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The Journal of Perpetrator Research (JPR) is an inter-disciplinary, peer-reviewed, open access journal committed to promoting the scholarly study of perpetrators of mass killings, political violence, and genocide.

The journal fosters scholarly discussions about perpetrators and perpetratorship across the broader continuum of political violence. JPR does not confine its attention to any particular region or period. Instead, its mission is to provide a forum for analysis of perpetrators of genocide, mass killing and political violence via research taking place within the fields of history, criminology, law, forensics, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, memory studies, psychology, politics, literature, film studies and education. In providing this interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary space the journal moves academic research on this topic beyond, and between, disciplinary boundaries to provide a forum in which robust and interrogative research and cross-curricular discourse can stimulate lively intellectual engagement with perpetrators.

JPR thus not only addresses issues related to perpetrators in the past but also responds to present challenges. The fundamental questions informing the journal include: how do we define, understand and encounter the figure of the perpetrator of political violence? What can we discern about their motivations, and how can that help society and policy-makers in countering and preventing such occurrences? How are perpetrators represented in a variety of memory spaces including art, film, literature, television, theatre, commemorative culture and education?

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Editorial iv

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## RESEARCH ARTICLES

'I could have slapped myself':  
The Ethics of the Bystander Perspective in Sebastian Haffner's Memoir  
*Ellen Pilsworth* 1

Mass Violence as Tragedy:  
Analysing the Transmission of Discourses  
*Juliane Prade-Weiss, Vladimir Petrović, Dominik Markl* 29

---

## REFLECTIONS

State Violence in Narcotic Drug Governance:  
A Call for Harm Reduction and Human Rights Protection  
*Salvador Santino F. Regilme Jr.* 65

Future Research on Theories of Evil: An Insuperable Blind Spot?  
*Sabah Carrim* 77

---

## INTERVIEW

Encountering Humanity's Dark Side: A Conversation about Perpetrators  
*Uğur Ümit Üngör* 91

---

## BOOK REVIEWS

Materiality and the Construction of Cultural Narratives of Mass Violence  
Review of *Geographies of Perpetration. Re-Signifying Cultural Narratives of Mass Violence*, ed. by Brigitte E. Jirku and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca (2021)  
*Johanna Vollmeyer* 107

An Archipelago of Post-communist Memory  
Review of *Memory Archipelago of the Communist past: Public Narratives and Personal Recollections* by Daniela Koleva (2022)  
*Bilyana Manolova* 119

## Editorial

Emiliano Perra

We are delighted to share JPR issue 5.1 with you. The issue is divided into four parts. The first part consists of two research articles: Ellen Pilsworth investigates German journalist and author Sebastian Haffner's memoir *Defying Hitler* (2002), first published in German with the title *Geschichte eines Deutschen* in 2000 shortly after the author's death but written in 1939 in Britain. Focusing on some key passages of the memoir, Pilsworth draws attention to the role played by denial, self-deception, and rationalisation in leading 'ordinary Germans' into accepting and taking part in Nazi activities. Building on Mary Fulbrook's concept of 'bystander society', Pilsworth's article draws attention to an important and honest first-hand account of the ways in which a society can quickly adapt to the new reality of a regime like the Third Reich. The second article presents an exciting and pioneering interdisciplinary collaboration between literary scholar Juliane Prade-Weiss, historian Vladimir Petrović, and biblical scholar Dominik Markl. Bringing together insights from these three disciplinary backgrounds, their article explores the ways in which the trope of tragedy is used to define mass violence. More specifically, they note that the 'tragedy' trope is often deployed to inform justificatory discourses and ask whether research might unwittingly contribute to transmitting and to normalizing discourses which justify, downplay, or negate acts of mass violence.

The articles described above ask relevant questions for the field of perpetrator studies, either by interrogating the multifaceted conduct of individuals living in 'bystander societies', or by questioning some of the terms commonly used in public discourse – and by scholars in the field – to describe mass violence. Offering relevant insights is also the explicit aim of the two Reflections published in this issue. The first is International Relations scholar Salvador Santino Regilme's discussion of the extensive role played by state violence in contemporary global narcotic politics. Regilme identifies the state as a collective and institutionalized perpetrator of violence upon its citizens in the context of narcotic regulation. Moreover, he advocates for the inclusion in the field of perpetrator studies of structural factors such as socioeconomic inequalities and systemic discrimination that facilitate not only state violence but also the proliferation of narcotic drugs, which have a dis-

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proportionate impact on marginalised communities. The boundaries of the field of perpetrator studies are also at the centre of the reflection presented by Sabah Carrim. Taking the lead from the work of scholars such as Scott Straus, Timothy Williams, and James Waller, Carrim's contribution engages with some of the potential pros and cons of integrating neuroscience into the conceptual toolbox of scholars engaging with perpetration. Moreover, drawing on existing legal precedents, Carrim discusses how brain science can enter the court room in cases involving charges of mass violence, for example if used by defendants as part of their defence strategy. It is to be expected that neuroscience will enter the study of perpetration, and Carrim's piece asks some timely questions of the possible epistemological and legal implications of applying neuroscience to the study of genocidal crimes.

Perpetration and the challenges that it poses to the field is at the centre of Uğur Ümit Üngör's interview with Antonius C. G. M. Robben and Alexander Laban Hinton on the occasion of the publication of their important new book *Perpetrators: Encountering Humanity's Dark Side* (Stanford University Press, 2023). In a series of questions ranging from the impact of studying perpetrators on the researchers themselves, to the role of dissimulation in interviewing perpetrators, to the relationship between process and typology when studying perpetration and perpetrators among others, the discussion touches upon many themes that are central to JPR and the field at large.

The final section of this issue is represented by Johanna Vollmeyer's review of Brigitte E. Jirku and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca's edited volume *Geographies of Perpetration: Re-Signifying Cultural Narratives of Mass Violence* (Peter Lang, 2021), and Bilyana Manolova's review of Daniela Koleva's monograph *Memory Archipelago of the Communist Past: Public Narratives and Personal Recollections* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2022).

We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to receiving your submissions. As always, we also welcome proposals for special issues, special sections, JPR roundtables, and other formats.