

Re-reading Derrida

Perspectives on Mourning and Its Hospitalities

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Chapter Eight

Cryptonymic Secretion: On the Kind-ness of Strangers

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The crux of the problem for explanations of collective phenomena in terms of psychological processes seems to me to be this: if we wish to avoid the charge that we only use such terms in a vague metaphorical sense, we must be able to explain precisely the mechanism by which the psychology of an individual can come to be *shared* with others.

Lindsay Tuggle illustrates the reach of this problem while exploring the issue of mourning for strangers, exemplified in contemporary memorial sites at New Orleans (after Hurricane Katrina) and at Ground Zero in New York (after September 11, 2001). Tuggle explains that “ungraves” such as the Civil War monuments described by Walt Whitman and these contemporary memorials function as sites for a collective haunting resulting from a failed incorporation in which a “lost object is *kept dead*, and externalized” (69, above). This explanation draws on the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, which I shall be unpacking in more detail. It will become clear that this idea that a *failed* incorporation can produce an externalized site that functions to keep a lost object *dead* seems to me a wholly plausible—not to mention quite brilliant—extension of the theory of incorporation. Yet what interests me in the present essay is the need to take the explanation still further, to understand how it is possible that something like a phantom or a dead lost object—indeed, perhaps even the failure of incorporation itself—can be said to be truly shared by two or more people. What I propose is that the work of Abraham and Torok can be used not only as the source of a set of concepts that enable us to answer such a question; we might also see their work as the *product* of just such a sharing.

If we proceed along this pathway toward an examination of the precise mechanism by which psychical phenomena (such as those that result from mourning) can be said to be shared, do we force ourselves to forget another crucial set of claims made alongside those by Abraham and Torok on the work of mourning? I use the word “alongside” here deliberately to point out that the writings of Jacques Derrida on mourning can be read as having been informed

by those of Abraham and Torok, but certainly not as part of a collaborative or shared approach. Much of Derrida's own work on mourning and haunting is indebted to the work of these two authors, with whom he developed a close friendship. As I have argued elsewhere, though, his relationship to that debt and the way in which these topics are represented in his own work acquire an air of secrecy and discomfiture from 1975, when Abraham died. This was before many of Abraham's most compelling theories could be published, although Derrida himself had already alluded to many of these theories in cryptic fashion in *Glas* and elsewhere (L. Johnson, "Tracing" n.p.). Yet I do not wish to suggest simply that Derrida echoes or borrows from Abraham and Torok, or that the two bodies of writing could be said to amount to the same thing. On the contrary, after the figure of death begins to gain greater currency in Derrida's writing during the mid-1970s, his fascination with this figure leads him along a very different pathway. As J. Hillis Miller notes at the beginning of "Absolute Mourning," Derrida admits late in life to be obsessed with death: "At bottom it is what commands everything—what I do, what I am, what I write, what I say" (qtd. in Miller 9, above). As we shall see, the works of Abraham and Torok truck no such fascination with death, and indeed seem at times to be seeking to deny death any such currency.

This is not to suggest, further, that Derrida's writings on death come to oppose the theories of Abraham and Torok. I use the word "alongside" to suggest a kind of parallel relation: imagine that Derrida walks along one path with death at his side, and Abraham and Torok walk along an adjacent path, heading in the same direction, but turning a blind eye to death. Of course, I will beg the reader's indulgence at the outset for pursuing what may seem rather a cryptic set of observations. The substance behind them will become clearer in due course. I make these comments now, though, because there is in Derrida's work on mourning a seemingly contradictory set of claims that must be taken into account. Miller's pursuit of the "red thread" that runs through *On Touching—Jean-Luc Nancy* brings this contradiction into sharp relief: in a movement from mourning toward "absolute mourning," and in thinking about death "all the time," Derrida is compelled to view mourning as "an absolute condition of human existence" toward which we conclude that for Derrida "no sharing or taking part as such exists" (19, above; see also Smith 86, above, and Thwaites 154, below). Such a conclusion is of course at odds with our goal of explaining how a process of mourning can produce sharing, yet I will only reiterate the point that I do not see Derrida's position, and any position at which we shall arrive by way of the work of Abraham and Torok, as being directly opposed. Along *this* pathway, toward an explanation of shared individual psychological phenomena, I am going to suggest that we shall never in fact be all that far from being in agreement with Derrida—and Miller *on* Derrida—as well.

With this question of the "red thread" of absolute mourning held in abeyance, although only on the provision of its eventual return, we can pursue the path toward Abraham and Torok and what I will propose as the possibility of a *shared crypt*. During the 1960s and 1970s, prior to Abraham's death, the pair radically revised Freud's topography of the psyche, introducing the trope of the

"crypt" to describe an enclave within the ego due to inability to mourn a lost object. The concept is elaborated in greatest detail in *The Wolf Man's Magic Word*, Abraham and Torok's re-reading of Freud's analysis of the dream of the wolves, recounted to him by the Russian patient Sergei Pankeiev in 1910. They argue not that Freud's analysis is wrong, merely that it failed to take into account the presence of a crypt within the psychic topography of the Wolf Man. In *The Wolf Man's Burden*, I speculated on the conditions enabling Freud to fail to see this crypt. Of interest to me here, however, are the conditions that would favour a theory of the crypt being formed some six decades after the fact, by Abraham and Torok, in their institutional context—both are trained as "disciples" or inheritors of the Freudian legacy—in which the assertion that Freud "failed" to identify such a key component of the topography of the mind would normally seem anathema.

We can begin by looking more closely at what process is being described by the theory of the crypt. Abraham and Torok describe it as the result of failure to mourn the loss of a psychically significant object, most likely in the earliest stages of libidinal development. The cryptophoric subject lacks a capacity to work through the trauma of the lost-object, so the ego incorporates the object-loss in place of the object itself, creating an illusion of ego integrity. This means the cryptophoric subject can never speak of the lost object or the traumatic event occasioning its loss, for to do so would result in the shattering of the illusion and of the ego with it. The crypt operates in this way like a blind spot within the ego, filtering away any words, phrases, representations, or actions that might give away the secret locked in the crypt. Abraham and Torok developed the method they call "cryptonymy" to unravel the chains of dis-associations in Pankeiev's account of the wolf dream (at least as it is recounted to us by Freud). Instead of the primal scene identified by Freud, they uncover a simple scene of fairly innocent peek-and-touch involving Pankeiev's sister Anna and rendered traumatic by the reaction of the Father. The scene involved the need to suppress the truth at all costs, and becomes transformed into a scene of object-loss much later, when the sister dies.

The method proposed by Abraham and Torok, as much as the answers it produced for them, is compelling. Cryptonymy works as a method because it assumes that the answers it seeks have been concealed rather than obliterated, and that concealing reveals itself by the manner of the gaps that it produces on the surface. This is the process referred to in my title as *cryptonymic secretion*, wherein the term "secretion" refers both to the process of concealment and to the separation and excretion of internal matter. The crypt continually gives itself away by being paradoxically conspicuous in its failure to provide evidence of its existence. It secretes itself in an enclave that refuses to admit to an exterior realm, yet its blockages produce a language that manifests on the surface, thereby revealing to the outside world the gaps that inhere within. Cryptonymy works, therefore, principally as a reading method, contributing to what Nicholas Rand calls "a theory of readability . . . demonstrating the feasibility of interpretation in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstructions" (16). Such a theory of readability always begins, of course, with the assumption that a text

contains obstructions of this kind. The question we might ask is, therefore, whence this assumption or, more directly, on what grounds did Abraham and Torok themselves first presume that the texts they encountered would require a method of reading capable of overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles to reading that would be present-yet-concealed within these texts?

To begin to address this question, let us start with some background data. Both of Hungarian-Jewish origins, Abraham and Torok emigrated to France on either side of the Second World War, and both lost their family to the Hungarian genocide. They met in Paris in 1950, gained memberships of the Société Psychanalytique soon after and commenced clinical practice as psychoanalysts in 1956. Over the next twenty years, they collaborated on a number of essays (half of which are contained in translation in *The Shell and the Kernel*) and together produced one magnum opus, *Cryptonymie: Le Verbier de l'Homme aux Loups* (translated as *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*). The collaboration ended with Abraham's unexpected death, as I have noted, prior to the publication of this major work. The pair did not fit easily into the puzzle of psychoanalytical schools in the 1950s, in part because of their apprehensions about the clinical value of organized structuralist activity. They cultivated an ignorance of Lacan's teachings—his work is mentioned nowhere in their writings—and they did include statements against the systemic character of Kleinian investigation in some of their essays. Accordingly, therefore, they never pieced together a coherent body of theories that could be considered an "approach" or that could be mobilized against the more dominant schools of psychoanalytical thought. They committed themselves to interrogating received knowledge in light of evidence gained in the immediate analytical situation and critical practice. Rand notes in his introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel* that their writings were guided by a philosophy that all received theories should be "abandoned or revamped if inconsistent with the actual life experience of patients or the facts of a text" (1).

There is a sense in Abraham and Torok's writings that no singular program is at work behind their words, and Rand admits their essays "expend little rhetorical energy in promoting the novelty of an idea or explaining how an approach departs from standard modes of thinking" (7). Yet if there is a thread that holds their work together, it is to be found in what Elisabeth Roudinesco has called their "idiosyncratic reading of Freud's discovery" (599). In addition to revising the structure of Freud's topography, Abraham and Torok's idiosyncratic reading included a description of the "anasemic" quality of psychoanalytic language (a capacity to make reference to that which pre-exists the referential capacity of language itself), revision of the distinction between mourning and melancholia (the former being characterized by successful introjection and the latter associated with the fantasy of incorporation), and, as we have seen, the development of a theory of transgenerational phantoms (silences or gaps in language that are passed on from one generation to the next). These revisionary ideas were not so much a rejection of the Freudian corpus as a reorientation of some of Freud's core concepts, in order to create a match between the

knowledge handed on by the founder of psychoanalysis and the experiences of those Abraham and Torok treated in the clinic.¹

Given that the experience of the analyst is so crucial to their idiosyncratic reading of Freud, a gap seems to open up in Abraham and Torok's work when we observe that the experience of the analyst is noticeable by its absence. Unlike Freud, they remained reluctant throughout their career to use their own experience as the basis for any theoretical claims. For any reader of *The Interpretation of Dreams* or *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, for example, it is easy to recall the often explicit and otherwise sometimes only thinly veiled autobiographical references. In the writings of Abraham and Torok we find instead an insistence only that these revisions of psychoanalysis emerge logically from clinical observation. It is interesting, then, that their writings are also largely devoid of any detailed information from clinical notes to add weight to their claims. *Contra* their insistence (and that of Rand and others) that clinical evidence is key to the formation of their ideas, this further gap would seem to suggest that there must be good reason why Abraham and Torok remained reluctant to include detailed case histories or autobiographical materials in support of their arguments. Indeed, a significant fact that can be gleaned from independent sources is that much of their clinical work was in fact devoted to treating Holocaust survivors and refugees from the genocide (Burkhart). Here, then, we encounter a most telling absence, the order of which might suggest a "cryptonymic secretion": both Abraham and Torok and a large number of their patients were Holocaust survivors, yet this fact is not given to us in the writings as one of the predominant "experiences" according to which they fashion revisions of psychoanalysis.

The significance of this autobiographical detail has not been lost on some of the more recent commentaries on their work, although the link between their personal histories and their work remains relatively unexamined. Maria Yassa notes, regarding the fact that both had lives touched by personal loss from the Holocaust, "It is not surprising that the phenomenon of trauma and its repercussions in the human psyche came to occupy a central place in their production" (2). She goes on to cite Fabio Landa, their co-worker and colleague, as pointing out that "post-holocaust psychoanalysis was called upon for an answer, a theoretical adaptation to a human reality more horrifying than any nightmare" (2). Yet this is as far as any mention of the Holocaust goes in Yassa's article, which thereafter explores each of the major sets of ideas developed by Abraham and Torok, while repeating their silence on the relationship between these ideas and either the treatment of Holocaust survivors or their own need to have worked through such traumatic material. Similarly, Colin Davis makes a clear connection in *Haunted Subjects: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis and the Return of the Dead* between the personal histories of Abraham and Torok and the emphasis in their work on the role played by the dead in the lives of the living. Yet Davis's most sustained discussion of the Holocaust is in a chapter devoted to the testimony of Auschwitz-survivor Charles Delbo, and his principal focus in relation to the work of Abraham and Torok is in establishing clear distinctions between their work on haunting and

Derrida's: Davis concludes that the biggest difference between these two strands of "hauntology" is

in the status of the secret. The secrets of Abraham and Torok's lying phantoms are unspeakable in the restricted sense of being a subject of shame and prohibition. . . . For Derrida the ghost and its secrets are unspeakable in a quite different sense. Abraham and Torok seek to return the ghost to the order of knowledge; Derrida wants to avoid any such restoration and to encounter what is strange, unheard, *other*, about the ghost. (13)

Even Elisabeth Roudinesco's remarkable *Jacques Lacan & Co.: A History of Psychoanalysis in France, 1925-1985*, to which any researcher into the lives of Abraham and Torok is much indebted, seems to mention the fact that both escaped the Holocaust only in passing and as merely a precursor to a detailed history of their intellectual pursuits rather than as being somehow related (598).

This perception of the disconnection of their past histories from their intellectual lives seems to me to have been fuelled in the first instance by the writings of those who, like Derrida and Rand, were closest to them. Derrida's introduction to *Cryptonymie* focuses so intently on the pros and cons—the *fors* and *against*s, shall we say—of the analysis of "this crypt" that it has no room for committing to print the personal histories of the analysts. As I have argued in "Tracing Calculation [*Calque Calcul*]: Between Nicolas Abraham and Jacques Derrida," and as noted above, Derrida's introduction was most likely to have been written in direct relation to questions of secrecy that plagued him as a result of Abraham's untimely death. In similar fashion, Rand's introduction to *The Shell and the Kernel* provides a brief biographical statement, but the fact of any personal loss in the European genocide is elided altogether by the simple observation that the authors "emigrated separately from Hungary to France in the late 1930s and 1940s respectively" (1-2). It seems then that amongst those who were close to Abraham and Torok, the elision of reference to the Holocaust or their personal losses is repeated in tacit agreement when discussing their intellectual endeavors, as if the separation of the two must be maintained, indeed, even by way of refusal to mention the earlier material in any direct manner. Among those who come late to their work, or of those who look upon it with a detached eye, the personal losses sustained are observed with a view to historical accuracy but any connection to the later material remains unexplored save for a brief, perfunctory note.

In some degree, then, we may wonder if the uptake by other scholars of Abraham and Torok's "theory of readability" has come to resemble the manner of its initial formation. This is to say that a subsequent generation of scholars is replicating the very silence that both Abraham and Torok and their closest colleagues introduced into their work by failing to re-examine the role played in shaping their theoretical formulations by the fact that both were Holocaust survivors. The specter of the Holocaust thus perhaps haunts the theory of transgenerational phantoms, in the form of a phantom within the passage of a language (and its theory of language transmission) from one generation of scholars to another. Such an observation possesses an elegant simplicity that

would make it tempting to leave anything further unsaid, but I contend that formulations of this kind, while elegant, lack explanatory adequacy: dare we say that the observation makes up with sufficient elegance what it otherwise lacks in elegant sufficiency. Nevertheless, by dint of metaphorical force, observations such as these may point in the right direction toward a more sufficient set of explanations. Suppose we begin rather than end with this observation that there could be said to be a transgenerational phantom lurking within the theory of the transgenerational phantom and its transmission. The next step would be to ask what that entails throughout the full historical reach of such a process. As it is described in a number of essays within *The Shell and the Kernel*, the phantom manifests principally as "an undisclosed family secret handed down to an unwitting descendant" (Rand 16), which means that the phantom exists *as such* only on the recent side of the history of transmission; that is, on the side of the descendant. There is no firm requirement within the theory of the phantom that the phantom exists as an unconscious blockage for the progenitor.

This may prompt us to note that there is no direct continuity between the theory of the crypt and the theory of the transgenerational phantom. A crypt may indeed lead to a phantom, but the latter can also be formed as a result of any other form of secrecy in the transmission of a familial discourse from one generation to the next. Thus, we would be compelled to pull up short of any suggestion that the failure by subsequent generations of scholars to examine the role of the Holocaust in shaping Abraham and Torok's theories is of the order of a crypt that is handed down through generations of scholars. This is a crucial point within the context of the current argument: the theory of the transgenerational phantom is *not* a theory of how one individual psychological state is transmitted to or shared with another; rather, it is a theory of how an individual (as a descendant) fails to achieve full psychical integrity as a result of non-disclosure of knowledge by another party (the progenitor). This would be to say that the theory of the transgenerational phantom remains a theory of individual psychology, rather than of a transmitted psychological phenomenon. Yet suppose we imagine that the initial gap is produced by way of a crypt in the psyche of the progenitor: would this be transmitted to the descendant in the form of a secondary crypt? No. The result would surely be the same in the descendant as if the gaps in the language of the progenitor were the result of conscious non-disclosure.

At this point, we must surely find ourselves hamstrung by pursuing a pathway toward shared psychical phenomena with the aid of Abraham and Torok, since we find that their own work can be used to refute the idea that the transgenerational phantom is ever a shared phenomenon in the sense that, for example, has interpreted it. Yet we must be clear: while there is no sharing as such from progenitor to descendant, where there is more than one descendant, we must be open to the prospect that for any of these descendants the structural gap opened up by the gaps in the language of a progenitor could be shared. In the case of our immediate example here—of the absence of their personal lives from the theoretical writings of Abraham and Torok, as well as from writings about their theories by subsequent scholars—we could perhaps say that there is

indeed a phantom introduced into the writings *about* their theories by the absence of this material *in their own* theoretical writings. This leads us in two possible directions, then: we can confirm that something like a shared structural gap exists in the writings of scholars about Abraham and Torok, but this gap was not shared with, or *transferred across to*, these subsequent generations of scholars by Abraham and Torok themselves; so we may wish to map this structural gap shared by scholars on the more recent side of history, or we may go back to Abraham and Torok themselves to begin looking anew. We shall pursue the latter, but first a brief word on the former (which will, *inter alia*, bring us to where we want to be). It is in the work of Derrida that we first find such a gap present in writings *about* Abraham and Torok. Abraham and Torok never wrote about themselves, and so we cannot imagine that their work begins the tradition of writings about Abraham and Torok.

It is important, while we settle our minds on Derrida momentarily once more, to recall that in his writings about others he would constantly bring the problems of writing about others into question. Derek Attridge's essay in this volume provides a powerful reminder of the constitutive role that Derrida's writing about another can have in relation to the writings of that other: "In a sense, Derrida takes up that responsibility, showing that a certain reading of Levinas can move his thought in a direction which he may not have foreseen but which enriches and deepens it" (36, above). Attridge cites Hent de Vries to confirm that the writings of Derrida and Levinas seemed at times to be "almost interchangeable" given the degree of overlap in their thought, although de Vries is quick to qualify the claim, adding that such contiguity is not "that of an overlapping minimal consensus but an intersection that is a chiasmic crossing" (De Vries 310; qtd. in n17, 39, above). I have made similar observations in an essay on Derrida and Levinas as well, mapping what I consider to be the untimely "correspondence" in their theoretical writings about the work of each other, that is, an exchange that is never wholly responsive to the other by virtue of being out of time with the writings of the other, even as it directs itself always toward this other (Johnson, "R.S.V.P."). Where Attridge extends such ideas is in the observation that to be hospitable to the other's thought, one must welcome it "in the fullest sense: both to allow one's own thinking to be transformed by it, as Derrida's certainly was by Levinas's, and also to treat it as still growing" (37, above). This is to say that writing *about* another's writings must be at once both correspondent with the thought it presents and an extension or continuation of the transformation of that same thought. Attridge invites us to consider his reading of Derrida in this same mode, and I suggest that Miller's reading of Derrida reading Nancy follows much the same contours. I also suggest that Derrida's reading of Abraham and Torok, which began the short tradition of writings about Abraham and Torok's writings with which we concern ourselves here, does the same.

This last point brings me to the crux of this brief detour, by which I will explain why it has in fact been no detour at all. What Attridge's reading of Derrida's reading of Levinas shows us is that what we might on the one hand conceive as a correspondence is also, on the other hand, always out of time.

Where we speak of a "generation of scholars," as we have here, we run the risk of conflating an ongoing process of writings *coming after* writings into what de Vries called this overlapping minimal consensus. As I demonstrated in "R.S.V.P." a correspondence is rendered untimely precisely by the simultaneous release of two statements: this nullifies the capacity for response. Thus, where we might otherwise presume to be able to identify a sharing of a structural gap within the writings of a "generation of scholars" we nevertheless must be able to recognize within this generation a subsequent set of transgenerational relations. If it is indeed to Derrida rather than to Abraham and Torok that we can attribute the origin of the structural gap we have identified, then we must also locate Derrida now in the role of progenitor and all others as descendants, and we must continue to do that wherever it can be imagined that this gap is passed on to the next writer by a previous writing. The point is that where a gap can be seen to be reproduced, it emerges perhaps in the double bind of the posthumous fidelity of which Attridge writes, and not simply as a "sharing" *per se*. We might counter this claim with an observation that when we are talking of a generation of scholars, we are not dealing with a need for *posthumous* fidelity, and that Attridge is really only talking about fidelity to a writer who has predeceased the writing of another who comes after. Yet this is hardly an argument that inheres in any of the writings with which we are dealing, since it is something of a commonplace to presume that when we talk of a writing that comes after, we are always talking, in effect, of death.

We return, then, to Abraham and Torok. Rather than continue to search for a mechanism for sharing in the proliferation of writings that come after writings, I want to suggest that their work provides a more viable locus for the possibility of the sharing of phenomena since it is a writing that carries two signatures, as the mark of a shared writing. Yet their writing contains this gap bearing all the hallmarks of what they would call a crypt. It conceals their crucial secret, yet it also reveals by concealing: no mention is made of the Holocaust or of the personal lives of the authors; the lives of their patients are given as a crucial point of reference for the formulation of these theories; by looking awry, we learn that the Holocaust is a significant event for both the authors and their patients. We must therefore be prepared to accept that this work, being shared, carries the trace of a crypt that is shared. Our task must now be to determine if such a thing is indeed possible. I will begin this last part of this essay by recalling what for Abraham and Torok might be received wisdom on Holocaust survivors. In psychoanalytic terms, those who survived would be prone to what William G. Niederland called the "Survivor Syndrome," which includes intense feelings of guilt and a sense of being burdened with the responsibility for the deaths of others (313). In such cases, it is suggested that testimonial evidence is crucial in helping survivors to overcome significant memory loss relating to detachment from one's past; that is, to create a tangible link to the family no longer present.² The dead must be allowed to speak, and the living must hear them. Shannon Burns observes that, as hospitality to trauma, testimony contributes to a dual work of mourning: "it remains faithful to the humanity that

is dead and thereby holds out for, and invites, the humanity to come" (138, below).

Abraham and Torok do not mention Survivor Syndrome specifically; neither do they even defer to Freud's own work on the "guilt of the survivor" in his observations on the formation of the super-ego in *The Ego and the Id and Civilization and Its Discontents*. Instead, Abraham and Torok focus on the role of failed mourning in generating obstacles to language. The essay in which they elaborate these ideas in detail—"Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation"—is clearly addressed to Freud's 1917 essay "Mourning and Melancholia" in the elaboration of its principal terms, though it never mentions that essay by name or quotes from it. For Abraham and Torok, incorporation is viewed as primary in the formation of the crypt: in incorporation, the body of the thing lost is taken into my own body, which is to say that my ego absorbs the thing whole, as if it is now and always was a part of me, the result being that I become indissociable from it. The loss is erased because the thing is made perpetually whole and fully present within me. A crypt is a defensive formation that protects the incorporated object, stopping words that represent (and therefore admit to) the loss of the object. For the cryptophoric subject, then, allowing the dead to speak will be terribly injurious, for it will be an admission that *the dead are in fact dead*. In this extreme case, Abraham and Torok seem to suggest that the dead must in fact be silenced for the benefit of those still living. Furthermore, their theory of transgenerational phantoms suggests that the dead thereafter remain silenced, in perpetuity, for the good of the offspring of survivors. Blissful ignorance begets blissful ignorance, and so on. The theory of the crypt would therefore seem to be opposed to testimony, to bearing witness to, and, we may presume *pace* Burns, to the hospitality to trauma that invites the humanity to come. Can it be possible that a clinical practice arising from the theory of the crypt is designed to replicate the very silence that is perpetuated in their writing? The answer would seem to be, yes, but if we can track how their theoretical writing represents a positive step forward for its authors, then we may also gain some insight into how an analytical practice tied to this writing aids the analysis.

We might argue, for example, that silence need not be considered as a lack or gap that must be overcome or filled. I will refer here to the work of sociologist and critical psychologist Erika Apfelbaum, who has for decades been exploring the condition of displaced persons. Apfelbaum argues that in cases of "uprootedness"—in which a community's link to its own past is ruptured due to large-scale violence—the *need for legacy* becomes paramount at the level of both collective identity and individual self-expression (which, she contends, are one and the same thing). The need for legacy refers to the idea that in such cases of uprootedness, the community's cultural compass can thereafter no longer point anywhere but to the moment of uprooting, as any attempt to restore the legacy of past generations ultimately leads back to the time and place of rupture. Furthermore, for the uprooted community, there is no point of connection in the new environment—new language, new culture, new regime, new routines and practices, etc.—that can fill the void. What the community comes to share is

no longer a legacy, but just this very *need* for legacy. What they share, in other words, is lack, and this is what enables them to regroup around a familial arrangement. Now, at the risk of erring on the side of brevity, we might map these ideas onto the story, as it were, of Abraham and Torok. Both were stranded in France after the war, each without family, and each newly immersed in a foreign culture, and each with no link to the past. When we consider the young Abraham, alone and devoid of context, it is reductive, I think, to define his specific situation in terms of generalizations such as "the Jewish experience" or "uprooted communities" writ large. It is when he meets Torok, also alone and devoid of context, that he is able in some way to connect with another with whom he might see himself sharing a need for legacy, and he represented the same for her.

Abraham and Torok must in this way have provided for each other a point of connection. Their shared experience of being uprooted is thus shared *in retrospect*, and the sense they have of sharing dislocation must be projected onto the past in order for them to be able to experience it as shared *here and now*. It is this that enables them to agree to identify with each other as kindred, to regroup as a familial unit. We may suspect that the need for legacy is held in abeyance as a condition in the individual alongside failed mourning, as part and parcel of the same broad procedure of deferral: holding off the working through of loss. The reason I suggest that these conditions must be held in abeyance alongside each other is their mutually exclusive status with respect to the other: the need for legacy is a refusal to maintain a link to the past; failed mourning, or incorporation, is the insistence that the past is always present herein. While these conditions remain suspended in this way, the individual is held in a kind of limbo, neither mourning nor melancholic. The need for legacy gains primacy when it is activated in the field of social relations, such as in the formation of a family unit. The union of Abraham and Torok thus enables each of them to achieve entry into the social field, but it comes at the expense of any chance of successful mourning. This is what I mean by the "*kind-ness*" in the title of this essay: a necessary willingness in adopting a relation *in kind* with another to give oneself over wholly to the other in a reciprocal surrendering.

The splitting of the ego identified by Freud as the key to the formation of the superego is here recast as a splitting off of the ego from itself altogether. In place of the superego there is only the familial unit, which in this instance is reducible to the level of the couple. In place of the id, moreover, there is now the creation of a pseudo-cryptic enclave within the confines of a shared language. What do I mean by this? When a need for legacy gains primacy, it must also occasion the completion of the process of failed mourning. Unable to be held in abeyance any longer, the failure of mourning is experienced simultaneously by both parties to the union, but it can no longer be viable for either party in terms that are specific to individual personal loss. In order for a need for legacy to function, loss must be displaced onto a more general term, which in this instance would seem to be the Holocaust. In this sense, the need for legacy will occasion a rupture within the language of the union, very much like the rupture that a crypt introduces into the language of the cryptophoric subject. I suggest that in

entering into the institution of psychoanalysis, Abraham and Torok found an outlet for expression that could enable them to displace this traumatic past even as they sought to identify and help others like them: the essays that they wrote in the 1960s and 1970s need to be viewed in the context of French philosophical and theoretical psychoanalytical writing, the principal exponents of which include Derrida and Lacan. (They openly despised the celebrity status of the latter, who wrote a scathing attack on their major work soon after its release.)

Within the psychoanalytic field, then, Abraham and Torok's writings could address the need for legacy, writing back to Freud the Father within an extended family of new scholarship, even as this same writing reveals-by-concealing a shared traumatic history—the sharing of which was nevertheless the result of a displacement enabling the kind-ness of two strangers to be played out. Thus, we cannot conclude without qualification that the work of Abraham and Torok bears witness to a shared crypt in the truest sense of what that term might convey; that is, if we define the crypt precisely in the terms identified by the authors themselves. Yet we have seen that this writing does bear witness, via a form of secretion, to a traumatic past that is concealed behind the appearance of being double, since two signatures, two proper names, and apparently no single individual history, frame the collaborative theoretical text. It would thus seem to make sense that we could refer to a shared crypt in the collaborative mind-set to which Abraham and Torok's writings give expression, yet we must only ever engage such a concept provisionally. Nevertheless, the value of such a term is that it enables us to give an account of the way in which the collaborative enterprise makes very specific demands on the collaborators even as it holds out for them—but ultimately displaces and confounds—promise of working through past traumas. If a shared crypt exists in any phenomenal sense, then it is only in the form of the cryptonymic secretion through which it gives itself away, but it may also be the case that it is only in the writing that such a structure can be said to exist at all, as a consequence of writing undertaken by a couple who represent a unity entered into out of kind-ness, a *need for legacy*.

As we reach the end of this pathway, we may now ask if we were ever that far from a pathway with Derrida. We have seen that Derrida looms large in any case along this same pathway, as a participant in the theoretical enterprise that offered for Abraham and Torok a locus in which their need for legacy could play itself out, and as a progenitor of sorts in the transmission of a gap that opens up around the silence regarding their personal histories. Yet we can go further. notes in closing that each death is ultimately also the end of a world since each world is a product of a collective "worlding" that depends on "the co-presence of all the unique others" constituting it. The work of the survivor ("and we are all survivors," Miller adds) is also thus one of "world-building," although for Derrida this world is always "hollowed out in all directions" by the impossibility of touching, which he aligns with absolute mourning—the red thread traced through Derrida's work (20, above). We are all survivors, yet since no sharing or taking part exists, we cannot share our survival; we cannot take part in being survivors. Again, do we find that such statements are altogether incompatible with the sharing mechanism we located in (and through) the work of Abraham

and Torok? Put simply, and in closing, no. The mistake we may make is if we assume that the word "survivor" pertains in this sense to Abraham and Torok. In the formation of a need for legacy and, I suggest, a shared crypt, there is no survival that may take place as a precondition for world-building. They survived, this is true, yet they identified as such only through the vehicle of a relationship forged as a way of relocating the loss into a here and now of the need for legacy: in this sense, they are survivors only to the extent that in their relationship they postpone survival. They are not opposed to the impossibility of sharing in the path on which they elect to travel together in what may well be termed an overlapping minimal consensus—though it denies the *at least two* implied in the terms "overlapping" and "consensus"—since their theories would seem to back up this impossibility at the level of the transmission of secrets. In what their writing represents, however, we see that Abraham and Torok could be said to have formed a truly sharing relationship, neither being wholly other, since they were constituted anew in a need for legacy, trusting, shall we say, in the kind-ness of at least one stranger.

Notes

1. It is worth noting that some of Torok's most ardent admirers are willing to paint her work as a rejection of the Freudian corpus in favor of a revisionary psychological model (see, for example, Burkhart).
2. For more theoretical investigations into psychoanalytic uses of testimony, see, for example, Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*; Felman and Laub, *Testimony*; Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*; or LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.