Editor's Note

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The present age manifests an obsessive preoccupation with memory (in its collective or social sense). The modern distinction between past and present and its representation of temporality as an infinite continuum (within which any event vanishes immediately beyond recovery) resulted in "two competing experiences of time: acceleration and loss" (Stone, 2006, p. 148). Collective memory comes into existence as a counterbalance of loss and an element of stability. Modern genocide came to symbolize the extreme instability. According to one of the most insightful contemporary scholars of the Holocaust, Dan Stone, this complex of events—although not an appropriate etalon of reflection on genocide in general—was not a total break with what happened before, but a radical version of genocidal experiences that have taken place throughout modern history which requires us to rethink our relationship with the past (Stone 2010, p. 8; Stone 2003, p. xv).

The papers collected in this issue of *Deliberatio* illustrate converging ways in which underlying premises or representations of a radical traumatic catastrophe in recent history contribute to its open, never complete understanding. The first contribution, "Structure and Fantasy: Genocide and The Homogenization of Identity" by Dan Stone himself, explores the complex historiography of genocide, particularly the Holocaust, by

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analyzing the structural and voluntaristic interpretations of perpetration. Stone describes the structural approach as viewing genocide as a result of macro-level forces like state competition and crisis decision-making, while the voluntaristic view emphasizes the individual agency of perpetrators and their personal motivations in moments of crisis. His goal is to reconcile these views, arguing that both contribute significantly to understanding genocide but are more effectively interpreted when integrated. Stone suggests that this synthesis can better explain how genocidal actions fit within broader patterns of normal human behavior and state function, exacerbated by societal crises that necessitate both structured state mechanisms and fantasy-driven justifications for these abominable acts.

Paul A. Shapiro's paper "Memory of Vapniarka and the Interface of Antisemitism, Fascism, Communism and the Holocaust" focuses on the historical and ideological connections between antisemitism, fascism, communism, and the Holocaust through the case study of the Vapniarka camp in Romanian-administered Transnistria. It discusses the role of Romanian authorities in deporting and concentrating Romanian Jews and local Jews to Transnistria, detailing the harsh conditions and atrocities they faced, including ghettos, forced labor, and systematic extermination. The text emphasizes the significant overlap and differences in how Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union employed antisemitism in their oppressive regimes. It also examines the postwar use of the history of Vapniarka in various political and ideological narratives, highlighting how memory and historical accounts are shaped and used differently by various groups to serve specific agendas, including the minimization of the Holocaust's Jewish experience in favor of highlighting communist victimhood under the Romanian postwar regime.

In his article entitled "Obsession of Romanian Intelligentsia During the Interwar Period: Ethnonational Specificity", Victor Neumann examines the debates among Romanian intellectuals in the 1930s and 1940s regarding solutions for constructing the state after World War I. Much-discussed key political views included Europeanism, traditionalism, and the peasants' movement. However, many intellectuals promoted an ethno-nationalist approach, emphasizing Romanian ethnic identity and traditions over modernization and individual rights. Prominent figures like Mircea Eliade and Constantin Noica supported this ethno-nationalist vision, while Mihail Sebastian tried to counter-argue from a critical perspective. Neumann

maintains that the obsessive preoccupation with ethno-nationalism and the aversion to democracy manifested by many Romanian leading intellectuals fostered an eliminationist thinking consonant with the purging radicalism of the racist regimes of the time.

Andrei Simionescu-Panait's contribution "Infantilizing the Interlocutor: Thrasymachus in the Counseling Room" is an exploration of the concept of subhumanization within the framework of philosophical counseling, particularly through the interaction between Socrates and Thrasymachus in Plato's *Republic*. Simionescu-Panait uses the dialogue to illustrate how clients in philosophical counseling often exhibit a tendency to infantilize others when their viewpoints are challenged, reflecting a form of subhumanization. This behavior is compared to Thrasymachus' attempts to belittle Socrates by not acknowledging the validity of his arguments and assuming a superior stance. The author discusses Aristotle's views on children to further analyze the notion of subhumanization, arguing that Greek culture may have regarded children as subhuman due to their inability to engage in rational discourse. Ultimately, the paper uses these philosophical texts to shed light on dynamics in philosophical counseling where clients might resist engaging in self-reflective and rational dialogue, mirroring historical philosophical disputes. And at a deeper level, the paper sheds a new light on roots of subhumanization tendencies underlying specific forms of relational thinking.

"Disenhancing animals as a path to harm" by Mattia Pozzebon probes into a related pattern of thinking, this time about animals by scrutinizing the ethical and welfare implications of genetically disenhancing animals used in factory farming. Disenhancement refers to the genetic modification of animals to reduce their ability to suffer under harsh farming conditions, thus potentially easing public concern about animal welfare. However, Pozzebon argues that such practices may perpetuate the objectification of animals, treating them merely as resources for human use, and might not genuinely improve animal welfare. Furthermore, disenhancement could entrench the use of animals in industrial agriculture by providing an ethical facade to ongoing practices. This discourse critically examines the balance between animal welfare and industrial needs, highlighting the ethical complexities of using biotechnology to manipulate animal genomes in the context of modern agriculture.

References

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