

Editorial

Susanne C. Knittel

It gives us great pleasure to share the latest issue of *JPR* with you. This issue has a dual focus, on the one hand perpetrator studies in Latin America, and specifically Argentina, and on the other, a thematic and methodological focus on interviewing perpetrators and working with perpetrator testimonies.

The bulk of the issue is taken up by a special section on *Perpetrators in Argentina*, guest edited by Antonius C. G. M. Robben and Valentina Salvi. This special section is the result of two online workshops held in the fall of 2021 by the *Utrecht Forum for Memory Studies* (Utrecht, Netherlands) and the *Nucleus of Memory Studies* (Núcleo de Estudios sobre Memoria) of the *Institute of Economic and Social Development* (IDES) in Buenos Aires in Argentina. The workshops were organized by Daniele Salerno (Utrecht) and Soledad Catoggio (Buenos Aires). The aim was to bring into conversation researchers from Latin America and Europe across linguistic, economic, and geographical barriers and revolved around two themes: the figure and discourse of/on the perpetrators of mass violence and the memory-activism nexus. Another, more practical, aim of the workshops was to experiment with best practices for working in a multilingual context. Out of these workshops came the idea to make accessible in English the work of the Argentinian scholars to the broad international and interdisciplinary audience of *JPR*.

The special section consists of an introduction by the guest editors and four articles. The introduction provides an overview of the historical and memory-political context of the military dictatorship in Argentina after the coup d'état of 1976 and Argentina's efforts since then to hold perpetrators accountable. Furthermore, the introduction situates research in and about Argentine perpetrators within the field of perpetrator studies more broadly, opening up new avenues of inquiry and potential comparative and cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary comparative work. The four articles that follow, all translated for this issue by Daniele Salerno and Antonius Robben, reflect on the specific parameters and modalities of conducting perpetrator research in Argentina as well as the challenges researchers face, particularly wanting to interview and interact with convicted perpetrators. Valentina Salvi and Analía Goldentul describe in their articles the incomprehension and critique they faced from colleagues for engaging in dialogue with these perpetrators. Meanwhile, in their interviews, the perpetrators themselves are defiant, presenting themselves as victims and political prisoners or patriots and heroes. The mechanisms and discursive formations that construct the figure of the perpetrator come into view the articles by Claudia Feld and Santiago Garaño. Feld explores the role of the media and specifically the circulation of images, which she refers to as visibility *dispositifs* in making visible and

knowable the identities of perpetrators of the forced disappearances. Garaño details the fluidity and ambiguity of the categories of perpetrator and accomplice, witness and implicated subject.

The special section is followed by Raya Morag's article on documentary films about the Cambodian genocide and the Chinese Maoist Revolution, and here, too, the focus is on perpetrator interviews. Morag theorizes two novel genres of encounter, which she calls the Duel and the Quiet Interview. Arguing that Western scholarship has failed to consider the position of South-East-Asian atrocities and the discourses around them in what has come to be known as the Age of Testimony, Morag seeks to expand the conceptual boundaries of fields such as trauma studies, cinema studies, and perpetrator studies.

The issue concludes with two book reviews, Erin Jessee's review of Eva van Roekel's monograph *Phenomenal Justice: Violence and Morality in Argentina* (Rutgers University Press, 2020), and Catharine Aretakis's review of Doris L. Bergen's monograph *Between God and Hitler: Military Chaplains in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2023).

This issue has been several years in the making, and we are delighted to be able to send it out into the world. We would like to thank the authors, guest editors, translators, peer reviewers, copy-editors, and typesetters for their hard work in bringing this issue together.

It has been a very difficult year in many respects for many of us. Let us hope for better and more peaceful times in the year ahead.

On behalf of the editorial team,

Susanne C. Knittel