

## Notes

### Introduction

1. The most famous of these trials was based on Eileen Franklin Lipster's recovered memories of her father raping and killing her friend, Susan Neason. The trial, which took place in 1990, employed expert witnesses Lenore Terr, for the prosecution, and Elizabeth Loftus, for the defense, both of whom later wrote popular books about recovered memory. In her book, *Unchained Memories*, Terr tells the stories of eight people who recovered memories of traumatic childhood experiences and explores why and how such memories return. Loftus, in her work, *The Myth of Repressed Memory*, consistently links repressed memory to falsification of the past. We will discuss the debate about the validity of recovered memories in more detail later. What is important to acknowledge here is that well-publicized trials have shaped the audience for recovered-memory narratives as a kind of jury.

2. I am grateful to Michelle Massé for her conversations with me about this practice of cultural projection.—DH

3. The problems with emphasizing fantasy and also with denying fantasy any role will be discussed in more detail later.

4. We chose not to analyze films about incest, for example, because (like the narratives we discuss) films are part of a genre with its own complex history. The best-known films about incest include *Lolita* and *Chinatown* (more recently, *The Sweet Hereafter* and *Eve's Bayou*), but beginning in the 1980s with *Something About Amelia*, television also becomes an important venue for telling incest. More recently, talk shows and documentaries have also focused on the issue of recovered memories of incest. (There exists feminist scholarship on this development; Alcoff and Gray's "Survivor Discourse: Transgression or Recuperation" is a notable example.) In addition, feminist film theory has explicitly debated the significance of cinematic representations of violence to the female body and it has also analyzed the spectacular visibility of women's bodies in the medium of film. This extensive archive suggests to us that a consideration of filmic tellings of incest deserves its own separate, substantial consideration.

5. When he describes this "epidemic" in his book, *The Memory Wars*, Crews refers specifically to memories that emerge in therapy.

6. Diana Russell, in *The Secret Trauma* (1986), writes: "it is clear that further research on racial and ethnic differences in the prevalence of incestuous abuse as

well as most other aspects of the incest experience is urgently needed. This has been a seriously neglected area in the field” (112). Ten years later, Kali Tal echoes Russell’s concern by pointing out the way in which anthologies of incest stories, such as *Voices in the Night* and *I Never Told Anyone*, universalize the experience of incest by ignoring racial and ethnic differences, or rather, by ignoring the specific social and economic conditions that complicate telling and perpetuate “the myth that ‘womanhood’ is white middle-class womanhood, and that black or brown womanhood is merely a variation on the theme, rather than a kind of womanhood in its own right” (179). Yet, as we do, Kali Tal focuses on African-American and white women’s tellings (save for one example of a narrative by a Native American). Like Tal, we have found far fewer representations of incest in writings by Latinas and Asian-American women. Perhaps these writers have initially fought other battles in their writings, and so lack the tradition for telling incest that African-American women writers—and white women who draw upon their work—can now rely upon for help in writing about incest within their communities.

7. The temptation to use the term *recovery* in a playful way—in recovering memories, victims re-cover the past—is hard to resist. However, given that *recovery* already has a double meaning as retrieval and healing, we have decided not to make our use of the term any more complicated than it already is.

8. Despite the media emphasis upon false accusation in the mid-1990s, those who challenge the recovered-memory movement often position themselves as bravely disputing mainstream belief in the validity of recovered memories of abuse. In part, the stance of these critics reflects shifts in media coverage, which earlier provided many sympathetic stories about recovered memories. In chapters 4 and 5, we offer a more detailed account of this shifting terrain of representation.

9. Elizabeth A. Waites, in *Trauma and Survival*, writes that “Although there is no evidence that endogenous fantasy produces the characteristic biological and psychological patterns associated with inescapable shock, a body of literature dating from the early work of Maier (1949) indicates that there are certain reliably observable negative effects of actual traumas and that these are not confined to humans with their complex capacities for fantasy” (34). Waites goes on to discuss the way in which trauma affects fantasy; “ironically” it initially impoverishes fantasy—flashbacks and nightmares simply “reproduce” the traumatic event, and “when this occurs, the victim is deprived of the adaptive uses of the imagination, a deprivation that can leave her trapped in painful literalities. Eventually the fantasy usually modifies such literal responses. . .” (35). Waites’s analysis suggests that the impact of the traumatizing event is liminal, both biologically and psychologically significant.

In *Soul Murder*, Leonard Shengold writes, “I assume that actual overwhelming experiences [his emphasis] in a child’s development of seduction, rape, and beatings by parents have a different, more profound destructive and pathogenic effect than do the fantasies of such experiences that inevitably arise in the psychic elaboration of the child’s sexual and aggressive impulses. . . . There ought not to be disagreement that experiences have greater pathogenicity than do fantasies” (16).

The “real” versus “fantasy” debate is a subject of much interest in work on trauma. Here, we only want to suggest that trauma theory represents the trauma/memory/fantasy triad in such a way as to preserve a place for actual events in causing trauma, even as fantasy shapes the experience of those events.

## Chapter 1

1. The idea that denial of abuse is itself a form of abuse is drawn from Deborah E. Lipstadt's *Denying the Holocaust*. Lipstadt uses the "Holocaust" metaphor to equate Holocaust revisionism with the Holocaust itself: "On some level it [Holocaust denial] is as unbelievable as the Holocaust itself, and though no one is being killed as a result of the deniers' lies, it constitutes abuse of the survivors" (3). Lest it be assumed that the Holocaust metaphor is necessarily linked with progressive critiques of conservative political agendas, it should be noted the right-to-life movement employs the Holocaust metaphor to describe the "mass killing" of babies.

2. D. S. Lindsay and J. Read provide a good overview of debates about the prevalence of childhood sexual abuse. They note that Bass and Davis, in *The Courage to Heal* (1988), believe that prevalence rates are very high: one in three girls is abused by the age of eighteen. What would an accurate prevalent rate look like? The major source of widely differing results in retroactive surveys of childhood sexual abuse is variability in how sexual abuse is defined, from verbal solicitations to rape. If broadly defined, prevalence rates might look like those cited by Bass and Davis. However, because evidence suggests that adult problems are closely linked to incestuous contact abuse, especially forced contact by fathers, and because this kind of abuse is the primary focus of recovered-memory therapists, the base rate of incestuous contact abuse by fathers is something that Bass and Davis need to think more about. In their review, Lindsay and Read describe studies that provide base rates of this kind of abuse as ranging from a high of 12 percent to a low of 0.25 percent. Lindsey and Read cite a number of studies that do not support the view "that a large percentage of clients are completely amnesiac for actual childhood sexual abuse" (312).

Because it is easy to be skeptical about claims that clients are amnesiac before coming into therapy, it is also easy to unfairly dismiss claims made by recovered-memory therapists about the prevalence of incestuous contact abuse and its long-term effects. Mike Males has argued that the media now gives short shrift to confirmed victims of sexual abuse, though because he does not define terms, it is unclear how much of this abuse should be understood as incestuous abuse. To emphasize his point about media "escapism," he also attacks media silence on "other violent abuse of children," asking why the media seem more interested in crimes by youth rather than crimes done to them. "Ideally, journalists can serve as a counter force when politicians embark on their all-too-predictable crusades to blame powerless scapegoats for vexing national problems. But no sign of media courage is evident in today's expedient political attack on adolescents, nor in exposing the official silence on epidemic rape, violence, and impoverishment adults inflict on the young" (10–11).

3. James Twitchell makes a similar argument: "One of the most frightening aspects of our new interest in, and knowledge of, intrafamilial sex is that the incidence of incest *seems* to be increasing exponentially as information becomes available. . . . For if incestuous behavior is a learned process, a communicable disease, as some social scientists now assert with reference to the undeniable explosions in statistics, then this may well turn out to be a major public health problem for which the only cure may be, ironically, its return to obscurity and silence" (39). Clearly Twitchell decided that someone else should begin the nontalking cure after *he*

finished talking. In our view, those with the least visibility and social power are those who should be granted the longest lease on discourse about abuse. And it should be emphasized that there is also no evidence that incest was less prevalent when it was not talked about.

4. Standard definitions of sexual harassment describe it as any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors or other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct that interferes with work, is made a condition of employment or evaluation, or creates an intimidating environment.

5. Analyzing forms of resistance to existing power relations, Michel Foucault concludes: “Finally, all of these struggles revolve around the question: ‘Who are we?’” (Afterword, 212).

6. In a recent book, *The Social Construction of What?* Hacking offers a reconsideration of his claims in *Rewriting the Soul*, labeling himself as a “sinner” who has carelessly confused the “object [child abuse]” and “the idea [the concept of child abuse].” After making this confession, he adds, “We analytic philosophers should be humble, and acknowledge that what is confused is sometimes more useful than what is clarified” (29).

7. Feminists are well aware that Foucault’s work on sexuality can support both sides of the debate about whether “talking incest” harms or benefits women. Survivor discourse is linked with the confession, with the production of women’s sexuality as a danger that must first be elicited so that it can be regulated. The confession does not enhance the power of the person confessing but of regulatory apparatuses of the state.

Yet Foucault also insists that speech is an arena in which power is contested. The feminist discussion of incest offers a critique of powerful knowledges that have constructed and disciplined women’s sexuality. Feminists “talking back” have educated women about the possibility of resistance and interrupted the demand for acquiescence in sexual practices defined solely by naturalized male desires. This is not to say, of course, that survivor discourse can speak for all women or that it always functions in progressive ways (see Alcoff and Gray; and also Bell). Hacking’s book relies on Foucault’s early *Archeology of Knowledge*, in which Foucault attempted to explain the rules that govern speech acts within expert, discursive formations. In his later work, Foucault moved away from this approach to an interest in relationships among power, knowledge, and discourse—especially the limitations of discourse: “Silence is less the absolute limit of discourse, the other side from which it is separated by a strict boundary, than an element that functions along side things said, with them and in relation to them within overall strategies” (*History of Sexuality*, 27). By considering the production of incest stories over time, it is possible to see how the boundaries between the said and the unsaid transform as feminist analyses develop increasing authority. It should be noted, however, that feminism’s institutional power is limited.

8. “Hanging in” may be a good strategy in some situations but it is not self-evidently the best way to respond to an evolving understanding about the past, one that comes to include memories of sexual abuse.

9. Rosaria Champagne points out that false-memory literature regularly suggests the link between victim politics and feminism in newsletter pronouncements such as the following: “Emerging political movements almost always exaggerate their ‘oppression’ and attack the powerful and rich. That is par for the course. In

the FMS phenomenon, victimization has become the ideal, the preferred state” (168). Such rhetoric obviously hides debates within feminism about survivor discourse. Feminists like Carol Tavris and Wendy Kaminer have raised useful questions about the commodification of victimization and the popularity of psychologized identity politics. However, as we will show in chapter 6, these feminist critics have also covered over the interesting differences between survivor narratives.

10. Leonard Shengold writes that *soul murder* is “a dramatic term for circumstances that eventuate in crime—the deliberate attempt to eradicate or compromise the separate identity of another person” (2). This crime is “most often committed by psychotic or psychopathic parents who treat the child as an extension of themselves or as an object with which to satisfy their desires” (3). It is, he adds, an abuse of power.

11. There is a tradition of gothic narratives that includes incest motifs, but this conventionalized idiom, often featuring sibling incest, is quite different from emerging stories in which a female narrator attempts to describe incest in the context of mundane family life. In the gothic, aristocratic characters and their “exceptional” transgressions are posed against the morality of the middle class, justifying its ideological dominance. Elizabeth Wilson has written about another way of protecting middle-class morality: defining incest as a problem of the poor.

Hacking does not focus on the gothic or on specific narrations of incest. In line with Foucault’s early work, Hacking’s interest is in expert narratives, especially those that incorporate the idea of trauma. In “Narrative Structures and the Analysis of Incest,” Wendy Evans and David R. Maines provide an excellent analysis of the supports for a narrative about incest that encourage what they call the “taboo story” that incest is rare.

12. While Linda Gordon notes the economic benefits of prostitution as a way for a daughter to become less dependent upon her father, there may be other benefits as well. In an interview, Denise Turner, an incest survivor and former sex worker, explains: “It kind of brought me into reality about dealing with men. Particularly adult men who were as old as my stepfather, and were being sexual toward me. I felt that I could take charge of my situation, and I could handle it. I could speak for myself. I wasn’t silent, and I could take control. It was really positive for me in that way” (qtd. in MacCowan, 236–37). (My thanks to Natalie Josef for bringing this interview to my attention.—DH.) Clinical literature discusses prostitution and sexual promiscuity as familiar symptoms of traumatic early sexual experiences but does not consider the possibly liberatory effects of sex work. See, for example, Finkelhor and Browne.

13. “Confessions” were mandatory in Magdalen houses in which “fallen” women were required to tell their tales. Rodney Hessinger writes that “the operators of the Magdalen Society initially attempted to describe the past of its clients in terms of the conventional seduction tale. The clash between the founders’ preconceptions and the information presented to them by prostitutes” ultimately led to blaming women (and their class) for their “vicious” behavior (203).

14. See D’Emilio and Freedman, particularly pp. 171–221.

15. Stein began work on *The Making of Americans* in 1902. The project continued to expand as her conceptions of narrative and American character shifted over the next quarter of a century.

16. The narrator describes the same process when “one little boy does some-

thing to another little boy who does not like it, he shows no sign of reacting to it the little boy who does not like it” (378). The narrative thus generalizes this phenomenon of a delayed response to past events in “little ones” (379).

## Chapter 2

1. The conclusions of the Moynihan report are based on the assumption that “the family is the basic social unit of American life; it is the basic socializing unit” (*Negro Family*, 5). It adds that “a fundamental insight of psychoanalytic theory . . . is that the child learns a way of looking at life in his early years through which all later experience is viewed” (5). According to the report, the “great discontinuity” in American family structure is “that between the white world in general and that of the Negro American.” This difference is that white family structure is “stable,” and “the family structure of lower class Negroes is unstable” (5).

2. Maxine Baca Zinn’s excellent essay “Family, Race, and Poverty in the Eighties” describes and discusses both the cultural and the structural models for understanding the causes of the underclass. She shows how much these analyses depend upon a belief that only two-parent families can be economically successful, despite the decline of this family type in white as well as black communities and despite the existence of alternatives. Further, she shows that phrases like “the feminization of poverty” obscure what is happening to black men—economic disenfranchisement—and simultaneously reinforces “the public patriarchy that controls Black women” (87).

3. Historians have debated whether or not the paternalism of plantation owners should be understood as benign, though the arguments of Fogel and Engerman about the comforts provided by slave masters have now been discredited. Fogel and Engerman also denied that slaves were brutally exploited sexually.

4. “Ellison’s law” is drawn from one of Ellison’s pieces in the *New York Times*, “On Being the Target of Discrimination,” April 16, 1989: 6–9.

5. In a chapter of *The Politics of Survivorship*, in which she discusses *Thereafter Johnnie* by Carolivia Herron (1991), Rosaria Champagne attempts to explain why father-daughter incest can be an effective trope for the institutionalization of slavery: “When violence becomes naturalized—that is, understood as common, ordinary, or even necessary to group cohesion and identity— . . . it conditions social patterns of oppression, which constitute all subjects who make up that culture. Since rape under slavery was called ‘capitalism’ and therefore, ostensibly, was not marked as abuse, rape for the society born of slavery—that is to say, our own—is an overdetermined symbol of citizenship and subjection” (165).

6. Special thanks to Thorell Tsomondo for discussing with me both Ellison’s work and the problem of incest.—DH.

7. Sundquist’s commentary is part of an introduction to a selection from Gunnar Myrdal’s study of racism, *An American Dilemma*, See *Cultural Contexts for Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man: A Bedford Documentary Companion*.

8. Peter L. Hays notes that “Norton’s investment is more than personal financial gain—it’s a form of propitiation, a method of assuaging the guilt he feels

because of desiring his own daughter. His pathological interest in Trueblood reflects this. . . . So does his insistence on his daughter's purity; he describes her so five times in three paragraphs" (336).

9. Houston Baker writes: "From Freud's point of view, Trueblood's dream and subsequent incest seem to represent a historical regression. . . . And having run backward in time through the grandfather clock, Trueblood becomes the primal father, assuming all sexual prerogatives unto himself. . . . Insofar as Freud's notions of totemism represent a myth of progressive social evolution, the farmer's story acts as a counter myth of inversive social dissolution" (179–80).

10. Michael Awkward writes that "Baker's essay mirrors the strategies by which Trueblood (and Trueblood's creator) validates male perceptions of incest while, at the same time, silencing the female voice or relegating it to the evaluative periphery" (197).

11. Obviously, the incestuous making of generations can be gendered in other ways. In her novel *Corregidora*, for example, Gayle Jones depicts "making generations" as a way for women to memorialize the crimes of a white Brazilian slave master who has raped one generation of women and incestuously assaulted the next. These women are not making monsters, they are revealing a monstrous maker. Knowing that officials may burn and distort documents, women must become vessels of a history of incest that might otherwise be erased and forgotten by reproducing daughters who will tell. The injunction of the *Corregidora* mothers to their daughters, "make generations," is a command to reproduce witnesses to the crimes of the past. Yet this process of racialized and gendered memory, Jones suggests, may dangerously contain and rebuke black women's individual capacity for pleasure in the name of a painful reproductive imperative. Certainly Trueblood's story about "making generations" has little to do with women's desires and pleasures.

12. In her novel *The Women of Brewster Place*, Gloria Naylor specifically reminds her readers of a black sharecropper's vulnerability and inability to protect his daughter from a white man's predation (in Ben's story). When he tells his story, Ben is a janitor who pathetically awaits a letter from the daughter he failed to protect, unsuccessfully attempting to comfort himself by drinking. He and Lorraine bond because of their suffering, further emphasizing the black father's feminization and vulnerability. Clearly helpless in the face of larger socioeconomic forces, Ben cannot even protect his surrogate daughter from her devastating rape by the young black toughs of the neighborhood who feel insecure about their own masculinity in a society where white men's authority is still predominant.

13. See also David Lionel Smith's discussion of *The Bluest Eye* and Vanessa D. Dickerson's "The Naked Father in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." The novel does not make it easy to imagine positive alternatives to patriarchal norms. Even Mr. McTeer is described as remote and cold, though these qualities are explained as produced by his constant battle to provide his family with food and shelter.

14. Michael Awkward argues that Morrison "writes her way into the canon" by directly "taking Ellison to task for the phallogocentric nature of his representation of incest which marginalizes and renders as irrelevant the consequences of the act for the female victim" (201).

### Chapter 3

1. Because the stories Armstrong collected were about “true” experiences and informed by a political critique, Armstrong does not think that they can be classified with first-person testimonies that proliferated in the 1980s, which are no more than “stories.” “All that began to get through were stories: battered women’s stories, rape victims’ stories, incest victims’ stories” (*Kiss Daddy Goodnight*, 76). Presumably, the feminist incest story is the only one to offer a real critique of power and violence; other stories are mere rhetoric. However, as we will show, it is too simple to declare the feminist story the truth and other stories mere fabrications.

2. Armstrong begins one chapter of *Rocking the Cradle* by describing a young woman’s furious response to a panel on incest: “You keep saying men! . . . You are wrong! Everything you are saying is wrong. I was sexually abused by my mother!” (59). Armstrong goes on to say that this was just one of a number of attacks that left her feeling perplexed. She does not deny that mothers can be perpetrators but argues that these are relatively rare experiences that do not make her gender-based analysis incorrect.

3. Tavis, in *The Mismeasure of Women*, approvingly cites Armstrong’s *Kiss Daddy Goodnight: Ten Years Later* for its outrage about mother-blaming in the public and professional literature on incest (314–15). However, Janice Haaken makes a good point about the way incest narratives try to make women’s relationships seem unproblematically sisterly and supportive.

4. This is the same Raymond Solokov who, in his review of *The Bluest Eye*, praised Toni Morrison for writing “a novel instead of a harangue” (95).

5. Armstrong briefly discusses this review in *Rocking the Cradle* but does not mention the problems associated with the book’s cover.

6. Armstrong includes a chapter about a “swinging” father-daughter couple. The daughter extols her “closeness” to her father as she recounts a story of her subjection to his needs. Armstrong offers this story as proof that the daughter’s desire for her father is really a sign of his power over her. Florence Rush confirms this view: “The call for sexual freedom in children . . . is transparently focused upon adult gratification” (*Kiss Daddy Goodnight*, 187). Not only does the power differential between adults and children compromise children’s sexual “choices” but, as we have already seen, in earlier psychological literature, the child’s “desire” is constructed so as to blame the “seductive” child as instigator of the father’s assaults.

Sandra Butler’s *Conspiracy of Silence* includes an interview that suggests the complicated ways in which this feeling of being vulnerable and seductive can be internalized: “My father reinforced my feelings as a child that I had no power to stave off his assault. But he also reinforced the notion that I had a lot of power, because if I hadn’t had a lot of power, I wouldn’t have seduced this grown man into sexually acting out. . . . But when I try as an adult woman to let some of that power, vitality, strength out, it gets misinterpreted in the world—the world of men. . . . I see this as being related to issue of sexism, of my being a woman and my options for expressing my power being culturally limited” (59). In these remarks, incest is said to elicit an eroticized power that is misinterpreted “in the world of men,” but seemingly also “in the world of women,” where incest is often equated only with powerlessness.

Diana Russell's chapter entitled "Can Incest Be Nonabusive?" asserts that some cases of incest between siblings or cousins may be positive, though she argues that a person's own feelings of being traumatized should not be used as the "sole defining criterion for sexual abuse" (42). She believes that abuse occurs, even if a person does not feel victimized, if there is an age or "power disparity" when sexual contact—or attempted sexual contact—occurred between relatives.

7. See "Three Men and Baby M" in *Feminism without Women*. Her analysis refers to such films as *Three Men and a Baby* and *Three Men and a Cradle* as well as to television programs like *My Two Dads* and *Full House*.

8. Herman entitles a chapter of *Father-Daughter Incest* "The Daughter's Inheritance." In *A Thousand Acres*, Jane Smiley expands upon the idea of incest as a paternal legacy.

9. Herman points out that this is also the therapeutic agenda of Henry Giaratto. However, in his *Integrated Treatment of Child Sexual Abuse: A Treatment and Training Manual*, this reinstalling of the bond could be understood as a disciplinary process that involves asking women to assume all primary parenting responsibilities. Herman both adopts this view and shapes it by imagining the utopian possibilities associated with the mother-daughter bond.

10. In the 1960s, clinical accounts of incest explain how maternal failures lead fathers to molest their daughters. See Lucy M. Candib's "Incest and Other Harms to Daughters across Cultures," which discusses this discursive tradition and addresses contexts of male dominance that lead to maternal practices that harm daughters.

11. Giaratto explains that the "context" in which incest takes place is "faulty marriage" (57), a familiar but much narrower parameter of understanding than is offered by Herman. One traditional defense of the father's incestuous assault of his daughter is that his wife does not meet his sexual needs.

12. In discussing the "social location" of concerns about threats to children, Joel Best challenges the "folk myth" that upper-middle-class parents are particularly susceptible to anxieties about threats to children. Studying the results of a *Los Angeles Times* survey, he finds that "the people who worried most about threats to children were people who must have seen themselves as especially vulnerable in uncertain times." Concern was "higher among categories of people who would seem more likely to feel socially vulnerable: women rather than men; blacks and Hispanics rather than whites; older—and to a lesser degree—younger people, rather than the middle-aged; the less-educated; and those with lower incomes" (173). Fear of threats to children is not simply a matter of white middle-class ideology.

13. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act became law in 1974, authorizing \$86 million over three and a half years and establishing the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect. (The states had earlier passed reporting laws in response to growing concerns about battered children.) Barbara J. Nelson has argued that issues like rape and incest became a part of the governmental agenda because they are represented as "deviance" and thus cannot claim to be protected by privacy of the family. The "deviance" model, she argues, turns policy "away from considering the social-structural and social-psychological underpinnings of abuse and neglect" (3), though she elsewhere acknowledges that domestic violence

legislation does highlight power in the family and power in society. Her view is complex: she sees that raising the issue of child abuse is often good for children and for enhancing the authority of professionals working on their behalf. However, in the 1980s, the problem of structural causes and long-established power relations faded from view for a number of reasons: Reagan's cuts to the budgets for research on abuse and neglect; media coverage shifting to the failure of state programs and the problems of reporting; a new focus on psychopathology (as in the Giaratto model).

14. Armstrong embraces Andrea Dworkin's theory of eroticized domination, which is based on an analysis of pornography as the key to understanding the condition of women. Armstrong does not examine the way that feminist criticisms of pornography converged with right-wing denunciations of sin in the early 1980s. Feminist morality can lose sight of its institutional and social effects.

15. Elayne Rapping discusses the influence that feminism has had on the recovery movement by encouraging women to seek "fairer, more rewarding" lives (164). She also acknowledges that the recovery movement has shaped feminist discourses about the politics of the self, about personal change and self-esteem. (For example, see Gloria Steinem's *The Revolution from Within*). Rapping writes: "The recovery movement, in adopting so many feminist ideas, only to twist them into the service of so many deeply reactionary ends, is a fascinating and compelling sign of the times" (9). These reactionary ends, she argues, are possible when women embrace an overly simple narrative to explain their unhappiness.

## Chapter 4

1. In 1987, Bessel A. van der Kolk edited a group of essays called *Psychological Trauma*, based on the work of the Harvard Trauma Study Group, that included an essay by Judith Herman and van der Kolk, "Traumatic Antecedents of Borderline Personality Disorder." Van der Kolk, like Herman later, sees the contemporary interest in trauma as deriving from two important sources, (1) the women's movement and its concerns about consequences of rape and child abuse, (2) grassroot concerns of veterans about the psychological symptoms exhibited by returning Vietnam veterans. In *Trauma and Recovery*, Herman elaborates on this account, tracing interest in trauma back to the work of Janet that informed the study of shell shock in World War I. A rival genealogy, whose limits we discuss in chapter 1, has been created by Ian Hacking, who locates the origin of ideas about psychological trauma in the study of neuroses following railway accidents.

Both Herman and Hacking share a faith that their histories will recover the truth of the past. Such faith is hard to shake—and that is why both Herman, a recovered-memory advocate, and Hacking, a skeptic, share this belief. The discovery of historical patterns is a way of establishing what seems to be a solid relationship between the past and the present. The extent to which the origin of the chain linking past and present is not the past but shifting present concerns is frequently unacknowledged. The attraction of the canonical text, for example, is the belief that it both embodies the past and is a key to explaining the present, hence its seeming universality.

Our goal is not to decide on a true history but to show how Herman's text foregrounds ideas about trauma that shape and have been shaped by feminist ideas about narrative forms as both dangerous and empowering to subjugated women. In the 1980s, the literary canon becomes a crucial site for exploring this issue.

2. Feminist efforts to open up the canon have been criticized by John Guillory for their narrow understanding of representation: the assumption that authors and characters can stand for entire social groups and their key experiences and values; the way that opening up the canon becomes *the* definition of a progressive institutional practice to the point that diversity in the canon is assumed to be the same thing as actual social diversity. We appreciate Guillory's critique of the theoretical and political limitations of the practice of canon revision, but a sympathetic understanding of feminist criticism of the canon in the 1980s is nonetheless crucial to understanding the writing practices that we are discussing in this chapter.

3. In addition to the work of Baym, Froula, and McKay mentioned in this chapter, many other examples of feminist work written in the 1980s challenge the traditional literary canon, such as Joanna Russ's *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, Lillian Robinson's "Treason Our Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon," and Paul Lauter's "Caste, Class, and Canon" (1981), which was revised in 1987.

4. We explore this shift in feminist thinking and its grounding in the psychoanalytic theories of Melanie Klein and D. W. Winnicott in *From Klein to Kristeva* (Doane and Hodges).

5. Because the "witch hunt" metaphor pervades false-memory literature, it is not surprising that Miller's play has become a touchstone. While feminist critic Elaine Showalter deplores the credulity of readers who accept the truth of recovered memories, she repeatedly cites *The Crucible* as if it were a key to understanding both the past and the present, describing it as "prophetic" and calling her own last chapter "The Crucible."

What is surprising about her faith in the play's truth is that as a literary critic she might be expected to see it as something other than a simple mirror of reality, especially given its configurations of gender. *The Crucible* powerfully reinforces contemporary challenges to the evidentiary status of recovered memories while at the same time naturalizing a familiar logic of male innocence and female corruption. Miller rewrote the story of Salem making one of its male victims—John Proctor—into a younger, attractive, and virile man, and one of the accusers—the eleven-year-old Abigail Williams—older so that she could be a "harlot." This revision might well be explored not just as a vehicle for analyzing the McCarthy hearings, as is so often done, but as a characteristically 1950s version of the melodrama of beset manhood.

6. Pendergrast and Showalter make a similar argument about what the novel is saying, narrowly defining the work as a recovered-memory polemic.

## Chapter 5

1. The foundation was started by Pamela Freyd after her husband was accused by their daughter, Jennifer, of sexual abuse. Its newsletter features parents and experts, but the organization has resisted scrutiny, so claims about its mem-

bership are open to question. Mike Staunton's "U-Turn on Memory Lane" explores how the FMSF has managed to strongly influence public opinion while itself trying to block articles critical of its own operation.

2. This book is widely cited in texts devoted to the memory wars. In addition to Ofshe and Watters, see, for example, Schacter; Loftus, *Myth of Repressed Memory*; and Lindsay and Read.

3. Erdelyi, by calling Crews's discussion of repression a "vast red herring," points to the way in which Crews is controlling his reader's understanding of recovered memory by making Freud and repression the objects of attack. Crews's rhetorical strategy of attacking Freud and repression makes therapy seem outmoded by obscuring ongoing developments in the psychological study of memory and trauma.

4. Sexual abuse survivor stories by adult males, long concealed by homophobia (responses to women's accounts often turn the victim into the "seductive" daughter; men fear being turned by the same logic into "seductive" boys) and the conflation of sexual abuse and incest (with predominantly female victims), are just now being widely explored.

5. In *Return of the Furies*, Hollida Wakefield and Ralph Underwager write: "Radical feminism, emphasizing the unique relational and contextual experience of women and claiming special knowledge of truth for women, abhors distinctions, principles, universals, or consistency" (39). This statement, is, in their view, a useful gloss on this one expressed by an editor of a textbook on feminist jurisprudence and cited in their book: "the feminist intellectual movement, like many postmodern movements, regards the truth of all propositions relating to society and certainly to law as depending on context, perspective, and situation" (39). The anxieties created by an increasing awareness of the problems of judging what constitutes a veridical memory are displaced onto feminism; antifeminism thus is associated with reason and an undistorted access to the past. Because Wakefield and Underwager offer a particularly wacky historical account of claims by adult children of repressed memories as social phenomena antithetical to the foundational (for them, Greek) ideas of civilization, they very much need to scapegoat feminism as the embodiment of unreason. Few of these commentators are able to recognize the complex debates between and within radical feminism, cultural feminism, ludic feminism, and so on.

6. Adrienne Harris has written about this passage: "Loftus's memory of an experience of sexual abuse in her childhood, which pops up *in toto* in her account, remains privileged and uncontested in a book in which personal conviction is regularly dismantled and disputed. At the same time, the language in which she describes her experience is achingly familiar to anyone working with abuse" (162).

7. In her novel *Push*, Sapphire depicts this kind of group as making possible new cross-race and cross-class alliances between women.

8. Donald Spence in "Narrative Truth and Putative Child Abuse" draws on this exchange to make his case that respondents to Tavris, like many others, were not willing to consider memories of early child abuse as "narrative truths," as "metaphors for a wide range of boundary violations which belong to both past and present" (289). Indeed in his view, a "tight narrative structure and an almost total absence of doubt or irrelevant detail is almost certainly false" (289) and thus prob-

ably honed to make a “legal or clinical argument” (299). On the other hand, “The most truthful account of an early childhood experience is probably one told haltingly in a rather disconnected manner with many internal contradictions, false starts, blind alleys, and all the other earmarks of a confused memory that refers to an event that took place many years ago at a time when details were vague, only partly known, and the world was just beginning to come into focus” (298). These assumptions about the marks of a true narrative demonstrate the growing power of the “fragment” as marker of the truth. While in our next chapter we will discuss the possible meanings of the fragment in incest tellings, we do not recognize only fragmented narratives as true.

9. I would like to thank my students, Lara Henry and Monica McTyre, for directing my attention to this web site <[http://www.a-team.org/nation3 .htm](http://www.a-team.org/nation3.htm)>. D.H.

## Chapter 6

1. Most of these memoirs were published by small presses and have not been reviewed, which has limited their accessibility. These memoirs include *A Miracle From the Streets* by Cherie Ann Peters (Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1997); *Annie's Attic: Surviving Sexual Abuse* by Sarah Anne Stevens (Scottsdale, Ariz.: Hubbard Publishing, 1995); *Because I Remember Terror, Father, I Remember You* by Sue William Silverman (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 1996); *Cry the Darkness* by Donna L. Friess (San Juan Capistrano, Calif.: Hurt into Happiness Publishing, 1993); *Forgotten Memories* by Barbara Schave (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1993); *In Search of My Heart* by Rebekah Huetter (Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Words of Hope, 1998); *The Little Girl Within* by Pamela Capone (San Jose, Calif.: R&E Publishers, 1991); *My Jewels Are Broken Glass* by Ella M. Heady (Baden, Pa.: Rainbow's End Company, 1997); *Living On Empty* by Mary Jane Hamilton (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Cook Communications Ministries, 1994); *Paperdolls* by April Daniels and Carol Scott (Curtis, Wash.: RPI Publications, 1993); *Prisoner of Another War* by Marilyn Murray (Berkeley, Calif.: PageMill Press, 1991); *No Place to Cry* by Doris Van Stone (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1990); *The Obsidian Mirror* by Louise M. Wisechild (Seattle, Wash.: Seal Press, 1988); *There Were Times I Thought I Was Crazy* by Vanessa Alleyne (Toronto, Ontario: Sister Vision, 1997). Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss: a memoir* (New York, N.Y.: Morrow/Avon Books, 1997), while it recounts remembered incest, is an effort to depict and recall how the mind and body suffer unspeakable experiences.

2. These memoirs are to be distinguished, then, from narratives produced as legal testimony. In *Troubling Confessions* Peter Brooks discusses narratives of recovered memory that were used in legal cases.

3. In her essay “Not in This House,” Elizabeth Wilson draws upon the work of Diana Russell, *The Secret Trauma* (1986), whose research suggests that “high-income background” is a risk factor in incest. Finkelhor and Araji in their *Sourcebook*, also published in 1986, do not make precisely this case, though they do claim that income and prevalence are not correlated, thus undercutting views that the

problem occurs only among the poor. However, *The Third National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect* (1996), written by Andrea Sedlack and Diana Broadhurst, provides statistics showing that children of families making less than fifteen thousand dollars a year may be at significantly greater risk (more than twenty-five times greater) than children from families in the highest income classification (making more than thirty thousand dollars per year). This study also argues that this risk cannot be simply explained as a result of the greater surveillance of the poor. As a result, the *Incidence Study* explicitly makes a plea for a stronger commitment to working with and increasing the incomes of those in poverty. Acocella's interpretation of such recent demographic statistics about sexually abused children tends to "forget" that these statistics hardly deny the existence of abuse in middle-class and high-income families, although the fact that the highest income classification is \$30,000 per year suggests that the incident study has avoided scrutiny of the wealthy. However, the *Third National Incidence Study* finds that there is one case of sexual abuse in every two thousand families with incomes over thirty thousand dollars per year. Of course, how the data are collected and what they prove remain a matter of debate.

4. See, for example, van der Kolk and Van der Hart; Zola; and Brewin and Andrews. These writers are interested in exploring the contributions of neurobiology and cognitive science to our understanding of how memory works because they wish to replace repression and dissociation as explanations of forgetting.

5. For accounts skeptical about trauma theory, see especially Elizabeth Loftus's *The Myth of Repressed Memory*. Janice Haaken offers a nuanced and cautious critique of trauma theory in her *Pillar of Salt*, especially pp. 60–83.

6. In "We Shared Something Special," Jane F. Gilgun reports on her interviews with eleven incest perpetrators. She found that perpetrators understood incest as a form of "caring" behavior. Further, they saw children as "gatekeepers" for sexual relationships. Gilgun remarks, "The perpetrators, as adults and parents and parent figures, clearly had authority in these relationships, and to delegate their authority in circumstances where children had virtually no freedom of choice had to be highly confusing to children, as well as unfair and harmful" (276).

7. See Jennifer Freyd's extensive exploration of a child's adaptive need not to remember experience of childhood abuse. On the basis of growing evidence, Freyd argues that the most devastating and long-lasting effects of child abuse occur when a victim is abused by a trusted person in the child's life. The abused child will process this betrayal by blocking information about it, not to reduce suffering but to maintain an attachment with a figure vital to the child's survival, development, and thriving.

8. Writers about the experience of trauma emphasize, far more than do those who emphasize recovery, the limits of language. Betsy Warland eloquently speaks to this issue: "Memory is most true when not translated into words. A smell or taste, long forgotten then remembered—a sensation so vivid, stories so intact, they shock us. / With words we begin our forgetting. Tongue forgets taste, forgets touch, as it quickens to its work of words. / Words that force forgetting: memories then held in our senses, speaking through symptoms, nervous physical habits, inexplicable intuitions, redundant emotional culs-de-sac. . . . Memory saved in senses

translated into language: re / storying, remembering, re-storying. / Words to remember what we had no words for” (*Bat*, 14).

For academic explorations of the challenge trauma theory poses to the conceptual framework and to concepts of referentiality in many different disciplines, see Caruth, *Trauma and Unclaimed Experience*; and Caruth and Esch, *Critical Encounters*. For trauma theory’s impact on pedagogy, see Felman and Laub. Suzette A. Henke in *Shattered Subjects* demonstrates the usefulness of trauma theory to an understanding of women’s life writing. While not neglecting recovery and healing, all of these writers focus upon traumatized individuals’ powerful feeling that their experience lies just beyond the capacities of representation, and that attempts at representation of these experiences thus demand new modes of response and listening on the part of their audience.

## Chapter 7

1. The works of Sapphire and Allison make claims for realism as a resource for presenting fundamental truths of history and challenging oppressive forms of capitalism, claims Georg Lukács also made for realist modes of writing. However, Lukács could not have anticipated the alliance of realism and therapeutic discourses that has resituated the place of the individual in realist writing.

2. Allison’s efforts to “refuse the language and categories that would reduce me to less than my whole complicated experience” are part of a project to “remake the world” (*Skin*, 213).

3. In some sense, Bone’s problem is that she dreads reinforcing the cultural expectation, informed by the conventions of the southern gothic, that the lower-class southern family is predictably inbred (sexually abusive) and violent. Allison’s novel replicates this model of the Faulknerian family yet also significantly revises it by making the female child’s point of view visible and her abuse hard to explain as either inevitable or merely a metaphor for larger cultural conflicts.

4. In her collection of short stories, *Trash*, Allison includes an account of her “real” Aunt Raylene, who is married to a man who beats her. In *Bastard out of Carolina*, Raylene’s situation is narrated as expansive with possibilities.

5. Rosaria Champagne relates incest and queer subjectivity in a different way: “The project of politicizing incest shares its closest kinship to that of queer liberation because of the social stigma patriarchy has attached to those outside its law (of ‘normality’) and also because both queer culture and survivor culture have strategically and historically constituted themselves in the closet and signified themselves through codes (nondiscursive symbols of inclusion or exclusion). In both constituencies, the closet has functioned historically as a site of subjectivity, and coming out of the closet has served as political performance” (6). While there are problems with this linkage (complex contexts for closeting and for coding identity are seen as the same for incest survivors and queer subjects), the performance of coming out—or trying to—does inform both kinds of narrative.