Entangled memories of violence: Jean Améry and Frantz Fanon

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Abstract
In this article I discuss the entangled memories of the Holocaust and the anticolonial struggles in Western Europe in the 1960s by relating the writings of Jean Améry and Frantz Fanon. My aim is to show how Améry’s retrospective narrative of his lived experience in the Nazi camp was formed by his reading of Fanon’s experiences of colonialism, and how Fanon’s narrative of the colonial trauma was transposed and translated into Améry’s public testimony as a Holocaust survivor. The article argues that Améry’s individual memories found a certain mediated cultural form and narrative frame in the contemporaneous situation of decolonisation. The multilayered weave of fascist and colonial violence constituting Améry’s testimony highlights questions of memory’s multidirectionality and casts new light on how cultural memorial forms are shaped and shared.

Keywords
circulation of memory, Frantz Fanon, Holocaust, Jean Améry, multidirectional memory, palimpsestic memory, violence

Introduction
In recent years we have seen increased interest in the study of how memories of both individuals and groups travel and interact in shaping shared memorial forms, which function as narrative frames or genres for articulating and disseminating acts of remembrance (Erlr, 2011; Rigney, 2005; Silverman, 2013). This article aims to explore the ‘multidirectional’ memories of the Holocaust and the anticolonial struggles in Western Europe in the 1960s (Rothberg, 2009) by relating to each other the writings of Améry (1980a, 2005, 2008) and Fanon (1951, 1967, 1986).

From December 1963 to August 1965 the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial was held, at which 22 SS-officials were charged for their role in the Holocaust having served in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp during World War II. Among the 319 witnesses, 181 were survivors from the camp (UNESCO, 2017). The Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem in 1961 and the trial in Frankfurt were both massively covered by the media and resulted in a new public sphere for the Holocaust. For the first time a mass audience could hear the testimonies about what happened in the camps from the survivors themselves, and the public figure of the Holocaust survivor as a public witness emerged (Pendas, 2006).
During this time, the Austrian-born, Belgian-based writer and Auschwitz survivor, Jean Améry, also appeared as a public witness. He spoke of his personal experience of the Nazi extermination camp in a series of five talks, which were broadcast on West German radio in the autumn of 1964 and the beginning of 1965.

In 1966, the talks were published as a book, *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne: Überwältigungsversuche eines Überwältigten* [Beyond guilt and atonement: attempts to overcome by one who was overcome/overwhelmed] (Améry, 1966), which in 1980 appeared in English translation as *At the Mind’s Limits* (Améry, 1980a), the title taken from the title of the first essay in the book ‘An den Grenzen des Geistes’, which deals with the collapse of the intellect in its encounter with the Nazi reality. The other four essays revolve around Améry’s experience of torture, his exile and loss of trust in the world, his feeling of resentment, and his ambiguous identity as a Jew.1 Jean Améry, born as Hans Mayer in Vienna 1912, was brought up by his Roman Catholic mother, after the death of his Jewish father in World War I when Hans was 5 years old. Only after the introduction of the Nuremberg laws in Germany in 1935 did he realise his Jewish origins, as the antisemitic legislation turned him into what he called a ‘nicht nicht Jude’, ‘a Non-non-Jew’ (Améry, 1966: 167; Améry, 1980a: 94). After Austria’s Anschluss to Nazi Germany in 1938, he fled to Brussels. In 1943 he was arrested by the Gestapo in Brussels and tortured at the SS-camp Fort Breendonk for his activities in the Belgian Resistance. When his Jewish origin was discovered, he was deported to Auschwitz and eventually to Bergen Belsen. After his return to Brussels following the Liberation in 1945 as one of six hundred Jews who had survived from around twenty-five thousand deported from Belgium, he changed his name anagrammatically by letting Hans Mayer become Jean Améry (Heidelberger-Leonard, 2010).

Améry (1980a) wrote the first essay of *At the Mind’s Limits* in 1964 shortly after the Auschwitz trial had begun, after, as he puts it, ‘twenty years of silence’ (p. xiii). First, he explains in the preface, he only intended to write this one essay. After he had completed it, however, he felt an urge to continue writing: ‘For two decades I had been in search of the time that was impossible to lose, only it had been difficult for me to talk about it’, he reflects and continues: ‘once a gloomy spell appeared to be broken by the writing of the essay on Auschwitz, suddenly everything demanded telling’ (Améry 1980a: xiii).2

Améry explicitly frames the context for his testimonial writing by referring to the ongoing Auschwitz Trial, describing it as a trigger for him to start remembering and publicly articulating his own experiences in Auschwitz. The importance of the Trial returns in a late interview made shortly before his death in 1978, in which he explains the circumstances of the radio talks. In 1964, he coincidently met with an author friend who worked with public radio in South West Germany, and he was asked to write something. The Auschwitz trial was running and all he could think of to write about was his experiences in the Nazi camp, Améry (2008: 97) remembers.

As I will argue in this article, however, the Auschwitz trial and the mediated testimonies of the camp survivors were not the only impetus for Améry’s writing. In the contemporaneous framing of his retrospective narrative, or as he puts it, his ‘phenomenological description of the existence of the victim’ (Améry, 1980a: xiii), different histories converge. Améry followed the anti-colonial struggle in the 1950s and 1960s very closely, and he was deeply affected by the ongoing debates in France about the systematic use of torture by the French military during the war in Algeria in the beginning of the 1960s. His attentive reading of accounts by Jean Paul Sartre, Henri Alleg and not the least Frantz Fanon of the state-sponsored colonial violence in Algeria formed his memories of fascist violence. In this article, I will show how Améry’s narrative of violence and dehumanisation in the Third Reich is profoundly influenced by mediated experiences of colonial violence. I will particularly examine how Fanon’s account of the colonial trauma was transposed and translated into Améry’s testimony as a Holocaust survivor.
In recent years, a growing number of works have explored the historical interconnections between racism, fascism, colonialism, and anti-Semitism, notably by bringing together the history of the Holocaust and Holocaust testimonies with the history of decolonisation (Cheyette, 2014, 2018; Gilroy, 2000; Mutti, 2007; Rothberg, 2009; Silverman, 2013). Rothberg (2009) is of particular importance as he relates the politics of memory of the Third Reich to that of French decolonisation by highlighting torture and testimony as two key concepts in an entangled memorial landscape. In his seminal work *Multidirectional Memory* Rothberg mentions Améry twice – he even notices that Améry, in the essay on torture, refers to the French public debate on the torture in Algeria – without, however, more thoroughly engaging with Améry’s writing. By using the concept of memory’s multidirectionality in exploring the links between Fanon and Améry, I will argue that seemingly discreet events overlap and converge both spatially and temporally in Améry’s testimonial work. Within the analytical framework offered by Rothberg, Max Silverman and Ann Rigney, I will show that his narrative is forged in the intersection between individual and collective memories and is composed of several co-existing layers of time.

**Converging narratives of violence**

Jean Améry’s work has primarily been studied in relation to the genre of survivor memoirs (Heidelberger-Leonard, 2010; Hewera, 2015, 2019; Korte, 2005; Schröder, 2015). In recent years, however, there has also been a growing tendency among researchers to situate it more broadly in the intersection between philosophy, political theory and Holocaust studies (Brudholm, 2009; Jean-Marie, 2018; Żółkoś, 2011, 2013). However, surprisingly few deal with the way fascist and colonial violence intersect in his autobiographical writing.

One exception is the German-Israeli historian Dan Diner (2012). He highlights the connections between Améry’s text on torture and the debate in France on the systematic use of torture in Algeria by the French military. Diner emphasises that the pressing issues of the early 1960s in France found their way into Améry’s retrospective narrative of his experience of torture. He even states that ‘Améry’s text on torture is symptomatic of the discourse of that time. Although confronted in Auschwitz with collective – that is, Jewish – death, it seems that in the 1960s he [Améry] felt obliged to submit his experience of genocide to the discursive hegemony of torture’ (Diner, 2012: 5). And he continues: ‘Améry is not to be blamed for his choice. Two experiences and two analogous narrations stood biographically at his disposal’ (Diner, 2012: 5). That said, Diner (2012) nevertheless ends his article by stating that in Améry’s essay ‘one experience interferes with the other – displacing, and to some extent appropriating, the ultimate event [the meaningless collective annihilation of Jews]’ (p. 5).

The merits of Diner’s (2012) article lie in the way he so attentively captures the interrelations between the two stories of violence and trauma present in Améry’s testimony. The problem, however, is how he frames this interrelation in terms of an ‘either-or’; as a choice between two experiences outrivalling one another – on the one hand the political resistance fighter who gets caught and tortured for his activities and on the other the deported Jew who is doomed to anonymous collective and meaningless death in the camp. Either you tell the experience of racialized genocide or that of politically motivated torture, he seems to argue. And because Améry’s focus is on torture he fails, according to Diner, to adequately account for the true essence of Nazism, which was extermination and collective death (p. 2–5). Améry’s (1980a) location of torture at the heart of National Socialism, expressed in his central claim that torture was not ‘an accidental quality of this Third Reich but its essence’ (p. 24), is for Diner (2012: 2) ‘odd’ and ‘perplexing’; torture, however horrible it might be, he states, cannot measure up to the brutality and extremity of genocide.
The recurrent references in Améry’s testimony to the torture practised in Algeria make Diner (2012) question the reliability of his narrative as a testimony of the Holocaust: ‘the creeping impression asserts itself’, Diner explains, ‘that his reflections on the pain inflicted on his body and soul demand, to a certain extent, that another, different experience – the experience of mere destruction, of annihilation, which, as we know, was the true essence of Nazism – be overwritten . . . Both experiences seem to oppose each other’ (p. 2). In separating the two memories, Diner values them differently. Not only does he see one as being more true to the past and the other more attuned to present issues, but in emphasising their opposing relation, he seems to argue that Améry’s memory work loses its sovereignty and credibility as his authentic, personal testimony when channelled through another, more contemporary, narrative of violence.

If we read Améry’s essays from the perspective of memory as dynamic and hybrid, something quite different from what Diner sees becomes visible. Whereas Diner emphasises two separate and competing narratives of violence as different events on a time line – which makes it impossible to understand experiences from the 1940s through events from the 1960s – a multidirectional framing captures instead the multitemporal and mediated character of Améry’s work. It stresses not only that Améry’s Holocaust testimony is clearly situated in relation to the contemporaneous history of decolonisation, but also how experiences of fascist and colonial violence are tightly woven together in it, in an effort to understand one through the other. Silverman’s (2013) trope of the ‘palimpsest’ is here apt for capturing the characteristic of Améry’s memory work. Palimpsestic memory, Silverman writes, ‘synchronizes (or spatializes) memory traces from different sites of extreme violence’ (p. 175). A similar synchronisation occurs in Améry’s memory, in which different times and places appear as overlapping layerings of experiences. Améry’s memory work is thus not only multitemporal (as memories always are), but also multimediated, constituted in a space of culturally mediated memories, which blurs a clear-cut boundary between a unique individual memory and a shared collective one. Such an interpretation is in line with Rigney’s (2005) concept of memory circulation, to which I will return below.

The characteristic intermingling of narratives, experiences and temporalities that occurs in Améry’s (1980a) writing becomes visible in the following passage from his essay on torture, quoted at length:

I do know, and the reader probably has also heard, what went on between 1956 and 1963 in the jails of French Algeria. There is a frighteningly exact and sober book on it, La question by Henri Alleg, a work whose circulation was prohibited, the report of an eyewitness who was also personally tortured and who gave evidence of the horror, sparingly and without making a fuss about himself. Around 1960 numerous other books and pamphlets on the subject appeared . . . Half the French nation rose up against the torture in Algeria . . . But that was the great and freedom-loving France, which even in those dark days was not entirely robbed of its liberty. From other places the screams penetrated as little into the world as did once my own strange and uncanny howls from the vault of Breendonk. (p. 23)

And he ends the section by concluding: ‘Somewhere, someone is crying out under torture. Perhaps in this hour, this second’ (Améry, 1980a: 24). In this short passage, three stories of torture are told: the torture in French Algeria from the not so remote past in the time that Améry is writing immediately after the Algerian war; the torture that he himself suffered by Gestapo more than twenty years before, but that hadn’t really found its way to the public until the international media coverage of the ongoing Auschwitz trial. ‘Nobody heard us back then, no books and pamphlets on the subject were published back then’, he seems to say implicitly, by referring to the contemporary French public debate about torture as part of the systematic colonial violence in Algeria. And finally the unknown and invisible torture practiced anywhere and everywhere in the ongoing present, in this very ‘now’.
By connecting the remote and not so remote past to what is happening in the present moment, Améry (1980a) seems to say that the past is far from over and done with. In light of this, his well-known statement that ‘[w]hoever was tortured, stays tortured’ (p. 34), can be read as something more than a schoolbook description of trauma. It also seems to refer to the interrelated temporalities or multilayered memories by which past and present experiences mirror each other and in so doing incessantly speak to the present time. The systematic violence he once experienced thus remains present, through the French military’s torture of French Algerians or in the Anti-Black racism of his contemporary Europe.

Rothberg’s (2009) claim is thus highly valid in Améry’s case as the debate about the systematic practice of torture in Algeria brought questions of state organised violence into the public sphere in the 1960s and thus triggered public articulations of Holocaust memories. The two stories of violence appear clearly intertwined in Améry’s essays. Whereas Fiedler (2017) emphasizes the tension in Améry’s experience of his ‘kinship of fate’ with Fanon in light of his insistence on the uniqueness of the Holocaust, I stress the converging character of his narratives. Composed of different times and memories they transform Améry’s Holocaust testimony from within, but without displacing it. Their conversion in his writing can rather be understood as an attempt to grasp the political and philosophical significance of what he had experienced, in line with Gilroy’s (2010) attentive reading of Améry’s interest in Fanon’s work.

There are three striking and recurrent themes that frame Améry’s testimonial narrative: the figure of the victim, the one who has the lived experience of that of which he speaks; the intense experience of being reduced to a body in the torture room as well as in the concentration camp; and the feeling of resentment as a form of retrospective imaginary counterviolence. In what follows, I will sketch out how these themes are articulated in deep interconnectedness with Fanon’s work.

The lived experience of the victim

In an interview from 1978, Améry (2008: 54) describes how deeply affected he was by the brutality of the war in Algeria. He followed the public debate in France intensely and read Fanon’s (1961) Les damnées de la terre [The Wretched of the Earth] when it appeared, in the most brutal phase of the war, one year before Algeria’s independence: ‘The stir caused by Les Damnées in France at the time was great’, he remembered (Améry, 2005: 15).

At that time, however, Améry was already a careful reader of Fanon (1951, 1986). He came across his writings 10 years earlier, in 1951, when he read an essay called ‘L’expérience vécue du Noir’ [‘The Lived Experience of the Black Man’], which was to be published the following year as a chapter in his (Fanon, 1952) Peau noire, masques blancs [Black Skin, White Masks]. The essay was a revelation to Améry (2005); its sentences, he says, ‘impressed themselves upon me forever’, as ‘the lived experience of the black man... corresponded in many respects to my own formative and indelible experience as a Jewish inmate of a concentration camp’ (p. 13).

Améry describes his strong encounter with the work of Fanon in a radio-essay written in 1968, which deals with Fanon’s philosophy of revolution. In this text Améry identifies several connections between his own and Fanon’s experiences. Fanon is, as Améry (2005) puts it, ‘an author well trained in phenomenology and... a personal victim and bearer of violence, Fanon remains faithful to the concrete event in his description: it is the event that forces the theory upon him. He knows that of which he speaks’ (p. 15).

Améry (2005) also emphasises the striking similarities between the colonial and Nazi orders by comparing Fanon’s description of the segregated colonial city with his own account of the concentration camp:
I too suffered repressive violence without buffering or mitigating mediation. The world of the concentration camp too was a Manichean one: virtue was housed in the SS blocks, profligacy, stupidity, malignance and laziness in the inmates’ barracks. Our gaze onto the SS-city was one of ‘envy’ and ‘lust’ as well. As with the colonised Fanon, each of us fantasised at least once a day of taking the place of the oppressor. In the concentration camp too, just as in the native city, envy ahistorically transformed itself into aggression against fellow inmates with whom one fought over a bowl of soup while the whip of the oppressor lashed at us with no need to conceal its force and power. (pp. 15–16)

With the use of the little words ‘[me] too’ and ‘[I] as well’, Améry translates his own experience of being a Jew in the Nazi camp with the help of Fanon’s account of being a native in the colony, by letting them mirror each other. Although separated in time and space, the two experiences of violence and oppression are thus brought together on a structural level in his narrative.

The explicit interconnections that Améry establishes in this article do not, however, only help him to grasp and articulate his own experiences. Interestingly, the references to Fanon’s testimony of colonial violence also serve to strengthen Améry’s (2005) ethos as a witness of the Holocaust:

> It is still impossible for me . . . to simply ignore these parallels between our respective experiences. Perhaps however my point will gain rather than lose authoritativeness through these parallels: Fanon’s entire philosophy of revolution and violence is founded, without being psychological in the strict sense, in the lived reality of a subject: re-experiencing a particular subjective existence is indispensable in understanding the author, and thus only parallel experiences are able to turn my subjective insights into objective ones. (p. 13)

In this text, Améry returns to the word parallel. In his autobiographical writing from 1964–1965 it is clear, however, that his own and Fanon’s experiences do not run parallel but are intermingled in Améry’s narrative. Yet, Fanon is only mentioned once in *At the Mind’s Limits*. As we will see, Fanon is almost absent even though Améry’s text is saturated with his presence.

**‘Being a body and nothing beside that’**

Améry’s experience of torture is a phenomenology of pain – of the bodily pain from his shoulders cracking when he is hung from a hook on the ceiling and of the existential pain coming from his loss of faith in the world. ‘At the first blow’, he writes, ‘trust in the world breaks down’ (Améry, 1980a: 28). Améry (1980a) explains: ‘[O]nly in torture does the transformation of the person into flesh become complete. Frail in the face of violence, yelling out in pain, awaiting no help, capable of no resistance, the tortured person is only a body, and nothing else beside that’ (p. 33).

Améry (1980a), however, does not reserve the existential loss of Weltvertrauen, the loss of trust in the world, to the experience of torture. In his account of being a Jew in the Third Reich he returns to the violent event of being expelled from a world that one thought was one’s own – of suddenly becoming a Jew without a citizenship and an intellectual without a Heimat, ‘I was no longer an I and did not live within a We’ (p. 44). Both aspects of this radical negation of the self clearly mirror Fanon’s (1986) painful experience of discovering himself as a black man in a white man’s world, of being transformed into flesh, into black skin and nothing beside that, by the white man’s gaze.

In the essay that ends *At the Mind’s Limits*, ‘On the Necessity and Impossibility of Being a Jew’, Améry (1980a) returns to the bodily existence of the concentration camp inmate: ‘I was my body and nothing else: in hunger, in the blow that I suffered, in the blow that I dealt. My body, debilitated and crusted with filth, was my calamity’ (p. 91). In this passage he explicitly refers to the *Wretched of the Earth*. As already mentioned, this is the only time that Fanon appears in the five essays. And, tellingly, it is not in the essay on torture, but in his attempt to work out an understanding of what
happened to him as a Jew in the Nazi camp; how he restored his dignity by hitting back at his oppressor in the camp, a certain foreman Juszek, although Améry was severely beaten up as a result. Without accounting for Fanon’s view of the restoring effects of counterviolence for oppressed people, Améry (1980a: 90–91) relocates Fanon’s theory of violence from the colonial setting to the world of the camp inmate. He also, importantly, transposes it to the afterlife of the camp survivor who refuses to reconcile with what happened to him, who clings to his resentments, as a retrospective re-enactment of imaginative counterviolence. In Fanon’s work, Améry thus not only finds a highly relevant content of recognisable experiences of violence and counterviolence, but he also discovers an essential form that will structure the articulation of his own memories, as well as an intellectual frame within which he develops his key concept of resentment.

Resentment is doubtless the most important word in Améry’s (1980a: 62–81) autobiographical writing. It made him into Primo Levi’s counter-figure within Holocaust studies: the one who turns his back to the future by refusing to reconcile with the past (Fareld, 2016). If we read Améry’s feeling of ressentiments, in line with Hirsch (2006), as an imaginary way of retrospectively re-enacting the counterviolence that never actually happened in Auschwitz or in the torture room, it appears as part of a broader imaginative emancipatory dialectic—a kind of fictitious counterviolence that would liberate the oppressed but also ‘yesterday’s oppressor’, by turning both into fellow human beings again, in line with how Améry (2005) describes Fanon’s account of revolutionary violence: ‘Its liberation cuts both ways, otherwise it would be without historic value’ (p. 16). Against this background, Améry’s refusal to let go of the past appears as an insistence on the importance of creating such an imaginary space in which a retrospective re-enactment of revolutionary violence can take place—the humanising counterviolence argued for by Fanon in In the Wretched of the Earth—in order to let a new man be born, liberated from the structural positions of both the victim and the victimiser. This space, summed up by Ribeiro (2011: 151), ‘escapes the dichotomies inscribed in the colonial and the anti-Semite orders of representation’, and thus renders possible a utopian idea of the birth of a new humanity.

Améry’s (1980a) effort to explain to his readers why his resentments are not at all ‘a matter of revenge, nor one of atonement’ (p. 70) gives us a clue to his understanding of the interdependency between victim and victimiser:

The experience of persecution was, at the very bottom, that of an extreme loneliness. At stake for me is the release from the abandonment that has persisted from that time until today. When SS-man Wajs stood before the firing squad, he experienced the moral truth of his crimes. At the moment, he was with me [. . .] I would like to believe that at the instant of his execution he wanted exactly as much as I to turn back time, to undo what has been done. When they led him to the place of execution, the antiman had once again become my fellow man. (p. 70)

In his conception of resentment, Améry not only silently translates Fanon’s narrative of racialised violence into his own personal experience of fascist violence. Through a certain Fanonian dialectics of force and counterforce that hits the subject as well as the object of this force, and thereby liberates both the persecuted and the persecutor from their opposing positions within a structure of oppression, Améry argues for the liberatory, even emancipatory potential of his resentments.

**Conclusion**

Although Améry explicitly framed the context for his testimonial writing by referring to the start of the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt 1964, this article has argued that the trial was not the only
trigger. The anti-colonial struggles in the 1950s and 1960s, the intense debate in France on the use of torture by the French military during the war in Algeria, as well as Frantz Fanon’s writing on colonial violence, helped to frame and translate Améry’s lived experience of Nazi violence into a retrospective narrative of dehumanisation in the Third Reich.

Améry’s personal memories found a certain cultural form and narrative frame in the contemporary situation of decolonisation, and more particularly in the mediated cultural experiences of the colonial trauma, which were transposed and translated into his public testimony as a Holocaust survivor. The multilayered weave of fascist and colonial violence that constitutes his testimony thus highlights questions of memory’s multidirectionality and casts new light on how cultural memorial forms are shaped and shared.

Instead of questioning the authenticity of Améry’s memory work, focusing on its inability to grasp fully an original experience, its multitemporal and multimediated character points rather to the need to continue to develop analytical approaches to time, memory and history that can capture and conceptualise the dynamic processes of cultural memory and its often complex ways of circulation. Such an approach would not only be able to account for the deeply interrelated work of memory, and how it transcends clear-cut boundaries and binary understandings of what is common and unique, individual and collective, authentic and mediated, but also to engage us in rethinking their interdependency in new ways.

By being attentive to the many layers and traces of other experiences and memories that are present in Améry’s testimony, it is possible to develop further what Rigney (2005) has called ‘the circulation of cultural memory’, meaning the ways transcultural memorial frameworks mediate, interconnect and shape local memories through which collective identities are being worked out.

Against this background, the two narratives of violence from different times and political situations are not competing or opposing each other in Améry’s memorial work. With an interest in circulation we can see how the mediated experiences of colonial violence, to which Améry explicitly referred, found their way into his personal testimony of Nazi violence and shaped his retrospective narrative as a Holocaust survivor. From this perspective, the retrospective nature in his work does not turn it into a purely backward-looking narrative but into one with performative force in the present as it opens ways for new and joined anti-colonial and anti-fascist imaginaries. Through the broader conception of cultural memorial forms it is possible to conceptualise this double movement analytically, and to show that also Holocaust memory, which often functions as the source for or origin of a globalised memory, even ‘cosmopolitan memory’, in Levy’s and Sznaider’s (2002) understanding of it, is itself already a hybrid category as well.

Améry’s At the Mind’s Limits is certainly a piece of Holocaust literature, precisely, however, by exposing how different stories of violence echo each other and how traces from different narratives are discernible in his testimony – traces that transform this testimony from within, turning it into a site for multiple and co-existing stories.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.
Notes

1. Corresponding to the chapters following ‘At the Mind’s Limits’: ‘Torture’, ‘How Much Home Does a Person Need?’; ‘Resentments’ and ‘On the Necessity and Impossibility of Being a Jew’, in Améry, *At the Mind's Limit*.

2. In an interview from 1978, Améry (2008) uses the word ‘katharsis’ to describe the writing of the book: ‘alles Verdrängte kam wieder hoch und wurde nun geistig durchgearbeitet’ (p. 98).

3. A recent contribution is Jean-Marie’s (2018) work, which connects Améry’s philosophical writings with his testimonial account of the Nazi crimes. Although Jean-Marie situates Améry in the context of 20th-century continental philosophy, he does not consider the context of decolonization.

4. Some exceptions will be discussed in this article (Diner, 2012; Fiedler, 2017; Gilroy, 2010; Hirsch, 2006; Ribeiro, 2011). Weiss (2006) connects Améry and Fanon but doesn’t deal with the question of violence.

5. In a late interview Améry (2008: 53–55) distances himself from his former belief in counterviolence as an emancipatory force against state-sponsored violence. I have to correct it, he says, as history has corrected it.

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