in *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), and to some extent in *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Indeed, some of the examples that ground *Multidirectional Memory* return here in new contexts. In *Multidirectional Memory*, I pursued mnemonic links between the Nazi genocide and European colonialism that usually involved experiences of victimization perceived as shared or shareable across contexts. Engaging with this archive, I made a more general argument about the productive and dialogic nature of cultural memory: while the public articulation of memory takes place in a space of contestation, it does not obey the logic of a zero-sum game, but rather emerges via echo, ricochet, and cross-cultural borrowing. In moving from *Multidirectional Memory* to *The Implicated Subject*, I have maintained my interest in the way histories and memories overflow the borders of nations and identities, but I have shifted attention to different valences of connection. In place of the intervictim group “minor transnationalism” (in Lionnet and Shih’s useful term) out of which the previous book sought to construct a new theory of memory, the present book pursues the implication of those proximate to power in historically or spatially distant events and in impersonal structures.

49. Robbins, *The Beneficiary*, 10. See also Bruce Robbins, *Perpetual War: Cosmopolitanism from the Viewpoint of Violence* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

50. In addition to thinkers discussed elsewhere, several other scholars have been important to my conceptualization of implication. Historian Tessa Morris-Suzuki offers a notion of implication close to mine in her book *The Past within Us*. Morris-Suzuki’s primary focus, however, involves investigating how different media construct historical consciousness and the importance of a notion of historical “truthfulness” as opposed to a fetishized “truth.” Both complicity and implication are keywords in sociologist Alexis Shotwell’s book *Against Purity*, but Shotwell does not attempt to distinguish them or put forward a theory of implication as such. I share Shotwell’s critique of purism, but I primarily foreground the limits of the victim/perpetrator binary. In *The Broken Voice*, literary critic Robert Eaglestone investigates the role of public secrets in the construction of complicity in genocide in a way that complements my own approach. Michael Lazzara’s *Civil Obedience* offers a nuanced account of “complicity

and complacency” in neoliberal Chile whose argument is generally in line with my own. See Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Past within Us: Media, Memory, History* (London: Verso, 2005); Alexis Shotwell, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016); Robert Eaglestone, *The Broken Voice*; and Michael Lazzara, *Civil Obedience: Complicity and Complacency in Chile since Pinochet* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2018).

51. Sanyal calls these pitfalls “dangerous intersections” and explores the advantages and disadvantages of multidirectional memory with great nuance and tact in *Memory and Complicity*. See also Tzvetan Todorov, *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century*, tr. David Bellos (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), esp. 159–76.

CHAPTER 1: THE TRANSMISSION BELT OF DOMINATION

1. Samuel Moyn, “Human Rights Are Not Enough,” *The Nation*, April 9, 2018, <https://www.thenation.com/article/human-rights-are-not-enough/>. For a full account, see Moyn, *Not Enough: Human Rights in an Unequal World* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2018).

2. Robert Meister, *After Evil: A Politics of Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011); Bruce Robbins, *The Beneficiary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).

3. Charles Mills, *Black Rights / White Wrongs: The Critique of Racial Liberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 49.

4. For the initial use of the concept of intersectionality, see Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* (1989): 139–67. For a recent review essay that interrogates the often fierce debates over intersectionality, the question of its institutionalization in the US academy, and the frequent attempts to establish a definitive genealogy of the concept, see Jennifer C. Nash, “Intersectionality and Its Discontents,” *American Quarterly* 69.1 (2017): 117–29.

5. A new edition, with a contextualizing introduction and interviews with the original authors, marks the fortieth anniversary of the statement. See Keeanga-Yamahatta Taylor, ed., *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2017). Further references to the statement are from this edition.

6. Quoted in Asad Haider, *Mistaken Identity: Race and Class in the Age of Trump* (New York: Verso, 2018), 9. Haider emphasizes throughout his book the need to create something like what I call “long-distance solidarity”—that is, solidarity that transcends fixed identity categories.

7. Primo Levi, “The Gray Zone,” in *The Drowned and the Saved*, tr. Michael F. Moore, *The Complete Works of Primo Levi*, vol. 3, ed. Ann Goldstein (New York: Liveright, 2015), 2414–15.