Mapping Memoryscapes: New Research Perspectives

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Introduction

Karin Roginer Hofmeister, Klára Kosová

Remembering the past in the present represents a multifaceted process involving various active and passive elements across the vast landscapes of human experience. More specifically, it results from interactions between a multitude of social agents operating within broader social and cultural frameworks that create specific power constellations aiming to shape our understanding and imagination of the past. Untangling these shifting constellations over time has become a central scholarly focus in the expanding field of memory studies.

Yet such constellations are not only temporal; they are also spatially embedded. This spatial dimension has therefore been approached through the concept of place, understood not merely as a factual location defined by topographical and demographic characteristics, but as a site shaped by social and cultural functions (Nardi et al. 2019, 2). The complexities of memory-making imprint themselves onto spaces in myriad forms – both physical and material as well as mental and abstract. As Gaston Bachelard noted in *The Poetics of Space*: "In its countless alveoli, space contains compressed time. That is what space is for" (Bachelard 1994, 8).

This edited volume examines how "memory is produced, contested, and transformed across different space-times" (Rose-Redwood et al. 2022, 450). It delves deep into the dynamic interplay between remembrance and the environments in which it unfolds, emphasizing the close processual relationship between the two. This vibrant interaction is best captured through the concept of *memoryscape*. As defined by Kendall R. Phillips and G. Mitchell Reyes, a memoryscape is a complex landscape upon which memories – both individual and collective – are inscribed through dynamic processes of remembering, forgetting, or neglecting. It is a plane where memories "move, come into contact, are contested by, and contest other forms of remembrance; older ways of conceptualizing the past" (Phillips and Reyes 2011, 13–14).

Memoryscapes, as "sites of concentrated cultural practice" (Kapralski 2015, 150), extend beyond Pierre Nora's influential terms of "authentic 'milieux de mémoire' and self-consciously commemorative 'lieux de mémoire'" (Basu 2013, 116). They encompass a multiplicity of forms of remembering, including intentional, communicable forms (language, narrative, or material expression) and unintentional, "inherently non-narrative" forms, such as embodied memory (Basu 2013, 116). Materiality, politics, and social imaginaries intertwine in the composition of memoryscapes, which are cognitively constructed and continually shaped through interaction with those who engage with them (Cardina and Rodrigues 2021, 381). Exploration of physical, mental, and, most often, hybrid scapes that form, and are formed by, memory reproduction and renegotiation serve as a common platform where the volume contributions across the disciplinary spectrum interlace.

The contributions result from the interdisciplinary online PhD Seminar "The Past in the Present: The Dynamics of Remembrance" organized by the Centre for French Culture and Francophone Studies (CFC) at the University of Warsaw on 15–17 April 2021 as a part of the 4EU+ European University Alliance project, *Plurality of Memories in Europe in a Global Perspective*, a trailblazing initiative for European memory studies. PhD candidates from six member universities, namely Charles University, University of Copenhagen, Heidelberg University, Sorbonne University, University of Milan, and University of Warsaw had then opportunity to present their research that was widely commented on and discussed by memory studies professors and scholars from these institutions. With this volume – a wellspring of plurality, dialogue, and exchange of ideas – we wanted to offer PhD candidates a space to share their initial findings and learn about the process of academic writing and publication.

All stemming from the canons of memory studies, these early career researchers provide fresh, sometimes innovative, approaches, perspectives, and conclusions on the profound connections between past experiences and their remembrance on the one side and spaces in which they are displayed and gain diverse meanings on the other. They examine these memoryscapes as particular clusters of physical spaces and locales, as social practices and as terrains of cultural production. The time gap between the seminar and the publication also allowed the authors to retrospectively reflect on their work with a more experienced eye and the often-necessary distance. The volume thus represents a unique collection that maps various aspects and stages of the newest research projects on the topic of memory embodiments in various space-times, exploring material, social and cultural memoryscapes. They do so across disciplinary fields and academic traditions.

The first section of this book, titled "Mapping Material Memoryscapes" consists of five contributions that examine changes in physical landscapes, their narrative representations, and mnemonic functions. Employing multi-sited ethnographic methods, the first two texts explore the transformation of "ruins forgotten in the landscape" (Jurgenson 2020, 31) – in both a literal and figurative sense – to the sites of new cultural practices defined by shifting mnemonic power constellations. The text that follows addresses the narrative transformations of Kyiv as a specific memoryscape in historical guidebooks. The last chapter deals with cultural signifiers and mnemonic traces of a minority, which makes Chinatown in London a specific material memoryscape.

In a review of the conceptual and methodological framework of his research project, Giovanni Agostoni illustrates how spatial memoryscapes contribute to identity construction. He chose Bosnia and Herzegovina as an empirical case study because it serves as an excellent example of a country whose memory, a central reference of identification, has been largely affected by the war, that aimed to materialize the exclusive territorial identities and by the subsequent post-war grief and hatred. The great expulsions and relocations of inhabitants that occurred during and after the war led to a general homogenization of the territorial composition of the population. As a result, the relocated communities live in territorial contexts rich in records of the previous inhabitants that, in some cases, religiously differ from the current occupants. Focusing especially on "abandoned" mosques and churches, Agostini aims to analyze what role these places of worship play in the representation of people living around them by combining landscape analysis and semi-structured interviews.

Jonas Lendl analyzes the post-National Socialist dynamics of remembrance in Nuremberg. He elaborates on how the self-victimization narrative that dominated the first decades after World War II shifted to the imagination of having successfully dealt with the Nazi past that forms the core of the contemporary narrative. Using the proliferation of human rights-oriented institutions, memory sites, and commemorative events as examples suggesting a shift in remembrance and contrasting them with the fact that former NSDAP member Karl Diehl was made an honorary citizen of Nuremberg, Lendl further argues that local memory of National Socialism remains very selective, marginalizing the regime's ordinary supporters. He demonstrates such selectivity through the development of mnemonic content and function of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds and the cultural upcycling of the Congress Hall. Although presented as embracing the difficult Nazi heritage, Lendl claims that these processes also narrowed local remembrance to a specific aspect of the Nazi period and led to relocation and spatial fixation of the Nazi past to a limited part of the Nuremberg memoryscape.

Focusing on the guidebooks published from the second half of the nineteenth century until the present, Eugenia Sarapina examines the dynamics of the spatial interaction with the past in Kyiv by taking a closer look specifically at St. Sophia and St. Michael's squares. She traces four main mythologems that formed the basis for the narrativization of space-Kyiv as 1) the second Jerusalem or Jerusalem of the Russian Lands; 2) mother of Russian cities; 3) the cradle of fraternal people's friendship; and 4) the kernel of Ukrainian statehood. Furthermore, she reveals that despite the radical differences in state ideologies within a given period, the official memory narratives not only reinterpreted the past but also inherited semantic units from their predecessors, combining them into a new narrative.

Grounded in semiotics studies, Ziyu Yuan's contribution takes a closer look at the role that various semiotic modes play in the creation of the current image of Chinatown in London by focusing on the shopfronts located in this area. At the visual level, cultural signifiers such as dragons, lotuses, phoenixes, Fengshui, hip-and-gable roofs, pilasters with Dougong, red and gold colors, etc., are often applied without careful alignment as nothing more than cultural indicators conveying a sense of "otherness." At the linguistics level, clear cultural references are made through the names of the shops, such as "Imperial China," "Orient London," "Golden Dragone," and the like. At the same time, the shopfronts hold semiotic resources containing many layers of coded meaning (i.e., Chinese typeface) that are difficult to understand for the non-Chinese speaking audience. Although the names of the shops are often translated into English, these attempts that vary from literal translation to free transliteration, in most cases, are not able to approximate the encoded sounds of the Chinese characters. As a result, Yuan argues, the cultural signifiers used at different levels contribute to the overall orientalist outlook of Chinatown, making it a specific memoryspace in London.

The second part of the book, "Mapping Social Memoryscapes," focuses on social discourses and historical narratives that imprint themselves into the relief of memoryscapes and transform them. Acknowledging the interdependence of memory and identity, this section also addresses memoryscapes as a plane upon which social identification has been (re)organized. The first contribution in this section explores these processes on a local level, drawing on oral history accounts from individuals in the Czech borderland region. In contrast, the second contribution examines these dynamics at a national level, analyzing the use of historical references in political debates within the German Bundestag.

Anežka Brožová's chapter deals with the intertwined complexities of memory and identity by looking at the dynamics of narrative transformation in the oral history of people bound together by a specific regional identity. More concretely, she examines the popular narrative of World War II and its aftermath in the Hlučín region, which is located on the border of the Czech Republic and Poland and inhabited by an autochthonous population without a clear Czech national identity. By analyzing narrations/storyscapes of people born between 1920 and 1931 and placing them in the broader historical context, Brožová's study demonstrates that communicative memory plays an important role in the construction of regional identity.

David Barkhausen closes this second section with an analysis of the employment of memory and historical references in parliamentary debates. More particularly, his contribution brings to the fore the term *stability culture* in the context of German collective identity and elucidates the utilization of this term in the Bundestag debates from 1949 to 2020. Addressing the conflation of the present and the past, the author examines what significance historical memories occupy in the parliamentary negotiations of stability culture. In his quali-quantitative content analysis, Barkahausen found a relatively low recurrence of historical references within the parliamentary addresses of stability culture, occurring mainly in times of critical junctures and transformative moments of crisis such as the breakdown of the Bretton Woods System or the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis. When the narrative nexus between the stability culture and past events was employed, it evolved, in most cases, around the references to the successes of the D-Mark and Bundestag. Importantly, the majority of historical references were made by representatives of conservative parties Christian Democratic Union / Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and Free Democratic Party (FDP), which clearly illustrates that history and its (re)interpretation can play a strategic role in policy making and its assessment.

The third part of the book, "Mapping Cultural Memoryscapes," brings together authors who focus on diverse aspects of memory-making by exploring various dimensions of memory embodied as results of creative (artistic) processes. They examine cultural artefacts as "imaginative geographies of the past" (Rose-Redwood et al. 2022, 452). The three texts delve deep into the fields of art, drama, and literature. They scrutinize the intersections between the outputs of cultural production and remembrance, between individual and collective memory, and between individualist and universalist messages coded in the selected art and literary pieces.

Margarita Fontana uses the artworks *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago and the *Siluetas Series* by Ana Mendieta to show how the feminist art practice can facilitate the role of a memory devise through the mythological imaginary of matriarchal prehistory. *The Dinner Party* functions as a grand visualization of "Herstory." It addresses the universal women's history through the connection of both myth and history while acting simultaneously as a medium of reimagination of the past on which the women could base their empowerment. The *Siluetas Series* brings the "Herstory" to the personal level as it stages the return to the roots that are both universal (mother nature) and intimate (an individual's origins). By comparing these examples, Fontana explains how they add to the understanding of the dualistic tension between nature and culture inherent in second-wave feminism.

Looking at the first production of Samuel Beckett's play *Krapp's Last Tape* in the GDR, Alice Clabaut examines how it contributed to shaping the collective memory of GDR's citizens. Beckett's play was not, however, staged on its own but was brought together with the poem *The Rearing of Millet* by Bertolt Brecht under the title *Lebensabend* (*Evenings of Life*). By coupling these two pieces, the aim seemed to be to highlight the distance between the two political blocs the authors represented. Beckett's play brings to the fore the individual memory as the main plot line revolves around the annual birthday ritual of its protagonist. Brecht's poem, on the other hand, focuses on the collective memory of the GDR while drawing on Soviet mythmaking of the 1930s. Yet, the combination of Beckett's and Brecht's pieces, Clabaut argues, exemplifies the cultural progression representative of the decline of GDR.

While focusing on the two novels by a Russian émigré writer Gaito Gazdanov, *An Evening with Claire* and *Night Roads*, Maria Turgieva concludes the volume with an analysis of the inherent relation between individual and collective memory. Building on Jan Assmann's notions of communicative and cultural memory and Astrid Erll's theory of narrative modes of remembering, she elucidates Gazdanov's understanding of memory as a medium through which one can understand the past. On the one hand, the protagonist of *An Evening with Claire* aims to preserve his individual past through narration. He attempts to reconstruct the past from scattered fragments of memories that are inherently subject to constant changes as life goes on. The narrator of *Night Roads,* on the other hand, focuses on portraying Paris of the 1930s when describing the lives of marginalized groups. By doing so, Gazdanov shows that a certain social group can share a collective memory that is not necessarily compatible with the cultural memory of the given society. By looking closely at both the memory-preservation and memory-making in the two Gazdanov's novels, Trugieva argues that *Night Roads* may be viewed as a continuation of *An Evening with Claire*, which adds to our understanding of how one's personal experience can be expressed and preserved in mediated literary form.

The contributions, while individually unique in disciplinary approach, collectively address the dynamic processes of memory-making and their spatial manifestations and reimaginations through material, social, and cultural frameworks. By examining diverse memoryscapes – from the physical transformations of historical sites to the social practices and cultural artifacts that shape remembrance – this volume provides a holistic and interdisciplinary lens to understand the symbiotic relationship between past and space-times. Together, these essays highlight the shared commitment of early-career scholars to advancing memory studies through innovative, reflective, and methodologically diverse research.

Eventually, in addition to the exceptional effort and hard work of promising young researchers from six European universities, the volume could hardly be finished without the support of many scholars and institutions. There is a reason for the saying: "it takes a village …" to produce any academic publication. As the editors of this volume, we would therefore like to thank, above all, the authors of the texts but also their mentors and reviewers for their guidance, patience, and constructive criticism. We are also grateful to the 4EU+ Alliance network for an opportunity to organize and fund the PhD. seminar and other activities leading to a close cooperation between memory scholars and early career researchers across Europe. Finally, our thanks go to Charles University for its willingness to take over the publishing process.

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Mapping Material Memoryscapes

Introductory Remarks on the "Abandoned" Places of Worship in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Memory, Cultural value, and Territorial Identification Processes

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Abstract

This study deals with the places of worship in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, in the aftermath of the 1992–1995 war and following the forced displacement of the local population, ended up being located in areas controlled by people who belong to a different "nationality" from that of the inhabitants who had lived there in the pre-war period. The main aim of the research is to understand the role of these inherited places of worship in the representations of the current population. Therefore, the research identifies the places of worship left behind in six different municipalities, namely Brod, Kupres, Vareš, Ilijaš, Višegrad and Stolac, which were chosen because of the changes in population that occurred there, by religious groups that abandoned those areas during or after the war. The first aim of the research is to analyze their current status (destruction, abandonment, reconstruction, or conservation) to clarify the role these buildings (or their remains) play in the landscape as an outcome of the post-war period. The second aim is to examine the meaning they assume for the current populations in terms of memories, symbolic representations, identity significance, and inclusion in the process of (re)building a new local identification.

Keywords

Territorial identification; places of worship; post-war landscape; memory; Bosnia and Herzegovina

Introduction

This chapter presents my PhD research in cultural geography on the symbolic and identity meaning of the abandoned places of worship in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It describes a preliminary stage, resulting from several years of elaboration of the research project which was implemented in the two years following the drafting of this article. More specifically, the text provides an explanation and justification of some of the underlying choices made in terms of conceptual framework and territorial context; it also clarifies the terminology adopted to interpret and describe the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Beyond the reflection on the current socio-political conjuncture in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this case study might be explored further to allow additional contributions to studies on the relationship between places, memory and identification processes through the analysis of places of worship which help spatialize the juxtaposed identities on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It could also give a new insight into the current construction of identities in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society by seeking to establish if there is a local identification, which is independent of that of religion.

The first section of the text briefly describes the historical context and divisions along the lines of identity in Bosnian and Herzegovinian society, specifying relevant lexical choices. Starting from this overview, the second section focuses on the materialization of such division in the landscape of the country and explains the conceptual framework adopted to read the territorial context. The third part aims to justify the two fundamental choices of the case study: the relevance of the places of worship and the selection of the six municipalities where research would be conducted. Finally, the last section presents the research's main aims and the methodology to be followed to achieve the expected results.

Identity division and historical context of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Identity is a peculiar issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina because everything in this field is highly controversial, and nothing is clearly defined. Centuries of coexistence created a unique environment where mixing was normal and social interaction regular, people could understand each other while not using exactly the same language[1] and locally shared the same traditions and way of life while following – if they were believers and practicing their faith – different religious prescriptions. However, in this inclusive environment, everyone knew everyone's affiliation to the three "nationalities," basically differentiated only according to religious belonging: Bosniaks[2] who are Muslims, Serbs who are Orthodox Christians, and Croats who are Catholic Christians. This concept of religious belonging should not be understood to represent the expression of their individual faith but rather as a cultural reference point upon which the difference among the nationalities is based (Bougarel 2001). For this reason, I use "nationality" and "religious community/group" interchangeably, while I try to avoid the terms "ethnicity" or "ethnic group."

Indeed, the choice of terminology is quite a delicate issue: in dividing the three constituent peoples (the constitutional wording for defining the three above-mentioned national-religious communities), local and external rhetoric attributes to the term ethnic group an ontological sense, which is problematic in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian context. In my work, I criticize this dominant use of the ethnic narration that has a clear political aim for the politicians who confirm and endorse it: The reification and deepening of the segregation of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian population according to the "ethnic" labeling cemented by the war. This ethnic discourse is even more problematic because it is, at this point, widespread in the media and academic studies dealing with the country, sometimes becoming the expected starting point for every interpretation of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian reality. Through my research,

1 The language is actually a major issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a revealing one: scholars, politicians and ordinary people are involved in the dispute among the supporters of the existence of a single common language and those who affirm that Croatian, Bosnian and Serbian are three distinct languages in general and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular. It is very difficult to solve this dispute because, even though it is clear that people living together for centuries could communicate without any problem, some slight differences (the choice of the alphabet in writing, the selection of some words instead of other ones) were always used to mark a distinction of belonging, knowing that in an inclusive society the aim of mutual understanding was achieved in any case, provided that everyone knew the linguistic habits of the others. Today the problem is more evident and serious, because the law, the school systems and the physical division of the people is creating an excluding environment.

2 The term "Bosniak" was officially adopted only after the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Yugoslav authorities used instead the word "Muslim" as the national identifier of the Slavic people of the Islamic religion (officially named as such by Communist authorities since 1968 and recognized as a constituent nation since 1974) (Glamocak 2005, 41–42). The history of this term is the subject of a chapter by Xavier Bougarel (2002), while Marina Glamocak (2005) wrote an illuminating article on the evolution of the Bosniak identity.

I would like to explore if the situation could open new perspectives and connections to be explored beyond this prevailing vision. I am aware of the risk signaled by Robert M. Hayden that "if analytical distancing is based on moral disapprobation, the result may be distortion" (Hayden 2007, 106), and I intend to be self-critical about my judgment, aware of my positionality and ready to ultimately just confirm that the dominant narration remains valid; however, I also want to remain open and give visibility to other, even if minor, possible ways of interpreting the situation that I might find during my fieldwork.

Having this in mind, whenever the terms related to ethnicity are employed in this chapter, they should always be understood to be referring to the way they are used by others or according to the constructivist meaning presented by Andreas Wimmer, partially following the definition by Max Weber, as "a subjectively felt belonging to a group that is distinguished by a shared culture and a common ancestry" (Wimmer 2013, 7), but adding the category of "boundary," a line of mental division that has a twofold dimension: "categorical" (linked to social classification and the distinction of the groups) and "behavioral" (i.e. that influences the relations and social actions of the individuals) (Wimmer 2013, 9). These ethnic constructions also carry a strong meaning of political revendication; therefore, the term "nation" should be appropriate (Wimmer 2013, 8). Nonetheless, the fact that two of the three mentioned communities claim to belong to nations that already have their centers of power outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, has led me to favor the use of the term "nationality," which seems to imply the idea of the entirety of the national group to a lesser extent.

The 1992–1995 war ended the fluidity among and peaceful coexistence of the three nationalities. Differences in religious belonging became rigid ethnic differences, an idea strongly fueled by nationalist propaganda according to the interests of the post-communist leaders (Violante and Vitale 2010, 177). The war and the widespread practice of ethnic cleansing provoked a radical redefinition of boundaries among communities causing the escape or displacement of about 2.2 million people, half of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the largest exodus in Europe since World War II. This caused the uprooting of entire communities and their relocation to areas conquered by other groups. The Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the conflict, simply froze the situation, creating two entities (the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) whose borders basically retrace the frontline at the moment when the agreement was signed (Björkdahl 2018, 38; Riding 2019, 239).

After the great movements of population that occurred during and after the war, the inhabitants of almost all the municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are today divided into two parts: those who have lived there since birth, being rooted there for generations, and the displaced people, who came to live there following the expulsion from their original birthplaces.[3] These changes also led to a general homogenization of the composition of the population, meaning that the part of the population that remained often belongs to the nationality in charge of the territory, while the other communities were expelled. Additionally, the relocated people who came to live there are members of the currently dominant religious group too. At the same time, generally speaking, they suffered the forced eradication from an area where they became a minority.

After the end of the war, the Dayton Peace Agreement stipulated that the displaced people have the right to return to their original dwellings and, in a way, tried to encourage this restoration of the pre-war Bosnian melting pot (Ó Tuathail and O'Loughlin 2009, 1047). However, twenty-five years after the agreement, we can see that the returnees who came back to their original towns and villages are still few, and doubts are raised about the perspective that the redistribution caused by the war and ethnic cleansing could be a reversible change (Dahlman and Ó Tuathail 2005, 658). On the contrary, the newly established institutions of post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly when dominated by nationalist and ethnocratic parties, have strongly acted in order to discourage the claims of the returnees and to preserve and consolidate the separation that materially helps their policy of antagonistic nation-building (Violante 2015b, 154).

Nevertheless, the relocated communities live in territorial contexts rich in material records of the groups that previously inhabited these places. Among them, several religious buildings are especially meaningful as bearers of identity values and are often quite visible in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian landscape due to their size, color, and minarets or bell towers. These places of worship are not simply visible but also have a strong presence in another sensorial area, the auditory one: through the various calls to prayer (the recitation of specific phrases by a muezzin atop the minarets, the tolling of bells from the different churches) that

3 Stephanie Rolland (2004) describes the problems related to the coexistence and failed integration of these different components of the population in Mostar, showing in this urban reality a new kind of conflict between "original" often mixed inhabitants and displaced people generally coming from the countryside, where the religious groups tended to be scattered in different mono-confessional villages.

resonate in the air, marking the hours and echoing in the streets, squares and valleys; these sounds too are the essential elements of a landscape that constitutes the multisensory context in which people find themselves living. The landscape of Bosnian and Herzegovinian towns is full of various fragrances, mostly due to the abundance of places selling food, and odors in the winter season emitted by obsolete and polluting heating systems; some of the religious buildings add their own smells to this olfactory atmosphere due to the incense used during Christian celebrations and the beeswax candles that are always lit in dedicated chapels inside or around orthodox churches. Many of these mosques or churches were targeted by artillery or burned during the war, and consequently were destroyed or severely damaged; others remained untouched or were rebuilt after the war but still stay in territories that no longer belonged to the original religious group.[4]

Territorial context: identity in the landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The historical picture presented above explains the choice of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the field of research. In fact, in this country, memory, a central reference of identification (Lavabre 2012, 266), has been "contaminated" by post-war grief and hatred (Violante 2015b, 154). Ethnic cleansing was aimed at the material realization of exclusive territorial identities, eliminating every kind of mixture among communities (Walasek 2016, 205–206) to generate an "effect of the space on the identities"[5] (Gervais-Lambony 2004, 471). These divisions are, at this point, engraved in the territorial "infrastructure" (Di Méo 2001), in the "spatial structures [that are] supposed to 'generate' identities" (Gervais-Lambony 2004, 471). The term "identity" is defined by Guy Di Méo as "an ideology, meaning a coherent ensemble of mental representations that an individual or a group makes of themselves or of the others, of their place in the society and in the space" (Di Méo 2004, 340). This definition should not lead us to forget that identities are never unique: They are constructed and used in different ways according to spatial and temporal circumstances (Gervais-Lambony 2004, 470).

4 This is the main topic of the work by Helen Walasek (2016), with the contribution of other authors, entitled *Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage*.

5 All quotations were translated from the original into English by the author.

The choice of Bosnia and Herzegovina is therefore justified by the hypothesis that this country could be the appropriate place to analyze the relations between space and identity construction processes. This analysis was planned to be conducted by confronting the mainstream political discourse that uses the "religious-national" division as an interpretive prism of local reality and as the only loophole of stability (Kinnvall 2004, 742) for a society strongly destabilized by conflict and also by the image that the inhabitants, the actors in this rhetorical and symbolic battlefield, have of themselves and their society, with particular attention for the different categorizations and social constructions that could emerge (Wimmer 2013).

It is evident from a simple observation of the urban or anthropic landscapes of Bosnia and Herzegovina that landscapes partake in the nationalistic conflict based on opposite identities that dominate the country's political scenario. On the one hand, places in Bosnia and Herzegovina still abound in traces of the recent war and records of the multifarious culture of its inhabitants; on the other hand, several, often forced, insertions of symbols of identity claims can be recognized easily (such as billboards, new monuments, hodonymy or religious buildings) (Mazzucchelli 2010, 85–86). Due to its diachronic nature, the landscape materializes and makes traces of historical events in the territory visible. For this reason, as it happens in other fields (such as historiography), the landscape is manipulated too, often only rhetorically or semantically, but sometimes also physically and materially, to support discourses aimed to unite one part of the society against another (Björkdahl 2018, 41–42), or sometimes even only for the electoral or personal goals of some leaders of the different political formations. Of course, as Monika Palmberger warns, we should not consider the people as passive subjects and mere receptors of these changes and political visions (Palmberger 2012, 24); yet the denunciation of such manipulations still remains a duty for a deeper understanding of the meanings transmitted by places.

In the process of appropriation, cultural heritage played a special role because, being charged with identity meanings, it was the victim of deliberate destruction in the acts of ethnic cleansing during the war (Walasek 2016, 23; Perry 2016, 186; Mazzucchelli 2010, 31–32; Tratnjek 2011; Lewicka 2008, 213). The main aim of such destruction was "to obliterate the material evidence of the expelled communities' deep roots in the locality, effecting a transformation of the cultural landscape from one of ethnic diversity into an apparently historically mono-ethnic domain." (Walasek 2016, 55). The intended result of such actions was to show a landscape fully free from traces of the presence of different religious groups or even of any kind of "living side by side" or "living together" of different communities (Tratnjek 2011; 2012a; 2012b).[6] In this way it was possible not only to show a new "ethnicized" landscape but also to rewrite history, claiming that a particular region always belonged to a certain group, that no other community ever lived there, because there are no (more) traces nor visible evidence of their presence (Mazzucchelli 2010, 34–36).[7] This kind of planned action led some observers of these events to label the devastation or demolition of mosques, churches, bridges, libraries, towers, caravanserais, traditional houses, and other distinctive monuments as "cultural genocide," mainly perpetrated by the Bosnian Serb forces in the areas they controlled during the conflict (Walasek 2016, 52–53).

Today, cultural heritage is at the center of many nationalistic clashes, which are becoming increasingly focused on symbols rather than on specific actions and argumentation among politicians in office (Violante and Vitale 2010, 179).[8] For this reason, Annex 8 to the Dayton Peace Agreement is explicitly devoted to the Commission to Preserve National Monuments. In fact, it is one of the most delicate topics in the post-war period, as the numerous cases of obstruction to or protests against the reconstruction of "contentious" destroyed monuments (generally mosques) show (Walasek 2016, 228).[9] Another one is the return of refugees and displaced people, which is clearly linked to it

6 The concept of komšiluk (similar to "good neighborhood") was crucial in social relations before the war and somehow overcame the differences in religious belonging; it might be interesting to explore if it still remains strong, even after the disruptions that the war caused in the communities (see Appriou 2001, 8).

7 Stephen Schwartz (1999, 41–42) explains that the shelling of the National and University Library and the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo was carried out with the aim of erasing any trace of living together. Bénédicte Tratnjek (2014) uses the term "memoricide" to express this obliteration of (a part of) the memory from the space.

8 For example, Antonio Violante (2015b, 152–154) and James Riding (2015, 382) describe the political controversies and divisions that occurred on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in 2015 and the concurrent commemorations where every part of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society remembers and transmits only its own memory and history, depicting the others' as "false."

9 Antonio Violante (2006) reports the violent protests occurred in May 2001 in Banja Luka on the occasion of the start of the rebuilding work on the Ferhadija Mosque, dynamited during the war by unknown people (225–226). In another article, the same author more widely contextualizes the preservation of multi-confessional monuments in today's Banja Luka (Violante 2015a).

(Perry 2016, 188) because "the destruction of cultural or religious property was intended to discourage the return of the expelled population" (Walasek 2016, 55, 61).

The choice of the "abandoned" places of worship and municipalities

As already suggested, the choice of places of worship is relevant for this analysis because, according to Bernard Debarbieux, mosques and churches are "generic" places, that suit idealized forms, correspond to archetypes, are reference points for the processes of identification (Debarbieux 1995, 22–23; 2010, 28–29), and where people perform ordinary practices that "participate in the organization and social regulation by the space" (Debarbieux 2015, 172–173). For the communities living around them, such archetypes can also be "places of memory," working as material loopholes for individual and – moreover – collective memories (Mazzucchelli 2010, 22); therefore, they inscribe themselves in the symbolic heritage of the groups that makes visible their collective institutions, their practices and their social representations of the space (Veschambre 2008, 185–187). The notions of "trace" and "mark" can be used to describe this process: Vincent Veschambre (2008) defines the former as a simple material and unintentional reminder of the past, while the latter is described as the result of an action "thought and realized to make visible a person, a group, an institution, to build the support of an (individual or more generally collective) identification" (10–11). Both notions can be applied to places of worship in Bosnia and Herzegovina because they can be, sometimes simultaneously and sometimes at different times, both traces and marks, or traces for someone and marks for someone else.

I decided to use the adjective "abandoned" for the places of worship I focus on in this research. It needs a short clarification too: It does not refer to buildings that are necessarily ruined, unkept or deserted; on the contrary, I expected to find the great majority of these buildings standing and perhaps even reconstructed and hosting some leader of the local (potential or existent) religious community. I labeled these places of worship as "abandoned" because they were left behind by their community, by the people who were forced to leave their place. As a result, these sacral buildings remained in the same territory but under the control of a newly dominant group of a different religion. I did not exclude the possibility that some returnees came back and still use these places of worship for their religious practices. Still, if they exist, they are clearly in a position of a minority within a potentially hostile environment.

The already-mentioned presence of displaced communities makes the evaluation of their representation of the legacy of other religious groups particularly interesting. This allows us to understand what testimonial value these places can acquire for local communities or, on the contrary, to what extent they are downgraded to the role of "shadows" of an erased or currently under-removal past. Understanding the meaning of these sites could shed light on the local identity of displaced populations and help in measuring their level of integration in their new territorial context.

As previously described, the local communities living around these places of worship could be made up of three components: residents who have lived there since before the war, who are likely to belong to the currently dominant religious group; the displaced people, who probably belong to the same dominant religious group; and finally some returnees, belonging to the religious group that visits and uses the "abandoned" places of worship and constitutes nowadays a minority in its own territory. Therefore, it is interesting to understand the kinds of bonds of identification with these places established by these three groups in the local community. More specifically, a question must be raised about the emergence of a new identification with the places in such a peculiar context of the "relation with the past of people, of society and of spaces" (Gervais-Lambony 2004, 483). And we need to ask whether such an identification would be different if we dealt with people who have not changed their residence, rather than with individuals who moved recently or who were forced to leave their own territory and have now returned as an unwelcome minority. In the first and last cases we would deal with locals who have experienced the overturning of the communities and who keep a longer memory linked to religious buildings and their territory, while the second is related to people who have lived in these places for a shorter period of time.

On the basis of these theoretical and historical indications, six sites were considered for the case study. I selected six Bosnian and Herzegovinian municipalities[10] that have undergone substantial changes in

10 Generally, the extension of a municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina includes an urban center and an extensive countryside sprinkled with small villages that often have a different community composition than the main center.

the national composition of their population after the war: Brod, Ilijaš, Kupres (FBiH), Stolac, Vareš, and Višegrad. They are comparable in demographic size and represent all the possible patterns of a substitution of community (absolute or relative) majorities among Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. This choice was made to include abandoned places of worship of all the three confessions, Muslim, Orthodox Christian and Catholic Christian, as well as to have an equal number of cases where each national-religious community has become dominant. Additionally, these municipalities are located in areas that reflect the socio-spatial diversity of Bosnia and Herzegovina (fig. 1): from the plains of Posavina (Brod) to the valley of the Bosna river near Sarajevo (Ilijaš), from the Drina valley (Višegrad) to the plateaus of Tropolje (Kupres), from the mountainous areas of central Bosnia (Vareš) to the hilly region around the valley of the Neretva river (Stolac). The following table summarizes their main features.

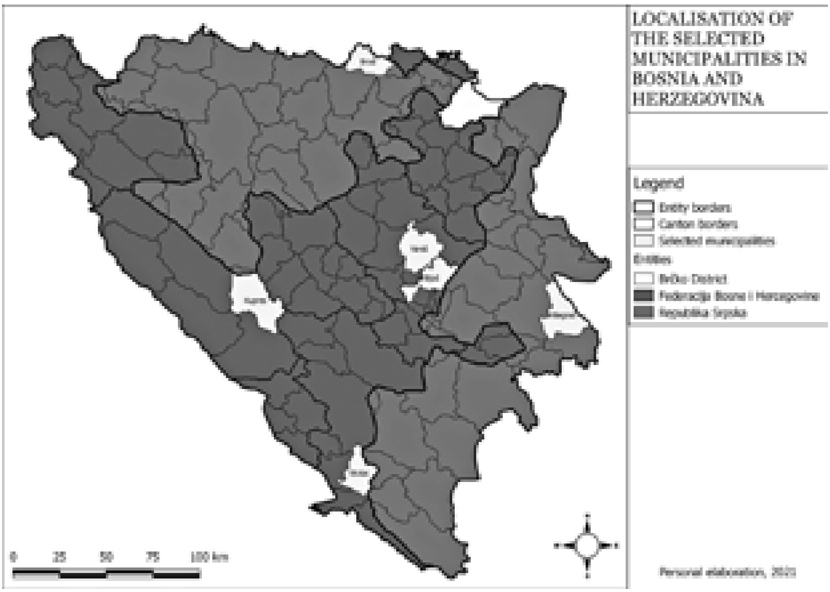

Fig. 1: Localization of the municipalities selected for the case study in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Source: personal elaboration

Table 1: Location and the main demographic characteristics of the municipalities selected for the case study (legend: RS = Republika Srpska, FBiH = Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; B = % of Bosniaks, C = % of Croats, S = % of Serbs).

Name	Area	Population 1991	Population 2013
Ilijaš FBiH	Sarajevo Canton (north to the capital)	25,016 (45.2 S / 41.7 B)	19,603 (92.6 B)
Višegrad RS	Podrinje (eastern Bosnia)	21,199 (63.5 B / 31.8 S)	10,668 (87.5 S)
Vareš FBiH	Zenica-Doboj Canton (central Bosnia)	22,203 (40.6 C / 30.2 B / 16.4 S)	8,892 (61.3 B / 31.7 C)
Stolac FBiH	Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	15,187 (48.7 B / 36.6 C)	14,502 (58.5 C / 38.2 B)
Kupres FBiH	Canton 10 (north-western Herzegovina)	8,836 (46.3 S / 43.1 C)	5,057 (88.5 C)
Brod RS	Posavina (northern Bosnia)	33,744 (41.3 C / 33.0 S)	16,619 (69.1 S / 19.8 C)

Source of the data: Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, n.d. and Statistika.ba, n.d.

Objectives, project description and methodology

The aim of the research is to analyze the representations of these abandoned places of worship among the people who live in the territory around them: What is the symbolic meaning of these buildings? Which value is ascribed to them in official texts and the discourses of their inhabitants? Are these places of memory only traces of the past, or are there new meanings assigned to them? Did they become marks of revendication of the permanence of the community that built them, of the existence of diversity despite the effects of ethnic cleansing, or the assertion of the power of the currently prevailing community?

The first result expected from this research would derive from landscape analysis of the selected sites: it would allow me to understand how the spatial and symbolic role of the places of worship has changed in the last three decades and what forms of decay or renovation they suffered. Starting from the work carried out involving local stakeholders, I want to reconstruct the picture of the representations of these places of worship developed by those who live around them today and the perception that emerges from their narratives.[11] In this regard, it is reasonable to expect a diversifica-

11 On the role of perception in human geography as an interpretive instrument of territorial reality see Scaramellini 2008, 25–30.

tion of the symbolic meaning attributed to the different places, according to the function of the spaces and people's personal experiences. Starting from different experiences and memories relating to these places, it might be possible to propose a picture of the identification relationship that may or may not exist between the inhabitants and these buildings.

More specifically, the extent of conservation or destruction and, if it is the case, of enhancement of all three main confessions' religious buildings would be assessed in the six selected municipalities. The way the abandoned places of worship (or what remains of them) fit into the current landscape and cultural context, resulting from the destruction of war, population change and recent reconstruction, should also be observed through landscape analysis. Particular attention was meant to be devoted to their relationship with the new monuments that mark the presence and identity of current inhabitants that belong to different religions. The question of ownership of buildings and the means necessary for their restoration, or the involvement of international organizations or foreign patrons in their maintenance, should also be considered.

The research was planned to continue with semi-structured interviews with local political actors to distinguish the cases in which patrimonialization or tourist promotion policies have been implemented from those in which, on the contrary, religious buildings are really abandoned due to the indifference of the relevant institutions. A study of the value attributed to these places of worship in official texts or images (speeches given by local authorities, tourist promotion materials,[12] territorial planning actions) was also envisaged. Even members of the clergy of different religious denominations have been considered to provide pertinent information and views to continue the analysis. Local experts or historians were also intended to be interviewed, and members or representatives of relevant associations present and active in the territory. The opinion of all the stakeholders must be examined to reconstruct their origin and relationship with the territory and places of worship and to recognize the presence of any misleading information and to identify on which narrative framework it rests, with particular regard to ethnic or cultural ideologies or nationalist rhetoric.

Moreover, I planned to interview some inhabitants of these territories to analyze their representation of the abandoned places of worship, the value they attribute to them and the perception that emerges from their

12 Eventually, even the comparison between pre-war and post-war tourist promotion materials, including postcards, could be useful; and the images published by official tourist services could be contrasted with personal pictures or paintings that interviewees may keep at home.

narratives. In choosing the inhabitants to be interviewed, also through contacts with the actors already indicated or with other realities known in the field, an attempt was made to build the widest possible picture of the many forms of diversity that may be encountered. The aim was to compare the narratives of and evaluations by people with different experiences concerning the places of worship taken into consideration, starting from how long they have resided in that particular area and how frequently they visit them today. This comparison was also meant to show if there were differences between the official rhetoric and politicized evaluation of these abandoned religious buildings and the individual perceptions of the people who see them every day and who are used to their presence in the habitual landscape around them.

Conclusion

In this chapter a conceptual framework for the research has been sketched out, showing, on the one hand, the importance and problematic role of identity and the divisions based on identity in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian context and, on the other hand, the relevance and the meanings of places of worship for people's identification. I also explained the main choices that defined the following steps of the research. The municipalities chosen as case studies were briefly presented as well as the reason why they were selected. Finally, the twofold methodological framework and the guiding questions of the research were introduced too.

This framework proved to be the crucial scaffold for the subsequent work, even though the fieldwork made me reconsider several issues such as the number of the case studies and the way to involve interviewees. Unfortunately, the restrictions on movement caused by the covid-19 pandemic also obliged me to reduce the planned extensive presence in the sites and affected the meetings with the interviewees. However, I could still collect sufficient data for the analysis of the relation between memory, identification processes and religious landscape and, after the necessary elaboration, the results will be presented in the upcoming thesis.

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Past Forward? Post-National Socialist Dynamics of Remembrance in Nuremberg

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Abstract

Considering the Nuremberg Rallies, the Nuremberg Laws, and the Nuremberg Trials, it becomes clear that the city is a special case for negotiating the history of National Socialism. The current local narrative of a successful confrontation with the past, based on two well-attended institutions at historical sites – the Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds and the Memorium Nuremberg Trials – as well as the late-twentieth-century epithet "City of Peace and Human Rights," has already received considerable academic attention. New dynamics linked to the question of how to deal appropriately with the megalomaniac Nazi ruins on the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds, as well as Nuremberg's unsuccessful application for the title European Capital of Culture under the motto "PAST FORWARD," call for another critical look at the way the city deals with its Nazi legacy.

Keywords

National Socialism; Nazi past, Nazi architecture; Nuremberg; remembrance; memory; heritage

Introduction

The triad of Nuremberg Rallies (1927, 1929, 1933–1938), Nuremberg Laws (1935), and Nuremberg Trials (1945–1949) inextricably links Bavaria's second largest city with National Socialism. The three historical references are a concise example of post-National Socialist dynamics of remembrance: As a widespread mantra, this triad “serves as much to displace as to remind” (Gregor 2003, 630). A closer look reveals the historicity of political processes: Today, the Allied attempt based on legal principles to deal with the German crimes is opposed to the Nazi mass events and the antisemitic and racist laws. For decades, the Nuremberg Palace of Justice was not considered a potential World Heritage Site but an unpleasant symbol of the victor’s justice (Bühl-Gramer 2019, 108–109).

In recent decades, following the global “memory boom” (Huyssen 1995, 5), the way the city handles its Nazi legacy has received considerable academic attention. Among others, historian Neil Gregor (2003; 2005; 2008; 2017) has dealt thoroughly with the *Haunted City* (2008), social anthropologist Sharon Macdonald (2009) has analyzed its *Difficult Heritage*, focusing mainly on the former rally grounds, and cultural historian Doris Katheder (2014) has classified Nuremberg as a paradigm of dealing with National Socialism in Germany (33).

Drawing on this interdisciplinary knowledge, this article[1] analyzes the changes in local remembrance and questions the current dynamics concerning how to handle the architectural remains of the Nazi period. In addition, empirical data gained through semi-structured interviews were used for background information.

A closer look at the postwar decades shows the dominance of self-victimization in the majority of society. From the mid-1960s, this condition was challenged by new dynamics of remembrance and by interventions from the Jewish community, which I understand as doing memory (Thomas and Virchow 2018). After a brief look at the 1990s, when the Nazi past began to be addressed with a focus on human rights, I show that there is no clear-cut distinction between a past based on denial and a self-reflexive presence. This is evidenced by both the reconciliatory treatment of perpetrators and deficits in commemoration of the victims of Nazism. In addressing changes in dealing with the former Nazi Party Rally Grounds in the southeast of Nuremberg, I observe a relocation and spatial fixation of the local Nazi history on this site, which supports a narrowed “memory picture” (Hubner and Dirksmeier 2023, 104, 112) of National Socialism. Further, I trace the dynamics triggered by Nuremberg’s unsuccessful European Capital of Culture (ECOC) bid as

1 The research was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation – Project number 388682090 – and the Flagship Initiative “Transforming Cultural Heritage” at Heidelberg University.

culturalization of the Nazi heritage and consistent continuation of the outlined development.

The dominance of self-victimization in postwar Nuremberg

With reference to Astrid Messerschmidt (2012), I would characterize German society as "post-National Socialist." Influenced by postcolonial theory, Messerschmidt (2018) argues that the prefix *post* marks both the changes, continuity, and presentness of historical experiences (39). To operationalize the impact of power relations on this contradictory negotiation of history, I draw on the narratological concept of basic narrative (*Basiserzählung*), defined as the "construction of the history of a society and culture that contains the dominant legitimating construction of the past"[2] (von Trotha 1993, 6–7). Thomas Herz (1997) describes the basic narrative of the Federal Republic of Germany in the postwar decades as a collection of plots and short stories that, taken together, created a notion of the Nazis, the Second World War, and the reconstruction, in which the Holocaust was omitted or relativized. Instead, the basic narrative offered flexible alternative stories: the sole responsibility of the Nazi leadership, the exaggeration and invention of resistance to Nazism, the creation of myths such as the clean Wehrmacht, the Zero hour, the *Trümmerfrauen* (literally "rubble women"), the *Wirtschaftswunder* ("economic miracle") (251). The result was "collective innocence" (Salzborn 2020). In what follows, I try to comprehend the basic narrative of postwar Nuremberg.

In the severely damaged city, "self-victimization" (Hammerstein 2007, 27) prevailed. People saw themselves as victims of the bombings, as relatives of dead or missing soldiers, as *Heimatvertriebene* (German expellees, literally "homeland expellees"), and even as victims of denazification procedures (Gregor 2005, 329–330). In the early 1950s, a grove of honor was created for fallen German soldiers and bombing victims, while the graves of forced laborers and an urn field of murdered concentration camp prisoners were neglected or dissolved in the mid-1950s. On *Volkstrauertag*, the National Day of Commemoration, martial-looking ceremonies took place in front of the 1930 Hall of Honor on the rally ground, where the SA and SS had staged their cult

2 All quotations were translated from the original German into English by the author.

of the dead hero at the rallies. Originally dedicated to the victims of World War 1, an annex from the early 1950s included victims "of the tyranny 1933 to 1945" (Macdonald 2009, 66). In 1957, the city erected a bell tower in the Southern Cemetery, the most important monument of the postwar decades, for the "victims of the bombardment and the fighting in the homeland in the years 1941–1945." To build it, the city reused the stones of the main synagogue, which had been demolished in 1938 (Schmidt 2020, 55–59). According to Neil Gregor (2005), this was a symbol *par excellence* of the "redefinition of the society of perpetrators into a society of victims while simultaneously repressing the history and experience of the Jewish minority" (330). It is worth mentioning that the synagogue was destroyed in August 1938, even before the November pogroms, in opposition to the resistance of the Jewish Community of Nuremberg (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Nürnberg, IKGN) (Schmidt 2020, 56–57). The site was later built over with residential buildings in accordance with the ground plan drawn up by Heinz Schmeissner and Wilhelm Schlegtendal, who had won the competition for the reconstruction of Nuremberg's old town (1947–1948) (Manka 2019, 41). Until 1970, Heinz Schmeissner, a former member of the NSDAP and structural engineering advisor between 1942 and 1945, served as the head of the city's building department. As reported in the *Nürnberger Zeitung* on April 15, 2010, he also prevented the return of the Neptune Fountain, donated in 1902 by Jewish patron Ludwig von Gerngros, to the *Hauptmarkt*, from where it had been removed in 1934 on Hitler's direct order. Highlighting this political continuity seems appropriate because the efforts of postwar reconstruction were important elements of the postwar basic narratives.

The proximity to self-victimization was particularly evident at the 1949 German Building Exhibition under the motto "We must build!" in the Nazi Congress Hall. A space-filling panorama showed the damage caused by the bombing of Nuremberg on January 2, 1945. In front of it, a glass pyramid, symbolizing the rubble of Nuremberg, was juxtaposed with a smaller vitreous model of the Great Pyramid of Giza (Macdonald 2009, 63). Anti-fascist commemorative events in the Square of the Victims of Fascism, renamed from *Wodanplatz* by order of the U.S. military government in 1946, never mobilized more than a political minority of trade unionists, social democrats and communists (Dietzfelbinger and Liedtke 2004, 106). Gregor (2005) argues, however, that these events had significance for the political culture of the city, which was governed by social democrats until 1996 (331).

In the 1960s, dealing with the history of National Socialism started to change locally and nationally. Trials of Holocaust perpetrators in Germany, such as the Ulm Einsatzkommando trial (1958), the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (from 1963), and most prominently, the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem (1961), were important catalysts in this shift (335). Local examples would be the trials of SS leader Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski, starting in 1961, in which he was convicted of individual political murders, while his involvement in the mass murder of Jews and suppression of the Warsaw Uprising was neglected. The "Nuremberg talks," initiated in 1965 by the head of the Department of Education and Culture, Hermann Glaser, are seen as a central turning point in local memory politics (Gregor 2005, 336; Schmidt 2020, 59). Among others, Fritz Stern, Jean Améry, Fritz Bauer, Max Horkheimer and Raul Hilberg took part in these annual conferences lasting for several days (Bogen 2019, 55). In the exhibition "The Fate of Jewish Citizens in Nuremberg 1850–1945," shown in the accompanying program, the city dealt for the first time with the deportation of the Jews of Nuremberg (Schmidt 2020, 60). The new dynamics of remembrance were initiated and supported by clusters of progressive politicians, liberal citizens and trade union youth groups that were heterogeneous but small in number (Gregor 2005, 336). They met with rejection in the private sphere and in the long-established clubs, as well as in the public space. In 1966, a plaque for the local Wehrmacht regiment was added to a victory column in Nuremberg's old town. Originally dedicated to Nuremberg soldiers who had fallen in the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871), the monument also proudly referred to local participation in colonial violence in China and the genocide of the Herero and Nama (Gregor 2017, 228). A plaque with a vague antimilitarist and antiimperialist statement was added in the late 1990s.

Interventions from the Jewish community as doing memory

The 1965 exhibition on the recent history of the Jews of Nuremberg triggered a debate on the medieval Jewish gravestones used as steps in St. Lorenz Church. In tough negotiations, the IKGN vice-chairman, Arno Hamburger, successfully demanded their restitution. The stones were finally inserted into the wall of the funeral hall at the New Jewish Cemetery in 1970 (Schmidt 2020, 60). A plaque on this peripheral burial ground, attached to a war memorial for the fallen Jewish soldiers of World War I, is still the only commemorative site for the victims of the Holocaust in Nuremberg. The Jewish community remained mainly among themselves at commemorative events (Gregor 2005, 331).

Alexander Schmidt (2020) points out the difference in handling the synagogue stones and the gravestones. At the end of the 1950s, the IKGN representatives had to accept the remnants of the synagogue being "preserved" as a memorial to those who died during the bombing of Nuremberg. A decade later, they confidently negotiated a proper solution for the gravestones (58). In 1958, on the twentieth anniversary of the November pogroms, a realistic fear of antisemitic attacks still prevailed. But from the mid-1960s onwards, the Jewish community actively campaigned for a memorial for the demolished main synagogue (61–62). That the inauguration in 1971 coincided with the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Albrecht Dürer had a positive effect on the city's support. Although Schmidt claims that with this memorial a central site that "exclusively commemorated the persecution of the Jews" had finally been achieved (61), I see the memorial – later enlarged and provided with a plaque for Leo Katzenberger, the IKGN chairman murdered in 1942 – as no more than a reminder of the 1938 destruction of the main synagogue.

The interventions by the Jewish community were important steps in the remembrance of the victims of Nazism, as they challenged the dominant self-victimization in Nuremberg by addressing at least some crimes against Jews, as well as the history of antisemitism. This struggle for recognition of Jewish perspectives can be captured by using the concept of doing memory as a "performative practice of … rewriting and overwriting ideas about the past" (Thomas and Virchow 2018, 61).

Memory lapses in the City of Peace and Human Rights

In the 1980s, protests against the annual commemoration ceremony in November in front of the Hall of Honor led to a kind of demilitarization of the event. In the wake of the peace movement, a decade before the war crimes of the Wehrmacht were publicly discussed, the arguments were indeed mainly antimilitaristic (Macdonald 2009, 92).

Neil Gregor (2005) describes the changing attitude to the city's involvement in National Socialism as follows:

> Whereas for decades the historical associations with the Nazi era had been regarded as an undeserved stain on the honor of a traditionally social-democratic city, … now the city declared itself ready to accept this connection as an integral part of its own identity, in order to be able to derive from it at the same time a contrasting contemporary self-image as a 'City of Human Rights' (339).

The year 1995 combined the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II and of the Nuremberg bombing, which was related to the 60th anniversary of the enactment of antisemitic legislation (Bühl-Gramer 2019, 108; for a critical view, see Gregor 2003, 629–630). This presented both a challenge and an opportunity for the reinvention of Nuremberg. In the same year, the city granted the International Nuremberg Human Rights Award for the first time. Already in 1993, the Way of Human Rights, a large-scale installation also referring to the Nuremberg Laws, had been inaugurated in front of the Germanic National Museum. In 1997, the municipal Human Rights Office was founded, followed by the Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival in 1999 and the proclamation of the epithet "City of Peace and Human Rights" in 2000 (Bühl-Gramer 2019, 109). The year 2010 saw the establishment of the Memorium Nuremberg Trials, a permanent exhibition around the famous Courtroom 600 that opened in the Nuremberg Palace of Justice, followed in 2014 by the International Nuremberg Principles Academy, promoting international criminal law (Schmidt 2020, 65).

The diagnosis of a "learning process" (Gregor 2005, 339) that began in the mid-1960s and became institutionalized with the human rights focus in the 1990s seems apt. Dani Karavan, who lost most of his family in the Holocaust, was the sculptor of the Way of Human Rights. From a situated perspective, and with regard to the city's commitment to human rights, Karavan (2013) said on the twentieth anniversary of the installation of the artwork that he believed he had defeated the antisemitic legislation.

However, in 1997, only four years after Karavan finalized the sculpture, he had threatened to demolish it because, despite vehement protests, the city council made Karl Diehl, a former NSDAP member, armaments industrialist and concentration camp profiteer, an honorary citizen of Nuremberg (Gregor 2003). The controversy took place while the city council was under conservative leadership. Yet the position of the subsequent social democrat mayor hardly reads any better. It is paraphrased in a report of the Nuremberg Chamber of Industry and Commerce (2002) on the 100th anniversary of Diehl's company: "With impressive words Nuremberg's mayor Dr. Ulrich Maly revised the exaggerated criticism with which the company was met a few years ago, also by parts of the [Social Democratic Party] SPD." Reference is made to laudatory statements saying that Diehl compensated forced laborers even before the federal government and other companies started the "Remembrance, Responsibility and Future" foundation in 2000. Praise of the compensation payments decided on by the family-run concern in December 1997 neglects the fact that claims by former forced laborers had been rejected for almost a decade (Siegler 1997). Above all, it ignores the fact that the company only made this move under the influence of articles and television reports like "We were Diehl's slaves," which presented the perspectives of concentration camp survivors (Gregor 2003, 598). Moreover, the mayor of the City of Peace and Human Rights stated that the arms industry would have to be evaluated differently after the September 11 attacks (Nuremberg Chamber of Industry and Commerce 2002). This reference is interesting as it shows the dialectics of memory politics in unified Germany: while new state involvement has enabled the transformation of memorial sites from countercultural projects into the highly professionalized and recognized institutions of today (Siebeck 2015), a company's Nazi past may become secondary to foreign policy considerations.

The Diehl case shows that a clear-cut distinction between difficult postwar decades and a present that has learned lessons from history is too easy to make. The fact that a serious and broad discussion of local perpetrators remains a "memory lapse" (Gregor 2005, 338) is also exemplified by the legally unpunished mass murders committed by the *Polizeikompanie Nürnberg* in Ukraine and Belarus from 1941 onward, which have received little attention to this day (Tobias 2005).

The commemoration of the victims of Nazism also reveals remarkable deficits up to the present day. The installation of a memorial for forced laborers, approved by the city council in 1987, took twenty years. The long process of realization required constant practices of doing memory. Many of the former laborers had already died or could no longer attend the inauguration in 2007 (Rieger and Jochem 2020). Today the memorial is neglected. The same applies to Nazi deportation sites and right-wing terrorist crime scenes. Only an extra-legal plaque commemorates the 1982 racist attack on the Twenty-Five discotheque that killed three people. To mark the three local racist murders by the neo-Nazi network "National Socialist Underground" between 2000 and 2005, the city inaugurated a central memorial in 2013 and neglected the sites of crime for years.

While the postwar basic narrative was based on self-victimization of the majority of society, the illusion of having successfully dealt with the Nazi past forms the core of the contemporary version. Without going into developments that occurred on the former rally grounds at this point, I argue that recognition of the local history of National Socialism has remained selective. The focus on major Nazi events and associated Reich-wide rules marginalized the examination of everyday domination, segregation, exploitation, and deadly violence in Nazi Nuremberg. In this context, Gregor (2003) highlights a local "narrative of Nazism in which propaganda is privileged over participation, in which 'fanatical' Nazi leaders are emphasized over everyday Nazi supporters" (630).

While the above points are clear in their problematic nature, the optimistic vision of a *cosmopolitanization of memory* (Levy and Sznaider 2001; 2002), with which Nuremberg's human rights focus can be interpreted (Macdonald 2009, 129–132), is more ambivalent. On the one hand, municipal or municipally-funded activities enable an inclusive and future-oriented perspective. On a discursive level, the city's self-description is also used as a reference point for criticism, for example when it comes to the rigid municipal politics of deportation in the present-day (Bogen 2019, 53–54). On the other hand, warnings of "displacements of cosmopolitan discourse" (Macdonald 2009, 132) or even a process of "leveling of memory" (Salzborn 2020, 103) need to be taken into consideration. For example, former Mayor Ulrich Maly (2015) regretted that future children "can no longer ask grandpa or great-grandpa at home how it was back then." Since Maly is concerned with individual testimonies from the Nuremberg Rallies, he extends contemporary witnessing to perpetrators and bystanders. This perspective seems to ignore both the dynamics of denial in the perpetrator society and the multiperspectivity of the "post-migrant society" (Foroutan 2015). I would like to emphasize that there are still people who can testify to antisemitic and antiziganist violence, the brutal occupation of their countries of birth by the Wehrmacht, or how they defeated Nazi Germany. Such memories would immanently criticize rather than affirm the dominant Germanocentric narrative in Nuremberg.

From denial to embrace: the rediscovery of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds

The change of the basic narrative is particularly clear on the former rally grounds. When the German Building Exhibition in 1949 was held in the unfinished and undamaged Congress Hall of the architects Ludwig and Franz Ruff, it was simply presented as the "Exhibition Building" (*Ausstellungsrundbau*) (Macdonald 2009, 60). As long as Heinz Schmeissner was head of the building department, the actions of the city were characterized by pragmatism (Dietzfelbinger and Liedtke 2004, 94–105) and attempts "to overcome the Nazi past through the removal of architectural remains" (Schmidt 2020, 63). The construction of parts of the new Langwasser district from 1957 onwards was done so thoroughly that hardly any traces of Nazi prehistory and none from the immediate postwar period remained. After the end of the war, the site was used for prisoner-of-war and refugee camps, as well as for (temporary) housing. In 1967, the pillar gallery of the Zeppelin Grandstand, located in the middle of the former rally grounds, was blown up due to its dilapidation. According to Alexander Schmidt (2017), the image of the city may also have played a role as two years earlier Israeli guests had criticized symbols reminiscent of swastikas (104). In 1973, only six years after the demolition, the Free State of Bavaria issued a new monument protection law, which suddenly ended the city's strategy of demolishing and overbuilding (105). After initial steps in the late 1970s (Bühl-Gramer 2019, 108), intensified engagement with Nazi history became visible on the site: in 1984, the first version of the exhibition "Fascination and Violence" was shown in the Zeppelin Grandstand. In comparison to other major German cities – the Topography of Terror in West Berlin started in 1987, the NS Documentation Center of the City of Cologne in 1988, and the Munich Documentation Center for the History of National Socialism only in 2015 – and given the regressive politics of history under Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Nuremberg was early. In 1987, resistance by local civil society groups and a narrow majority of councilors (39:31) prevented the transformation of the Congress Hall into a shopping center (Macdonald 2009, 93–96). Instead, the Documentation Center Nazi Party Rally Grounds finally opened in its north wing in 2001, integrated according to a confrontative design by Günther Domenig.

The currently planned general overhaul (*Generalinstandsetzung*) of the dilapidated Zeppelin Grandstand and the overgrown Zeppelin Field, which will cost at least 85 million euros, was the subject of intense debate. In summary, a broad political coalition at all federal levels with advocates from the sciences, especially historic preservationists, supported the project, while strong criticism came primarily from historians and heads of memorial sites (e.g. Knigge 2017; Wagner 2020; see Schmidt 2017, 113–114). What is meant by a general overhaul is controversial:

the city states that the goal is to keep the grandstand safe to walk on (*trittfest*), while critics see the measures as too far-reaching – particularly in the context of concentration camp memorials, reconstruction is a taboo (Wagner 2020, 45). Extending the discursive field temporally and spatially, I argue that the increasing interest in the distinctive Nazi ruins is linked to disinterest in other historical sites in the urban space.

When Hermann Glaser, who was responsible for culture and education in 1984, and who was a proponent of *banalization* in dealing with the Nazi ruins (Macdonald 2009, 88), opened the first audio-visual show in the Zeppelin Grandstand in 1984, he announced that remembrance work was now also (!) being done at the former rally grounds (Dietzfelbinger 2013, 23). Today, some parts of the grounds are among the most frequently visited places in Nuremberg, with the Documentation Center, information boards, and guides providing historical information. Without denying the importance of this work, it is necessary to reflect on the underlying change.

Years ago, the sudden enthusiasm for the site had irritated Neil Gregor (2003): "(T)he speed with which the city council has recently embraced the rally grounds … raises questions about the broader, unspoken motives for such a shift" (629). One possible answer can be found in a statement by a British tourist, Diana: "(T)he old town is quite wonderful, but the Nazi history is even more exciting" (quoted in Arnold 2019). This quotation shows, on the one hand, that the National Socialist heritage is interestingly, but not surprisingly, attributed a higher tourist value, and on the other hand, a remarkable dichotomy between the old city and the Nazi legacy. This supports my argument that the rediscovery of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds has led to a relocation and spatial fixation of the Nazi past in this part of the city. Diana's assessment is not an individual misconception but a result of the city's politics of remembrance. While the Nazi rallies took place in different parts of the city, the municipal government decided to limit its information system, consisting of fixed panels, to the former rally grounds in the southeast of Nuremberg. Similar to the information on the former *Reichssportfeld* in Berlin, they were installed in the run-up to the 2006 FIFA World Cup. However, the factual and ideological significance of the old city or the adjacent opera house for the rallies remains unaffected. In general, within the city walls, there are few references to the Nazi period: the largest memorial after the Way of Human Rights is dedicated to the German expellees, and the eventized *Hauptmarkt* is still waiting for historical contextualization. The central square of the old city is a remarkable but invisible palimpsest; as the site of the destroyed medieval Jewish settlement, scene of both anti-fascist and Nazi rallies, Adolf Hitler Square, the original location of the Neptune Fountain, venue of the Nazi book burnings, and stage for the first victory parade of the U. S. army.

The focus on the megalomaniac Nazi remains encourages ignorance of other histories. While Gregor (2017) states in his critique that "the events of the National Socialist era are in a sense quarantined, neutralized, deprived of their political and moral challenge" (237), in my view, only a certain part of National Socialism has been absolutized: namely the rallies from 1933 to 1938, when the Nazi movement had become a state power. The Nazi Party rallies before 1933 shed light on the political conditions of the Weimar Republic. While the local police met the Nazis with goodwill not only during the 1927 and 1929 Nazi Party rallies, but the city council also used the militant clashes between Nazis and anti-fascists of 1929 as justification to ban further Nazi mass events in 1930 and 1931. The analysis of this ambivalent prehistory should be of interest for lessons from the past, and *a fortiori*, the history of violence of the rally grounds after the German invasion of Poland had put an end to the annual occurrences. The use of the site for deportations, as a place of suffering and death of thousands of captured Red Army soldiers and as a hub for the allocation of forced labor, is still a side issue in public discourses (Lessau 2021; Kundrus 2017). The neglect of the former *Märzfeld* train station, from where Jewish citizens were deported, makes this particularly clear.

The European Capital of Culture bid: culturalizing the Nazi heritage

Nuremberg's bid for the title European Capital of Culture 2025 between 2016 and 2020 was described as "a chance to shift up a gear and move towards the future, without losing sight of our past" (City of Nuremberg 2019, 1), which was also expressed in the leitmotif "PAST FORWARD." Without going into the application as a whole, I will focus on how the city's Nazi history was reflected, and on the cultural development of the congress hall that was initiated by the bid process.

The bid books of the two-stage selection process contain accurate references to the mass support of National Socialism before 1933 (City of Nuremberg 2019, 4) and exculpatory statements that the city "became a façade on which to project Nazi ideology" (City of Nuremberg

2020, 22). A focus on big names and an emphasis on propaganda can be observed: Julius Streicher (City of Nuremberg 2019, 23, 30), Leni Riefenstahl (City of Nuremberg 2019, 23; City of Nuremberg 2020, 28–29), and a photograph of "Hitler's podium" (City of Nuremberg 2020, 26) made it into the bid books. Although the "*Jewish Religious Community Nürnberg*" is mentioned as a cooperating partner in the second bid book (City of Nuremberg 2020, 56), the first discussion between IKGN representatives and the bid office did not take place until the application had already failed.[3] The IKGN demand for a meeting place to make local Jewish presence and history more visible, which the Nuremberg city council finally backed with a feasibility study in March 2021, was therefore not thematized in the application. This is irritating both with regard to the communicated claim to develop "THE FUTURE OF REMEMBRANCE" (City of Nuremberg 2020, 24–25) and the EU's expectation of special consideration for minorities ("Decision No 445/2014/EU", 2014).

Existing potentials, such as cooperation with the Flossenbürg memorial site in the neighboring Upper Palatinate region, were questionably outlined. Instead of seeing this as an opportunity to address deficits in the perception of the history of violence on the rally grounds after 1939, the two sites were dichotomized and exaggerated as "real antithetical metaphors, in both the national and international context" (City of Nuremberg 2020, 25).

Ultimately, the ECOC bid was a catalyst for the cultural upcycling of the Congress Hall. The plan formulated during the bidding process to transform parts of the Nazi building into a "New Creative Space" (City of Nuremberg 2020, 22) has not only persisted but was supplemented by the Nuremberg city council's decision to use parts of the inner courtyard[4] as an interim location for the opera.

The speed of municipal action, which already seemed suspicious to Neil Gregor in 2003, must once again be questioned. If back then it was about embracing "the rally grounds as the chief focal point for an ostensibly more open, critical engagement with the legacies of Nazism" (629), this time it is the marriage of arts and culture and the Nazi past, the culturalization of the Nazi heritage.

In September 2021, the association *Geschichte für Alle* ("History for All") that offers most of the guided tours on the site publicly positioned itself in favor of preserving the "empty courtyard" as a place of learning.

3 Interview with a representative of the Jewish community on March 15, 2021, and with a senior member of the bid office on May 25, 2021.

4 Thought of as the interior of the Congress Hall in the Nazi plans.

This suggests that the ECOC expert panel (2020, 16) was right to point out “the limited elaboration of a participatory approach, which did not include all relevant stakeholders in those developments.” Whether the internationally observed decision to transform the Congress Hall into a cultural center can also set corresponding cultural accents remains to be seen. For the opera, which was late in dealing with its prominent role in the Nuremberg rallies (see Reichard, Mungen, and Schmidt 2018) and whose current postal address honors the anti-Semite, Richard Wagner, this decision is obviously not a reward but a challenge. With regard to the creative use of the interior spaces of the Congress Hall, curatorial decisions and artistic contributions will determine whether this will provide insight into “the entanglement of German history with global history” (Attia and Rothberg 2019, 51). Due to the presence of migrant workers in the Congress Hall, which was used as a warehouse between 1972 and 2007 by the historically burdened Quelle Group, these “entangled (hi)stories” (Attia and Rothberg 2019, 52) are part of the building.

Conclusion

In order to understand the changes and voids of remembrance in post-National Socialist Germany, the concept of basic narrative has proven helpful. Applied to the local level in this article, I was able to show the change from victimization and denial to selective recognition of National Socialism in Nuremberg. The interesting question of how the local developments outlined here relate to national and supranational influences, as well as comparison with other cities, has only been touched upon. Borrowed from research on the remembrance of the victims of contemporary right-wing terrorism, the doing memory approach can help to understand fully post-National Socialist dynamics. It seems particularly suitable for making visible the importance of bottom-up initiatives in changing dominant narratives.

Nuremberg is undoubtedly relevant for negotiating the history of National Socialism. But with which memory pictures in mind? The focus on the megalomaniac Nazi remnants narrows remembrance to a specific aspect of the Nazi period, which encourages the neglect of other times, themes and sites. It remains to be seen whether this development will intensify in the next few years with the general overhaul of the Zeppelin Field and Grandstand and the cultural development of the Congress Hall. On the one hand, it is clearly positive that funds are being allocated to foster creativity and knowledge transfer with the aim to deal with the Nazi past. On the other hand, political decisions made with a lack of public participation are obviously not the way to face the challenge of an increasingly visible past in the present. This requires, above all, an explicit awareness that the historical "pile of debris" (Benjamin 1969, 249) does not relate to the Nazi ruins but to the victims of Nazism.

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Kyiv Collective Memory Through the Centuries: Dynamics of the City's Imaginary

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Abstract

Urban space has always been a canvas of memory narratives aiming at the creation of a strong collective identity. As the ancient capital city, Kyiv has been a major stage of stately representations of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine – three states to which the city belonged in the course of the period discussed here. Each of these states dedicated a special role to Kyiv in their memory narratives that were often incompatible. In order to examine the interaction between collective memory and space, I distinguish three operations: memorization of space, spatialization of memory, and resistance of space. I use Kyiv guidebooks as a source for tracing the genealogy of the city's space memorization from the second part of the nineteenth century until 2021. Then, I analyze the impact of discovered semantic memory units – mythologems – on particular Kyiv public spaces: Sophia and Saint Michael's Squares. This gives an outlook on the dynamics of antagonistic memory narratives, as well as their interaction with urban space.

Keywords

Collective memory; memory narrative; guidebooks; Kyiv; Ukraine; urban space

Introduction

Urban space has always been a canvas of memory narratives, personal ones as well as those aiming at the creation of a strong collective identity. Similar to the ancient mnemonics, where the articulation between memories and places was one of the fundamental mnemonic tools, states use lived space as a memory aid for their citizens. As the ancient capital city, Kyiv has been a major stage of stately representations of three states to which the city belonged during the historical period that frames this study: the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine. Each of them dedicated a special role to Kyiv in their memory narratives that were often incompatible. Thus, Kyiv's space has always been contested. In this chapter, I analyze the dynamics of the city's imaginary and its impact on urban space from the second part of the nineteenth century until 2021.

In research dealing with collective memory construction, it is necessary to reveal the operations invested in the production and maintenance of the collective imaginary through time and space, as well as to see how this imaginary reinforces a particular collective identity. As Halbwachs (1925) observed, a memory is always concrete: ideas must acquire a tangible form before being stored in memory. Concepts and images are inextricably linked so that in order to be inscribed in a group's memory, any "truth" is presented in a solid form of an event, personality, or place. Reciprocally, for an event to continue to live in the group's memory, it must be enriched with the meaning of an important truth, thus, entering the domain of collective memory, a personality or an event is immediately transformed into a homily, a concept or a symbol that becomes a composing element of the ideological system of a given society. This combination of the event, personality, or place and ideas attached to them constitute what Assmann (1995) calls "figures of memory" – fixed points whose "memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance)" (129). Figures of memory comprise three characteristics: their relation to a specific time and space, their relation to a specific group, and their reproduction by a specific mode of action. In this text I refer to the figures of memory in question as mythologems.

The interaction between memory and space is one of the fundamental processes to consider since most memory figures are rooted in the lived space that constitutes the framework of memory. Lived space is an identity support that creates an impression of permanence and stability. Halbwachs (1950) considers the tendency to localize memories universal for all types of communities. Each group seeks to create and secure places that are symbols of their identity and strongholds of remembrance. As far as the interaction between collective memory and space is concerned, I distinguish three operations linking them: memorization of space (articulation of places and semantic elements linked to memory narratives), spatialization of memory (inscription of the official version of the past into inhabited space), and resistance of space (space as an archive of traces omitted in the official historical narrative). In this chapter, I examine these operations with respect to Sophia and St. Michael's Squares in Kyiv from the end of the nineteenth century until 2021.

In the process of memorization of space, lived space is inscribed into a memory narrative by attributing symbolic significance to certain objects and ignoring other ones. I consider Kyiv guidebooks to be fruitful sources for analysis of the city's representations in state-sanctioned memory narratives. Guidebooks are a specific genre that neither aims at scientific objectivity nor is pure fiction. Since guidebooks are a popular genre of quite a conservative nature with the ambition to represent the city, they provide a unique perspective for the analysis of widespread ideas and stereotypes about it. Guidebooks propose what to see in the city and how to see it. By doing so, they direct the city's imaginary. They give an insight into the way the city is constructed in the minds of both visitors and people who are living in it. The representations of the city in guidebooks are at the same time a reflection and a contributing factor to the construction of the city's imaginary, including its collective memory. Thus, guidebooks can be seen as an instrument in social negotiations of city identity (Michalski 2004).

As Barthes (1975) points out, guidebooks contribute to the construction of a mythology detached from real experience: Rather than functioning as an indexical aid, guidebooks operate by conditioning the tourist (133–137). By focusing the reader's attention on a selected number of features, it directly influences the perceived landscape of the traveler (Duncan 1992). Guidebooks can hide or reveal objects in the city by recording, describing, advising, and, thus, imposing certain interpretations. In the framework of Fiske's (2001) concept of vertical intertextuality in tourist activity, three main texts can be distinguished: the landscape itself, guidebooks (or, nowadays, websites as well), and travelogues (visitor books, reviews, personal blogs, etc.). In the landscape as the primary text, material objects ordered in a certain way constitute semiotically a first level of signification or denotation in Barthes' terms. Guidebooks select, put into circulation, and tie with certain meanings selected objects from the primary text, thus creating the secondary text. In this second level of signification, new meanings are attached to landscape objects, creating a level of connotation. Travelers' texts comprise the tertiary text, being yet another level of meaning circulations. Since I focus on the interaction of dominant memory narratives and space in this study, I deal with primary and secondary texts.

The primary text of the chosen public space consists of two squares – Sophia and St. Michael's – connected by Volodymyrskyi passage. This is the most ancient part of Kyiv or the so-called "Yaroslav's city," a fortified part of ancient Kyiv built during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise. This space contains four key objects: the Saint Sophia Cathedral (founded in 1011 or 1037) with the eighteenth-century bell tower facing the square, the Saint Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery (constructed in 1108, destroyed in 1934–1937, and rebuilt in 1999) the monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky (constructed in 1888), and the monument to Princess Olga (erected in 1911, torn down in 1919, and reconstructed in 1996). While comparing pictures of the beginning of the twentieth century and contemporary ones, it might seem that the space did not change, however, this is an illusion: Two of the objects in contemporary photographs are, in fact, reconstructions of the originals present in ancient pictures. These paradoxical transformations resulted from the successive spatializations of memory (and, to a lesser extent, resistance of space) that corresponded to conflicting memory narratives.

The secondary text, or the connotation level in my analysis, are the texts of the guidebooks. Tourism is a highly codified activity in which numerous actors participate. If we consider the guidebooks' composition, they present a selection of objects proposed for visiting. The actors that performed the selection (usually the authors), thus attributing value to some objects while ignoring others, are embedded in an ideological framework: Guidebooks' content is conditioned by the physical and social environment of the city, as well as by the political context of their production. This embeddedness (at least to a large extent) determines their choice (conscious or not) of sites that start to function as signs after having been enriched with additional meaning.

If we apply Barthes' scheme of myth analysis to the symbolic construction of sites as tourist attractions, material objects (landscape elements) are on the denotative level, while their presentation in guidebooks forms the connotative level (second level of signification). Hence, the signifier denotes a landscape object, while the signified comprises ideas attached to landscape elements, creating a sign that functions as a figure of memory in the framework of a particular memory narrative.

So, the popular genre of guidebook serves as a (self)presentation where the city is proposed to readers as a mnemonic map: objects selected by guidebooks' authors are organized in semantic sequences that reveal mythologems structuring cultural memory of the city (or about the city). These semantic cores determine the selection of objects to be visited, the rhetoric of their descriptions, as well as estimates of different architectural styles that constitute the urban tissue. As Roland Barthes (1957) showed, in signifying systems, signs evolve on the level of significance in the endless interplay of signifier and signified. Therefore, the diachronic analysis of Kyiv guidebooks reveals the dynamics of the city's memorization that led to the spatialization of particular mnemonic semantic units. For my study, I used discourse analysis of Kyiv guidebooks that were published in the states to which Kyiv belonged over the last 150 years – in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and Ukraine. Taking into account that in two of these states publications had to undergo censorship, the guidebooks give an insight not just into the cultural embeddedness of their authors, but also represent state memory narratives in a more straightforward way. Therefore, I trace transformations and successions between conflicting memory narratives about Kyiv and their impact on Sophia and Saint Michael's Squares while presenting the result of my analysis in four semantic units – four mythologems of/about Kyiv.

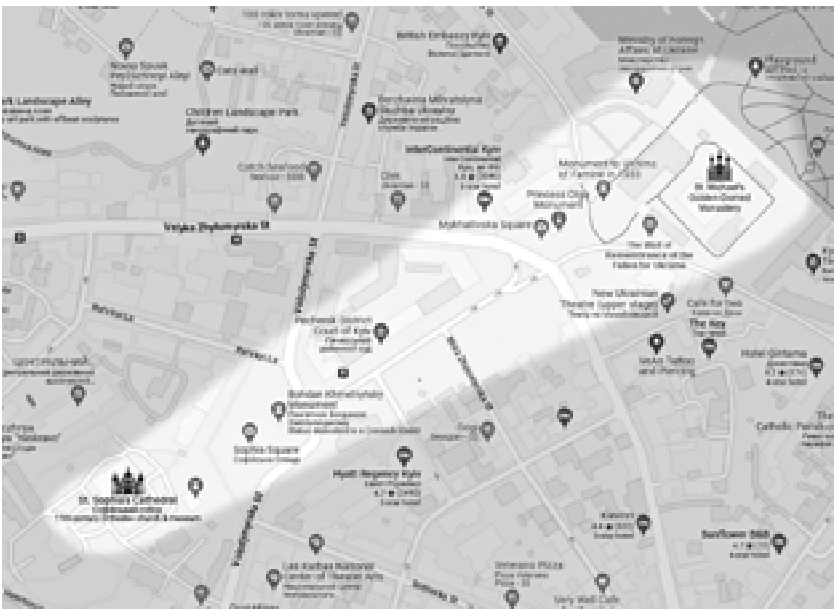

Fig. 1: Map of Sophia and Saint Michael's squares.

Second Jerusalem – Jerusalem of the Russian Lands

Despite the ups and downs of its turbulent history, Kyiv has never lost its status as a religious center. Since 988, when Prince Volodymyr the Great baptized the Kyivan Rus', Kyiv has been enriched with monasteries, cathedrals, and churches containing relics considered to be sacred by Orthodox believers. Starting from the fifteenth century, the city became one of the first and most important pilgrimage destinations on the territory of the former Kyivan Rus'. In addition, Kyiv was featured as an essential point on the pilgrimage route to the Holy Land (Dysa 2015, 24).

The pilgrimage rituals flourished in Kyiv at the end of the seventeenth century when Kyiv came under the rule of the Russian crown, and starting from the eighteenth century, Kyiv's sacred sites became the main destination in the imperial family's visits to the city. According to some travelers, the annual number of believers visiting the city's sacred places doubled the number of its inhabitants. Thus, pilgrims became the first public targeted by editors of guidebooks starting from the 1840s. These publications "intend to familiarize a pilgrim with all the churches and monasteries in Kyiv and its suburbs, as well as anything that these monasteries and churches contain deserving special attention" (Maksymovych 1854, III).

Guidebooks for pilgrims do not seek to attract readers with exclusive information and novelties. Quite the contrary, as one of the guides put it, "this description does not contain new unknown stories, but the same stories known for a long time from different books" (Ukazatel' sviatyni 1853, I). As a genre close to religious literature, guidebooks for pilgrims tend to follow a canon developed over centuries. They deal with clerical history and memory of the glorious past filled with great deeds and exploits of the saints. The customary route used to begin with Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra and its caves and continued with the Upper Town (Saint Sophia cathedral, the Saint Michael's monastery), Saint Andrew's church, and Podil.

In guides for pilgrims, the history of Kyiv traditionally begins with a legend about the Andrew the Apostle's prediction. The authors recreate the account from the *Chronicle of Nestor*, about Saint Andrew coming with his disciples to preach in the lands north of the Black Sea. Looking at the Kyivan hills, the Saint proclaimed, "On these hills, the grace of God will shine, and there will be a great city where many churches will be erected" (Maksymovych 1849, I) and installed a cross baptizing the land of the future city. This legend was used in order to underline that these lands knew Christianity eight centuries before the baptism of the Kyivan Rus'.

Moreover, since the Middle Ages, the prediction of the Andrew the Apostle was seen as the grace of God granted to the people of Rus'. This was perceived as a sign of being "elected by God" with reference to the city of Kyiv, as well as to the state that it represents. Some guidebooks stress that the city is not just "second," but "our" Jerusalem, where "our" means Russian. As an anonymous author put it, only the Orthodox "are able to understand and appreciate what Kyiv is for the Russian people, and here, in our own Jerusalem, they find an echo of the one that is far away and not always accessible to them in a foreign country"[1] (Kiev i ego sviatyni 1871).

Fig. 2: Saint Sophia Cathedral, beginning of 20th century.

1 All quotations are translated from the original by the author.

So, Kyiv is presented as both a local variant of Jerusalem and a phenomenon peculiar to Russia. However, a symbolic link between Kyiv and Jerusalem was established long before the period discussed here, already in theological literature and popular culture of the Kyivan Rus'. In the medieval imagination, based on the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the Church, Jerusalem was seen as the sacred center of the world, a city chosen by God where God himself carried out a saving mission for the whole world. According to medieval theology, through symbolic resemblance to the prototype, an image becomes the bearer of the same properties as the prototype. It contains within itself the presence of the primary source. Hence, the metaphor of Kyiv as "the second Jerusalem," which first appeared in the eleventh century, corresponded to the attempts to introduce the newly baptized Kyivan Rus' into the Christian world and sacred history. Later, in the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, the metaphor of Kyiv as the second Jerusalem flourished again in the era known as "Ukrainian Baroque." This mythologem was used by the Orthodox intellectuals as a way to oppose Kyiv to Rome and thus counter Catholic influences and then newly created the Ruthenian Uniate Church. Thus, at the time, when guidebooks for Kyiv's pilgrims appeared, the representation of Kyiv as a holy city had been widespread for centuries. Moreover, since Jerusalem was at the origin of the pilgrimage ritual, this was an additional opportunity for pilgrim guidebooks' authors to emphasize the parallel between the two cities.

As the public visiting Kyiv became more diverse and guidebooks for the general public appeared in the 1880s, these so-called "practical guides" for tourists inherited the tradition of presenting Kyiv as the local Jerusalem: "Kyiv is the center of people's pilgrimage, the promised land, the most important, after Jerusalem, 'holy places.' To see them is every ordinary person's cherished dream" (Shamurina 1912, 6).

However, a significant semantic change can be observed in touristic guides. As a general rule, authors of pilgrim guides are not interested in political history, focusing on the history of saints, monasteries, churches, and their relics instead. While the connection of Kyiv's history to the church remains important in the guidebooks for the general public, the majority of them tie it to the political importance of the Russian state. Thus, Kyiv as "the second Jerusalem" is replaced by the formula of "Jerusalem of the Russian Lands." This phrase is attributed to Alexander II, and it appears in numerous guidebooks as a quote from his 1856 rescript to the Metropolitan of Kyiv. However, it is likely that he used an expression that was already commonplace. Yet, the choice is strategic since this metaphor underlines the sacred unity of "Russian Lands." As theorized by Nikolai Karamzin, the idea of merging Orthodoxy and autocracy (*samoderzhavie*) as state ideology flourished during the reign of Nikolai I. "... appanage Russia is united in two Great Principalities, linked by an indissoluble chain: by faith and nationality (*narodnost'*) which we received from Kyiv" (Sementovskij, 1852, 23), states in his earlier publication the author of the guide most rewarded by the Imperial family. "*Narodnost'*" is a category introduced by Sergej Uvarov in 1831 that became one of the key elements of the Russian imperial identity. It represents an alliance of the people with the tsar, whose authority was established by God in order to protect the Orthodox people from moral destruction. In this framework, religion and nationality define each other: Orthodoxy is a precondition for Russian *narodnost'*, and the only true Orthodoxy is the Russian one. Hence the need to emphasize that Kyiv is not only the "second Jerusalem" but "Jerusalem of the Russian Lands."

In this mythologem, the key event of Kyiv's history was the christening of the Kyivan Rus' by Prince Volodymyr the Great in 988 and the era of the Kyiv principality as such: "Kyiv, which served as the cradle of our state life, became at the same time the cradle of the Orthodox faith of Christ in our country – and should be honored as the "Jerusalem of the Russian Lands," in the words of Emperor Alexander Nikolaevich. That is why Kyiv is so dear to every Russian" (Zakharchenko 1888). This was written by Mykhailo Zakharchenko in the guidebook published on the occasion of the nine hundredth anniversary of the baptism of Rus'. As a formative moment in the ideology of the Russian Empire, the baptism anniversary was commemorated in the past each year on July 15 with a religious procession, and, in 1888, the celebrations were large-scale with high-ranking visitors coming to Kyiv.

Naturally, in the framework of this mythologem, Saint Sophia Cathedral and Saint Michael's Monastery were among the first places to visit: both were the rare relics of the Kyivan Rus' era, and the former had a status of episcopate center and the residency of the Kyiv metropolitan. However, for the same reasons, these buildings were crucial for Ukrainian cultural memory. For example, in the only guidebook that was published during the revolutionary period of 1917–1921 and thus escaped censorship, we read: "From 1051 to 1786, there [in St. Sophia] was a cathedral monastery as a part of the cathedral run by the metropolitan of the autocephalous Kyiv church that used to have its own ritual, theology and special organization based on the elective principle. All

Fig. 3: St. Michael's Monastery, beginning of 20th century.

Orthodox dioceses and monasteries of Ukraine, Lithuania, and Poland were subordinated to the metropolitan of Kyiv, who was awarded the title of "Metropolitan of All Rus'." In order to mark this, Kyiv prelates wore two panagias" (Shyrotskyi 1917).

For Shyrotskyi, as a spokesman for Ukrainians' collective memory, it was important to draw a distinction from the Russian church. In the Ukrainian memory narrative, the role of the Orthodox church, with its center in Kyiv, was no less important than in the ideology of the Russian Empire, but for a different reason. As Shyrotskyi (1917) put it, "all national [Ukrainian] life was concentrated around the church" (147). This statement refers to the fact that, starting from the times of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Ukrainians were deprived of the possibility to have their own political institutions, thus the local population would gather around the church as a counter-force in the assimilation processes.

The conflict between the "second Jerusalem" and "Jerusalem of Russian Lands" ceased to be relevant after the Soviets came to power. During the 1920s, politics of "militant atheism" and anti-religious propaganda reversed the mythologem of Kyiv as Jerusalem. The guidebooks of this

Fig. 4: Soviet destruction of religious buildings, 1937.

period still advise visitors to visit Kyiv's historic churches and monasteries, but this time because "the struggle against religion is a struggle for the development of the cultural revolution. The guidebooks stress the need to study the history of religion, "its class essence and the methods of struggle of the clergy" (*Putivnyk po Kyievu* 1930, 81). Thus, tourists are invited to visit St. Sophia Cathedral, Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, St. Michael's monastery, and other sites and feel not rich heritage, as suggested by the guidebooks of the previous period, but their difference from the "stupefied population of the nooks of the former Russian Empire that used to gather in Kyiv to 'kiss the holy imperishable relics of the saints'" (*Putivnyk po Kyievu* 1930, 1).

In the 1930s, the anti-religious campaign shifted from the politics of the memorization of space by transforming religious buildings into museums of atheism, to spatialization of memory when physical testimonies to the former role of Kyiv as a religious center were supposed to be physically removed. A propaganda campaign for the destruction of ancient monasteries was launched in the press using the arguments from the anti-religious campaign of the time: "St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery, as well as the Cathedral of St. Sophia and the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra were among the largest and oldest centers of feudal exploitation and clerical prejudice [...] In addition, the monks and priests regarded the Saint-Michel monastery as a rich source of profit and as a means to stupefy the consciousness of the masses" (Movchanivskyi 1937).

Press publications of this kind prepared public opinion for the destruction of the St. Michael's monastery and the nearby Church of Three Saints (or Vasylivs'ka church, twelfth century) in preparation for the construction of a new socialist government center instead. The Institute of the History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR concluded that St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral had no historical value. Leading art critics Fedir Ernst, Mykola Makarenko and Stepan Taranushenko, who voiced an opposite opinion, were arrested. In 1934–1936, the bell tower, the majority of the wall, and some other buildings of the monastery were destroyed. Specialists from the Leningrad Academy of Art dismantled mosaics and frescoes of the cathedral that later resurfaced in several museums in Russia. On August 14, 1937, Saint Michael's Cathedral was blown up with approximately 2,500 ammonal charges. More than 20,000 tons of debris were taken to the landfill (Ivakin 2007). Plans for St. Sophia Cathedral's demolition were not put in motion. However, in total, in Kyiv, no less than sixty-nine religious buildings were demolished in 1934–1937 (Kukharenko 2001).

Fig. 5: St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral reconstructed, 2021, photograph taken by the author.

When the ideological framework changed once again after Ukraine's independence, it shifted to a certain extent back to the mythologem of the second Jerusalem. Not unlike the Ukrainophile's views at the beginning of the twentieth century, the historical Metropolitanate of Kyiv of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is seen as a means of national revival with an emphasis on its difference from the Moscow Patriarchate that annexed the Metropolitanate in the seventeenth century. St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral was rebuilt and opened in 1999 as a part of the monastery of Kyiv Patriarchate (beginning in 2018, the Orthodox Church of Ukraine). St. Sophia Cathedral has been a national preserve since 1934 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1990. In the early 1990s, the cathedral was planned to be returned to the Orthodox Church. Since there were three Orthodox churches as well as a Greek-Catholic church that laid claim to it, the transfer was postponed. While all the Orthodox churches have been occasionally allowed to conduct services there on different dates, in 1995 riot police dispersed the crowd that was trying to conduct a funeral of Patriarch Volodymyr of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kyiv Patriarchate on St. Sophia's territory. Since then, no religious entity has been granted permission for regular services. However, Saint Sophia Cathedral was used several times for symbolic liturgies uniting several Ukrainian churches, including the Unification Council of 2018, which established the statute and elected the head of the United Orthodox Church of Ukraine.

Mother of Russian cities

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, travelers began to combine pilgrimage with archaeological or historical purposes of visits. Interest in Kyiv was promoted by the popularization of the history of the Russian Empire after the first eight volumes of the *History of the Russian State* by Nikolai Karamzin went on sale in 1818. He builds a genealogy of the Russian Empire from Kyiv and its princes.

One of the guidebook's authors, Zinaida Shamurina (1912) describes the rediscovery of Kyiv by the Russians in the following way: "In the 1810s, when national consciousness, as well as interest in our past, awakened in Russian society, the memory of Kyiv as the oldest Russian city and the cradle of Russian culture resurfaced. For the first time, Kyiv was considered not as a military fortress or a large trading city: society was interested in it because of the abundance of ancient monuments that are preserved there, its rich history, full of majestic episodes."

So, residents of two capitals of the Russian Empire visited "Little Russia" as a part of trips resembling English grand tours of the early eighteenth century (Tolochko 2012, 47–135). In addition to the status of a religious center that Kyiv had for centuries, its secular rediscovery entrusted Kyiv with a civil mission that was now emphasized in the memory narrative of the Russian Empire. One of the guidebooks sums up this role in the following way: "In a word, it was in Kyiv that our faith, our state organization and our Russian nationality arose, meaning the current glory of Russia was born and matured" (Sementovskij 1900, 23). This summary recalls the famous formula of the "official nationality" theory: "Orthodoxy, autocracy (*samoderzhavie*), nationality (*narodnost'*)" by Minister of Public Education, Sergei Uvarov. His triad is equally reflected in quotes commonly used in Kyiv guidebooks. The first one is a statement of Prince Oleg cited in the *Primary Chronicle* stating with reference to Kyiv that "Here there will be the mother of the Russian (sic) cities." The second one is an extract from the decree of Nicholas I to the Senate, 1833, saying that "Kyiv is the cradle of the holy faith of our ancestors, and at the same time, the first witness of their civil identity." The third is the expression, "Kyiv is Jerusalem of Russian Lands" discussed previously. The correspondence of the quotes chosen for the official state ideology summarized in Uvarov's triad is far from random. Nikolai Sementovskij's (1900) guidebook, which has the highest concentration of these ideological messages, obtained several precious awards from the Russian royal family and got seven editions. It quotes directly Russian historian Mikhail Pogodin, ideologist of Pan-Slavism: "Indeed, all the ancient Russian Lands originated from this mother. From here, as from the center, its circumference was demarcated, and the Slavic tribes scattered throughout northeastern Europe forming the united Russian state. How can we tell – perhaps in modern times, Kyiv is destined to become the center of an even wider circle!"

So it is clear that in order to justify political conservatism under Karamzin's idea that "the ancient people do not need new laws" and justify territorial expansion by demonstrating "Russian" past of Western provinces, it was essential to build a genealogy of the Russian Empire from the Kyivan Rus' and its capital Kyiv as the "cradle of our Russian glory" (Sementovskij 1900, 53). Otherwise, Russian ideologists would have been left only with a short period of the Vladimir-Suzdal principality's rise, followed by Mongol rule.

While the Kyivan Rus' period of history was appropriated by the imperial discourse, other national communities living in the city of Kyiv had their own heroes corresponding to their political views and memory narratives. In 1909, a local Ukrainian initiative obtained permission to construct a monument to Taras Shevchenko on St. Michael's Square. Government officials were strongly against having a statue of the poet who called for Ukrainian independence in the heart of the "mother of Russian cities." Thus, in 1910, a counter-initiative was launched by the Kyiv branch of the Russian Imperial Military Historical Society. They proposed to erect instead a series of monuments called "Historical Path" that was supposed to represent Kyiv's history from prehistoric times. According to this project, a line of statues would connect St. Michael's and Sophia Squares: Starting with monuments to the Kyivan Rus' princes from the Rurikid dynasty, it would be followed by the Moscow tsars and St. Petersburg emperors of the Romanov dynasty, thus incarnating a lineage and spatializing the Russian imperial memory narrative. The Kyiv council (duma) concluded that this would be the only appropriate place for the memorial and that the first monument in the sequence would be devoted to Princess Olga. The city mayor Dyakov jokingly said that the "gentleman" (Shevchenko) should give way to the "lady" (Olga). Members of the commission for the creation of the monument to Shevchenko saw this as a plan to create obstacles to their initiative. Despite the debates taking place in the press, the monument to Princess Olga, flanked by the figures of apostle Andrew the First-Called and Saint Cyril and Methodius,[2] was hastily produced in concrete and officially opened in 1911. An inscription on it stated, "She will be the first to enter the Kingdom of Heaven from Rus' because the sons of Rus' praise her as a patriarch," referring to the fact that Olga was converted to Christianity long before it became the official religion of Kyivan Rus'.

However, the narrative about Kyiv as the "mother of Russian cities" had one systematic flaw: until the middle of the seventeenth century, the city was not a part of the Russian state. That is why the Pereiaslav Council of 1654, where Cossacks under the leadership of Bohdan Khmelnytsky submitted the Cossack polity to the authority of the Muscovite tsar, was considered a key event in the Russian imperial narrative. One of the guidebooks presents it in the following way: "This was the last act in the historical destiny of the "mother of Russian cities", cut off from its family for more than four centuries. Kyiv's ordeals ended, and a period

2 Sculptors, Ivan Kavaleridze, Petro Snytkin; architect, Valeriyan Rykov.

Fig. 6: Monument to princess Olga, Apostle the Andrew the First-Called and Saint Cyril and Methodius, beginning of the 20th century.

of slow but constant development and growth of the city started … which put it on the same level with the best cities in Russia and even Europe" (Bublik 1890).

So, a monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky that "finally surrendered to the protection of Russia" (Bublik 1890, 11) would spatialize the imperial narrative of the "reunification of Rus'." The commission for the construction of the monument stated that the idea of a monument to Khmelnytsky first appeared in Kyiv academic circles in the 1840s–1950s but was forgotten until it resurfaced in debates between the Kyiv Archeographic Commission and the Polish community in the 1860s (Pamiatnik 1888, 145–147). So, the initiative was most likely launched in the wake of the Polish uprising of 1863–1864. The newly created commission for the construction of the monument was presided by the head of the Kyiv Archeographic Commission, Mikhail Yuzefovich, known for his extreme Russian nationalist views and opposition to Ukrainophilism. This was the time when in order to suppress the rise of modern nationalism among the Eastern Slavs, imperial authorities were promoting the tripartite

Fig. 7: Project of the monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky by Mikhail Mikeshin, engraving by V. Shpak, 1870s.

model of Russian nationality, presenting Russian people as a "unity in diversity" consisting of three tribes: Great Russian, Little Russian (Ukrainian), and White Russian (Belarusian). This model referred to the middle of the seventeenth century when, having attached Cossack Ukraine and conquering eastern Belarus, the Muscovite tsar added the names of Great, Little, and White Rus' to his title (Plokhy 2017, 163). By representing this key event, a monument to Khmelnytsky was supposed to spatialize the Russian imperial memory narrative.

Some of the guidebooks describe the initial project of the monument by Russian artist Mikhail Mikeshin, who regularly worked for the Romanov family. It presented the hetman on a horse stepping on the corpses of a Jesuit, a Polish landlord, and a Jew. Below there were figures of kobzar, "velikoros", "beloros", "maloros", and "červonoros." Two inscriptions read, "Poland will die, Russia will rein" and "One undivided Russia to Bohdan Khmelnytsky." "But later all figures and symbols were removed by the Highest order, as being offensive to the national feeling of a significant part of the local population" (Bublik 1890, 121), writes the author of the 1819 guidebook. In fact, it was Alexander II who personally approved Mikeshin's xenophobic project in 1869, and thus, despite the criticism, it could not have been changed. However, public fundraising efforts were limited, and in 1878, the Russian Emperor changed his mind. Finally, when the monument was officially opened in 1888 as a part of the celebration of the nine hundredth anniversary of the baptism of the Kyivan Rus', it contained only Hetman's figure and the inscriptions "We want to be under the rule of the Orthodox king of the East," and "From the united, indivisible Russia to Bohdan Khmelnytsk", "1654–1888".

Cradle of fraternal peoples' friendship

After the revolution, Bolsheviks proclaimed the rupture with the past, trying to establish a historicity of a new type. At first, they followed a famous postulate of the Communist Party Manifesto declaring that "workers have no homeland" (Marx and Engels 1848). Throughout the first post-revolutionary decade, Soviet ideologues abolished the historical narratives and commemorative practices of the Russian Empire by rejecting national history as such. Instead, the Bolsheviks constructed their genealogy within the framework of the succession of revolutionary movements of all times and all countries starting from the uprising of Spartacus (Yekelchyk 2004). This approach reflects the Marxist view

Fig. 8: Monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky, beginning of the 20th century.

Fig. 9: Temporary plaster bust of Shevchenko installed on the former princess Olga's pedestal.

of history: Instead of the traditional nineteenth-century narrative of nation-state development, Marxists see history as a chronicle of class struggle which leads to the change of socio-economic formations.

After having failed to gain a foothold in Kyiv (which was still the capital of the Ukrainian People's Republic) in 1919, the Bolsheviks proclaimed the creation of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic in Kharkiv, which remained its capital for the next fifteen years. During this period, the city was actively developed to represent the "proletarian capital of Ukraine" properly. While architectural projects designed for Kharkiv reflected early-Soviet ideas about an ideal socialist city, Kyiv's transformations remained minor until the 1930s.

As it usually happens during or after revolutions, the first changes in urban spaces began with the monuments. On May 7, 1919, the USSR Council of People's Committee in Kyiv adopted a decree *On the demolition of monuments erected to tsars and tsarist servants from squares and streets*. The same spring, the sculpture of Princess Olga was toppled. In preparation for Shevchenko's anniversary celebrations on March 11, a temporary plaster bust of Shevchenko was installed on the pedestal of the former sculpture of Olga, while the side sculptures of Andrew the First-Called and Cyril and Methodius were covered with plywood. Thus, the initial confrontation for this public space between the public initiative that had called for a monument to Shevchenko and the government response that

Fig. 10: Demolition of the Princess Olga monument in 1920.

had launched the "Historic Path" instead was reversed after the fall of the Russian monarchy. The side sculptures were removed in 1920, and the pedestal was dismantled in 1934.

The case of the monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky was more complicated since he has always been a controversial historical personality. At the initial stage of its existence, the USSR condemned imperialist and colonialist practices of the Russian Empire. In the framework of class history, Khmelnytsky was a "traitor and ardent enemy of the Ukrainian

Fig. 11: Caption: Obelisk to the Perekop heroes erected by the Soviets near the monument to Khmelnytsky, 1920s.

peasantry," as the Great Soviet Encyclopedia of 1935 puts it. As to the Treaty of Pereiaslav, it "marked the union of Ukrainian and Russian feudal lords and, in essence, legalized the beginning of Russian colonial rule over Ukraine" (*Bol'shaia Sovetskaia entsiklopediia* 1935, 816, 818). While discussions about its demolition were ongoing, local authorities tried to distract attention from the monument by boarding it up during public celebrations. In addition, the square was renamed the Square of the Red Heroes of Perekop and an obelisk to the Perekop heroes[3] was erected. The monument was kept, while the inscriptions on it were removed in 1919 ("From the united, indivisible Russia to Bohdan Khmelnytsky" and "1654–1888") and the rest in 1925 ("We want to be under the rule of the Orthodox king of the East"). They were replaced with a plaque on the front side saying "Bohdan Khmelnytsky. 1888." As to guidebooks of that period, statements like the following were widespread: "Due to the official and Russification nature of the monument, the general public did not sympathize with its construction" (Ernst 1930, 334).

The Stalinist era marked the transition from a futuristic regime of historicity (Hartog 2003) and its radical rupture with the past to a return to a traditional continuity narrative. Timasheff (1946) marks 1934 as the beginning of this "great retreat" to conservative values. That was also the year when the Communist Party of the USSR adopted a decision to transfer the capital back to the historical capital of Ukraine – Kyiv. Now, the task was to "turn Kyiv into a model socialist city", and the first architectural challenge was to construct a government center that "should become a living example of those huge creative achievements that characterize our unceasing growth in all branches of socialist construction" (Yurchenko 1934, 14). The choice of the republic's leaders was made to place the government center in the heart of the "city of Yaroslav." As mentioned earlier, this led to the destruction of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery.

During 1934–1936, four rounds of competition for the project of the Kyiv administrative center took place. In the final tour, a project of Leningrad-based architect Joseph Langbard was selected. He proposed to erect two symmetrical neo-classic buildings for the Central Committee of the Communist Party (in the place of the Church of Three Saints) and for the Council of People's Commissars (in the place of St. Michael's Monastery). Between them, the project contained a hundred-meter-high Lenin statue that would have crowned a wide staircase facing the Dnipro River (which was supposed to be built instead of the funicular dating from

3 Dedicated to the siege of Perekop in autumn 1920.

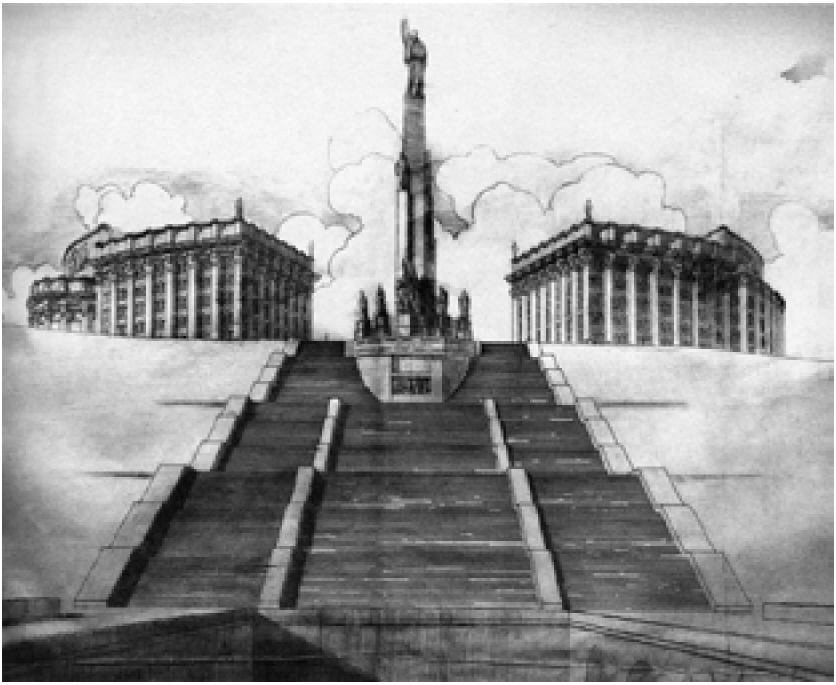

Fig. 12: Project of the governmental center that was supposed to be built in place of St. Michael monastery.

the beginning of the twentieth century). Further, towards the St. Sophia Cathedral, a large square for military demonstrations and manifestations was projected and planned to be decorated with a huge star in red granite that could be seen from the sky (Molokin 1935, 11). The project was unfinished and only the building of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) was constructed. Saint Sophia Cathedral was preserved, and in 1934, by the resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, it was transformed into a cultural preserve.

In preparation for the war and seeking patriotic mobilization, Soviet ideologists were progressively rehabilitating the Russian imperial narrative. While the Soviet state memory narrative returned to the notions of statehood and nationhood, local Ukrainian intelligentsia was balancing between class and national history. Thus, the interpretation of the Pereiaslav Treaty changed from absolutely evil in the 1920s to a "lesser evil" in the 1930s ("lesser" in comparison to being oppressed by "foreign occupants" – the Poles). After the Moscow signal about the rehabilitation of Khmelnytsky, the hetman started to be presented as a great military leader, patriot, and liberator, especially in the World War II propaganda that emphasized his role in uniting Ukraine with Russia. In October 1943, when Moscow announced the creation of the Order of Bohdan Khmelnytsky (the only Soviet military order named after a non-Russian figure), the Russian, as well as the Soviet Ukrainian press accompanied the news with articles reintroducing the concept of "reunification" combined with the idea of "friendship of fraternal peoples" (Yekelchyk 2004, 35–38). In 1954, Khrushchev initiated a sumptuous celebration of the 300th anniversary of the Pereiaslav Council in 1654. On this occasion, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union issued the *Theses on the Three-Hundredth Anniversary of the Reunion of Ukraine with Russia* that canonized the only possible interpretation of the Pereiaslav Treaty as the crowning moment of the "people's struggle for the reunion of Ukraine with Russia" and fulfilment of the "age-long hope and aspiration of the Ukrainian people" (Basarab 1982, 257).

Consequently, all post-1954 Soviet tourist guides begin with a cliché of Kyiv as the "cradle of three fraternal peoples," the city that "carried through the ages a glorious history, inextricably linked with the history of our Motherland" (Myshko 1954, 5–6). According to Soviet guidebooks, the history of "friendship of peoples" dates back to the prehistoric times when Kyiv was the "administrative center of Polyany" that maintained close ties with other Slavic tribes. Thus, in the 1950s, the mythologem of Kyiv as the "mother of Russian cities" marked its return, now with an emphasis on the integral function of Kyiv: Kyiv princes strengthened and united all the Slavic principalities in a single state. Even the adoption of Christianity is now viewed as a justified step because it contributed to the centralization and the power of the state (Kholodkov 1988, 51–55). However, Soviet guidebooks emphasize that Kyiv's achievements would not have been possible without the other East Slavic peoples, especially without the wise rule of the "older" Russian brother. With the addition of this leitmotif, the mythologem of "the mother of Russian cities" was transformed into the "cradle of fraternal peoples' friendship".

The full rehabilitation of Khmelnytsky and reinterpretation of the Pereiaslav Council occurred at the same time as the Kremlin's 1943 decision to replace *The Internationale* as the Soviet anthem with a new one that opens with the verse, "An unbreakable union of free republics, The Great Rus' has sealed for forever." The reappearance of the Kyivan Rus' marked the full return of the Russian imperial narrative with its claims

Fig. 13: Central Committee of the Communist Party building constructed in place of the Church of Three Saints.

for all the territory that once comprised the mediaeval Kyiv state. Thus, Soviet ideologists revived the pre-revolutionary notion of "reunification of Rus'," as well as the model of a tripartite nation, only replacing the "reunification" of subnations of one all-Russian nation with the "reunification of fraternal peoples."

While Soviet guidebooks present the friendship between "fraternal peoples" as eternal and existing since prehistoric times, the diachronic core of the Soviet memory narrative is based around the motive of struggle in two dimensions: "long struggle against invaders for the reunification of fraternal peoples in a single state" and "irreconcilable struggle against social oppression" (Myshko 1954, 14). If the latter follows the Marxist idea of class struggle, the former builds a classical heroic narrative. It is worth mentioning the similarity of these formulas used in Kyiv guidebooks and the 1944 Khrushchev speech that, in turn, duplicated the 1943 war propaganda article by the court historian, Mykola Petrovsky.[4] Indeed, World War II, presented as the Great Patriotic War, was

4 "The history of the Ukrainian people is a history of the long and fierce struggle against various foreign invaders, against social and national oppression, for the reunification within the united Ukrainian state, and for the establishment of an unbreakable union with the fraternal Russian

the cornerstone of Soviet memory politics, combining all existing mythologems in one event. It embodied a struggle against foreign invaders for existence within one state, the victory that asserted superiority over the capitalist way of life and strengthened the “friendship and brotherhood of the peoples of the USSR.” The same logic has been transposed throughout history. Starting with the Tatar-Mongol invasion, Soviet guides draw a sequence of struggles against the invaders for reunification in one state. Thus, in 1240, “only at the cost of heavy losses Tatar-Mongol hordes managed to take over the city” (Myshko 1954, 14). (The wording is similar to Soviet propaganda justifications for the 1941 defeats.) After the invasion and disintegration of the Kyiv state, “centuries of struggle against foreign invaders” (Emchenko 1990, 12) began. At this time, Kyiv was under the rule of states that sought to “break the fraternal ties [of Ukrainians] with the Russian people” (Myshko 1962, 13–14). Despite that, “three fraternal peoples carried through the ages a sense of unity, a sense of common historical destiny and a desire for reunification” (Myshko 1962, 15).

The idea of “reunification” became an especially important tool in the memory politics of the Soviet Union during and immediately after the Second World War as a justification for Soviet territorial acquisitions presented as the culmination of “the reunification of peoples.” Already in 1943, Khrushchev proposed to Stalin a celebration of the 290th anniversary of the Pereiaslav Council as a means to counter “furious anti-historical propaganda against the union of the Russian and Ukrainian people that the German fascists and Ukrainian-German nationalists have conducted in Ukraine” (Yekelchyk 2004, 38). Every post-war Soviet guidebook underlines that the Soviet annexation of Western Ukraine in 1939, Northern Bukovyna and Izmail in 1940, and Transcarpathia in 1945 was the “completion of the historical process of reunification of the Ukrainian people” (*Korotkyi putivnyk* 1959, 5). This was supposed to overshadow the Unification Act signed in 1919 by the Ukrainian People’s Republic and the West Ukrainian People’s Republic on Sophia Square. Instead, Soviet guidebooks stress that it was in the Sophia Square that Kyivans took an oath to the Moscow tsar. Thus, the monument to Khmelnytsky was supposed to remind viewers once again of reunification with Russia as the “realization of the eternal aspirations of the Ukrainian people” (Myshko 1962, 16).

people.” Radianska Ukraina, 31 October 1943, 3; Petrovsky, Mykola. 1943. Nezlamnyi dukh velykoho ukrainskoho narodu. Kharkiv.

Kernel of Ukrainian statehood

Most of the guidebooks I have discussed so far represent Kyiv's place in the official memory narrative of the Russian Empire succeeded by the USSR. Up until 1991, it is difficult to get an insight into alternative versions of Kyiv's space memorization through the guidebooks, since publications in both of the mentioned states had to pass the censorship. However, *Kyiv. Guidebook* by Shyrotskyi is an exception. Kostiantyn Shyrotskyi was an art historian who held positions in the Ministry of Education of the Ukrainian People's Republic in 1917. That is when *Kyiv. Guidebook* appeared. Hence, even though this is the only pre-Soviet guidebook using Ukrainian memory discourse, we might assume that it was expressing views that were common in Ukrainophile circles but were not reaching the wider readership due to Russian censorship.

Unlike other guidebooks of his time that inscribe Kyiv's history into the genealogy of the "Russian world", Shyrotskyi's publication introduces it into a wider cultural context. In a discussion of Kyiv architecture and monumental art, he draws parallels with Western art and sometimes emphasizes differences with Russian tradition. Shyrotskyi does not insist on purely Byzantine sources of Kyivan Rus' culture, which was a common point of the other guidebooks of his time. Instead, the author draws parallels between St. Sophia of Kyiv and Ravenna, Cyprus, Palmyra, Phocis, Daphne, Chios, and Sicily. Shyrotskyi (1917) also often highlights the uniqueness of local tradition: "… the architecture of Kyivan Sophia has many features of Byzantine and Romanesque styles … however, there are no full analogues to the Kyiv cathedral either in Byzantium or in the West. It is an independent monument of world art that develops to a large extent the features of the earlier monuments of Kyiv … and Chernihiv" (35).

Shyrotskyi correlates periods of Kyiv's prosperity or decline with the condition of Ukrainian autonomous statehood. Thus, he gives positive evaluations of the periods of the Kyivan Rus', the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Cossack era. On the contrary, according to Shyrotskyi (1917), after the incorporation into the Moscow state, "the new government immediately began to restrict Kyiv self-government and began repressions" (6). In Shyrotskyi's opinion, Cossack times were the era of Kyiv's prosperity when the city had Magdeburg Rights, "the abolition of the Magdeburg Rights in Kyiv [by Nicholas I in 1834] was caused by the general aspiration of centralization and destruction of Ukraine's autonomy" (178).

Fig. 14: Reconstruction of the monument to Princess Olga, 2021, photograph taken by the author.

Instead, the Cossack era was the time of artisan brotherhoods ("bratstvo"), through which "Ukrainian people could defend their nationality" (139). During this period, Ukrainian culture flourished: art, education, theater, and music developed their national forms. As to architecture, according to Shyrotskyi (1917), the baroque incarnated the spirit of this time: "The idea of strength was combined with the idea of beauty – the baroque style was most suitable for this imposing and rich life, it became the property of the people, it became the expression of people's culture". It is worth mentioning that the authors of the majority of pre-revolutionary guidebooks leave negative assessments of Kyiv baroque architecture, finding it "foreign" and unsuitable for the ancient capital of Kyivan Rus'.

Therefore, in Shyrotskyi's guide, references to the past "prosperity periods" fulfil a counter-present function that is usually activated as a response to a current disadvantageous position, in contrast to which certain periods of the past acquire features of a heroic era. According to Assmann (2004), such memory usage mainly takes place in transitional periods since counter-present mythology has the potential to become revolutionary, especially in the context of foreign domination. Thus, instead of legitimizing the present situation, narratives about ancient times raise doubts and call for change (84–85). This was the general atmosphere of 1917–1918 when revolutionary events were taking place in Kyiv. Shyrotskyi often emphasizes the gap between "once" and "now" (which refers to the period of Russian dominance since the text of the guidebook was prepared before the revolution), always to the disadvantage of the latter. For example, he opposes the old Kyiv Academy of the Cossack era to the "miserable existence" of the current clerical academy that was established in its place as a part of Catherine II's policy of revoking Ukrainian autonomy. In Shyrotskyi's (2017) opinion, "300–200 years ago, broad masses were incomparably more cultivated than the current Ukrainian population, browbeaten and ignorant as the result of Russification" (147). Shyrotskyi dedicates a large part of his guidebook to the Kyivan Rus' period, but his attention is shifted from political to art history. For example, fifty pages of the guidebook are dedicated to St. Sophia Cathedral, but monarchs are hardly mentioned. Shyrotskyi's (2017) assessment of the "Historical Path" is also negative: "... apart from the lack of talent, it was conceived, of course, without any historical considerations ...; the monument, moreover, is made of concrete – a material that does not suit sculpture ... The forced theatricality of this group apparently will be communicated to the entire 'historical path'!"

Instead of honoring the monarchy, on several occasions he emphasizes that Ukraine has a long tradition of collective governing: "In ancient times, in the courtyard of St. Sophia a people's veche [popular assembly] gathered – people sat down along the galleries and on the balconies of the cathedral taking decisions, electing metropolitans and princes who lived here in the courtyard of the cathedral; later this very organizational form was kept by noisy Cossack "radas".

Thus, in the situation when Kyiv Rus' period of history was appropriated by the colonizer's memory narrative, the alternative Ukrainian narrative is built on stressing the differences: while Russian collective memory built its strain on autocracy, the Ukrainian one emphasized democratic elements. Thus, the same space was memorized within two incompatible frameworks.

After having disappeared during the Soviet period, the semantic unit of Kyiv as a kernel of Ukrainian statehood reappears in guidebooks after the proclamation of Ukraine's independence in 1991. As the processes of decanonization began in memoryscapes, guidebooks ceased to be a direct reflection of the official memory version promoted by the state. However different Kyiv guidebooks might be now, starting from the 1990s, the city's history is mostly structured by a teleology of "state-building aspirations of the freedom-loving people of Ukraine" (Kalnytskyi 2001, 14).

The nation's continuity in time is associated with language, national institutions, "national character," religion, territory, heritage, and origin. Thus, the major events of the past are re-signified according to their role in the nation's construction. The course of history, starting from the time of Kyivan Rus' decline until the collapse of the USSR, is presented as a series of defeats on the way to Ukraine's independence. Kyiv is called a "phoenix-city" that managed to resurrect after each foreign conquest. Similarly to Shyrotskyi's guidebook, events, personalities, and places are chosen to be worth remembering according to their "great importance for raising the national consciousness of the population" since they "ultimately contributed to the liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people." Therefore, negative assessments are given to the Catholicization policy of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Pereyaslav Council when the city fell under Russian rule, and Russian dominance when "imperial authorities tried to turn Kyiv into an outpost of Russification of the South-Western region." Despite that, "Kyiv remained a recognized educational and spiritual center, where the original culture of the Ukrainian Baroque flourished." Like Shyrotskyi, contemporary Ukrainian guidebooks for Kyiv define baroque as a national style: "... baroque, which best corresponded to the mentality of the Ukrainian nation, its worldview and perspective" (Kurus 2010, 111).

However, there are some differences too. If, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Kyivan Rus' period of history was appropriated by the Russian imperial memory narrative and references to the initial period of Kyiv's history could not be used in the counter-narrative to the colonizer's discourse, this is not the case anymore. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, Ukrainian history was conceived as a Cossack one. Having nothing in common with the history of the Kyivan Rus', it was not in conflict with the imperial narrative. However, in the course of the nineteenth century, the Kyivan Rus' period was gradually integrated into the Ukrainian national narrative that was in the process of construction. For instance, in the anonymous *History of the Rus'* (*Istoriya Rusov),* which began to circulate in manuscripts in Ukraine after the publication of Karamzin's *History,* Little Russians rather than the Great Russians are stated as heirs of the Kyivan legacy. The first academic claim for the Kyivan Rus' heritage was made by Mykhailo Maksymovych in his 1850s debates with Mikhail Pogodin. But it was Mykhailo Hrushevsky who deconstructed the Russian historical paradigm. Unlike the previous debates that focused on the question of which of the Russian nationalities had a better claim to Kyiv, thus attempting to secure a place within the imperial narrative, Hrushevsky put forward this question with regard not to nationalities but to separate nations (Plokhy 2005, 134–155). On the edge of the twentieth century, Hrushevsky created a scheme of Ukrainian history where its continuity is based on the anthropological and linguistic evolution of the nation (considered as people) from the Slavic colonization of Eastern Europe in the fourth century. Hrushevsky's integration of the Kyivan Rus' into the Ukrainian national narrative marked the turning point in the separation of Ukrainian history from Russian and to a large extent is still the basis of Ukrainian history's scheme.

Given that now the Kyivan Rus' is an integral part of the conventional Ukrainian memory narrative, the former monument to Princess Olga is no longer seen as controversial. The history of its initial construction having been long forgotten, discussions about its reconstruction began in the 1990s because, as one of the popularizers of this initiative said, "it corresponds to the relevant idea of statehood" (Andriievych 1994). The Kyiv government adopted the decision about the reconstruction of the monument in 1995, and on the May 25, 1996, a replica in marble of the original Kavaleridze statues was inaugurated in the square of St. Michael.

Another common point with the 1917 guidebook is the desire to inscribe the history of the city into the history of Europe. If Shyrotskyi

Fig. 15: St. Sophia square, 2021, photograph taken by the author.

accomplishes this by driving parallels between Kyiv and European architecture and art, in contemporary guidebooks this is done in a less subtle manner targeting political more than art history. For example, one of the guidebooks proposes to its readers a chronological table where the "Kyiv Chronicle" is synchronized with the "World Chronicle" (however, the latter is represented mainly by events in Western Europe). According to this table, the baptism of the Kyivan Rus' took place at the same time as the baptism of Norway; Kyiv received the Magdeburg right simultaneously with the inauguration of the Florentine Republic; Bohdan Khmelnytsky's solemn entry into Kyiv coincided with the beginning of the Fronde in France, and so forth (Kurus 2010, 24–37). This distancing from the "Russian world" is amplified by the omission of the Soviet period which is represented only by several objects of the Second World War. Seventy years of Soviet rule are presented as a deviation from the "major path of human development." The symbolic denial of the Soviet past is incarnated in the program of reconstruction of historical buildings destroyed during the Soviet era initiated by the Ukrainian president in 1995. The newly rebuilt St. Michael's Golden-Domed Cathedral, which was officially opened in 1999, was a part of this. The same year, the complex of the monastery was included in the State Register of National Cultural Heritage despite being a reconstruction and not the original building. It is also presented as a site worth visiting by every contemporary guide to Kyiv. In addition, St. Michael monastery and the square made their way into the commemoration of more recent events. To start with, in 1993, a memorial sign to the victims of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 was opened near the wall of the monastery. It was the first monument in Ukraine commemorating the artificial famine. Every autumn, on a selected day people used to gather and cover the square with lit candles in memory of the victims until, in 2008, official ceremonies started to be held near the newly opened Memorial to the victims of the Holodomor. Then, St. Michael's Monastery played its role in the Revolution of Dignity. On the night of December 11, 2013, the priests of St. Michael's Cathedral used warning bells at three o'clock in the morning, thereby calling on the people of Kyiv to help and support the protesters against the riot police's attempt to disperse Maidan. Later, the monastery became a medical hub where wounded protesters could stay and get help, and where those who had been killed were brought. St. Michael Cathedral became a traditional place for memorial services for the Heavenly Hundred (participants killed during Euromaidan) and then for the dead soldiers. In 2015, the wall of the monastery along

Fig. 16: Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine, 2019, photograph taken by the author.

Fig. 17: Memorial to the victims of the Holodomor, 2021, photograph taken by the author.

Trokhsviatytelska Street was converted into the Wall of Remembrance of the Fallen for Ukraine featuring thousands of pictures of the soldiers who perished in the Russo-Ukrainian war.

As to the other objects of the public space discussed in this article, the Bohdan Khmelnytsky monument is still in its place. In fact, before being appropriated by the Russian imperial discourse in the second half of the nineteenth century, Khmelnytsky's figure had a long history of being perceived as a hero in the nascent Ukrainian memory narrative. Since the works of panegyrists in the middle of the seventeenth century, he became a personification of the rights and freedoms of the Hetmanate and the Cossack stratum, which were guaranteed in the Pereiaslav Articles, and which were gradually taken away by the Russian Empire. At the turn of the twentieth century, Hrushevsky decisively detached the Khmelnytsky Uprising from the history of Russia and inscribed it as a key event of the Ukrainian national narrative. Despite being critical of Khmelnytsky at the beginning of his career as a historian, Hrushevsky later portrayed him as a predecessor of the struggle for Ukrainian statehood, not unlike the one that was ongoing at the beginning of the twentieth century. He emphasized that at the time of the Pereiaslav Council Ukraine was de facto independent and regarded its relations with Muscovy as those of vassalage. It is worth mentioning that Hrushevsky's 1909 brochure, *On the Cossack Father Bohdan Khmelnytsky* written for the mass public starts with a picturesque description of the Khmelnytsky monument in Kyiv, thus appropriating the symbol that used to spatialize Russian imperial memory narrative (Plokhy 2005, 281–345).

In this memory narrative, the Khmelnytsky monument spatializes not the Pereiaslav Treaty, but rather the triumphant entrance of Bohdan Khmelnytsky to Kyiv on January 2, 1649 after three victorious battles, in which the Cossack army completely defeated the army of the Commonwealth. Among the hundreds of Kyivans who greeted the hetman, there was Jerusalem Patriarch Paisius, Kyiv Metropolitan Sylvester Kosiv, and professors and students of the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium. The symbolic importance of Sophia Square for the Ukrainian state memory narrative was emphasized during the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917–1921 when all the most important state and political events took place on Sophia Square. Firstly, it was the Ukrainian manifestation on April 19, 1917; second, the proclamation of the First Universal of the Central Rada on June 10, 1917; next, the declaration of the Fourth Universal that proclaimed the state independence of the Ukrainian People's Republic on January 22, 1918. Then, the period of the Ukrainian State of Pavlo Skoropadsky began on

Fig. 18: Unification Act of Ukrainian People's Republic and the West Ukrainian People's Republic, January 22, 1919.

April 29, 1918, with his anointing as hetman in St. Sophia Cathedral and a solemn prayer in the square near the monument to Khmelnytsky. Next, on December 19, 1918, the Directory of the Ukrainian People's Republic was solemnly welcomed on the square. Finally, a month later, on January 22, 1919, the Unification Act of the Ukrainian People's Republic and the West Ukrainian People's Republic.

With the establishment of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the Soviet narrative about the reunification of Ukraine with Russia was rejected, and most Ukrainian historians adopted numerous features of Hrushevsky's outlook on the Khmelnytsky Uprising. In the dominant memory narrative, the latter is referred to as the "national liberation war" and Khmelnytsky is most credited for the implementation of the Ukrainian state-building project (creation of the Ukrainian Cossack state) and for his role in the Ukrainian nation-building (Plokhy 2001). Contemporary guidebooks, as well as Shyrotskyi's 1917 guide, while presenting the monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky on the Sophia Square, often describe its first controversial project but seem to be oblivious of the imperial memory narrative that the current monument used to spatialize. Instead, since 1999

January 22 (the day of the 1919 Unification Act) has been commemorated as the Day of Unity of Ukraine. Thus, the place where the memory of the "reunification" with the Russian Empire had been spatialized became a site of celebrations of Ukraine's independence and unity.

Conclusion

Having studied spatial interaction with the past in Kyiv in regard to memorization of space and spatialization of memory with a focus on Sophia and Saint Michael's Squares, I traced several semantic operations. Firstly, diachronic discourse analysis of Kyiv guidebooks shows that Kyiv space was (or is) memorized according to four semantic codes – four mythologems: Jerusalem of Russian land/second Jerusalem, mother of Russian cities, cradle of fraternal people's friendship, and kernel of Ukrainian statehood. These mythologems were produced in the framework of an antagonistic mode of remembering (Erll 2009; 2011; Leersen 2001) that relies on a canonical version of the past supported by monuments and heritage. These memory narratives date back to the historical phase of nation-state building, characterized by the dualistic evaluation of historical events and personalities and are based on glorifying or nostalgic narratives. Secondly, the antagonistic dynamics experience transformation over time. Initially, mythologems produced by different states to which Kyiv belonged during the analyzed period conflicted with each other. However, in time, the Soviet Union embraced key elements of the collective memory narrative of the Russian Empire, while Ukraine resignified some of the latter while detaching them from the imperial narrative and incorporating them into the national one.

Thus, after the initial period of denial, the USSR revived the mother of Russian cities' mythologem, reconfiguring it into the cradle of fraternal people's friendship. Meanwhile, Ukraine continues the memory narrative nascent in Ukrainophile circles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century with its view of Kyiv as the second Jerusalem and kernel of Ukrainian statehood, combining it with genealogy from the Kyivan Rus' that was previously appropriated by the Russian Empire's memory discourse. These operations of resignification made it possible for some constructions to survive in different ideological regimes and for others to be reconstructed after states changed. Therefore, Sophia and St. Michael's Squares looking seemingly unchanged since the beginning of the twentieth century create an illusion of continuity while masking turbulent transformations that this space underwent during this time due to the memory politics of successive states. Physical changes, as well as the lack of them, are the result of paradoxical semantic transformations. The monument to Princess Olga, which had been erected in opposition to Ukrainophiles' initiative and spatialized the mythologem of the "mother of Russian cities," was reconstructed in 1996, but now as a part of the genealogy of the Ukrainian state. The monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky that was constructed in order to mark "reunification" with Russia, now is memorized within the framework of the Ukrainian struggle for independence. After its demolition by the Soviets, St. Michael's Golden-Domed monastery was rebuilt in 1999, patching the city's historic urban tissue in an attempt to erase traces of the Soviet period that is now regarded as a rupture in the course of history. With Saint Sophia Cathedral having escaped demolition in the Soviet period, it became the first Ukrainian object to be listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. It continues to function as a historic preserve, only occasionally being used for religious events of symbolic significance. Thus, this chapter shows how, despite the radical differences in state ideologies, official memory narratives of the states in question not only reinterpreted the past but also inherited semantic units from their predecessors combining them into a new narrative. Therefore, conflicting memory narratives can not only inherit semantic units from each other but also preserve objects, which were used to spatialize antagonistic mythologems, by resignifying them. Thus, being the capital city of the colony, Kyiv was deprived of autonomy in decisions about the spatialization of memory in its urban tissue during a large part of the period discussed here. However, when spatialization concerned mythical events that already had a tradition of collective remembrance opposite to the imperial one, this resource could be summoned in order to re-memorize the initially antagonistic object according to a different framework of memory.

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The Current Appearance of What is Chinese in London's Chinatown: A Multimodal Semiotic Analysis of Chinese Shopfronts

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Abstract

Consuming activities ascribe shopfronts as interfaces between street life and business. Shopfronts in urban areas like Chinatown serve as physical manifestations of cultural memory. These shopfronts employ abundant semiotic resources, which evolve over time, reflecting the changing dynamics of the community, migration patterns, economic conditions, and societal values. This research examines semiotic modes on shopfronts in London's Chinatown, focusing on linguistic and visual elements of Chinese shopfronts and the meaning making of these semiotic resources in the area. I conducted a multimodal semiotic analysis on photos of nighty-eight shops, which allows the assembly of a general lexicon. This lexicon addresses the research question: What are the key semiotic modes on these shopfronts and how can these semiotic modes construct the current image of Chinatown in London? I argue that while a multilayered temporality is embedded in these semiotic resources, strong cultural signifiers still scaffold the framework of a current Chinese image and simultaneously function as a cultural barrier. When randomly juxtaposed, these semiotic modes have lost their precious cultural and historical roots and together form a mutual Orientalism within the realm of speculative commercialization. This chapter also confirms the significance of an assembly of ethnic storefronts in a neighborhood, serving as a dynamic repository and narrative of changing symbols, actively contributing to the cultural memory of a community. It provides a dynamic portrayal of how a community has been represented and how that same community actively shapes its image to meet the understanding of both its residents and the broader urban population.

Keywords

London; Chinatown; shopfronts; semiology; multimodal semiotic analysis

Introduction

The etymological root of "China" as nomenclature derives from historical international trade and travel. European understanding of Chinese culture remains significantly shaped by the consumption of exotic goods in daily activities, such as dining and shopping. Chinese shops, therefore, serve as pivotal gateways for Europeans to encounter Chinese culture. Shopfronts found in urban areas, including Chinatowns, fulfill dual roles, serving not only business purposes but also as tangible embodiments of cultural memory. These shopfronts evolve over time, mirroring shifts in community dynamics, migration patterns, economic conditions, and societal values. Walking through the streets of a Chinatown flanked by these shopfronts offers an immersive experience akin to a journey through a living archive of cultural symbolism.

Within Chinatowns, shopfronts engage in a dynamic interplay between elements that represent the past and those that reflect contemporary influences. These shopfronts, with their temporal layers of memory, symbolize a nuanced negotiation of heritage, illustrating how communities navigate the delicate balance between preserving their cultural identity and adapting to the ever-changing urban landscape. In this setting, examining the components of a group of shopfronts sheds light on the shaping force of the cultural narrative of such areas and provides valuable insights into the multifaceted dimensions of cultural memory in urban environments.

The chapter of Chinese shopfronts in Europe has attracted attention in the field of social linguistics, specifically within the framework of Linguistic Landscape (LL) research, which primarily investigates languages and signs displayed in public spaces (Shohamy 2015; Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, and Barni 2010). The linguistic landscape itself can be seen as a multilingual and multimodal repertoire that serves the fundamental function of attracting potential customers (Gorter and Cenoz 2015). Notably, LL research has extensively scrutinized shop signages in Chinese within delimited spatial boundaries, such as Chinatowns, shedding light on how languages on shopfronts serve as indicators for chaptering social stratification within a community. Languages displayed in public spaces reflect a complex interplay of language policies, the social status of various communities, evaluations of one's language and community, and the intended audience and information orientation set by sign makers (Backhaus 2007; Malinowski 2018). This focus on language highlights that urban space is not merely a horizontally distributed passive formation but a vertically stratified structure (Landry and Bourhis 1997; Backhaus 2005). Chinese writings on these shopfronts are not only symbols of cultural diversity but also potent challenges to the notion of monolingualism and national integrity (Dang 2020). They offer intriguing insights into power dynamics among different social groups, including Chinese immigrants and the mainstream group, Chinese immigrants and other minority groups, and various Chinese groups with differing social statuses and origins (Blommaert 2013, 44–46).

Furthermore, existing studies of shop signs and other cultural symbols on shopfronts within public spaces underscores their visible layering and segmentation. In accordance with LL research, messages in public spaces are never neutral; they invariably convey connections to social structure, power dynamics, and hierarchies. Prior research has accentuated the connection between visual displays through shop signs and the commodification of ethnic spaces. Not only Chinatowns, but also other ethnic neighborhoods, where immigrant communities and their identities are often scrutinized by the host society, were and sometimes still are frequently associated with crime and vice, perpetuating prejudice and negative stereotypes (Wacquant and Howe 2007; Ealham 2005; Chuang and Trémon 2013). As part of urban development, particularly in inner-city revitalization contexts where early immigrants historically settled, these ethnic neighborhoods are rebranded to obscure their previous image. Originally serving as essential retail centers and socio-economic hubs for the immigrant community, they are now selectively designated and reimagined as tourist attractions within multicultural districts (Shaw, Bagwell, and Karmowska 2004). In this development, Chinese shop signs in Chinatowns play a symbolic role in this commodification process. The commodification reinforces the concept of Chinatowns and Chinese neighborhoods as semiotically-themed spaces, spotlighting the structuring of subject positions and the stratification of various perspectives (Lou 2016; Rath et al. 2018; Leeman and Modan 2009).

While prior research has started to recognize the importance of LL in chaptering ethnic spaces, the exploration of Chinese shopfronts in European urban contexts remains a relatively untapped domain. This underlines the pressing need for a more comprehensive examination that delves into the intricate dynamics and multifaceted layers of meaning embedded in the visual representation, expanding the focus beyond the emphasis of shop signs.

The current chapter utilizes a group of ninety-eight Chinese shopfronts in London's Chinatown as a case chapter and introduces a multimodal approach to investigate more than linguistic expression. Grounded in the concept of multimodality, as defined by Australian semiotician Gunther Kress and Dutch linguist, Theo Van Leeuwen, this approach expands the examination of meaning-making in signifying practices beyond textual information and different languages in shop signs, encompassing various semiotic resources or semiotic modes (Kress and Leeuwen 2001). Semiotic modes, which encompass visual, verbal, written, gestural, and musical elements, are socially produced cultural resources for communication. This multimodal framework guides the present chapter in the exploration of semiotic modes to identify key elements contributing to the construction of meaning in Chinese shopfronts. By addressing the primary research question – identifying the predominant semiotic modes used in these shopfronts – this chapter aims to uncover how these semiotic modes collectively shape the contemporary portrayal of London's Chinatown. Moreover, it aspires to illuminate how this portrayal reaches different audience groups.

Within the realm of Chinese shopfronts, the utilization of diverse typefaces within multiscript shop signs serves as a nuanced means of conveying business objectives while concurrently expressing aesthetic preferences and cultural identities. This significance of typeface as a semiotic mode, encompassing both ideational and interpersonal meaning, has been acknowledged in the work of van Leeuwen. Van Leeuwen (2006) underscores that writing has undergone significant transformations, with many of the cohesive functions previously attributed to language now being achieved through the interplay of layout, color, and typography. In his essay *Towards a Semiotics of Typography*, van Leeuwen applies a social semiotic approach to scrutinize various aspects of typefaces, including weight, expansion, slope, curvature, connectivity, orientation, and regularity. Typography is thus regarded as a multimodal form of expression that extends beyond mere lettering, seamlessly integrating with other semiotic elements such as color, texture, three-dimensionality, and movement. In the context of multilingual and polyscript environments, as evident in the present study, the interaction between verbal and visual elements takes on amplified significance, surpassing the impact of a single language in isolation (Tam 2012). Furthermore, it has been observed that typographic practices are profoundly influenced by ideological factors stemming from social, economic, and geopolitical hierarchies, which are in turn shaped by local histories of migration, colonization, and globalization (Curtin 2015). Therefore, the current study, by viewing typography as a semiotic resource, extends the purview of the linguistic element itself, revealing the intricate dynamics at play within the semiotic landscape of Chinese shopfronts.

I begin this chapter by providing background information on London's Chinatown. Moving to empirical research, I analyze the observable trends that emerged from the general lexicon and elucidate possible perspectives of the findings. In conclusion, I argue that strong cultural signifiers scaffold the framework of a current Chinese image and simultaneously function as a cultural barrier. When randomly juxtaposed together, these semiotic modes have lost their precious historical root. The renewal of a current Chinese image occurs more on the semiotic plain for Chinese viewers. This encourages an alignment in semiotic modes to attract business and present a diverse culture to audience groups with or without Chinese background. This research further validated the importance of a collection of ethnic shops within a local area, functioning as a vibrant repository and story of evolving symbols, actively enhancing the cultural heritage of a community.

Historical background

Chinatowns exist across the globe and provide geographic areas with high ethnic concentration, characteristic cultural identity, and economic activity for Chinese immigrants as part of the wider Chinese diaspora over the last two hundred years (Christiansen 2005; Wilson 2015; Wong 2021). The scattered nature of these sites suggests nodes in a global network of a widespread entrepreneurial Chinese community. Small businesses, such as grocery shops, restaurants, and barber shops, articulate a lively community life in Chinatown.

The history of Sino-British relations plays a significant role in understanding the representations of shopfronts in London's Chinatown, as the understanding of Chinese culture from a British standpoint can still be filtered through the historical narratives of imperialism and colonialism. The pattern of Chinese immigrants has also historically been overshadowed by the legacy of British colonialism. As a cultivated Chinese citizen, one considers the Opium War as a pivotal moment in China's modern history. Between 1839 and 1842, Britain forced a war in China in order to benefit drug smugglers (Qi 2017). The Treaty of Nanking ended this war, which settled the agreement of the cession of Hong Kong as a Crown Colony from the imperial Qing government to the British Queen ('Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship between China and Great Britain

(Treaty of Nanking)', 1842). From the Chinese history textbook in the eighth grade of compulsory education, Chinese citizens have learned that this treaty "humiliated the nation and forfeited its sovereignty," and the failure of the Opium War on the Chinese side "marked the beginning of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal history" (Qi 2017).

Other milestones in the Sino-British relationship include "The Sino-British Joint Declaration" in 1984, a treaty setting the transference of Hong Kong to Chinese control after July 1, 1997 ('Joint Declaration of the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Question of Hong Kong,' 1984). This later event, The Hong Kong handover in 1997, ended one and a half centuries of British rule in the former colony. Recent media presentations of upheavals in Hong Kong also allows compels a reappraisal of the to the development of Sino-British relations (Gu 2021). Especially when Chinese influence increased after the passing of the 2020 Hong Kong national security law, the Sino-British relationship has again been under challenge, a topic which will not be discussed at length here.

Despite a relationship that has been extremely fraught at times, the UK has always stood as a major destination during waves of Chinese migration. Indeed, the unique status that Hong Kong has held resulted in localized points of origin for migrants, with a major origin being primarily Cantonese-speaking provinces (Hatziprokopiou and Montagna 2012). British colonialism and Chinese migration are therefore defined by two key aspects: the "Century of Humiliation" as well as Britain's role in the Opium Wars and the resulting unique status of Hong Kong within the wider British Empire (Chang 2001; Kaufman 2010). This historical background is epitomized in a spatial area within Chinatown, regardless of whether these aspects are present in the cultural zeitgeist.

The first Chinese sailors from Guangdong (also known as Canton) province arrived in 1782, and the earliest Chinatown in London began to develop by the port at the Limehouse area. Rather than a drab area with food and groceries catering to the growing number of sailors who were recruited by shipping firms for new trading routes after China had lost the Opium Wars, this section near docks was presented and exaggerated as a blighted area with opium dens. Depicted as a dangerous and exotic place in the media, and especially in novels and films, Limehouse Chinatown had been known as the legendary Fu Manchu's secret headquarter to plot a world-changing scheme. With the media perpetuating the myth of Chinatown, all the attendant stereotypes involving sex, drugs, and violence stood in opposition to the existence of the small Chinese community due to a maritime connection to the riverside district (Seed 2006).

The influx of more sailors during and after the Second World War elevated the growth of the Chinese community in the catering business as Chinese food gained more popularity, which was followed by more migration from Hong Kong. As much of the original base for the Chinese community in Limehouse was damaged by aerial bombing, people decamped to where they could afford the low rents in Soho, whose reputation was then tainted by the sex industry. This inaugurated the current-day Chinatown. These days, Chinese architectural archways welcome pedestrians to this distinct part of the city ("Find out about Chinatown" n.d.).

Methodological framework

As we explore the historical trajectory of London's Chinatown, it becomes clear that this thriving enclave has developed in tandem with the city's rich multicultural tapestry. To gain a deeper insight into how its cultural identity is expressed in the contemporary context, the research is centered on understanding the semiotic elements that constitute a Chinese shopfront within London's Chinatown. To systematically address this research question, I have structured the interrelated variables to enable an analysis of the various semiotic elements under scrutiny. Here, I will outline these semiotic elements and engage in a discussion about their potential interpretations. This discussion will lay the groundwork for the subsequent development of our methodological framework.

Primary research input into the general lexicon was gathered through photography. Clear and street-level shots of the façades of buildings were taken. Some leeway was allowed for those businesses that used projecting signage, as a more upward-facing angle was necessary to capture the entire visual material. Photographs were taken also to record the general decorations in this area. A total of ninety-eight establishments were analyzed in this study, comprising eighty entities in the catering sector (encompassing teahouses, small eateries, bakeries, and bubble tea shops), three barber shops, six pharmacy-clinics, and nine additional businesses, which included retail establishments, gift shops, electronic stores, and money exchange outlets. Before further analyzing shopfronts, I examined the overall Chinese flair through the major decorative elements of the area. By analyzing photographs of these shopfronts, I have initially divided the primary resources into linguistic and visual categories. Additionally, I have assessed the prevalence of various semiotic modes and provided comments on the connotations associated with the respective semiotic resources. After multiple iterations in the process of categorizing these semiotic modes, I have tentatively developed a classification for documenting the diverse semiotic modes utilized in shopfronts. It is important to note that this framework represents a foundational step and can certainly be enhanced in future research. This lexicon consists of a data table and a structured gallery of the sample shops.

Under this classification, the visual material gathered through photography was deconstructed into tangible variables, each listed under its own criteria in a data table. There are four main indices in the data analysis: *Linguistic Semiotic Modes*, *Visual Semiotic Modes*, *Compositional Communication*, and *Interpretation of the Participating Modes*.

Linguistic Semiotic Modes include all the text in both English and Chinese. A description of the romanization/translation methods is included to examine the link between English and non-English text. The linguistic focus scrutinizes how the information is passed to both Chinese and English readers. Five indicators were recorded: *Shop Name in Chinese*, *Shop Name in English*, *Chinese Text*, *English Text*, and *Translation Method* of the shop names. *Visual Semiotic Modes* refer to a description of symbology and embedded meaning in the visual semiotic resources on offer. This category was further divided into seven items: *Chinese Typeface*, *English Typeface*, *Color*, *Seal*, *Logo*, *Architectural Motif*, and *Other Visual Elements*. Among these, descriptive words were used to record the last five indicators.

Compositional Communication represents the interplay between linguistic and visual modes. This research also endeavors to encapsulate the predominant semiotic codes manifesting on a shopfront, with their significance denoted as salience. Salience can be achieved through size, foregrounding, color, sharpness of definition, and other design methods (Kress and Leeuwen 2001, 176–77). What is placed in the upper, left, and center part of the signs is a more preferred mode than the lower, right, and marginal parts and thus more likely to take over the salience (Scollon and Scollon 2003, 117). This system is subjected to other facts, such as the writing vector of the languages used. This is applicable to both modern English and Chinese writing, which are normally read from left to right. *Interpretation of the Participating Modes* comprehends possible cultural connotations. My personal interpretation and my background as a Chinese citizen raised in China allows one possibility for how these modes can be understood.

Fig. 1: Lotus Garden.

Having explained the four indicators, I will now use some examples to discuss what semiotic modes contribute to the meaning-making of the business frontage and how semiotic modes construct the current Chinese appearance. Located almost at the foot of a Chinese archway, Lotus Garden is a restaurant specializing in Guangdong cuisine, insinuating the historical link of migration's origin (Figure 1). It offers a visual feast as well as an olfactory and gustatory one. This visual bravura carries many strong cultural signifiers, such as the whole *Architectural Motif*, the dragon engravings, and the keywords found in shop names, displaying an epitome of a cultural fantasy of an old civilization.

The dominating *Color* pallet of the red frontage corresponds to the Chinese archway with a clear *Chinese Architectural Motif*. This façade gathers many architectural elements, including roofs with gleaming dark teal tiles, pilasters with Dougong[1] above it, and cheerful red woodwork with carving designs. Hardly bearing any structural functions, these architectural details only serve a decorative purpose. The plant pots with engraved patterns of dragons and clouds add a heavy epilogue to this

1 Dougong is a structural element of interlocking wooden brackets, one of the most important design features in traditional Chinese architecture.

collection of the Chinese appearance, founding the Chinese cultural ground quite literally. However, for one who has some literacy in Chinese architecture, it is hard to identify the references to a particular time and/or a specific region for this shopfront, as it is more a patchwork-like parody than an applied eclecticism.

Looking into the *Linguistic Modes*, a direct translation of the *Shop Name in Chinese* is Golden Mansion ("金满楼" in Chinese), which is coherent with the gilded lettering. Although both are embedded with auspicious meanings, Lotus Garden and Golden Mansion represent the two most significant aesthetic ideologies in Chinese culture. Chinese philosopher Zong (2020) compared the aesthetic connotations of a new-born lotus and engraved goldwork and concluded that the aesthetic values of the two present a parallel pair of aesthetic concepts with equal importance (39). The former is a natural and simple artistic style full of vitality and possibilities; the latter refers to an artistic style that achieves ornate beauty through refined skills. In this sense, as a signifier for a less vanished beauty, Lotus may not be the best *Shop Name in English*.

As this example of Lotus Garden demonstrates clearly, all these above-mentioned *Visual* and *Linguistic Semiotic Modes* compose a vestment of a Chinese restaurant to attract customers, and this business purpose is well served. The rich semiotic plain in Chinese culture is exploited to establish a collage associated simply with something "Chinese." The denotative meaning of lotus as pure simplicity and dragon as imperial power are both lost in this potentially conflicting assembly. Enhanced by staging light, the lustrous appearance of this shopfront uses what appears like traditional Chinese symbolism, yet ironically, the result is more an imagined history than the history of the immigrants themselves. It is further removed from the present, not requiring any sense of cultural literacy to unpack the symbolism contained within.

The following two shopfronts show how a collection of semiotic resources can be composed with regional flair and historical roots in the value of cultural heritage. Also, using gilded lettering, this Beijingese pharmacy placed Chinese characters delicately on mahogany brackets (Figure 2). The original *Chinese Typeface* inscription was by Qigong, a calligrapher from Beijing with high artistic achievements. His artwork[2] is considered exquisite street decoration in urban landscapes from the 1980s especially in the capital city (Zhang 2005). A *Logo* with two dragons playing

2 Mainly sign writings for public institutions or commercial buildings. In fact, Qi's writing was used in the sign of my high school in Xuzhou.

Fig. 2: Tongren Tang and its Logo.

with a divine pearl represents a symbolic story of the aspirational morals of modesty and gentleness to achieve a harmonious balance in Chinese culture (Dong 2013). This signifying trajectory is in line with the *Chinese Shop Name*, Tongren Tang, meaning to treat all patients fairly and equitably. The careful attention to detail in the shop sign suggests a sense of elegance and sophistication, which can create a positive impression on potential customers. By embracing its historical legacy, this pharmacy-clinic not only pays homage to its roots but also positions itself as a trusted and established institution of traditional Chinese medicine. Although deeply and beautifully rooted in Chinese culture, there is, unfortunately, minimum information for non-Chinese viewers. With stacking shelves blocking any conversation between the exterior and the interior space, the display windows are also unhelpful in presenting the cultural legacy to the viewers.

Four Seasons (Figure 3), also serving Guangdongese delicacies and thus indicating the specific migration history, replicates the aesthetic of shopfront designs in Hong Kong. A black and red *Color* palette is applied. This consistent color scheme cascades from the fascia to the canopy, then to the display windows, and finally extends to the street with red tables and black chairs. A visual dialogue is created between the shopfront and the street. This specific shop carries a visual heritage

Fig. 3: Four Season.

reminiscent of Hong Kong, featuring prominent menu displays on its windows and showcasing roasted meat. It has also carefully chosen a regular script for its Chinese shop name, adding to the cultural root of its presentation. This particular shopfront effectively captures a regional essence while also highlighting the enduring and expanding tradition of this culinary practice. Originally prevalent in the Guangdong region, roast meat eateries like this one have gradually extended their reach to various other parts of China. As this tradition spreads, more people with Chinese background are able to identify with and appreciate the resonance and familiarity of this fragment of culinary memory.

At times, a single semiotic mode can bear a significant cultural relevance in the design of a shopfront. The use of typography, for example, can be a key contributor to a delicate appearance with cultural heritage. An example with enduring quality of *Chinese Typeface* is Xu Teahouse & Restaurant (Figure 4). Compared to the vibrant frontage of Lotus Garden, it appears more withdrawn with a dignified matte black paint. The graceful detailing of the capital, the cornice, the brass window decoration, and the pilaster still pertain to the indigenous architectural characteristics. The *Shop Name in Chinese* is written in a modified clerical script, whose slight wavy strokes capture an elegant mien. Although the *English Typeface* has less coded meaning in aesthetic value, Xu still successfully presents itself as a high-end dining place. In London's Chinatown, an interplay between tradition and modernity can be observed within the array of shopfronts that grace the neighborhood. While the afore-mentioned establishments employ semiotic resources that either form an imagined tradition or honor Chinese culture, there is a group of shopfronts that embrace a contemporary image of Chinese business. These businesses have become integral to the urban landscape and are indicative of today's dynamic China.

One prominent facet of this contemporary image is the emergence of chain businesses that deftly combine elements of Chinese culture with modern commercial purposes. These shops, with a growing presence, often use a palette of bright *Color*s and *Logo*s to create a visually appealing, instantly recognizable brand. An example of such is the Happy Lemon cold beverage shop (see Figure 5). The shop employs a *Color* palette with a bold contrast in yellow and black, immediately capturing the attention of potential customers. Its *Logo* features a cheerful lemon with a smiling face, perfectly aligning with its *Shop Name in English*. This cohesive branding strategy facilitates a quick and memorable introduction to new customers. Interestingly, while the main fascia lacks visible *Chinese Text*, the shop's window menus effectively convey information to Chi-

Fig. 4: Xu Teahouse & Restaurant.

nese readers. This clever use of visual cues, including imagery and *Color* schemes, caters to the diverse clientele frequenting the shop. Moreover, for Chinese audiences who may have previously encountered this chain business with nearly identical designs in mainland China, Happy Lemon radiates a sense of familiarity even without the presence of Chinese characters. It essentially bridges a cultural connection through its communication methods, making it a welcoming and inclusive storefront for both Chinese and English-speaking customers. In various sectors, one can observe the presence of chain businesses that exhibit notable regional characteristics. Notable examples include a hot pot restaurant named Little Lamb, a Dim Sum establishment bearing the name Taotao Ju, and a dessert shop recognized as Meet Fresh. Through their shopfronts, they not only convey a sense of continuity with their Chinese roots but also promote an image of dynamism and global outreach. It is a fusion of the traditional and the cosmopolitan, encapsulating the essence of an evolving commercial space in the urban landscape of China.

In addition to chain businesses, another category of establishments also contributes to this contemporary image by highlighting the diverse and ever-evolving lifestyle of the Chinese community. It is important to note that the second category may also include chain businesses; they are

Fig. 5: Happy Lemon.

not mutually exclusive. From the explosion of milk tea shops to restaurants specializing in social dining experiences like BBQ and hot pot, these businesses use a rich array of semiotic resources to engage their audience. Figure 6 illustrates a hot pot restaurant known as One Plus. This particular establishment employs an interesting branding strategy, as its *Shop Name in English* coincides with the name of a well-known Chinese mobile telephone brand, which enjoys a considerable level of recognition among consumers. The visual identity of this restaurant that is accessible in Chinese, includes the *Shop Name in Chinese* and an accompanying advertising *Chinese Text*, featuring a straightforward *Color* scheme consisting of a dark brown background with light-colored text. This color choice aligns with the visual identity of the shop's English sign, promoting a cohesive and easily recognizable look. In terms of linguistic elements for non-Chinese readers, the primary point of access is the shop's name, which is clearly visible. However, the communication could be further enhanced. For non-Chinese readers, the exterior presents as a restaurant with menu displays and a name identical to a mobile telephone brand, failing to convey the rich tradition of social dining associated with hot pot. Although the combination of semiotic modes might at times fall short in effectively reaching the audience, these businesses act as gateways for the broader

Fig. 6: One Plus Hotpot.

community to savor the culinary treasures from different Chinese regions, promoting a multifaceted Chinese identity that extends beyond tradition to embrace the contemporary, multicultural essence of Chinese society.

In summary, the diverse semiotic modes drawn from the abundant wellspring of Chinese culture can often be a rich tapestry of potent cultural symbols. In some instances, these symbols are applied without meticulous alignment, potentially resulting in conflicting combinations. Simultaneously, numerous semiotic modes reflect regional and historical roots within Chinese culture, but their impact may be limited to audiences with Chinese literacy. Additionally, a distinct group of shopfronts mirrors businesses and lifestyles in resonance with contemporary China. Even though an imagined history with repackaged cultural symbols is observed in certain cases, the diversity of presentations of shopfronts is positive for a renewed image of what is Chinese. Some semiotic resources are undeniably harder to interpret for viewers without literacy in Chinese culture and language, which raises a challenge to translate such modes to a different culture plain. A multimodal analysis of the aforementioned shopfronts is recorded in the following table. Such systematic unpacking of this semiotic material would allow a deeper analysis that, however, would exceed the limits of the present chapter.

Table 1: A multimodal analysis of the five shopfronts discussed.

	Linguistic semiotic modes					Visual semiotic modes		
No.	**Shop Name in Chinese**	**Shop Name in English**	**Chinese Text**	**English Text**	**Translation Method**	**Chinese Typeface**	**English Typeface**	**Color**
1	金滿樓	LOTUS GARDEN	精美點心, 粵式小菜, 燒蠟專家	CHINESE RESTAURANT, DIM SUM DAILY	Polyphonic	Semi-cursive script (行楷)	Sans serif	Black, Brown, Golden, Red
2	同仁堂	Beijing Tongren Tang	倫敦分店		Homophonic	Regular script in calligraphy style (启功)	Serif (Times New Roman)	Pink, Mahogany
3	文興酒家	Four Seasons, CHINESE RESTAURANT, Wardour street branch	家興酒		Polyphonic	Regular script (正楷)	san serif (three different fonts are used)	Black, Golden, Red, White
4	許儒華苑	XU TEAHOUSE & RESTAURANT			Mixed; Official Romanization / Loosely translated	Modified Clerical	Serif	Black, Golden
5		happylemon		Enjoy Real Fresh Tea, Bubble Tea, Smoothie, Fresh Fruit Tea, Rock Salt Cheese, Matcha	No translation		Sans serif	Black, Brown, Red, Yellow, White

	Visual semiotic modes				Compositional Communication				Interpretation of the Participating Modes
	Seal	**Logo**	**Architectural motifs**	**Other Visual Elements**	**Salience**	**Upper–Lower**	**Left–Right**	**Center–Periphery**	
			pseudo Chinese style	Stone lions, stone plant pots	Chinese name	None	Chinese	None	There are many potentially conflicting elements employed
		two dragons with one pearl	adhere to the local buildings	visible shelves with medicine jars	Chinese name	None	None	None	This pharmacy has little information communicating to English speakers
			adhere to the local buildings	menu display, Canopy with a traditional Chinese coin shape decoration	Chinese name	Chinese	None	English name flanks the Chinese name	Not sure if the Chinese and English names even have a translation relationship.
			adhere to the local buildings	window decorations	English name	English	None	None	许儒华苑 (Xu Ru Hua Yuan). Xu is the family name of the owner, Ru suggests that the owner is highly cultivated, Hua means grand, elegant, and also China, Yuan is a fancy building complex with gardens.
		A winking face in a lemon shape (personification of a happy lemon), even with interaction to the viewers	adhere to the local buildings		English name	None	None	English name	

	Linguistic semiotic modes					Visual semiotic modes		
No.	Shop Name in Chinese	Shop Name in English	Chinese Text	English Text	Translation Method	Chinese Typeface	English Typeface	Color
6	蜀九香火鍋	ONE+	一品天下		Polyphonic	Semi-cursive script (行楷)	Sans serif	Brown, White
7	五条人糖水铺	Five Friends Desserts			Literal Translation	Weibei Zhenshu	Sans serif	Red, Golden, White

Results and conclusion

This research has comprised a multimodal analysis of the semiotic modes employed in Chinese shopfronts in London's Chinatown. It has addressed the central question regarding the semiotic elements utilized to convey an image of Chinese culture. Upon analyzing all the nighty-eight shopfronts with this lexicon, I was able to identify a few emerging trends following the different indicators. I shall begin by presenting the results with a description of the overall atmosphere of this area, then discuss the emerging trends within the framework of *Linguistic Semiotic Modes*, *Visual Semiotic Modes*, *Compositional Communication*, and *Interpretation of the Participating Modes*.

The Chinese gates and flamboyant decorations imbue this area with a strong cultural flair, creating an overall jovial atmosphere which makes this place almost like a Chinese theme park (Figure 7). This image is now poles apart from the slum house myth in Limehouse. Two Chinese archways mark the territory as significant cultural landmarks. The archway, the banner with the phrase "over the moon," and the decorative lanterns all contribute to a festival and celebration mood.[3] Some decorations are also displayed on the building façades. In Figure 8, one can see colorful

3 The photographs were taken one month after the Mid-Autumn Festival (November 2020).

Visual semiotic modes				Compositional Communication				Interpretation of the Participating Modes
Seal	Logo	Architectural motifs	Other Visual Elements	Salience	Upper–Lower	Left–Right	Center–Periphery	
		adhere to the local buildings	window decorations and two giant menus	Chinese name	None	None	None	Same name as a Chinese mobile telephone company
		adhere to the local buildings	decorative lines on the main sign to mimic the wooden panel of some Chinese style	Equal salience with both	Chinese	None	None	This shop used a regional specific font, namely Weibei zhenshu, possibly to promote this regional specialty

Fig. 7: Chinese archway and decorations.

Fig. 8: Lantern decorations on the wall.

figures holding lanterns. On the red lantern-shape decorations, the keyword opium alludes to British colonial history from the understanding of a Chinese citizen. As the Opium War is still the symbol of national humiliation, the sign opium connotes a rather negative meaning for the Chinese audience. This setting of participating semiotic modes, however, has not been renewed compared to the sinité – Chineseness, things and ideas associated with China, in Barthes' concept (Barthes 2000, 121).

Examining the nature of intertextual communication of the *Linguistic Semiotic Modes*, I noticed that some keywords are observable from the collection of English shop names. These are probably more "Chinese" than shop names commonly seen in China. With the exception of the already-discussed Lotus Garden, strong cultural references can also be seen in the following shop names: Imperial China, Orient London, Golden Dragon, Golden Gate, Far East, Golden Phoenix, Feng Shui Inn, and many more. These keywords have established a framework of the imagination for what is "Chinese" in this area. "Orient," "Far East," and "Imperial," have enhanced a certain period with a back glance at the history from which the current Chinese image derives. Other aforementioned linguistic semiotic modes connotate some distinguished Chinese symbols, such as "Dragon," "Phoenix," and "Fengshui." The capital city Beijing and the former British colony Hong Kong are also most frequently referred to, connoting to two arguably most Chinese cities understood in the British context. These modes may build a rigid ideological structure, which confines new imaginations of Chinese culture of the local audience. Chinese shop names have been translated in various ways for cross-cultural communication. Many attempts, literal translation and free transliteration, for example, often reach beyond the encoded sounds of the Chinese characters. The primary business purpose is translated effectively through English text most of the time. This variety of trans-communication methods in shop names is positive for a diversiform Chinese appearance.

Regarding the *Visual Semiotic Modes*, a distinct preference for a coded color scheme of red, gold, and black is used. This design language appears to appear naturally without collaboration between businesses. This preference emphasizes red and gold, as in the case of Lotus Garden, and all the selected examples use gold color for the shop names and red color for the main shop sign. Colors have always been symbolic: In imperial Beijing, bright colors were reserved for significant buildings, such as palaces, temples, and other ritual buildings. While the imperial palaces had red walls and yellow ochre roofs, ordinary residential buildings were made of colorless gray tiles (Rasmussen 1959, 217). The red and gold scheme thus associates with the glorious palace architectural style, which was almost never applied to civil commercial buildings in imperial China. Misuse or not, like many other *Visual Semiotic Modes*, this palette is detached from a given space or time in the Chinese context. It is used as nothing more than a cultural indicator to convey an othering sense of "China" to the audience in London. This also reflects Barthes (2000) comments on the big documentary "The East," in which an overall atmosphere is observed that is "all flattened, made smooth and gaudily colored like an old-fashioned postcard" (94). The *Chinese Typeface*, as already discussed, has many layers of coded meanings. Despite the richness of this visual feast, there is unfortunately less to decipher for non-Chinese readers. For example, compared to a variety of different calligraphic Chinese typefaces in use, there is less diversity in Roman typefaces. Other visual semiotic modes are equally instrumental in conveying a contemporary portrayal of what constitutes an image of China within this vicinity. These modes are often embodied in the design of businesses that mirror the commercial landscape of urban China. What distinguishes these businesses is their adept use of semiotic modes that are readily understandable to the broader audience. In essence, it transcends the conventional portrayal steeped in historical 'sinité' and introduces a touch of innovation in the shopfront designs, aligning them with a more modern and dynamic urban landscape.

In *Compositional Communication*, shop names are the most dominant semiotic resources on the main shop sign, meaning that the linguistic semiotic modes take over the salience most of the time. I expected either Chinese or English shop names to take precedence over one another, but I identified a balance occurring between the two. This compositional balance between shop names in both English and Chinese encourages a balance in the semiotic plain for both Chinese and English readers, as it is currently tilted in one direction. This result on the perception of salience contributes to the literature in the way that the salience can also be influenced by the difference in language skills of the audience. The perception of salience from all the semiotic modes from a shop sign has more dimensions than the preference code system. The literacy in languages largely contributes to the different perceptions of different users. From the perspective of design, there are other influential factors on the concept of salience, such as a special choice on where to break lines in writing and a different emphasis on the readability of typefaces.

With respect to the *Interpretation of the Participating Modes*, I identified many more semiotic resources available to Chinese readers while analyzing the potential interpretation. This divergence in perception is not solely attributed to the quantity of visible text within this context; it is equally rooted in the heterogeneous manner in which text is presented, particularly in comparison to English signage. In instances where a Chinese shop name is artfully crafted using a distinctive calligraphic typeface for branding purposes, the English typography often assumes a more utilitarian role, primarily providing a translation. A case in point is the relatively unadorned lettering employed by Xu Teahouse & Restaurant. Another illustration is the shop sign of Five Friends Desserts, which incorporates a regional-specific typeface originating from Hong Kong, known as Weibei Zhenshu, for its *Shop Name in Chinese*. Notably, this design lacks a corresponding stylistic congruence with the *English Text*, highlighting the disparity in typographic treatment between the two languages. This Chinese calligraphic style possesses unique aesthetic qualities that are evident in the structure of each sign and characterized by its charismatic and trustworthy attributes, realized by the bold and thick strokes used in writing. For further examples of signs in this style, refer to Chan and Tsui (2018) (Figure 9). The connotation of the Chinese typefaces is lost in translation.

Following an in-depth analysis of the four key indices discussed, a discernible depiction of the current Chinatown image emerges, shaped by the abundant semiotic resources exhibited through the shopfronts.

Fig. 9: Weibei Zhenshu.

This chapter effectively positions these shopfronts as dynamic repositories, serving as tangible embodiments of cultural heritage within the urban landscape. The collective assembly of these shopfronts operates as a captivating microcosm, unveiling the intricate dynamics of memory. It underscores the interplay between elements that serve as symbols of historical legacies and those that mirror contemporary influences. Chinese shopfronts in London's Chinatown, in this regard, offer a multifaceted representation of temporality. They exhibit different business strategies where some businesses uphold traditional design elements and symbols, preserving a living archive of the past, while others adapt to contemporary aesthetics and consumer demands, continually negotiating between history and the present. The semiotic resources transcend their status as mere fragments of business frontages, emerging as active participants in the ongoing shaping of the cultural narrative of the locality. Individuals with a Chinese heritage often view these shopfronts as more than just commercial entities; they play a central role in shaping the historical landscape of London's Chinatown. Beyond their commercial functions, the semiotic modes featured on these shopfronts play a crucial role in shaping the distinct character of Chinatown, solidifying its reputation as a cultural enclave.

However, it is imperative to recognize that the aspects of Chinatown that reach the European audience, such as the connotative meanings embedded in many shop names in English and the prevalent gold-red color palette, provide only a surface-level understanding of the intricate depths of Chinese culture. Some shopfronts perpetuate an imagined historical narrative or cater to an oriental fantasy, projecting an aura of foreignness and exotic allure. Essentially, these shopfronts continue to reinforce a stereotype of Chinese culture meticulously tailored for the London-based consumer or tourist, constructing a marketable 'Chineseness' cliche. This phenomenon initiates a funneling effect, occasionally rendering the rich semiotic resources of Chinese culture somewhat elusive to a broader, non-Chinese-speaking audience. This orientalist perspective perpetuates the exoticization of the locality. Significantly, a mutual orientalism prevails in many shopfronts, rooted in consumption and speculation. Here, semiotic modes are predominantly utilized for business promotion, which inadvertently obstructs the Chinese community from presenting itself as a subject. Within this framework, historical value may occasionally be sidelined, as semiotic modes are employed solely to create a parody.

The undeniable nexus between culture and perception underscores the importance of innovative endeavors to convey a contemporary Chinese image through the diverse semiotic modes on offer. While commendable strides have been made in this direction, there remains ample room for enhancing the experiential dimension, thereby offering a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted and evolving landscape of Chinese culture.

My hope is that the findings in this chapter contribute to the current literature, as it identifies a few factors which influence the salience in the perception of the composition of semiotic modes and affirms the possibility of further discussing the semiotic nature of typefaces, especially in multilingual areas. The methods used to create a general lexicon may be applied to other semiotic research elsewhere in the world. It can be duplicated in research on other Chinatowns or Chinese shops in different cities. Also, this methodology can be expanded to other ethnic groups not only in London but also in other urban contexts. This research has several limitations. It is unfortunate that the study did not include the spatial relationship between all these semiotic modes. Further research can investigate how the shopfronts are positioned together. Also, because of the social restrictions during the Covid-19 crisis, this study did not include interviews. This personal interpretation of the author shall be expanded. It can include insights from the shop owners and the sign viewers. Despite its exploratory nature, this study offers some insight into the examination of a current image of a cultural other presented at the street level in everyday life.

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Mapping Social Memoryscapes

Memories of the Aftermath of World War II in the Hlučín Region

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Abstract

The chapter examines the popular narrative of World War II and its aftermath in the Hlučín Region based on the research of autobiographical accounts by witnesses of World War II that were recorded by the Museum of the Hlučín Region (*Muzeum Hlučínska*) between 2011 and 2013. The Hlučín Region is located in the Czech Upper Silesia, an area of frequent border shifts. The region was annexed to Czechoslovakia in 1920. However, between 1938 and 1945, it was occupied by Nazi Germany, and its inhabitants became German citizens. Population transfer in the aftermath of the war involved only about 5% of the population, and descendants of the autochthonous population inhabit the region until today.

The chapter identifies the main characteristics of the war and post-war narrative, and several phenomena connected with the collective memory and identity in today's Hlučín Region. The research findings indicate that traumatic memories of war and post-war developments in this area have been suppressed and silenced until the recent past, and some respondents still hesitate to speak about this period. Moreover, due to the traditional division of gender roles, male memories dominate the narrative while female memories are neglected. The analysis of the oral accounts also shows how the historical development influenced the national indifference of the Hlučín inhabitants. Beyond that, there is also a tendency to self-victimization among the Hlučín Region population facing the war and post-war history of the region.

Keywords

Memory studies; collective memory; post-war; Upper Silesia; the Hlučín Region; borderlands; national indifference; self-victimization

Introduction

This chapter[1] examines the war and the post-war popular narrative in the Hlučín Region,[2] a small region in Upper Silesia with a distinctive history, situated in the Czech Republic at the border with Poland. It presents an analysis of autobiographical accounts collected in the Hlučín Region and interprets them in the context of the history of the Hlučín Region in the twentieth century. These oral accountss were given by people living or born in the Hlučín Region and crucially, they were recorded and archived by the Museum of the Hlučín Region (*Muzeum Hlučínska*).[3] It is the first time these narrations are scientifically analyzed, focusing on the construction of collective memory in the post-war period.

Nevertheless, the Hlučín Region has already been studied in several works (as detailed below) because the history of the region and its inhabitants differ strongly from the history of the rest of the Czech Republic. The Hlučín Region was a part of Prussian Silesia since 1742, and was annexed to Czechoslovakia only after World War I. However, between 1938 and 1945, it was occupied by Nazi Germany, and its inhabitants became German citizens. In the aftermath of World War II, the anti-German resentment was high, and an extensive expulsion of the German-speaking population from Czechoslovakia took place. However, the question of whether the Hlučíns[4] should be regarded as German and be expelled or not (the so-called "Hlučín question") was solved liberally, and the population transfer involved only about 5% of the local population. Thus, the region is, until today, mostly inhabited by an autochthonous population, that is, descendants of people who lived there before 1945 or even before World War I. For this reason, the collective memory of the Hlučín Region has evolved continuously and without disrupting population exchanges.

Hlučín inhabitants feel bound together by a specific regional identity. This can be described as mutual solidarity created by shared traditions, a way of life and a collective memory based on the region's distinctive history (Kubátová 2015). Other aspects that impacted their identity include strong Catholicism, tight family bonds, and dense social networks

1 This study is the result of research funded by the Czech Science Foundation as the project GA ČR P410 22-05263S "Transformation of Silesia 1945–1948."

2 A brief history of the region will be provided in the second part of the chapter.

3 I will refer to the Museum as the Hlučín Museum, however, it is devoted not only to the town of Hlučín, but to the entire Hlučín Region. I would like to thank the Museum, its director and staff for their valuable help with my research.

4 In this chapter, the term Hlučíns refers to inhabitants of the Hlučín Region, not only the town of Hlučín.

within the region. Hlučíns believe that they share collective characteristics, such as thrift, diligence, neatness, and care for their houses and land. Such a regional consciousness is unique in the context of the Czech borderlands and perhaps even the entire Czech Republic.

Because of the peculiarity of the region's history and political delicacy of the post-war "Hlučín question" during state socialism, the post-war history and memory of the period remain under-researched. In other words, historical works on the Hlučín Region and Czech Silesia focus predominantly on the history before World War II. While there is a monograph about the history of Czech Silesia by Dan Gawrecki (2003), the Hlučín Region plays a rather minor role in it. Furthermore, Marie Gawrecká (2002; 2004; 2011) and Nina Pavelčíková (1990; 1994) devoted their work to the history of Silesia until 1945. Pavel Kladiwa (1998; 2015) has also published studies concerning the region and the nationality issues in the region following World War I and II. Many books published after 1989 have been dedicated to the history of particular towns and villages of the Hlučín Region. Almost every municipality has asked local historians to write its history. These publications are intended for locals who are naturally interested in the history of their hometowns and villages (Chrástecký and Kladiwa 2006; Plaček and Kotlář 2001; Štěpán 2010; Binar et al. 2016).

A special position among Hlučín's authors is occupied by the historian born in Hlučín and former director of the Silesian Museum in Opava, Vilém Plaček (2007a; 2007b; 2016). His trilogy *Prajzáci*, examining the history of the region from 1742 until the 1960s, is widely read by locals as well as cited by historians. Plaček also deals with the question of nationalities in the region from an insider's perspective. Unfortunately, Plaček pays little attention to post-war history and does not use reliable sources for his post-war research. Thus, the only work dealing cohesively with the post-war history of the Hlučín Region is Aleš Binar's (2014) monograph on social and economic development in the Hlučín Region between 1945 and 1989· The author provides a detailed quantitative account of the demographic, economic, and social development of the Hlučín Region in that period. This publication is a valuable source of data but lacks an analysis showing the everyday reality and people's lives behind the numbers.

However, it should be mentioned that several sociological and anthropological studieson the Hlučín Region residents have been done in recent decades. The interest of sociologist Helena Kubátová and her team in intergenerational changes in the way of life in the Hlučín Region resulted in the already-mentioned study (Kubátová 2015). In addition to studying the way of life from the perspective of working life, family life, religious life and communality, the book includes a basic analysis of the importance of regional collective memory and the perception of nationalities and collective identities in the region. Marcel Mečiar (2007; 2008) devoted his work to social and generational identities in the Hlučín Region. Value orientation of the Hlučín population has been studied by Petra Anýžová and František Zich (2016), and František Znebejánek (2014; 2016). Moreover, Johana Wyss explored the Hlučín Region in her dissertation about constructing collective identity in Silesia (Musalkova 2018). In this context, one should also mention the catalogue of the permanent exhibition in the Hlučín Museum called *Kdo jsou lidé na Hlučínsku* (*Who are the People Living in the Hlučín Region*) (Jung and Neminář 2016) and a popular book *Czech in the Wehrmacht* (Emmert 2005; 2012; 2018) containing life stories of soldiers from regions in Czech Silesia who fought in the Wehrmacht. However, a complex analysis of the war and post-war popular narrative in the Hlučín Region is missing.

For this chapter, I analyzed the primary sources of the autobiographical accounts. What interested me in particular was: What does the communicative memory of the post-war period (and especially the immediate aftermath of World War II) in the Hlučín Region consist of? What experiences are essential for the Hlučín Region inhabitants to remember? How do Hlučíns interpret the post-war period in retrospect? And do they position themselves clearly in terms of national identities or/and political loyalties today?

Based on the analysis of the oral accounts, I conclude that the collective memory of the Hlučín Region has been silenced since the end of World War II, and it generally shows a tendency to self-victimization. Above that, I tracked various social and cultural phenomena, such as national indifference or regional solidarity, and their roots.

Context of the life testimonies analyzed: a brief history of the Hlučín Region

Since the Middle Ages, the Hlučín Region has been inhabited by a Slavic population who spoke 'Moravian' dialect and referred to themselves as 'Moravians' (*Moravci*), living in the area of the Moravian margraviate (Stoklasa 2009, 14). The region was a part of the Bohemian Crown Lands and the Habsburg monarchy until the Silesian wars. After that, it was taken by the Prussian Kingdom in 1742. Thus, other people from neighboring regions have referred to the Hlučín Region as "*Prajzká*", that is, "Prussia." Accordingly, the inhabitants of the region have been called "*Prajzáci*", that is, "Prussians." Although some people from outside consider this label offensive, most of the Hlučín Region inhabitants proudly call themselves 'Prussians' even today (Kubátová 2016, 11).

The region became an integrated part of Prussia for almost two centuries. *Moravci* experienced the era of nationalism as German citizens and became loyal citizens of Germany. After World War I, the newly established state of Czechoslovakia claimed the Hlučín Region for itself. It based its claims on the Slavic origin of its autochthonous population. According to the *Treaty of Versailles*, the region was annexed by Czechoslovakia in February 1920 without a plebiscite. In the region and in the whole Ratibor district, to which the region administratively belonged before 1920, people were unsatisfied with the annexation. In the census of 1920, 83% of the region's population declared Czech or Moravian as their mother tongue and were regarded as Czechs. However, there is evidence that many of the inhabitants were forced to do so although they wanted to register German nationality (Plaček 2007a, 39–41).

As in the case of the 'sudetenland,' the Hlučín Region was annexed by Germany in the *Munich Agreement* in October 1938. Most of the Hlučín inhabitants welcomed the arrival of German troops as liberators. Moreover, inhabitants born before 1910 and their families and descendants automatically acquired German nationality and citizenship with their rights and duties, including military service in the *Wehrmacht* (Kubátová 2015, 27). The military service concerned about 13,100 men from the Hlučín Region. About 3,300 soldiers were killed, while about 2,000 were wounded or crippled during World War II. Many soldiers fell into captivity and returned home only after a few years (Kubátová 2015, 292–293).

In the first months after World War II, the German-speaking population of Czechoslovakia was forced to leave the state in the violent expulsion and the consequent organized transfer, legally based on the controversial *Beneš Decrees*. According to the decrees, Czechoslovak citizens who had acquired German citizenship during the occupation were deprived of Czechoslovak citizenship and expelled. Also, in the Hlučín Region, the relation between the state and the autochthonous Hlučíns was to be solved – the so-called "Hlučín question" or "Hlučín problem." State authorities decided on a liberal approach to the Hlučíns; however, this decision lacks a comprehensive explanation in the scientific literature. Almost 96% of the Hlučín Region residents were not deported to

Germany, but they had to get their Czechoslovak citizenship back by asking for the "certificate of national responsibility" and going through a loyalty screening. In addition to the citizenship agenda, there were other difficulties for Hlučíns. However, the confiscations of property did not concern many Hlučíns (about 500 items of property were confiscated), nor did retribution (about 2,400 people were punished) (Binar 2020, 129–131).

In the aftermath of the war, the Hlučín Region was not, unlike most parts of the Czech borderlands, massively resettled with newcomers from Czechoslovakia's inland, newcomers of Czech nationality to Czechoslovakia or national minorities. On the contrary, the autochthonous population was allowed to stay and makes up most of the Hlučín Region population until today. During the communist period, the autochthonous population was not considered a national minority and was perceived as Czech. The contemporary narrative of the post-war period in the Hlučín Region claims that Hlučíns were a mistrusted population group after World War II and especially during the period of state socialism (1948–1989). Reportedly, other inhabitants of Czechoslovakia looked at them suspiciously because of their cultural proximity to Germany and contacts with relatives living in the Federal Republic of Germany. Since the 1960s, survivors and injured veterans have started to receive pensions from the Federal Republic of Germany. Thus, the Hlučín Region was rich compared to other regions of Czechoslovakia, where people were envious of their money. Hlučíns were therefore stigmatized and discriminated against in terms of education and or working places (Kubátová 2016, 23).

As a result of the aforementioned border shifts and changes in ascribed nationality and citizenship, the population of the Hlučín Region remained (for the most part)[5] nationally indifferent with strong relations to their villages or towns, the region, and Silesia as a whole. Due to the fact that most of the Hlučín population was allowed to stay in their homes after World War II, the Hlučín Region is one of few border regions in today's Czech Republic inhabited by an autochthonous population without a clear Czech national identity. Also, regional specifics have persisted even after the period of state socialism. In this respect, the region is unique in the context of the whole Czech Republic.

5 It would be a mistake to regard the region as homogenous and relate to the whole population. Nevertheless, it is not possible to avoid generalization altogether.

Theoretical background

The term collective memory was introduced by Maurice Halbwachs in the 1920s as an individual memory created by interaction within a community (e.g., a family or a nation) (Assmann 2007, 29). German scholars Aleida and Jan Assmann developed the concept further and defined it as a memory shared by a group of people, built by rituals, stories, and symbols. Thus, the community produces shared images of the past with a common understanding of history (Assmann 2013, 17). Collective memory can be divided into categories of communicative and cultural memory. Communicative memory takes in the recent past of approximately three to four generations and is shared by living witnesses. This memory is passed on through everyday communication, for example, in a family or within a generation (Moller 2010). On the other hand, cultural memory consists of institutionalized memories that hold a distinctive meaning and have been selected and preserved for the future (Assmann 2013, 26–27). Cultural memory is manifested, for example, on monuments, during commemorative events, in books, or museums and galleries.

In the context of the presented chapter, the researched oral accounts present the communicative memory of the Hlučín Region population. This memory is being spread in families and among friends. The activity of the Hlučín Museum in recording these life stories and making them partially public (through the permanent exhibitions of the Museum or through a documentary) shows the attempts to institutionalize the memory and transform it into a cultural form. The focus of this chapter is to analyze communicative memory and identify the popular narrative that will likely be institutionalized.

Methods of research

The Hlučín Museum is a grass-roots organization that stems from the need to represent the people from the Hlučín Region and their unique historical experience. It was established in 2005 as a public-benefit corporation. The Hlučín town hall is the primary financial donor to the Museum, and it resides in several rooms of the Hlučín Castle, which were made available for the Museum by the town hall. The Museum opened a permanent ethnographic exhibition, "Who are the People Living in the Hlučín Region?" (*Kdo jsou lidé* *na Hlučínsku?*)[6] in 2014. Artifacts for the exhibition were donated to the Museum by people living or coming from the Hlučín Region (Muzeum Hlučínska, n.d.). Thus, the Museum is closely connected to the region and is trying to represent it adequately. Through its activities, the Museum collects artefacts belonging to, and memories of residents of the Hlučín Region, archives them, makes some of them public and available for researchers, and thereby publicizes the historical narrative of the Hlučín Region. In other words, the Museum is institutionalizing the regional collective memory and transferring communicative memory into a cultural one.

One of the Museum's activities include recording life testimonies of the Hlučín Region inhabitants. However, it is neither a systematic nor regular process. Until the beginning of 2021, the archive of oral accounts consisted of testimonies of 115 people born between 1911 and 1942, living in (and mostly coming from) the whole Hlučín Region. The Museum staff call this activity "rescue archeology"[7]; in other words, they try to take hold of memories of the World War II "generation of experience" (*Erlebnisgeneration*, *generace zážitku*), because this generation has been gradually leaving, and the community experiences perishing of the living memory (Kreisslová, Nosková, and Pavlásek 2019, 19).

It is necessary to point out that remembering one's own past and narrating one's own life story is not an objective process. Through remembering, people create images of the past; in other words, they construct the past. Remembering is a selective process, regards the past from the perspective of today and gives it a particular meaning (Šmídová Matoušová 2010, 60–61). By constructing stories of the past, people negotiate their position in the world and identity, who they are and why (Kreisslová, Nosková, and Pavlásek 2019, 32).

The life stories were recorded mostly between 2011 and 2013 (unfortunately, it is not clear in all cases when the recording took place) in order to preserve the memories of the oldest living generation of Hlučíns. The narrators were recorded in their homes or in public spaces (e.g., in a parks) where they could feel comfortable with both video and audio recorders. Most of them spoke in the regional dialect called *po našemu* or *Moravian dialect,* which combines Czech and Polish with the addition of German words. The use of the dialect can be understood as comfort-

6 The permanent exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue of the same name. For more, see Jung and Neminář (2016).

7 Rescue archeology is a term used for an archaeological survey and excavation carried out in advance of construction or other land development.

able communication method as this is being used in private (Musalkova 2018, 54). The interviews were led by one or two employees of the Hlučín Museum who came from the region, spoke the regional dialect and were familiar with the history of the Region. This fact was important to gain thetrust of the narrators. Mostly, only one narrator was recorded; however, in several cases, family members (mostly wives) were also present in the same room or next door and occasionally intervened in the narrations. Respondents were selected with the help of mayors of villages and towns in the Hlučín Region and the "Friends of the Museum of the Hlučín Region Association," which consists of some well-known personalities, local patriots, or intellectuals from the region. These people served as valuable gatekeepers for the Museum staff. The interviewees were selected based on their age (older respondents were preferred) and their willingness to tell their life stories. Acquaintances of the narrators and local representatives or the Museum staff played a role, too. Additional respondents were contacted by the snowball method. Some of the recordings analyzed in this text were utilized for a documentary about the experiences of Hlučíns between 1920 and 1950 and the creation of the permanent exhibition of the Hlučín Museum.

The employees of the Museum asked the respondents to talk about their life from an early age. No hints from the questioners have been given to them before the conversation, for example, about what part of their life they were supposed to speak. Additionally, the respondents were asked about certain war and post-war development events in the Hlučín Region.[8] The questions were based on the knowledge of the Hlučíns' collective memory. Thus, certain answers were expected in response to certain questions, and the questions were even sometimes put in a misleading way. It can be concluded that the interviewing method had two parts: It can be described as a mix of autobiographical questioning and semi-structured interviews. This is a common way of conducting interviews in anthropological research (Kreisslová, Nosková, and Pavlásek 2019, 66–67). This way of data collection has similar objectives as well as procedures as the method of oral history, which also explores communicative memory. Specifically, it also reflects a microhistory, the history of everyday life and individual experience of people. Furthermore, it tries to give voice to marginal groups of society neglected by the existing historical research (Mücke and Vaněk 2011, 9–24). However, it must

8 It is indicated in the next part of the chapter which questions or comments were specifically raised by the questioners.

be underlined that interviews presented in this chapter were not led or processed according to the method of oral history. Specifically, the interviewers were not guided by any specific research intention during the data collection. Thus, the interviews were consequently not conducted and processed according to the principles of the oral-historical method (Mücke and Vaněk 2011, 129–159).

For the purpose of this chapter, I have analyzed the oral accounts of thirty-three people born between 1920 and 1931. I utilized the recordings that had already been pre-summarized[9] because summaries enabled an easier orientation within the recording. I have decided to analyze rather a large number of life stories to make my research representative and generalizable. Because of the breadth and length of the narrations, no complete or precise transcriptions were made, as it is a necessity in the case of oral history interviews. To reflect my position in the entire process, it must be noted that I was not involved in producing the recordings and obtained these data in 2021. Therefore, unfortunately, I cannot draw conclusions from the non-verbal communication of the narrator or knowledge of the situation. However, I asked the director of the Museum and its employees about their collection methods during my fieldwork in the Museum in February 2021, and that offered me some possibility to include additional information in addition to the recordings and their summaries.

Importantly, my method of analysis consisted of listening to oral accounts and taking detailed notes about the content as well as their formal aspects. Even though the methodology can be considered rather heuristic, this first scientific analysis and interpretation of these narrations aim to initiate the process of understanding the collective memory in the Hlučín Region. As such, the oral accounts at my disposal represent a unique set of data that cannot be replicated because the World War II generation of experience is disappearing.

Analysis of formal aspects of narrations

In the following section, I will outline the most distinctive culturally based ways of talking about the past and rhetorical tools of the narrations and set them into conceptual context. The narrations show that

9 The summaries consist of a short profile of the interviewees and bullet points of topics of their accounts.

the Hlučín narrative of World War II has been silenced for a long time because respondents were not used to sharing their experiences with strangers. However, during some recordings, family members or friends were present as well, and it was clear that respondents had shared their life stories with their family or friends with similar experiences. Some respondents also made clear that from their point of view, their story was important to be shared, especially with younger generations. Still, some of the respondents spoke hesitantly about their life, and were sometimes even afraid to say something that they believed could be used against them. One respondent (male, born 1929, initials N. W.) even admitted being afraid of telling his personal story to the Museum employee recording him. He asked what the recording was for, and he expressed distrust towards the institution: "I am so careful, so that ... that ... when I would ... tell you some confidential thing, you would have to guarantee discreteness, because I am afraid to talk."[10] Finally, he overcame his uncertainties and was particularly persuaded by the fact that the younger generation would have the opportunity to learn about Hlučíns' experiences of the twentieth century thanks to his testimony.

During a recording with another narrator (male, born 1926, A. L.), his wife tried to respectfully end the discussion when her husband started to speak about the post-war experience, and mentioned their wedding in 1952. Obviously, she felt that the narration became too intimate and did not want to share her personal life with the Museum staff or the public. Another respondent (female, born 1926, A. F.) was hesitant to share some of her political opinions but finally decided to say them while swearing quietly: "So what, they can lock me up." That is an indication of a great distrustfulness towards strangers (insiders to the region yet outsiders to the family), but finally, the courage to say what she stood for.

Another general feature I have noticed is that male respondents talked more than female ones. If women were asked to talk about their early life, they often did not want to say anything or did not believe their life stories could be interesting enough and important to be recorded. Sometimes they even re-told the experiences of their husbands or fathers. Men's experience of war or work has been regarded as more important to be told and archived than women's experience. In my opinion, the feeling of not being a valuable contributor to the collective memory is also reflected by the fact that only 36% of all narrations recorded by the Hlučín Museum were female narrators (3.5% of the interviews were

10 All quotations were translated from the original into English by the author.

conducted with couples). Women were either unwilling to participate in an interview or were not selected for the interview by the gatekeepers or the Museum staff. This phenomenon was also observed during the previous sociological research conducted in the Hlučín Region (Kubátová 2015). The author states that the first post-war generation in the Hlučín Region was raised in traditional family patterns: women were supposed to care for children and family matters, and men were supposed to work. Following that tradition, they created traditional partner relationships with authoritarian and patriarchal characteristics (Kubátová 2015, 237).

I have paid particular attention to the perception of nationalities and identities in the everyday lives of Hlučíns. The respondents were usually asked about this issue by the questioner(s) in the final part of the interview (which shows that the questioners waited for the narrators to come up with the issue by themselves, but almost no one did), and asked if the respondent and his family felt German or Czech. Generally, three patterns occurred multiple times in the testimonies. First, most respondents adopted the perspective of outsiders to the region and claimed that between 1920 and 1938, they had been Czechs; between 1938 and 1945, they had been Germans, and since 1945 they have been Czechs again. This means that the people in the Hlučín Region had to adapt to the ruling nation and could not complain in order to not be discriminated against. They also felt discriminated against by both Czechs and Germans for their origin. One respondent (male, born 1931, K. B.) claimed to be labelled as "Hitler's follower" ("*Hitleráci*") by the Czechs in Ostrava, and meanwhile "damned *Wasserpolaken*" ("*verfluchte Wasserpolaken*"[11]) by the German school director during World War II.

Second, some respondents saw their identity as Hlučíns or "*Prajzáci*." This identity was often strengthened by Czechs from outside the region whom they had met at work, during military service, or while coming home from war. Also, in this case, this identity perception (partially) adopts the perspective of others. The third and smallest group of respondents felt affiliated with even the Czech or German nation itself because of family bonds outside the region.

Generally, Hlučíns did not assign collective characteristics to a distinctive nation and claimed that there are good and bad people in every nation. However, there was sometimes a rather hostile attitude towards a nation than a friendly one. Besides negative sentiments towards Czechs, negative attitudes towards Russians and Americans also occurred. These

11 Wasserpolaken is an offensive German label for the nationally indifferent population in Silesia.

attitudes stem from a bad experience with a group of people of a particular nationality, mainly during the war. The oral accounts made clear that historical experience supports the national indifference of Hlučíns of the pre-war generation and that they do not feel sentimental for either nation (Czech or German). The concept of national indifference (or ambiguity) was elaborated by Tara Zahra (2008; 2010). It refers to a population without a strictly bound ethnic identity over the long term, in other words, a population favoring no ethnic national movements. The concept was helpful for studying nationalities in the Polish part of Upper Silesia today. James Bjork (2008) and Hugo Service (2015) explored policies of nation-states and national movements and their impact on national identities from the foundation of the German Reich until the Plebiscite of 1921 and in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

While Service concentrates rather on the state strategies and policies, Brendan Karch (2018) examines the attitudes of inhabitants of Oppeln (Opole). He chose a broad timespan, and it enabled him not to go into detail but to conceptualize and answer the question why inhabitants of Oppeln stayed nationally indifferent. He defines the concept of the "feedback loop" that characterizes the mutual reinforcement of national radicalism and national skepticism. In other words, activists of different national camps frustrated by the ambiguity of the population were forced to radicalize the national struggle, and this, in a feedback loop, convinced the people not to side with any of them. A similar process played a role in national identification for the pre-war generation of Hlučíns (5, 21).

Main themes of the post-war narrative

The narrations covered many themes relevant to the history of everyday life from the 1920s to the 1950s.[12] I focus on the post-war memories of Hlučíns, however, the war and post-war experiences cannot be separated, especially in the case of soldiers who returned home from captivity several years after 1945. It can be said that all respondents preferred to speak about their experience during World War II and were much less willing to share the post-war experience. Sometimes it seemed as if the

12 A detailed analysis which would discuss the divergences in the testimonies is beyond the scope of this chapter due to the absence of transcripts of the originally conducted recordings. However, I will provide an overview the main themes from the post-war period that occurred regularly in the accounts.

respondents expected that the oral accounts should have been about World War II and that later life experience was not interesting enough to be told. Undoubtedly, this has something to do with the fact that they were growing up during the war and were shaped by this experience (they are the World War II "generation of experience"). According to one of the employees of the Hlučín Museum who was involved in recording the testimonies, the trauma of the war was intense and has remained the key event of their lives.

Additionally, narratives of the war often had the shape of stories or anecdotes (with an eventful plot and single characters). Meanwhile, everyday life may have seemed eventless and not worth talking about. Another reason for not talking about the war may be to protect their family; thus, they did not want to talk about the period after their marriage. This could be also another reason why women were not as willing to speak as much as men. Women have been traditionally responsible for raising children and for taking care of family and private issues. The narrations also showed that the post-war period has been understood as an outcome of the war, and without it, it would have been completely different.

All of the male respondent's key memory theme was the war and their service in the Wehrmacht (and occasionally in the Czechoslovak foreign army). This was also the dominant memory of the narrations from women as they sometimes presented the stories of their male family members and did not share their personal memories about how the war influenced their lives at home. There were various approaches to loyalty to Germany as the country they fought for. Some former soldiers admitted they would have entered the Czechoslovak foreign army if they had had the chance, while others would not due to the loyalty and the oath they had given to Germany. The respondents did not discuss the Holocaust or war atrocities on their own initiative, nor were they asked about it. Joining the army was seen as unavoidable for every man from the Hlučín Region. However, many respondents said that the war was horrible for all ordinary people involved, for example, one of them (male, born 1929, W. D.) explained: "Every war is bad ... the poor suffer and the lords, they get out of it somehow." This reflection also indicates mistrust for elites, identification with ordinary (working)people and solidarity with members of the same social class.

Parallel to the war, memories of the front-line battle in the Hlučín Region also occupied the memories of women, girls, and boys. The Hlučín Region had been hit by strong fighting during the Ostrava Operation in

April 1945. Some families had stayed at home and survived the fighting in cellars, while some families had fled to the inland and had returned to their homes after the end of the war. The omnipresent need for food, destruction, civilian casualties, and war damages played a significant role in this narrative. Men who had come back from the war had dealt with the issue of getting back Czechoslovak citizenship. They had claimed that they only wanted to live everyday lives back home. Some had perceived it absurd that they had had to ask for something they already had had before the war. However, they had often obtained it without making any effort and either their mothers or sisters had brought it home one day or had received it for them and then picked them up from detention. Some men gained it automatically at the beginning of the 1950s.

When speaking of citizenship, respondents often touched upon the expulsion of some families from the Hlučín Region. No pattern of why some were transferred was found, but in some cases, probably personal connections, animosities, and contingencies played a role. One respondent (male, born 1926, A. K.) stated that his house was confiscated when his mother and sister had come back home at the end of the war, but his mother had managed to get it back thanks to her contacts: "[Mother was] a good friend with the commissioner, that Pavelka, they understood each other very well [laughter]."

Men had often been interned in camps after the end of the war – either in captivity or labor camps for "Germans" in Czechoslovakia or detention centers for Wehrmacht soldiers from abroad. Some respondents had complained about humiliation or bad treatment because of their origin from the Hlučín Region or involvement in the *Wehrmacht*. Remarkably, they complained about working without getting paid. The need for material security had been significant, and work has had high value in the Hlučín Region until today.

A whole family of one interviewee (male, born 1931, K. B.) had to wear a sign indicating they are German (the missing father of the family was ethnic German): "We have got the N" … "not a star, but the N like Germans." As shown in this statement, the narrator compared the experience of himself and his family to the discrimination and persecution of Jews during World War II and, in this way, classified himself as a victim.

Czech citizenship had had an uncomfortable consequence for men: they had had to attend the Czechoslovak army's military service. This often resembled the experience of detention or forced labor camps. The military service seemed senseless training, sometimes even absurd or comical because of the previous involvement in the German army and combat experiences. Some men had experienced bad treatment and mistrust against them because of their personal war history. Some Hlučíns had had to join 'technical auxiliary battalions' (*Pomocné technické prapory, PTP*) and had worked in coal mines. This alternative to military service has usually been regarded as inferior to the hard labor, but Hlučíns considered this as a better option because the so-called *PTP*s could have gone shopping or had left the barracks for a leave of absence and had received some salary (even if small). One narrator (male, born 1929, W. D.) who completed military service complained in the following way: "The others raised money and we were hunted in vain ...".

The communist putsch in February 1948 did not present a big change in the lives of Hlučíns. Mostly, the narrators did not mention it. When asked by the Museum staff about their experience in 1948, some respondents could hardly remember why this year should have been memorable or extraordinary. The changes in public, political, and work life after 1948 were seen as a logical follow-up of the post-war conditions. The discrimination for their historical and national background continued and was strengthened by vetting processes (*kádrování*) at work or in the town/village. People had been afraid to speak openly even more than before and had withdrawn into privacy.

Given the fact that Hlučíns traditionally had made their living in agriculture, agricultural co-operatives (*Jednotné zemědělské družstvo, JZD*) were a topic coming up in almost every recording. However, the topic was mostly raised by the employees of the Museum who were leading the interviews. The founding of *JZD*s had been accompanied by intimidation and pressure from above and passivity from below. The passive attitude can be shown in the citation of a narrator (male, born 1931, J. B.): "The socialization of the country began ... Nobody wanted it, they did not believe it." Some respondents also remembered the strategies of how they had been forced to join the JZD: uniting fields without the owners' consent or inadequate compensations for nationalized fields.

Remembering the post-war period also evoked memories of the renovation of houses, the building of new homes for young families, and the overall material renewal of the region. The last topic the Museum staff asked about the respondents was receiving "marks from Germany" – financial support from the Federal Republic of Germany for war widows and invalids. This allowance was mostly regarded as rightful. However, the money was often paid out in Czech Crowns instead of DM or vouchers usable in *Tuzex* shops with Western goods (*bony*). In the view of some respondents, this was how the Czechoslovak state had robbed the Hlučíns of what they deserved.

Thematic as well as formal features of the narrative has shown a tendency to self-victimize among Hlučíns. Hlučíns did not reflect on their involvement in the war from a critical perspective and did not speak about German war crimes, which means that they did not accept the role of perpetrators and saw themselves as victims. They felt that, in comparison to other inhabitants of Czechoslovakia, they had suffered because of their compulsory involvement and loss of relatives and friends in the war, the fierce battle of Ostrava operation, and their experiences of insecurity during the post-war processes (expulsion, national reliability, citizenship, retribution, and confiscations). Later, they had experienced inconvenience from state administration and ostracism at work. As a result, Hlučíns have withdrawn into the privacy of their families and closed local communities, and built up their houses, villages, and towns.

The victimization narrative has been observed also during research in families of (Sudeten) Germans from Czech lands (Germans who had been expelled and likewise, Germans who had been allowed to stay in Czechoslovakia) during recent anthropological research. The research showed how respondents tried to negotiate their roles as victims of the Nazi regime by identifying with those controlled and used by the regime and adopting the position of heroes. The co-responsibility for the Nazi regime was covered by narratives of injustice and wrong experienced in the aftermath of the war. However, this crisis in the life story was solved by the narrative of diligence, usefulness, and modesty. Thanks to them, the families could become part of society and survive post-war material scarcity. Narratively, they became "*heroes* of everyday life."[13] (Kreisslová, Nosková, and Pavlásek 2019, 357–361).

Conclusion

The basis for the research is the fact that the history of everyday life after World War II in the Hlučín Region remains unresearched. There has also not been enough research done to understand the construction of collective identity in the post-war period. This chapter tries to fill this research gap partially and focuses on narratives of various processes in the Hlučín community in the immediate aftermath of World War II, like

13 Citation „… hrdiny všedního dne."

flight to the inland at the end of the war, insecure citizenship position, military service of Hlučín men in the Czechoslovak army or property changes and socialization during the communist regime. I also show how these experiences had an impact on the identity construction of people of the Hlučín Region. Moreover, I have interpreted the main findings with regard to the distinctive historical context of the region.

In my view, there are three key findings to be highlighted. First, the Hlučíns hesitate to speak openly about their past with strangers. This is connected to the fact that all men's key memory theme was the war and their service in the Wehrmacht, which was, in general, traumatic. Furthermore, women often did not perceive their memories as worth recounting and worthy of being recorded, which is probably caused by the patriarchal family relationships in the Hlučín Region. Second, World War II has played a crucial role in the collective memory of Hlučíns, while the post-war period has been seen as a consequence of the war due to the aftermath of the war alone brought Hlučíns several difficulties. In contrast, the start of the communist rule does not present such a decisive event. Third, a tendency to self-victimize among Hlučíns can be observed. They regard themselves as an object of the cruel history of Czechs, Germans, and other nations.

The analysis shows how much the communicative memory impacts the construction of regional identity in the Hlučín Region and its potential transfer to younger generations. In line with Kubátová (2016), I conclude that the shared understanding of the region's history becomes the most important source of regional identity.

In general, this chapter also tries to contribute to the large and still evolving field of memory studies. Even though the Hlučín Region seems to have a unique history for the Czech Republic, the phenomena observed here may also be relevant in other regions in Europe. Specifically, parallel developments can be found in states of the former antifascist coalition where German minority communities survived the expulsion or population transfers in the aftermath of World War II. Characteristically, these communities have hybrid or indifferent national identities or feel strong adherence to their region. In the first place, there are such communities in the former East bloc, such as Mantaken in Spiš, Slovakia, German-speaking Gottscheers in Sothern Slovenia, and German-speaking communities in today's Poland – in the Gdańsk Region, Mazury Region, and Polish Upper Silesia. Nevertheless, there are also German-speaking communities in Western Europe: such as the autochthonous population of South Tyrol or Eupen-Malmédy Region in Belgium. However, a comparison of collective memory in these regions is beyond the scope of this chapter and remains a goal for future research.

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Weimar's Trauma or Frankfurt's Triumph? Tracing Stability Culture's Historical Roots in the Bundestag

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Abstract

Widespread preference for stable prices corresponding to stability-oriented monetary and conservative fiscal policies are widely considered fundamental pillars of Germany's overall economic and political culture. This 'stability Culture' (SC) is often referred to as a decisive factor that shaped the country's bargaining position and policy choices during the founding period of the *Maastricht Treaty*, the inception of the European Economic and Monetary Union, and the Eurozone crisis. Within academia, popular literature and media, a vast majority of authors consider this preference for stable prices as well as monetary orthodoxy and fiscal restraint, a heritage of the past. Accordingly, the peculiar German affinity for stability is often explained with and discursively linked to the twofold experience of hyperinflation, especially the lasting trauma of the dramatic monetary devaluation during the days of the Weimar Republic. As a second historical root, the contrasting experience between monetary instability and the subsequent triumph of the stable D-Mark is invoked when explaining the particular entrenchment of SC among the German public and policy makers.

The chapter traces these historical roots within the plenary debates in the German Bundestag. By conducting a content analysis of all speeches given from 1949 until the end of 2020, it examines the discursive link between historical reference points and SC. Doing so, three main results stand out. Firstly, within these debates, the study does not detect an overwhelming density of historical lines of argument. Yet, it finds a concentrated occurrence of both references to SC and their linkage to history at three specific moments of crisis and disjuncture. Secondly, such debates were clearly dominated by conservative policy makers. And thirdly, overall, speeches most often emphasized positively- rather than negatively- connoted historical events and experiences when advocating, defending or rationalizing SC, thereby favoring monetary triumph over trauma as a historical root of SC.

Keywords

Stability Culture; economic culture; historical narratives; collective memory; European Economic and Monetary Union; Bundesbank

Introduction

The turn of the year 2020 ushered in a turning point for Germany's economy as well as its evaluation in the public eye: Not only did the long-thought-dead "specter of inflation" (Schnabel 2021) make a creeping yet dramaticallyvigorous comeback. As the country debated its exorcism, simultaneously, both painful and nostalgic memories of Germany's monetary history prominently returned to front page news, economic commentary, and political deliberations (cf. Sinn quoted in Ferber 2020; Jakobs 2021; Müller 2021; Söder quoted in Barkhausen 2022; Hosan 2022; Holtfrerich quoted in Opitz 2022; Mayer 2022).

This conspicuous reaction to the surge in prices displays a peculiar disposition shared by the general public, media, institutions, and policy makers in Germany, that is its 'stability Culture' (SC) widely considered the mainstay of the country's overall economic culture or even its "civic religion" (Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2013, 752). Coined by the leadership ranks of the German Bundesbank in the 1990s, SC constitutes the notion that pervasive experiences in German monetary history resulted in a lasting imprint on German society and its relationship with money (Issing 2005, 333–334; Löffler 2005, 2010; Schäfer 2018). Specifically, this historical heritage can be understood as the profound, deep-seated preference for stable prices, respective conservative budgetary policy, as well as independent, stability-oriented central banking safeguarded by a solid legal framework. As such, it decisively shaped the federal government's bargaining position and policy choices during the founding period of the *Maastricht Treaty*, the inception of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), and the Eurozone crisis (Dyson and Featherstone 2009; Blyth 2013; Brunnermeier et al. 2015).

As the primary historical root of such widespread affinity for stability, SC[1] is often explained with and narratively linked to the twofold experience of hyperinflation, especially the lasting "inflation trauma" (Teupe

1 As described in the subsequent chapter, as an analytical category SC may not exclusively refer to the German culture of stability, but here the term will be used to refer to the German case, unless otherwise indicated.

and Barkhausen 2023) resulting from the dramatic monetary devaluation during the days of the Weimar Republic deeply engrained within German collective memory (Haffert et al. 2020; Hüther 2021; Gerchow 2023). Secondly, the contrasting experience between those periods of instability and the subsequent monetary triumph of the Bundesbank following the introduction of the D-Mark in 1948 is invoked (Kennedy 1998, 3–4; Marsh 1993; James 2005; Tognato 2012). Given the continuous discursive reproduction and renegotiation of those formative experiences, today, however, one can hardly distinguish between the memory of monetary trauma or triumph as the most important historical root of the German SC (Lindenlaub 2010, 77; Brunnermeier and James 2018).

While such a historical dissection of its causes may be an interesting exercise, an even more rewarding but largely ignored question concerns the role of different historical memories as catalysts or drivers of SC within political debates. Yet, whereas the inflation aversion and policy preferences of the German public have been subject to thorough empirical scrutiny (Hayo 1998; Ehrmann and Tzamourani 2012; Hayo and Neumeier 2016ab; Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2017), to what degree and extent different historical memories are invoked and remembered when setting a course and direction for monetary and fiscal policy has not been examined yet.

The study at hand aims to address this research gap. With the aid of a mixed-methods content analysis of all plenary speeches that concern the term 'sC' or its synonyms in the Bundestag since 1949 until the end of 2020, this chapter aspires to detect, differentiate and compare the link between SC and historical points of reference in the German parliamentary debate. By focusing on this conflation between past and present, it seeks to contribute not only to the understanding of SC but to the ongoing debates on the stability of cultural heritage, economic culture, collective memory, and the dynamics of remembrance undergirding economic policy.

With this research interest in mind, the study poses the following research question:

What significance do different historical memories as discursive reference points have in the parliamentary negotiation of SC within the German Bundestag?

To tackle this question, the study follows a four-step approach: First, it briefly introduces the academic literature on SC regarding its main concept, historical roots, empirical assessment, and influence on economic policy. The second section then briefly describes the methodical approach of analysis and presents five hypotheses for the study of the Bundestag debates with regard to prevalence, temporal dynamics, and actor-specific employment of historical references. Thirdly, following the presentation of the empirical findings, these hypotheses are tested and briefly discussed. Finally, the main results are summarized and reflected upon with regard to the overall topic of historical remembrance in connection to policymaking.

Literature review – German Stability Culture

As an analytical category, SC can be broadly understood as a country's or society's set of collective attitudes towards monetary stability and the respective policies and institutional constraints following such disposition. Hence, not a singular German but several SCs exist (Bofinger, Hefeker, and Pfleger 1998; Drexler and Hegmann 2006; Stützle 2014, 114–115).

Based on the political introduction of the term by the Bundesbank in the early 1990s, the majority of scholars ground their conceptions of the archetypical German version on the notion that at its core SC is constituted by a historically-embedded, deeply-engrained "national consensus"[2] (Löhr 1992, 6) regarding the absolute primacy of price stability shared by the general public, civil society, trade unions, employers and foremost policy makers and public institutions (cf. Illing 1993; Häder and Nienbaum 1997; Loef 1997; Steuer 1997; Hayo 1998; Starbatty 2003; Hegmann 2006; Lindenlaub 2010; Steinpaß 2011; Stützle 2014, 120–125). This collective disposition, furthermore, constitutes a shared consensus on a particular set of policy preferences linked to price stability and is likewise shared by society at large. Specifically, SC entails a predilection for independent stability-oriented monetary and restrictive fiscal policy safeguarded by strict rules and a solid legal framework (Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2013, 723–53; Bulmer 2014, 1246–48; Brunnermeier et al. 2015, 66–67; Bibow 2017; see Table 1).

Therefore, at its very heart, the institutional character and mandate of the German Bundesbank transposed to the European Central Bank (ECB) as its supranational successor, epitomize SC in the monetary realm (Issing 2005, 333–334; Löffler 2005; Tognato 2012; Mee 2019). Furthermore, the imprints of SC on fiscal policy can be seen domestically in the German *Schuldenbremse* as well as the convergence criteria

2 All quotations were translated from the original into English by the author.

in the *Maastricht Treaty*, its insistence on fiscal self-reliance, the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) and the fiscal compact on the European level (Underhill 2002; Heipertz and Verdun 2004, 768; Löffler 2010, 164–166; Weidmann 2012).

Table 1: 'stability Culture' and its components.

Monetary policy	– Central Bank Independence – Mandate centered on price stability
Fiscal policy	– Restrictive expenditure policies (budget constraint, low public debt) – Self-reliance & prohibition of public bailouts

Following this general account of SC, a vital branch within the research for this study traces the culturally-engrained inflation aversion and stability-oriented policy preferences to their historical source.

As the primary root of such longing for stable prices, media, politics, and a sizable share of scholarly attention agree on the twofold experience of hyperinflation that the German population endured following both world wars. However, especially the dramatic monetary devaluation that took place during the days of the Weimar Republic and caused a notable redistribution of wealth, produced social and moral degeneration in society, is closely (though falsely) connected to the *Machtergreifung*, and remains a firmly established reference point in public remembrance, is consulted particularly often (Haffert, Redeker, and Rommel 2021; Teupe 2022; Gerchow 2023; Neyer and Stempel 2023). In line with the seminal assessment of historians Gerald Feldman and Frederick Taylor that such experiences produced a "trauma that has burned itself into collective memory" (Feldman 1997, 5) which "has not yet been fully overcome" (Taylor 2013, 359), SC is the product of a persistent psychological wound which continues to fester. According to this reading, painful memories of 1923 are transmitted intergenerationally, thus continue to haunt German society and decisively determine its relationship to money, central banking, and public debt until today (cf. Haffert 2016, 34; Hayo and Neumeier 2016a; Hüther 2021; von Wallwitz 2021, 10, 295–298; Stocker 2022, 8, 331; Teupe and Barkhausen 2023).

Others stray from this singular line of interpretation and invoke the interplay of different historical memories: On the one hand, the Weimar hyperinflation, and, on the other hand, the lasting stability of the D-Mark following the second German hyperinflation after World War II. Following this alternative reading, SC is the product of the pervasive contrast between "painful memories of inflation before 1948 and inflated experiences with stability" (Löffler 2010, 139), actively shaped by the efforts of German conservative politicians such as Ludwig Erhard, who tied stable money to the success of the social market economy and the triumph of the Frankfurt-based Bundesbank which effectively defended the stability of the new currency against inflation (Kennedy 1998; Brunnermeier and James 2018; Mee 2019). Thus, as the D-Mark emerged as "an escape from past traumas [...] one fixed point in the ocean of flux and change" (Marsh 1993, 29) and national symbol of the newly developing "*Wirtschaftswunder* identity" (Tognato 2012, 42), "D-Mark-Patriotism" (Meier quoted in Engelmann et al. 1997, 91), "DM-Nationalism" (Habermas 1990) or "Deutschmark nationalism" (Kaelberer 2005), price stability was cemented as the foremost goal of economic policy (Abelshauser 2005, 40; James 2005; North 2012; Teupe 2018; Stocker 2023).

A second branch of relevant research empirically controls for policy preferences linked to SC. Their results point in opposite directions: Studies on fiscal policy, on the one hand, show strong support for fiscal rules and budgetary restriction in Germany (Hayo and Neumeier 2016ab, 2017), on the other, they indicate that there is no significant relationship between the level of public debt and SC (LeMay-Boucher and Rommerskirchen 2015). Similarly, a range of comparative studies on inflation aversion disagree in their findings: While one group of authors diagnoses an inherently stronger aversion to rising prices in Germany and the Northern EU member states (cf. e.g. Shiller 1996; Hayo 1998; Scheve 2004; Ehrmann and Tzamourani 2012; Hübner and Klemm 2015), others reject such assessment and refer to an average rate of inflation aversion among the German public (cf. e.g. Easterly and Fischer 2001; Berlemann 2011). Within such literature, especially the work of Howarth and Rommerskirchen (2013, 2017) stands out, which finds strong support for SC within Germany but rejects the notion of German singularly and an alleged North-South-divide within Europe as a deliberately constructed "myth" (Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2017, 400).

A third branch of study scrutinizes the influence of SC in policymaking. In doing so, scholars largely agree that SC indeed played a decisive role in the establishment of EMU as it served both as an ideational factor shaping the agenda, bargaining position and policy preferences of the German government and the Bundesbank as well as their "*central leitmotif*" (Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2013, 759) of strategic communications when arguing about exporting the German model of central banking to the ECB and establishing strict fiscal rules in the Maastricht Treaty (Heipertz and Verdun 2004; Dyson and Featherstone 2009; Löffler 2010; James 2012, 272; Schäfer 2018). Likewise, a plethora of studies on the Eurozone crisis point out SC as the central ideational driver behind the conservative response of the German government to the crisis when advocating to safeguard these fiscal rules against demands of fiscal transfers and monetary financing (O'Callagahn 2012; Blyth 2013; Bulmer 2014; Wendler 2014; Granville 2016; Matthijs 2016; Bibow 2017; van Esch and de Jong 2019).

Methodical approach

In order to answer the research question posed in the introduction, this study employs a mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative content analyses of the Bundestag's plenary debates from 1949 until 2020 (Mayring 1994, 170–172). In doing so, it follows a two-step approach: First, with the help of the Bundestag online search engine DIP, which enables a full-text search for keywords and word combinations in all written materials and plenary minutes since 1949, the plenary documents are sorted for speeches making use of the term 'sC.' While the term itself only emerged in the 1990s, Schäfer (2018) points to the fact that the concept of SC existed earlier and was formerly addressed through a set of derivatives and synonyms (see also Wendler 2014; Bibow 2017). Therefore, in order to obtain valid results when tracing the debate on the concept, all such derivatives and synonyms are taken into consideration. Additionally, alternative combinations of words that could also indicate a reference to the concept (e.g. 'currency culture') are added to the list of search operators (see Table 2).

Table 2: Keyword list: 'stability Culture' and its synonyms in English and German.

Central keywords	– "Stability Culture" (Stabilitätskultur) and "Culture of Stability" (Kultur der Stabilität)
Derivatives and synonyms	– "Stability Orientation" (Stabilitätsorientierung) – "Currency Culture" (Währungskultur) – "Stability Tradition" (Stabilitätstradition) – "Stability Consciousness" (Stabilitätsbewusstsein/ Stabilitätsbewußtsein) – "Stability Union" (Stabilitätsunion)

After extracting relevant speeches, for each text the *date* as well as the *parliamentary group* of the respective speaker, that is, the faction consisting of the members of each party or parties, is recorded in order to gauge potential temporal and actor-specific differences within the debates.

In the second step, a qualitative content analysis is conducted to control for the discursive linkage between the term SC and references to historical events or experiences. Such discursive linkage here is operationalized as the semantically connected co-occurrence of both the term SC and historical reference points within a speech. Specifically, it examines whether each individual text contains references to history linked to SC and which historical references the respective speaker employs to underpin their substantive statement vis-à-vis SC.

Table 3: General classification of historical references.

Positively connoted historical references	Ambivalent or neutral references	Negatively connoted historical references
– Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank – German Reconstruction & 'Wirtschaftswunder'	– General Historical Rooting	– WW II & Nazi-Rule – Overall German Inflation Experiences – 1920s Hyperinflation – 1940s Hyperinflation & Currency Reform

For this purpose, a catalog of different historical reference points was deduced from respective literature above as well as a pilot sample. These can be roughly divided into positively, ambivalent or neutral and negatively-connoted memories (see Table 3). Finally, the results of the content analyses are compared quantitatively and discussed against the hypotheses formulated below.

From the literature review at least five distinct hypotheses can be derived.

Hypothesis 1.1: *When SC is debated in the Bundestag, a discursive nexus between SC and historical points of reference can be detected.*

First, it can be assumed that within the Bundestag speeches, a discursive nexus between the term SC and historical reference points can be observed as members of parliament advocate, rationalize, defend or contest the concept. Such an assumption is based on the general academic and popular consensus that the German population's special preference for stable prices and respective policies is rooted in its history. Consequently, one may assume an overall presence of historical references in the parliamentary debates on SC.

Hypothesis 1.2: *A historical nexus is particularly prevalent in moments of crisis and disjuncture.*

Secondly, one may assume that such historical references are formulated especially in moments of crisis, during formative events or critical junctures, that is. when fundamental disputes about the continuation of policies take place, institutions or societal norms fail. There is an urgent need for corresponding decisions (cf. Ikenberry 2008, 12). This assumption, too, derives from both the general social science as well as case-specific literature, which underscores the particular importance of disjuncture as a catalyst for the recollection of deeply entrenched ideas, collective memories and the occurrence of cultural modes of argumentation as the source of *ontological security* (Giddens 1991) and response to the "the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time" (Mitzen 2006, 342) through recourse to history. Likewise, moments of crisis may not only produce a recollection of traditional ideas and identity but catalyze processes of reappraisal that thus bring culture and history to the forefront of debate (Blyth 2002; Schmidt 2008; Blyth 2013).

In the case of SC, the founding period of the EMU – the abandonment of the D-Mark and the transfer of monetary sovereignty from the Bundesbank to the ECB – constitutes such an axis point (Kaelberer 2005; Teupe 2018). The second point, namely the global financial crisis and the subsequent Great Recession, not only posed risks to price stability but also to the stability of the financial system as a whole (Tooze 2018). As a third critical event, the Eurozone crisis from 2010 onwards marked a moment of particular uncertainty and fear of inflation among the German public (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung 2010; Zeit-Online 2011). The fourth moment of crisis is constituted by the Covid-19 pandemic and its potential existential danger to the EMU (Tooze 2020).

Hypothesis 2.1: *Historical arguments are used both positively and negatively.*

Since the historical roots of SC lie in both positively- and negatively-connoted historical experiences, the stability and prosperity linked to the ever-stable D-Mark and the *Wirtschaftswunder* on the one hand, and the experiences with hyperinflation on the other, it can be assumed that both strands of historical experience exert influence on the respective contemporary debates on SC and therefore resonate discursively (see literature review).

Hypothesis 2.2: *Mostly negatively connoted historical reference points are being employed.*

Given the preponderance of authors emphasizing the particularly traumatic imprint of the German experience with hyperinflation and its firmly established position in collective memory, one may assume that such negatively connoted cautioning or admonishing memories play a greater role than positive ones in the parliamentary negotiation of SC (see literature review).

Hypothesis 3: *Historical references are mainly used by conservative parliamentarians*

Ultimately, one may assume that historical references are employed primarily by conservative politicians. This presupposition, too, can be deduced from preliminary studies on SC. On the one hand, these point to its utilization as a strategic vehicle on the part of the conservative CDU/CSU and liberal-conservative FDP (cf. Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2013; Bulmer 2014; Wendler 2014). On the other hand, Haffert, Redeker, and Rommel (2021) found a link between conservative political attitudes and a mental conjecture of historical hyperinflation and the Great Depression, which ultimately led to Hitler's seizure of power in 1933. Therefore, not only historical references in general but especially negatively-connoted memories may play a vital role in conservative remembrance when debating SC.

Secondly, this assumption can be based on the preliminary consideration that the preservation of SC is an inherently conservative undertaking in itself and poses a defining example of conservative policy as it rejects progressive alternatives and change while preserving a traditional order (cf. Schubert and Klein 2016, 177–178). With the very term 'stability,' this character is also represented semantically within the very term SC.

Analysis

With the help of the Bundestag search engine DIP, a total of 220 parliamentary references to the term SC were retrieved that appear in a total of 214 speeches (see Table 1). Within those speeches, sixty-nine historical references were detected, which interlinked SC with past events, experiences, or memories. Thus, only about a fifth of all relevant speeches employed historical arguments when debating SC. The majority of parliamentary discussants, however, did not undergird their propositions in regard to SC with a discursive nexus to the past.

Delving deeper into the quantitative results, one can make out significant temporal differences regarding the occurrence of SC and its derivatives and synonyms (see Figure 1). Hence, political debate on the concept was clearly limited to certain time frames while the concentrated use of terms or synonyms appears characteristic of particular periods. Specifically, three distinct periods can be isolated during which plenary speeches made use of one of the keywords.

The first period ranging from 1968 until 1980 is characterized by relatively minor salience of the concept with a total number of twenty-nine relevant speeches (13%) including only four historical references (6%). During this first period, only the years 1970 and 1972 slightly stand out by showing a slight quantitative increase in references. Notably, corresponding to the literature (cf. Schäfer 2018), references to SC in this first period were only made on the basis of synonyms without using SC verbatim. What is more, curiously, there were no earlier references to the concept than 1968.

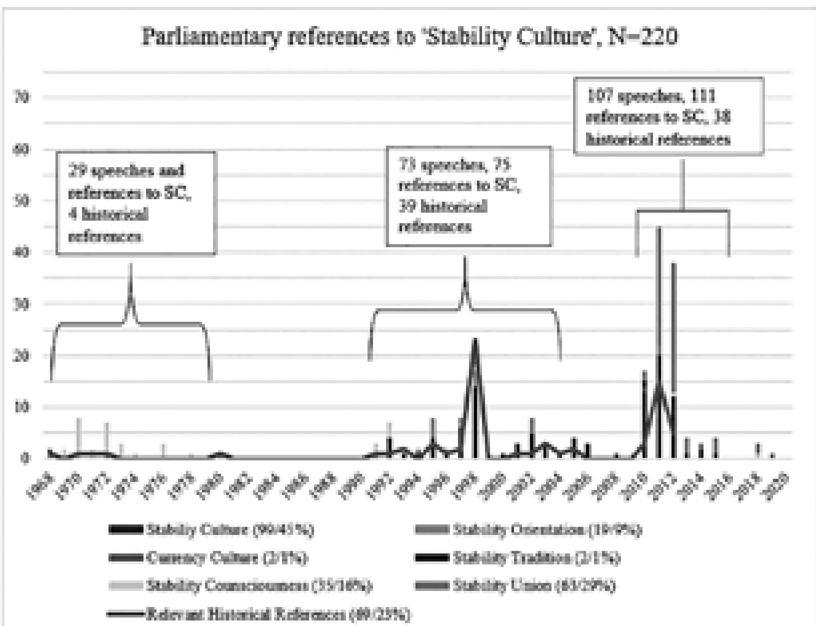

Fig. 1: Plenary references towards 'stability Culture' in the German Bundestag 1949–2020, N = 220.

The second relevant period concerns the years 1991 until 2006, while in 1992, the first literal use of the term SC can be detected. With regard to the frequency of speeches, a significant difference from the first period can be observed. Additionally, there is a striking discrepancy in frequency within this second period. During those years, a total of seventy-five (34%) individual parliamentary references either directly employ the term SC or refer to it through synonyms which marks a remarkable increase in comparison to the years 1968 until 1980. This general surge in salience was accompanied by a boom in the number of concomitant references to history. Specifically, a total of thirty-nine (55% of all) references to past events can be detected during the fifteen years from 1991 until 2006. During this second period, the political debates of the year 1998 stand out most notably: Not only did they contain the most relevant speeches (nineteen, 9%), but also the most historical references (twenty-seven, 39%), thereby clearly mirroring the intense public discussion preceding and following the Bundestag's approval of the Euro and the abandonment of the D-Mark. Overall, verbatim references to SC dominated the debate within this second period.

The following, third period is framed by the years 2010 and 2015. In this phase, again, one can observe a striking increase in the number of parliamentary contributions mentioning SC making for half of all relevant speeches, while in contrast the density of historical references (twenty-six, 38%) slightly decreased. Comparing the prevalence of different synonyms, a prominent increase in the references to the term 'stability Union' (fifty-seven, 26% of all references to SC) and therefore a *Europeanized* version of SC can be detected. This surge in salience points to the fact that the latter was one of the leading communicative concepts of the CDU/CSU-led German government when campaigning for a tightening of fiscal rules and against debt mutualization in the course of the Eurozone crisis and hence rhetorical supplement to traditional focus on Germany (Wendler 2014; Bibow 2017).

In temporal comparison, during this third phase, especially the years 2011 and 2012 are in evidence. Here, a total of forty-five (21%) and thirty-six (17% of all) speeches with reference to SC, as well as twenty (29%) and six (9%) instances of respective historical argumentation can be identified thereby, again, reflecting the intense debate on adequate responses and potential cures for the crisis.

After 2015, four sporadic references to SC can be detected which, however, were not accompanied by any discursive link to history.

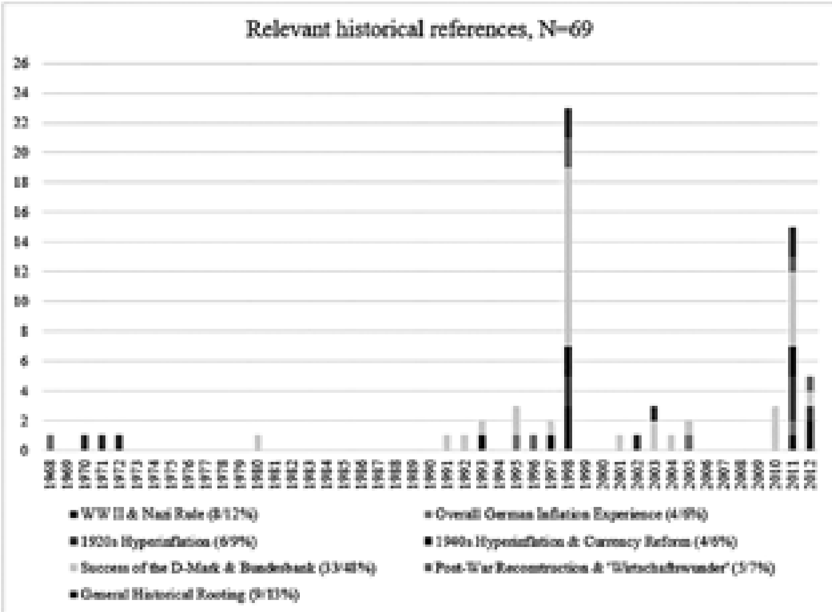

Fig. 2: Relevant historical references in concern to 'stability Culture' in the German Bundestag 1949–2020, N = 69.

Regarding the valence of historical references, both positively- and negatively connoted as well as neutral or ambivalent lines of argumentation can be identified (see Table 2, Figure 2). Concerning their proportion, the former clearly dominated: 55% of all historical references were positive, 33% negative, while a further 13% addressed a general historical rooting of SC without clear valence.

Controlling for the individual historical events discursively interlinked with SC, the most prominent positively connoted and most salient point of historical reference overall was the *Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank* (48%). Respective references can be found in 15% of all speeches. As the second most frequent historical reference point, nine speeches (13% of all historical references, 4% of all speeches) alluded neutrally to a *General Historical Rooting* when debating SC. The third most salient and most common negatively connoted historical point of reference was *World War II & Nazi Rule* (12%, 4%) which can be found in eight speeches overall. Meanwhile, as only six speeches (9%, 3%) contained references to the *1920s Hyperinflation*, historical experiences with inflation indeed played an important role in regard to SC as each four speeches (6%, 2%) linked the term to the historical experience of the *1940s Hyperinflation & Currency Reform* and to the *Overall German Inflation Experience* (see Figure 2). In the chronological comparison of the three aforementioned periods, especially the third stands out in regard to the valence of historical references. Here, the hitherto positively informed debate was strikingly augmented by negatively connoted historical memories as one can observe a relative increase in references to the *1920s Hyperinflation*, *World War II* as well as the *1940s Hyperinflation & Currency Reform* (see Figure 1).

Finally, controlling for references to SC and respective discursive linkages to history by parliamentary groups, there are obvious partisan differences, particularly, a clear dominance of the Christian-conservative CDUS/CSU group (53% of all speeches) and the liberal-conservative FDP (29%) in the use of the term can be detected. In contrast, the social-democratic SPD (14%), the Green Party (4%) and the Left Party, as well as the right-wing Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) (0.5% each), referred to SC perspicuously less frequently.

This disparity is even more apparent in the share of historical references. In this regard, the FDP (42%) and the CDU/CSU (44%) equally dominated the use of historical arguments mirroring an obvious conservative domination of the term SC and its historical vindication.

With regard to the valence of historical references, most negatively connoted arguments came from the ranks of the FDP (59%) and roughly half of the FDP references were negative. Conversely, most of the positively connoted arguments were made by representatives of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group (74%), while two-thirds of the historical references made by this group were positive (see Table 4, appendix).

Comparing the most prominent historical reference by party, the FDP referred most frequently to the *Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank* (eleven times), but also put particular emphasis on historical experiences with inflation, referring to the *1920s Hyperinflation* five times, *1940s Hyperinflation & Currency Reform* three times and the *Overall German Inflation Experience* one time. In contrast, CDU-CSU representatives most often pointed to the *Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank* (eighteen times) and *WWII* (four times) while references to historical experiences with (hyper-)inflation play little to no role in their debate on SC (see Table 4, appendix).

In conclusion, these results can be summed up against the aforementioned hypotheses.

In correspondence to the list of presuppositions formulated above, *Hypothesis 1.1* can essentially be confirmed. Indeed, one can observe a discursive nexus between the parliamentary address of the term SC and references to historical experiences undergirding it. However, the overall salience of this linkage to history is quite low as just under a quarter of all relevant speeches contain historical references.

Hypothesis 1.2, on the other hand, can be confirmed more clearly, though not entirely. Historical references can be identified especially in the three periods described above. The first period between 1970 and 1972 characterized by a high salience was marked by tensions in the Bretton Woods System and its consequent breakdown as well as the decision to pursue monetary integration in the European Economic Community (Blyth 2002, 127–129; Dyson and Featherstone 2009). Within the second period, which marks the inception of the Eurozone and the supersession of national currencies by the Euro, especially the years 1997 and 1998 stand out in regard to speech density and utilization of historical arguments. These years can be interpreted as especially critical not only to EMU but to the public negotiation of German identity linked to its particular disposition regarding monetary and fiscal stability, as in 1997, the heavily debated SGP was decided. Additionally, in 1998, the ECB was founded marking the end of national sovereignty over monetary policy and the abandonment of the D-Mark (cf. Heipertz and Verdun 2004; Löffler 2010). The third peak in salience can be observed during the years 2011 and 2012 and therefore at the height of the Eurozone crisis during which SC served as a guiding principle in the strategic communications of the Federal government and especially Chancellor Angela Merkel and Federal Minister of Finance Wolfgang Schäuble frequently made use of the term SC when canvassing support for the tightening of fiscal rules (cf. Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2013; Bulmer 2014). Hence, the salience of historical arguments is quite clearly linked to the occurrence of critical junctures and transformative moments of crisis. Curiously, however, neither the Great Recession nor the Covid-19 pandemic sparked (sizable) debate on SC and hence no historical references can be found during those years.

Hypothesis 2.1 can be confirmed as both negatively and positively connoted historical references can be found in the relevant speeches. However, *Hypothesis 2.2* is rejected as the latter dominated the overall debate on SC. Comparing different parliamentary groups, such positive historical framing of SC is present for all parties but the speeches of the FDP, which show a stronger focus on negatively connoted experiences, particularly in connection with inflation.

Finally, *Hypothesis 3* can be confirmed. Indeed, one can observe both a clear conservative preponderance in contributions to the overall debate on SC as well as in its historical vindication emanating mainly from the ranks of the Christian-conservative CDU/CSU and the liberal-conservative FDP.

Discussion

As the majority of hypotheses could be confirmed, the empirical results affirm the various explanations consulted above (see methodical approach).

Beyond that, a first surprising result, however, was the relatively low but concentrated salience of the term SC and respective historical references. This result points in two directions:

On the one hand, a convenient explanation for this may be those debates around monetary and fiscal policy in general, require neither verbatim reference to SC nor a respective historical vindication. As the scholarly literature largely agrees on the significance of SC for Germany's economic culture, one could argue that SC and its historical roots are accepted to such a degree that there is no need for them to be addressed. Moreover, such consensus should be especially prevalent among the expert discourse of the parliamentary debate which can be understood as an *epistemic community* (Haas 1992) pertaining to monetary and fiscal policy. Hence, one may argue that as all members of parliament understand and share the same cultural background and socialization only at critical junctures, in moments of pervasive change, and uncertainty proactive cultural feedback is necessary in order to determine route and direction and to regain ontological security.

On the other hand, a more specific explanation for the minor, yet concentrated use of historical arguments emphasizes that SC and respective references to past experiences and events are indeed elements of a specific *strategic culture* or as a *strategic narrative* adopted by individual politicians or parties serving specific functions and intent (cf. Swindler 1986, Longhurst 2004, Miskimmon, O'Loughlin, and Roselle 2013). As Howarth and Rommerskirchen (2013, 2017), Bulmer (2014) and Wendler (2012) point to such strategic employment of SC on the part of the CDU/CSU as a way to legitimize and achieve support for policies that could be perceived as potential dangers to monetary stability and to fuel a fiscally conservative vision for EMU, the selective discursive linkage to history may indeed reflect a strategic choice made deliberately in order to construct temporal meaning and continuity between the historical past, present, and future and achieve public support. Furthermore, the FDP's reference to SC and its link to history may equally suggest a strategic choice linked to its economic interests that come to the fore when joining forces with the CDU/CSU during the 1990s and the 2010s.

Secondly, despite the converse presupposition, the overall majority of SC advocates unexpectedly referred to positive experiences and events rather than to negatively connoted historical reference points when addressing SC.

At first glance, this result may be explained by temporal proximity as the *Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank* was the most prevalent positively-connoted historical reference point for SC. In line with this observation, only a small share of the German audience addressed in and through parliament experienced the two hyperinflationary periods in their lifetime whereas the D-Mark was in use until 2001 and thus a large part of people's active memory (cf. Shiller 1997, 53–54; Ehrmann and Tzamourani 2012). Consequently, first-hand memories may play an at least equally important role for the development and maintenance of, and hence debate on, SC.

Moreover, as with the inception of the EMU Germany's own currency as the epitome of its "*Wirtschaftswunder* identity" (Tognato 2012, 42) was at stake, it makes sense that during the 1990s advocates of SC addressed this ideational conflict in order to maintain their very own *ontological security* (Giddens 1991; Mitzen 1996) and emphasized the historical success of their sacredly-cherished D-Mark rather than more distant memories. Additionally, parliamentary debates by definition do not take place in a vacuum but are directed at a domestic audience. Thus, as mentioned above, appeals to positive memories may be a matter of a deliberate strategic choice when addressing an electorate that shared significant traits of "DM-Nationalism" (Habermas 1990) or "D-Mark-Patriotism" (Meier quoted in Engelmann et al. 1997, 91), and opposed the abandonment of the D-Mark. Hence, during the foundational period of the Eurozone, mentioning successes in terms of stability could have been the most auspicious point of reference for conservative policy entrepreneurs when trying to achieve resonance and identification.

From this vantage point, given the prevalent conservative use of the term and the preponderance of references to the *Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank*, such positive bias with regard to SC can be explained by the political dominance of the CDU/CSU whose conscious partisan identification with the stable D-Mark can be traced back to the *Wirtschaftswunder* years (Howarth and Rommerskirchen 2013; Brunnermeier and James

2018). Hence, its frequent references to the triumphant monetary stability can be interpreted as part and parcel of the party's own *strategic culture* in regard to economic policy that surfaces when there are dangers to stability and prevailed during the Eurozone crisis. In contrast to the FDP, hyperinflationary periods seem to play a less important role in that strategy and hence featured less often in the debates on SC.

A third surprising result was the curious absence of SC during the Great Recession and Covid-19 pandemic. This example once again underlines the role of SC in the CDU/CSU's strategic communications as the German government led by Angela Merkel in both crises responded with fiscally expansionary measures (Vail 2014; Tooze 2018, 286–287; Tooze 2020, 208–211; Seelkopf and Haffert 2023). Hence, for the sake of public support, undermining such measures with recourse to SC would have been strategically detrimental for the CDU/CSU, even though monetary stability could have potentially been at stake in both situations. As the FDP could not join forces with the CDU/CSU and was not represented in government, it therefore could have strategically refrained from employing references to SC.

One final aspect to consider is the significance of the results in relation to the research question. Overall, one can argue that the aspiration to unpack the rhetorical nexus between the term SC and German history could be adequately addressed for the case at hand. However, one has to be wary of the discrepancy between the term SC and the policies it entails. This study only focused on the discursive linkage between the very term and references to history, which therefore could represent a distorted perspective caused by a selection bias and the strategic application of SC on part of the CDU/CSU and FDP. In order to assess this dynamic for the overall phenomenon of SC and the different policy implications it entails, one would also have to conduct a much broader analysis taking into account the debates on specific policies linked to SC.

Concluding remarks

This chapter studied the discursive link between the parliamentary use of the term 'stability Culture' and the memories of historical events or experiences in the plenary speeches given in the German Bundestag. Following the analysis, three main results protrude:

Firstly, within the debates, the study does not detect an overwhelming density of historical reference points linked to SC but a concentrated occurrence of both references to SC and their linkage to history at three specific moments of crisis and disjuncture. Secondly, these debates were clearly dominated by conservative policy makers from the ranks of the CDU/CSU and FDP. And thirdly, while a cursory view into the ongoing media debates as well as the dominant reading of scholarly attention attribute the very existence of a German, national-specific culture of stability to be the product of a historical inflation trauma, references to periods of hyperinflation did not decisively shape the parliamentary debate on SC. Rather, the overall majority of historical references employed were positively connoted and speeches most often emphasized the stability of the D-Mark and the success of the Bundesbank in its pursuit of stable prices when advocating, defending or rationalizing SC.

In summary, the case at hand illustrates that collective memories of past events and experiences linked to identity and culture can indeed play an important role in the selection and assessment of policy options, especially when strategically adopted by single actors or one side of the political spectrum. This appears to be especially the case at critical junctures when past achievements or even individuals seem to be at stake in favor of non-traditional policy alternatives. The inception of the EMU and the Eurozone crisis, when the German public on the one hand feared for the heritage of the ever-stable German D-Mark and its post-war identity passing into oblivion, and on the other, dreaded the impending erosion of the common currency and the return of hyperinflation, both display such dynamic vividly.

Finally, the simultaneous, but actor-specific use of both negatively- and positively connoted historical memories in regard to SC, furthermore, illustrates that political or economic culture may not only rest on one formative narrative, historical root or monolithic memory, but corresponds to a conglomerate of different complementary experiences and their constant (re-)interpretation among society. These may be addressed in a concomitant manner or individually by different actors who tailor their rhetoric to different situations, audiences, and purposes. When addressing the present through the lens of the past, actors may compile and curate history, or – when justifying political preferences in the case of SC – choose between monetary trauma and triumph.

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Appendix

Table 4: Summary of analytical results.

	Speeches	References to SC	Historical References	WWII	Overall German Inflation Experience	1920s Hyperinflation	1940s Hyperinflation & Currency Reform	Success of the D-Mark & Bundesbank	Post-War Reconstruction & 'Wirtschaftswunder'	General Historical Rooting	Negative References	Ambivalent References	Positive References
CDU/ CSU	112(52%)	115(52%)	30(44%)	4(4/3/13/57%)	3(3/3/10/15%)	–	–	18(16/16/60/90%)	2(2/2/7/10%)	3(3/3/10/100%)	7(6/23/32%)	3(3/10/33%)	20(17/67/53%)
SPD	30(14%)	30(14%)	8(12%)	–	–	1(3/3/13/7%)	1(3/3/13/7%)	3(10/10/38/20%)	1(3/3/13/25%)	2(7/7/25/100%)	2(7/25/9%)	2(7/25/22%)	4(14/50/11%)
FDP	61(29%)	63(29%)	29(42%)	4(7/6/14/27%)	1(2/2/7/7%)	5(8/8/17/33%)	3(5/5/10/20%)	11(18/17/38/85%)	2(3/3/7/15%)	3(5/5/17/100%)	13(24/52/59%)	3(5/10/33%)	13(21/45/34%)
Green Party	9(4%)	9(4%)	2(3%)	–	–	–	–	1(11/11/50100%)	–	1(11/11/50100%)	–	1(11/50/11%)	1(11/50/3%)
Left Party	1(0.5%)	1(0.5%)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
AfD	1(0.5%)	1(0.5%)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Σ	214	220	69	8	4	6	4	33	5	9	22	9	38
Share in Historical References, share of Historical References in Speeches/ References to SC	–	–	100/22.5/22.7%)	12/4/4%	6/2/2%	9/3/3%	6/2/2%	48/15/15%	7/2/2%	13/4/4%	33/10/10%	13/4/4%	55/18/17%

Mapping Cultural Memoryscapes

From Primitivism to Contemporary Mythology: Some Strategies by American Feminist Art to Remember and Reinvent the Past

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Abstract

The chapter examines the myth of matriarchal prehistory, which has been embraced by second-wave feminist art practice as a means of preserving collective memory. The hypothesis that women once held dominant positions in society through matriarchy remains a subject of intense debate. Nevertheless, this concept has served as a conduit for remembering women's past, which has been distorted by centuries of patriarchy. I situate this phenomenon within the framework of what I call "feminist primitivism," a term inspired by the work of Lucy Lippard. This term captures the influence of Goddess imagery on feminist artists who deploy it to evoke female heritage or to forge new connections with their ancestral homelands, thereby empowering themselves. To examine the viability of this essentialist myth, I will examine two case studies of feminist art from the 1970s: Judy Chicago's monumental installation *The Dinner Party* and Ana Mendieta's series of *Siluetas*. These works aim to illustrate the subversive and political potential of reconstructing memory through mythical imagery. Acting as historians and paleontologists, these feminist artists sought to visualize the erased 'herstory' in the collective consciousness. By looking for models of female experience in prehistory and its mythology, which had been influenced but not entirely dominated by patriarchal scholarship, they attempted to rewrite history. Through a critical analysis of these efforts to redefine history, this study aims to illuminate feminist strategies for remembering and reimagining the past, while embracing its aesthetic and political dimensions.

Keywords

Primitivism; second-wave feminism; goddess religion; myth; installation; performance art

Introduction

The chapter addresses the role of reconstructing memory through myth in two American feminist art practices, those of Judy Chicago (1939) and Ana Mendieta (1948–1985). Rooted in second-wave feminism, these two case studies will hopefully show the subversive and political power of rebuilding memory through mythical imagery.

Myth serves as a vital mediator of memory, particularly when confronting an ancient and fragmented past, where the presence of women has been marginalized within patriarchal societies. That could be the reason why the emergence of the past and its re-signification belongs to the feminist art practice born in the 1970s. Acting like historians, but also as paleontologists, feminist artists tried to visualize the "Herstory"[1] which had been erased from shared memory. Searching for models to the female experience, many have turned to prehistory and its mythology, which had been colonized but not conquered by patriarchal scholarship; simultaneously, other women artists reinserted themselves into history as a whole. The monumental work *The Dinner Party* (1974–1979) by Judy Chicago on the one hand, and the powerful, almost violent, *Siluetas* series (1973–1978) by Ana Mendieta, on the other, will provide some indications of feminist strategies for remembering the past and for inhabiting it aesthetically and politically.

Feminist primitivism and the myth of matriarchal past

The frame of reference in which our discourse is situated is the artistic phenomenon which, in the wake of Lucy Lippard's (1983) art criticism, I like to call "feminist primitivism." Before delving into the political and art-historical implications of Lippard's discourse, it is worthwhile dwelling on this term, first of all, by clarifying the concept of "primitivism." This is an interpretative category strongly rooted in the history of twentieth-century modernism. In this regard, I would like to quote the

1 The invention of the neologism "Herstory" is attributed to Robin Morgan, activist, and writer, and a member of the feminist group W.I.T.C.H. (Women Inspired to Commit Herstory). "Herstory" appeared in the header of her article *Goodbye to All That*, published in the first issue of *Rat Subterranean News*, an underground magazine linked to the New Left. The article became notorious mainly because of Morgan's (1994) criticism of the chauvinism that was widespread even within the progressive New Left.

definition provided by the art historian and director of the first Museum of Primitive Art in New York, Robert Goldwater (1907–1973):

> It is the assumption that any reaching under the surface, if only it is carried far enough and proceeds according to the proper method, will reveal something "simple" and basic which, because of its very fundamentality and simplicity, will be more emotionally compelling than the superficial variations of the surface; and finally that the qualities of simplicity and basicness are things to be valued in and for themselves. In other words, it is the assumption that the further one goes back – historically, psychologically, or aesthetically – the simpler things become; and that because they are simpler they are more profound, more important, and more valuable (Goldwater 1938, 251).

In his famous *Primitivism in Modern Art* (1938), which is the first US survey on this aesthetic tendency, Goldwater describes primitivism as a pervasive trend in almost all the historical Avant-gardes: French and German Expressionism, Cubism, Dada, Surrealism, in all of which it is possible to find traces of this impulse, so deeply embedded within the history of Western art. In his account, primitivism is not reduced to a simple formal citation of non-Western artifacts, seen as spatially but also temporally distant,[2] but is rather described as a psychic, intellectual, and ethical dimension of the twentieth-century artist. Also, it may catch the reader's eye that Goldwater's definition does not include "primitive art," an extremely problematic but apparently irreplaceable category, which altogether identifies non-Western artifacts of peoples not ascribable to the domain of art history. The milestone set by Goldwater in 1938 was to represent an essential reference point for subsequent reflections on primitivism: William Rubin (1984) himself, in the catalogue of the famous 1984 exhibition "'Primitivism' in 20th Century Art: Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern," could only attempt to situate his discourse as an overcoming of the art historian's thesis.[3] I will not go into a reconstruction of the complex debate on the evident ethnocentric character

2 Here is a description by Goldwater (1938) of this very conceptual shift: "By replacing the temporally distant with the spatially removed, and by assuming lack of change among the 'retarded' people (sic!), it was possible to identify what was ill preserved among them with what had been lost in a more rapid evolution elsewhere" (52).

3 As this quotation from the introduction to the catalog shows, in 1984 Goldwater's text was still considered a starting point for discussing the topic. "In his classic text, Goldwater took a very conservative position on this question [...]. While arguing a 'very considerable influence of the primitive on the modern' in very general terms ('allusion and suggestion'), Goldwater insisted on the 'extreme scarcity of the direct influence of primitive art forms on twentieth-century

(Price 2001) of primitivism here[4] – Rubin himself had already pointed this out, using inverted commas and capital letters when dealing with "Primitivism." Furthermore, the debate on primitivism obviously does not stop at the twentieth century: the more contemporary approaches borrowed from post-colonial (Amselle 2003) and especially decolonial reflections (McLaren 2017) now offer new keys to understanding and tools to overcome the limits inherent in the very notion of "primitive." However, since "feminist primitivism," as we understand it, as well as the case studies under consideration, are rooted in twentieth-century reflection, I will take the liberty here of limiting my references.

As we have seen, primitivism, according to Goldwater, is hidden in the desire to find in the past a virgin simplicity, a profitable radicality, which can operate in the present. It is precisely this conceptual shift that allows us to move on to the definition of what I call "feminist primitivism." The idea behind this term is linked to some aspects of US second-wave feminism, in particular to cultural and essentialist feminism and the cult of the Goddess. These labels describe that political and philosophical strand, especially popular among white feminism, criticized for its essentialist nature, which gained prominence in the 1970s and 1980s in the West, particularly in the United States.[5] The search for a female identity which would no longer be limited by a patriarchal society led many scholars and activists to a form of historical revisionism that led to the myth of matriarchal prehistory. Eco-feminists and followers of the Goddess sought in a remote past a sign of women's inner value and a lost heritage to bring back to light. Feminist primitivism should be, therefore, intended as an exploration by feminist artists of a female visual vocabulary taken from prehistory in general and, especially, from the traces of these ancient Goddess-worshipping and woman-centered societies. However, as the discourse that follows will show, the past to which feminism aspires and on which it bases its political dimension has also a distinctly fictional character. This notion has been sharply identified by

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art. As our study will show, Goldwater substantially underestimated that aspect of the issue." (Rubin 1984, 18).

4 Titled *Overlays of American Primitivism*, my doctoral thesis delves into the profound exploration of primitivism within the twentieth-century American debate. It was defended in July 2022 at the IULM University of Milan, under the esteemed supervision of Professors Vincenzo Trione and Andrea Pinotti.

5 It is worth noting that the myth of matriarchy took root within feminist thought well before its adoption by second-wave cultural feminists. As early as the late nineteenth century, in fact, the two prominent American suffragists Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage used the matriarchal myth to support their theses for the renewal of society in a feminist sense.

Cynthia Eller (2000), a scholar of feminist spirituality and religion, who, in a much debated work, aptly refers to it as the "myth of matriarchal prehistory." The author finds its genesis in the 1970s and the existence of different iterations, yet underscored by common characteristics and a three-phase structure, underlining the imaginative nature of the myth and its central role in shaping feminist narratives and aspirations. The proposed framework consists of three distinct moments. The first moment encompasses the past, before the advent of writing, when social structures revolved around women. Their central role, derived from their innate physical abilities such as childbirth and menstruation, led to their being revered as embodiments and priestesses of the Great Goddess. The second moment represents a critical turning point, marked by a profound transformation that led to the establishment of patriarchy and the subsequent dominance of men in society. Finally, the third moment represents the future, envisioning a journey in which women, increasingly enlightened about their authentic history, gain the power to challenge and dismantle patriarchy. This transformative journey aims to restore the balance between humanity and nature, ultimately establishing a truly egalitarian society under the auspices of the Goddess (Eller 2000, 3). When second-wave feminists made the fascination with the first-wave myth of matriarchy their own, they intervened in the desired hierarchy of values. If, for the American suffragists at the end of the nineteenth century, the main objective was to restore centrality to the social and religious role of women, for their heirs, the restoration of the cult of the Goddess is of primary importance. In addition, the emphasis placed on female self-determination by the second wave downgrades the importance of motherhood, attributing it to the Goddess herself and not to all women. The feminist spirituality of this phase is characterized by the theme of the complex identification of women and nature in the matriarchal balance, which is praised no longer only for its morality but rather for its licentiousness. According to Eller, whose thesis has been considered too harsh and simplistic (Coleman 2005), that of matriarchal prehistory is indeed *just* a myth and not a progressive one. In fact, the matriarchal myth has potentially dangerous consequences arising from its essentialist premises, which are shared not only with second-wave feminism but also with right-wing extremism. Indeed, the identification of woman and nature does not guarantee political progressivism but, on the contrary, can potentially reinforce traditionalist positions, which are based on the idea that the social role of women, as well as their own individual identity, does not depend on the social relations in which they are included, but rather on their intrinsic nature. Offering a glimpse into the inherent political constraints associated with the veneration of the Goddess, it is worth considering the limited impact of such feminist ideologies beyond the confines of white, Western, middle-class women. This observation serves as partial evidence highlighting the specific social boundaries that have shaped the reception and adoption of these feminist perspectives. Joan Marler (2006) levied criticism against Eller's forceful "debunking" approach while endeavoring to defend the thesis of her mentor, Marija Gimbutas, whose contributions were instrumental in shaping the myth while compelling evidence that had eluded the purview of archaeology dominated by male perspectives (Gimbutas 1982).

As demonstrated briefly, the ongoing discussion surrounding the mythological concept of matriarchy and the contested boundaries of Goddess spirituality continues to fuel debates within certain feminist circles. Whether the matriarchal past exists merely as a myth or holds some historical and archaeological validity remains a topic of contention. However, regardless of its veracity, the exploration of this concept offers a thought-provoking framework for comprehending "Herstory." Even if one agrees with Eller's assertion, principally on the basis that the myth reveals itself to be more regressive than progressive, the question which remains is: Why was the myth so intriguing to artists? Even if it had created false memories, could it not be rediscovered in aesthetic terms and become a stimulating tool for understanding feminist primitivism? Even if matriarchy and Goddess worshipping never existed in the way feminists imagined, maybe it could be useful from a historical and aesthetic point of view to help rediscover their expressive potential, something which was embraced by many feminists and women artists. In fact, art intended as a cultural activity that actively shapes memory played a key role in building the myth, both imagining cultural and religious meanings for artefacts from the deep past and also writing the myth through contemporary artists' works. Therefore, instead of confronting human-made artefacts which had served as proof of the existence of the matriarchal past, I will explore two artworks, coming from the same time and cultural frame of second-wave feminism, from which the myth was born. As I previously mentioned, I will focus on two works made around the same time – the mid-1970s – by two women artists: *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago and the *Siluetas* series by Ana Mendieta. To do so, I will borrow from the theoretical and aesthetic point of view of the feminist art writer, Lucy R. Lippard.

In 1983, Lippard published *Overlay*, a pioneering book on the overlapping of prehistory and contemporary art in which we find an entire chapter devoted to "Feminism and Prehistory"; here, difference feminism and matriarchal myth played in providing a framework to understanding art by women and feminist artists. Lippard re-appropriates, in a political tone, the formal female lexicon taken from prehistoric art, renewing the sense of the female-male opposition modelled on nature-culture.[6] The critic's aim is not to identify women's expressiveness with the natural flow of "primitive" instincts, thus becoming part of a hegemonic patriarchal tradition that identifies women with the sphere of wild, unconscious and uncontrolled emotionality. Lippard, however, never denies that there is a specificity in the biographical and bodily experience of women that must be investigated and described in its own identity. This choice is evidenced by Lippard's endorsement of women's separatism in the artistic community: To make the female experience, as determined by social and cultural structures, a source of creativity, women had to spend time together without men, to focus on their condition, in a sort of artistic consciousness-raising process.[7] In *Overlay*'s discussion, Lucy Lippard's account of feminist primitivism is totally adherent to the ideology surrounding matriarchal past. According to Lippard, feminist art is really about remembering, reviving and re-actualizing the matriarchal heritage. From Lippard's (1983) words, we also understand also that women's desire to have a past on their own is the reason why a matriarchal past was imagined: "With the rise of the new feminism in the late 1960s, women's longing for a history and a mythology of our own found an outlet in a revisionist view of prehistoric matriarchies" (41). As many of her contemporaries had done before to enforce the myth, the reconstruction utilized by Lippard is, in many cases, approximate: she uses

6 Regarding the dualism between nature and culture, a reference point for second-wave feminism is Sherry Ortner's *Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?* (1972). In this brief essay, the U.S. anthropology tackles the issue of the pervasive and cross-cultural identification of women with nature, showing its human-made origin and its consequences on female imagery.

7 There were in fact some experiments carried out during the 1970s that went precisely in this direction. In 1970, Judy Chicago inaugurated the first feminist women-only art education program at Fresno State College (California), which was replicated the following year at the California Institute of the Arts, with the collaboration of Miriam Shapiro. In 1972, the educational experience gained with the CalArts students culminated in the creation of *Womanhouse*, an ambitious installation and performance project dedicated entirely to feminist art by women (Bryan-Wilson 2009). The next year, in 1973, Judy Chicago, together with Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Arlene Raven, founded the *Woman's Building* (Lippard 1974) in Los Angeles, a non-profit educational center aimed to provide women with quality artistic training (Alexander-Leitz 1979).

phrases such as "most prehistoric peoples"; "as culture became more separate from culture" (51); and, "discrimination against women artists probably has its roots in thousands of years of discrimination against nature, and against the early matriarchal religions" (52). As Eller has pointed out, such approximation is needed to build the myth of a matriarchal past since the archaeological and ethnological evidence of such cults leaves still space for some ambiguity. Lippard's quite generalizing account goes precisely in this direction, and the resulting image of Goddess worship is therefore lacking in ethnographical and anthropological details. In her words, "We began to find out that woman had once been seen as the omnipotent deity, source of all things, perhaps even earlier than 25,000 BC – the date given the *Venus of Willendorf*" (41). Incurring one of the dangers foreseen by Eller, Lippard proceeds to follow the conventional, male-conceived path by defining culture as the transformation and transcendence of nature, wherein woman's role as synthesizer, mediator, or simply fuser of nature and culture is destined to be transcended" rather than valued in its own right.

Even taking *Overlay* as the reference point to "feminist primitivism," our aim seems to be quite the opposite of Lucy Lippard's. While she states that *prehistoric* matriarchal religions are crucial to feminist 1970s art, I consider this mythology *contemporary*. My project is to understand precisely through this myth how feminist art can function as a (false) memory device. Even if the matriarchal past is only a hypothesis or, better, a tale of the origin with a history of its own, it still played an essential role in shaping the 1970s feminist art aesthetic. I will try to demonstrate this statement by considering two artists and their work, Judy Chicago and Ana Mendieta, whose works share a common interest in (anti-)monumentality and remembrance. Before moving on to the case studies, it is worth noting the peculiar relationship that bonds art, feminism, and memory. Indeed, the primary and best-known theoretical and practical contribution of second-wave feminism consists in exposing the social dynamics of hegemony that inhabit women's personal experiences. For this reason, women's cultural memory,[8] understood as collective experiential heritage, needed to be re-signified and perhaps – as is the case with the

8 Within the taxonomy proposed by memory studies, we adopt here the determination of cultural memory because of its collectively-mediated character and its connection to artistic practices of rewriting. See the definition provided by Mieke Bal (1999) in her introduction to *Acts of Memory*: "The interaction between present and past that is the stuff of cultural memory is, however, the product of collective agency rather than the result of psychic or historical accident." (Bal 1999, vii).

myth of matriarchy – invented. The construction of a new female identity went hand in hand with the need to rewrite history, also remembering the contribution of women to society. It was not until 1987, on the occasion of the conference "Women and Memory" at the University of Michigan,[9] that feminist scholarship, literature, and art themselves were described as a form of "counter-memory," made possible by ever greater solid active contribution (Hirsch and Smith 2002). Chicago and Mendieta's works will provide the opportunity to verify this double possibility of remembrance and rewriting: on the one hand, Judy Chicago's monumental work *The Dinner Party* will function precisely as a visualization of Herstory; on the other hand, Ana Mendieta's *Siluetas* stage a return to the past, intimate and at the same time universal.

Feminist monumentality: *The Dinner Party* by Judy Chicago

Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party* is a massive work that displays its connection to myth and history. As we shall see, the key concept here is "monument": the installation has to be understood as a memory device and simultaneously a medium to build and re-imagine the past, acting on the present empowerment of women. The work, now part of the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum, was exhibited for the first time in 1979 at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. *The Dinner Party's* main piece is a triangular banquet made up of three wings, each fourteen meters long: thirty-nine women, historical and mythological figures, metaphorically sit at the table. Each of them is represented by a hand-made place setting that includes a ceramic plate, gold cup, cutlery, and embroidered runner. One's attention is captured by the ceramic plates whose butterfly shape resembles the vulva. From flat surfaces, they are gradually transformed into three-dimensional sculptures, symbolizing the progressive emergence of the feminine. Overall, 1038 women are recalled: In addition to the ones sitting at the table, another 999 figures are inscribed in the Heritage Floor on which the banquet rests. Many paratextual elements complete the apparatus. Six woven entry banners welcome the visitor with verses that build a poem about the return to Eden, made possible by the Great Goddess. The impressive banquet

9 Later published as a special issue of the Michigan Quarterly Review (Lourie, Stanton, and Vicinus 1987).

is accompanied by the humbler, but only in appearance, explanatory "Heritage Panels" that provide detailed information about the women who participate in *The Dinner Party*. The installation resembles archaeological museum displays in which the visitor is often confronted with timelines and explicatory material. This strategy reinforces in the viewer the impression of being in front of authentic historical material. It is not by chance that the first place setting of the table is dedicated to the Primordial Goddess, whom Chicago defines as presents as the feminine principle conceived as the source of life and as a female creator of the universe. Thus putting Woman at the very beginning of time and history, Chicago re-invents the myth, or the religious scriptures, on the beginning of human life on Earth. But, alongside the Fertile Goddess, Ishtar, Kali, Snake Goddess, and others, the majority of women invited to the table are indeed historical figures, such as Byzantine empress Theodora, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella d'Este, and many others. Meaningfully, the last seat is for the American artist, Georgia O'Keeffee, who stands for all women's artwork that went unnoticed. In Chicago's (1979) words: "In my 'Last Supper,' however, the women would be honored as guests. Their representation in the form of plates set on the table would express the way the women had been confined, and the piece would thus reflect both women's achievements and their oppression" (11).

The Dinner Party's concept of legacy intertwines myth and history as a typical feminist method of rewriting history. As was noted by Lippard (1984), when the installation was first exposed, *The Dinner Party* is "a monument – a feminist counterpart of the Sistine Chapel or the Matisse Chapel, consecrated instead to the resurrection of the female energy – political and spiritual." (110). The work is monumental in its intent and size: this enormous laid table, a contemporary rewriting of the Last Supper. It should be noted that Lippard's enthusiasm acquires even greater significance if we consider that the immediate reception of the work was controversial: *The Dinner Party* was panned by, among others, Hilton Kramer of *The New York Times* (1980) and Robert Hughes of *Time* (1980). At the time of its debut, the destructive criticism pointed mainly to its kitsch aesthetic, which is entirely consistent with the artist's plan to re-evaluate women's crafts. Embroidery, weaving, ceramics, precisely because of their traditional connection to women, had been for too long excluded from the realm of art history. Nevertheless, the fiercer attacks are those which strike at the heart of its adherence to second-wave white feminism. Indeed, it has been noted that the only seat dedicated to a black woman is also one of the few not to present an explicitly sexual form (Walker 1982); that behind the collaborative nature of the work lies a clear hierarchy of roles, which puts the artist first (Jones 2005); and that no women from Portugal, Spain, and former American colonies have a seat at the table (Allen 2018; Allen and Chicago, 2018). Even if since the beginning of the new millennium the work has undergone a critical revision (Pilat 2018) and its author is on the list of the one hundred most influential people of 2018 according to *Time* magazine, it nevertheless continues to point out the limitations of white second-wave feminism.

Performative explorations: the *Silueatas* series by Ana Mendieta

After the roaring tone of *The Dinner Party*, I shall discuss a famous series of works by the artist Ana Mendieta, who explored the theme of the matriarchal past and the goddess religion in a more intimate and personal way: the *Siluetas* series, which was started in 1973. The year before had signaled a turning point in Ana Mendieta's carrier: she gave up painting following a need for realness and her desire to actively operate in society, developing an interest in performance in the framework of the MFA Intermedia program. From 1972, she devoted herself exclusively to performance and its iconic translation through video and photography.[10] The first *Silueta* (Jacob 1991), also known as *Imagen de Yaagul*, was created by the Cuban-American artist in 1973 when she travelled to the Mexican archaeological zone of the same name. Here her mentor and then-partner, Hans Breder recalls: "It is one morning in 1976, as we are planning to visit Yaagul, a Zapotec site in the valley of Oaxaca. Ana asks me to drive her first to the market to buy flowers. She tells me she has an idea for a piece. This is a site that we had visited many times. We walk up to one of the open tombs. She lays in it, nude, and asks me to arrange the flowers around her body, instructing me that the flowers should seem to grow from her body" (Katz 1990, 145).

This experience was only the first of a series the artists carried out until 1980. For creating *Siluetas,* the artist uses different natural media, such as clay, water, fire, gunpowder, wooden sticks, leaves, as surfaces or

10 In the artist's words, as quoted by Katz (1990): "The turning point in my art was in 1972 when I realized that my paintings were not real enough for what I wanted the image to convey – and by real I mean I wanted my images to have power, to be magic. I decided that for the images to have magic qualities, I had to work directly with nature. I had to go to the source of life, to mother earth" (143).

means through which to imprint or draw the silhouette of her body. The whole process is filmed or captured through photography. The project intersects performance, sculpture, and photography, both displaying the body and emphasizing its absence, disrupting conventional boundaries between artistic genres. The link between Mendieta's Cuban origins[11] and her performance art is problematic. Indeed, it has been pointed out that the artist, who came to the United States as a child with Operation Peter Pan, came from a wealthy family and had a high-profile artistic education in Hans Breder's experimental Intermedia program. Therefore, her experience can be compared to those of US white feminist artists of her generation, such as Carolee Schneeman, with whom she was very close (Schneeman 2011). The art critic Luis Camnitzer (1989) noted this aspect as early as 1989:

> Ana's work, as a direct product of her US education, has a different relation with Western mainstream art than that of Cuban artists living in Cuba (although as we will see there are elements in common in their art). Her decision to become an artist occurred in the US, within the mainstream's frame of reference. To a certain extent, her initial drive was to assimilate into that mainstream. Given her personal history this drive was to be expected. But, given this same history, that assimilation was bound to be incomplete. Her maturation process as an artist was based on the development of a refined awareness of this incompleteness (47).

However, what has been said so far in no way diminishes either Mendieta's relationship with her migrant identity or her interest in "primordial" aspects of the Cuban culture, which shaped her interest in the traditional religion of Santería (Lippard 1990, 86). To some degree, her rootedness in the art scene of the moment, prematurely interrupted by her tragic death (Katz 1990), allows us to situate her work within "feminist primitivism" more efficiently. Note for example that Schneemann (2011) herself recalled that they were "both researching, by the mid-70s, Maria Gimbutas, the Paleolithic, the Yoruba aspect of the inhabited

11 Ana Mendieta (1948–1985) was born in Havana, Cuba. In September 1961 she and her sister, Raquel, were sent to the United States due to US/Cuban political conflict intensification. Mendieta and Raquel were sent to an orphanage in Dubuque, Iowa, then to foster homes. Their mother and their younger brother Ignacio would join them in the US, not before January 1966. Their father, who the Castro regime had imprisoned for his links with the CIA, and the assistance he had provided in their failed invasion, joined the rest of his family in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in April 1979.

body, the sacral body" (184–185). Through performative language, the artist visualizes the link existing between her body and nature in its various forms. In her words from a 1980 statement:

> My art is the way I re-establish the bonds that unite me to the Universe. It is a return to the maternal source. Through the making of earth/body works I become one with the earth. It is like being encompassed by nature, an afterimage of the original shelter within the womb. The works are made dialectically in response to the particulars of a landscape. All the sculptures are human scale, thus visualizing the body as an extension of nature and nature as an extension of the body. This obsessive act of reasserting my ties with the earth is an objectification of my existence. The works recall prehistoric beliefs of an omnipresent female force whose body parts made the earth a living creature. In essence my works are the reactivation of primeval beliefs at work within the human psyche. (Mendieta 2015, 323)

In these often-quoted lines, the primitivist theme of reconnecting with nature by assuming a religious and ritual posture is merged with the artist's autobiography. The experience of being uprooted at the origin results in a need to regain her birthplace: The earth in which the silhouette is cast becomes like the maternal womb. Again, as happens in the myth of matriarchal prehistory, the identification of women with Mother Earth and Goddess imagery[12] is strong. However, the memory which Mendieta is recalling is different: The universal and essentialist frame of reference of "Herstory" this time has been taken back to the personal human scale. In a famous poem from 1981, "Pain of Cuba, Body I Am" Mendieta expresses the pain of exile and built a sense of connection. The body mentioned in the title is both individual and collective as she describes her existential condition, pointing to the cultural and social objectification of women and ethnic Others (Cabañas 1999). That is why Mendieta's artistic research cannot be easily shared with Chicago's determinations. Mendieta's Goddess imagery is mediated by her heritage and

12 Mendieta's self-identification with the Goddess is reinforced by her sister Raquel's proposed reading of her work shortly after her death (Mendieta Harrington 1988). She writes: "Ana became the earth and the earth goddess became Ana. By 1980, when the series ended, Ana and the goddess were one" (Mendieta Harrington 1988, 39). Nevertheless, more recent readings of the artist's legacy, perhaps in virtue of the general overcoming of second-wave feminism in a postmodernist direction, tend to downgrade this reference. For example, according to Ellen Teofer (2002), "Mendieta's work does draw on the personal, the biographical, the intimate, and the body – all traditional concerns of '70s 'essentialist' feminist art. However, it does so precisely without re-establishing a 'heroic' unified subjectivity" (240).

her desire to regain possession of it. As evidence of Mendieta's growing interest in her homeland culture, the work created for the issue of the feminist magazine, *Heresies,* is dedicated to the Great Goddess (Mendieta 1981). Here Mendieta offers a rewriting of the tale of the Black Venus (Blocker 2010), which represents the irreducible identity of the colonized. In this 1981 project, Mendieta translated the Cuban legend of the Venus Negra or Black Venus and included a photograph of a piece she had performed in Iowa a year earlier. The photograph portrays an iconic female body silhouette dug in the earth, then set ablaze with gunpowder. This complex iconotext gathers rich suggestions from history, colonialism, exile, travel and political struggle. This autobiographical element has been underlined by, among others, John Perrault (1987), who writes that "These helped her heal herself, if only temporarily. If one could claim even a small portion of the earth as one's territory, exile was assuaged" (13).

Many ideas about womanhood, spirituality, and ultimately, Goddess religion have been pursued by Mendieta in the next series of engravings she began to work on after 1978, namely *Esculturas Rupestres* or *Rupestrian Sculptures*. These are ancient goddess forms carved into rock, shaped from sand, or incised in mud beds. The link with matriarchal prehistory is patent here. Camnitzer (1989) noted that even if this last period was considered her weakest in artistic terms by critics, it has to be seen as "a logical extension, even a completion of earlier concerns." Here we see the fertility goddesses truly appear, while the previous silhouettes were, if goddesses at all, "sterile, maimed and emptied" (52).

Conclusion

The two examples discussed here have shown two of the many possible declinations of the matriarchal myth, which feminist artists adopted from the 1970s. In both cases, the myth serves as a memory device, addressed to universal women's history or personal autobiography. As we have seen in the discussion of Eller's critique on matriarchal myth and its legacy, the question we should ask when dealing with this fictional past – and its artistic translation – is the following: does feminism need to build a fictive past to have a better future? According to Eller, this is not the case, at least with respect to the myth of matriarchal prehistory. Nevertheless, we have seen how feminist practice and theory could be defined precisely as an empowering shared memory. In this case, recalling the women who have been forgotten is still a political act that can hopefully bear fruit for future generations. Currently, imagining a shared feminist memory seems possible thanks to transnational and transfeminist perspectives. Indeed, the intersectionality of these more recent approaches does not dilute the singularity in general. Therefore, this new shared memory can take the place of second-wave revisionism, whose essentialist consequences have been strongly questioned. These tensions are visible in the more recent accounts of the works of art discussed. In Judy Chicago's case, the postcolonial and decolonial perspective shows some limitations of the artwork, which is powerful and biased in its account of "Herstory." Ana Mendieta's case is also problematic. Her exile experience, her Western art education, and her being a (non-White) woman make her a hybrid figure, operating at the blurring boundaries of art and politics (Blocker 1999).

Nevertheless, revisiting our quasi-mythological hypothesis of a matriarchal past while acknowledging the necessity for precise historical and cultural contextualization reveals its potent role as a catalyst for inherent contradictions. Despite its complexities, this hypothesis emerges as a formidable tool for comprehending the legacy of the second-wave feminist movement. In the case of women's history, the myth's aim is twofold: on the one hand, there is the need to remember the contribution of forgotten women, to build a heritage that can affect the future; on the other hand, this very heritage is empowered through a fictional material, of which the Goddess spirituality is a perfect example. In my view, the matriarchal myth adopted by second-wave feminism proves itself to be an interesting theoretical tool as much as it shows some relevant tensions which are at the heart of feminist thought, namely the dualism between nature and culture and the question of gender and its relation to the aforementioned dualism.

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Archiving the Present or Beckett's First Production ever in the GDR

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Abstract

Krapp's Last Tape is certainly Samuel Beckett's play in which memory is the most central. Each year, on his birthday, the protagonist, Krapp records his thoughts and feelings on a tape. He is now a grumpy sixty-nine-year-old man, listening to bygone memories. *Krapp's Last Tape* is the first of Beckett's plays ever to be staged in the GDR, in 1986, the playwright being until then strongly censored by the political regime. Ekkehard Schall, Bertolt Brecht's son-in-law, played the role of Krapp and coupled the play with a poem by Brecht *Die Erziehung der Hirse* (*The Rearing of Millet*). Written thirty years earlier to commemorate the Russian Revolution, the poem tells of the successful lifestory of a Kazakhstan farmer who provides for the Red Army. Schall decided to entitle the evening *Lebensabende* (*Evenings of Life*), referring generally to old age. In many ways, the production was considered bad. It is largely forgotten because of its aesthetic failure, but it nonetheless survives in critical memory for its powerful instructive value. By introducing Beckett to the GDR repertoire through the lens of the confrontation of Krapp and his recording spools with Brecht's poem, the production certainly pays tribute to both playwrights. To what extent the opposition of the two playwrights in this production was a way to foreshadow the decline of GDR cultural politics remains to be studied.

Keywords

Samuel Beckett; Bertolt Brecht; East Germany; GDR; theater; political theater; collective memory; Palast der Republik

Introduction

The German Democratic Republic (GDR) was founded in 1949. A year later, Bertolt Brecht wrote *Die Erziehung der Hirse* (*The Rearing of Millet*). In 1952, Paul Dessau set it to music, in order to commemorate the thirty-fifth anniversary of the October Revolution. This epic poem recounts the outstanding achievement of Chaganak Bersiyev, a Kazakh who was a formera nomad. Yet he began to farm a new and stronger variety of millet on the Russian steppes according to the scientific teachings of two Soviet scientists, Ivan Michurin and Trofim Lyssenko, whose theories were famous in the 1940s in the USSR. His crops were exceptional and thus they became the main diet of Stalin's Red Army.

A few years later, in 1958, Samuel Beckett wrote and published the play *Krapp's Last Tape*. Each year, on his birthday, Krapp records his thoughts and feelings on a tape. Alone in his gloomy "den," the grumpy sixty-nine-year-old man listens to bygone memories of his late thirties. He fast-forwards through the recording, skipping parts he doesn't want to listen to anymore, or, to the contrary, rewinds the tape to dwell on other parts to complain again about personal events such as the death of his mother, the failure of his book, or his unfulfilled love story.

At first glance, the link between Brecht's poem and Beckett's play is not obvious. However, in 1986, the two were coupled on a very special evening at the Theater im Palast in East Berlin. Until then, Beckett's work had been heavily censored in the GDR. Young British director David Leveaux directed the production, closely assisted by the famous East German actor Ekkehard Schall, Brecht's son-in-law. The event was titled *Lebensabende* (*Evenings of Life*). The fact that the first-ever production of a play by Beckett in the GDR was not, as one would expect, *Waiting for Godot*,[1] is noteworthy. Furthermore, the event triggered artistic and political controversy. And yet, it has been almost forgotten because of its aesthetic failure. In his review of the production, Jonathan Kalb (1987) went so far as to say that it "deserve[s] merciful obscurity in the annals of theater history" (73). But the memory of the event somehow survived thanks to its powerful instructive value. To some extent, the production questions and challenges the dynamics of memory, whether collective or individual.

1 The very first official East-German production of *Waiting for Godot* took place a year later in 1987, in Dresden, staged by Wolfgang Engel.

Memory refers to forms of the past in the present, which create and ensure the identity of a person (the individual memory) or the identity of a group (the collective memory). In the 1950s, in his essay *On Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs (1997) tried to define collective memory by explaining that collective memory "owes its success to its power of evocation and to the feeling that historical knowledge does not give the same understanding of the past as the present does."[2] (Lavabre 1998, 48). Halbwachs also pointed out that collective memory relies on individual memories as much as it influences them. Collective memory depends on how collective events are officially displayed and how people remember them. In 2001, Marvin Carlson published *The Haunted Stage*, a book in which he closely analyzed the relationship between theater and memory. He emphasized how theatrical tools build and shape the collective by influencing individual memory.

Keeping Halbwachs' definition and Carlson's considerations in mind, this chapter examines the shaping of individual and collective memory during the very first production of a play by Beckett in the GDR. First, I will look at how both texts (Beckett's play and Brecht's poem) offer, in different ways, a specific perspective on individual and collective memory. In part two, I will analyze to what extent bringing them together under the title *Lebensabende* creates specific and contrasting dynamics of remembrance, which affords a political reading and in which orality is central. Finally, in part three, I will consider the political and cultural impact this event had in shaping East-German collective memory.

Archiving the present with Beckett – Shaping collective memory with Brecht

Krapp's Last Tape illustrates the dynamics of memory in many ways. Each year on his birthday, Krapp performs a personal ritual of archiving. He takes boxes containing tapes out of his cupboard, selects a few tapes, and listens to them carefully. He then takes a blank tape, on which he not only records memories of the year but also comments on the memories he has just listened to – so that his recent and old memories can be found side by side, combined on the new reel.

This listening phase precedes the recording and proceeds from the ritual of reactivation of the past in the present. By listening to, com-

2 All quotations were translated from the original into English by the author.

menting on and criticizing his personal archives, Krapp influences the present recording of his spools. By recording, he transforms his present into memories. The voice is central to that back-and-forth between his memories. Krapp uses his voice as the main vector of the newfound memory he is creating. Daniel Katz (2007), in his article dedicated to "Krapp's Archives," asserts that "*Krapp*'s *Last Tape* manifests a series of transformations which are not self-evident: Memory as archive, archive as language, language as voice, voice as machine" (147). The tape recorder thus becomes a mechanical projection of Krapp's voice. Rather than replacing Krapp's memory, the device visually embodies it on stage.

In Brecht's poem *The Rearing of Millet* (1950), the dynamics of remembrance do not work the same way. Memory doesn't relate to a personal history but to collective memory. In the late 1930s, Russian scientists tried to develop a *proletarian biology* that would *educate* grain like human beings, in order to withstand the winter cold and double the output. In 1943, a Kazakh named Chaganak Bersiyev apparently confirmed these scientific theories and "achieved the impossible" – a harvest of about 200 quintals of millet per hectare (about eighty quintals of millet per acre). "This is probably the largest harvest someone has ever obtained from a cereal crop up to that time" (Höge 2006). History belies the real effectiveness of this "proletarian biology," since the experiment eventually led to terrible famines. However, Chaganak Bersiyev's outstanding achievement had been at the heart of a great propaganda campaign for the regime since 1939. Hence, it was still very much present in people's minds, as much as Brecht's poem was in the early 1950s. In his poem, he not only reactivates but also updates this political memory, which he transforms into a poetic work. This shift is completed by Dessau's musical rendition in 1952. That same year, Brecht's poem was used and sung to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the October Revolution. The poem, which already focused on a landmark episode of USSR mythology, was then used to commemorate its founding event. What is commemorating, if not "remembering together," thus building collective memory?

Both texts recall the memory of an event, which took place on the same day one or several years ago. While *Krapp's Last Tape* is about the notion of a birthday, an individual commemoration, *The Rearing of Millet* deals with the concept of anniversary, a collective commemoration.[3]

3 It is interesting to note that the distinction between anniversary and birthday do not exist in French. They both coexist under the notion of *anniversaire*.

A birthday is a social yet personal ritual, which celebrates the approach of old age and the disappearance of youth, leading irrevocably to death. However, a birthday is, above all, a celebration of a person and of both their past and their future existence. The character of Krapp sets up his personal birthday, meaning his own annual ritual, during which candles and cake are replaced with wine and tapes. He celebrates his past, present and even his future existence in a self-centered, almost narcissistic way.

The GDR had given Brecht the status of national poet and playwright. Boycotted in the West, he was to the contrary praised in the East. In the 1986 production, Brecht's poem was used on stage and in school classrooms[4] to cement a community and its collective memory. In 2006, in an interview for *FOCUS* magazine, the German essayist and literary critic Hellmuth Karasek even stated that "Brecht was [their] catechism" (Höge 2006), referring to GDR pupils. Karasek's account underlines the extent to which Brecht's poetry was regarded as a means of community building.

Moreover, an anniversary is a collective event, often a ceremony, based on a collective memory. That is a reason why, in 1952, *The Rearing of Millet* was part of the anniversary of the October Revolution and thus helped build East Germany collective memory. Yet, an anniversary is effective since it remains annual and regular. In 1986, at the Theater im Palast, when Ekkerhard Schall, "[w]ith piano accompaniment, [...] sings and recites fifty of the fifty-two verses" of *The Rearing of Millet*, these are "well known to East Germans from their school lessons" (Kalb 1987, 76). The effect is emphasized by a youthful-looking costume: "a casual jacket and a boyish skullcap" (Kalb 1987, 76). On the one hand, the performance appeals not only to the personal memories of the East-German audience but also to the collective and cultural memory of the GDR. On the other hand, the aura that the poem may have had in 1952 is no longer effective in 1986 because of the propagandist hammering it implies. In his book *Keine Versöhnung mit dem Nichts* (*No Reconciliation with the Void*), Frank Bechert (1997) offers a meticulous analysis of the reception of Beckett in the GDR. The German scholar very much emphasizes the political failure of the 1986 production by stressing the fact that Brecht's poem relies on false scientific theories that led to real starvation: "But to misuse it as *an*

4 Interestingly, poetry has traditionally had a mnemonic function, particularly important in the learning and recitation processes, which is highly conducive to the construction of a collective memory in school.

ideological hammer, in the knowledge of the [scientific] errors on which it is based, in order, as one critic aptly put it, to 'bash Beckett,' is not only pathetic, but also unfair to both authors. The long condemnation of Beckett has thus had unmistakable consequences" (303).

In his book *Politik mit der Erinnerung* (*Politics towards Memory*), Peter Reichel (1995) tackles the issue of German policies towards national memory of World War II. His analysis underlines how during forty years, the two states of East Germany and West Germany used strong collective memory policies not only to deal with the past but also to be distinguishable from the rival (35–36). Peter Reichel emphasizes the idea that the GDR built its collective memory on new founding myths that praised communism against fascism. Moreover, Marvin Carlson (2001) observes that "when modern nationalism arose [...] historical stories again utilized the medium of theater to present – or, rather, to represent, reinscribe, and reinforce – this new cultural construction" (3). The very first Beckett production in the GDR pertained to the very same political mechanism. Fascism was then replaced by capitalism. Poetry and song on a theatrical stage aimed to cement the foundation of East German collective memory by influencing individual memories.

Both Beckett's play and Brecht's poem contain a particular vision of the construction and functioning of memory, be it individual or collective. They both illustrate memory as a form of ritual, in which orality and voice are central to the process of recollection. The memorial process on the one hand goes through the voice through the machine in *Krapp's Last Tape*; on the other hand, it recalls song and recitation from childhood in *The Rearing of Millet*. Beckett – a major transgressor in terms of form at least – was seen as the epitome of Bourgeois theater and culture in the former GDR. Beckett's theater opens the gate to individual and individualistic voices, which are unbearable for the East-German regime to listen to. As a matter of fact, most famous Beckett's plays are voices of lost men, wandering and waiting for whatever could happen (*Waiting for Godot*), disabled people going round and round in circles, old people stuck in garbage cans (*Endgame*), or stuck in a heap (*Happy Days*). Beckett's theater voices individuals who seem to have no future, no goal, and who roam aimlessly without getting anything done. His dark aesthetics and flat language are the opposite of the aesthetics promoted by Socialist Realism which pictures strong men and women accomplishing exploits, and which excessively uses the flamboyant vocabulary of victory

Krapp and Chaganak Bersijew: a strange but memorable pairing

The attractive timorous whispers of something new

Although in May 1986, the Theater im Palast staged Beckett's very first production in the GDR, the title of the production mentioned neither Beckett nor Brecht. The evening was entitled *Lebensabdende*, literally "Evenings of Life," a German word used to refer to old age metaphorically. The plural form must be taken into consideration for an accurate interpretation since it suggests that several elements are close to their *Lebensabend*.

Indeed, at first reading, the title of the event seems to resonate only with Beckett's text. Krapp is old, while Chaganak Bersiyev is vigorous at the height of his glory and the height of the regime he supports. Combined, the two characters echo each other despite their differences. The title of the event influences the reading of each play, and the two plays together. One could also consider a more encompassing reading: the title metaphorically foreshadows the end of life of the two works presented, and even the end of their authors. However, this being Beckett's very first performance in the GDR, and given the playwright's success, this hypothesis can easily be dismissed. Similarly, we cannot state that the title would signify the end of Brecht's work. As a great theorist and playwright, Brecht was famous outside the USSR even then, and he is still world-famous today. The title of the event offers a foretaste of Chaganak Bersiyev's *Lebensabend*, and by metonymy, of the whole system he embodies.

The importance of orality, speaking and singing, mentioned earlier, enables us to interpret further the title of the production. Although Frank Bechert contrasts the voice in *Krapp's Last Tape* to the music in *The Rearing of Millet*, both parts of the evening contain singing. After listening to the first tape, Krapp "goes backstage into darkness" (Beckett 1958, 7) and sings with a trembling voice the first lyrics of the traditional prayer, "Now the day is over" : "Now the day is over, / Night is drawing nigh-igh, / Shadow" (Beckett 1958, 11). In his analysis of the Beckettian use of music, Pierre Longuenesse notices that Krapp's song sounds like a voice dissociated from any body: it is not the voice of the tape, not the voice of the active and visible Krapp, and, I would add, not even Ekkehard Schall's voice. In his article "Beckett et la musique" ("Beckett and music"), Longuenesse considers the song as an "inner voice," the voice of the dead, coming from the dark and from a distance, who Krapp will soon be after the play (Angel-Perez et Poulain 2014, 434).

This idea is confirmed when Krapp decides eventually to record his memory of his sixty-ninth birthday, in which at some point he explains that "[he] went to Vespers once, like when I was in short trousers" (Beckett 1958, 11) before singing again with an increasingly inaudible voice: "Now the day is over, / Night is drawing nigh-igh, / Shadow – [coughing, then almost inaudible] – of the evening / Steal across the sky" (Beckett 1958, 11). Vespers, "evening" in Latin, refers to a Christian service of evening prayer. An answer to the enigma of the title emerges. The quavering voice singing barely audible vespers with poetic and almost prophetic lyrics announces the evening of Krapp's life, his *Lebensabend*. Yet, the vespers remind him of his childhood. The singing voice pervades the dynamics of remembrance.

How to draw a parallel between the timorous Beckettian song of Vespers and the Brechtian epic poem sung by Schall that follows? Brecht had a peculiar point of view on music. Music and songs should rather divert than entertain. He calls for an aesthetic based on the unexpected and the rupture against the illusion of reality. Music should be nothing but a tool to give a bit more "unreality," more "unnaturalness" to the play, opera or poem. Nevertheless, Brecht longed to create epic music. While speaking with Dessau about the setting of his poem to music, Brecht was convinced ancient Greek epic poems had always been sung (Banoun 2008, 341). He wanted *The Rearing of Millet* to be like a modern adaptation of an epic poem, diverting and educating children. Chaganak Bersiyev in this case should have become almost a mythological hero, who educates not only millet but also minds.

The production presents two very different ways to understand music. Although Krapp intercuts his vespers by ungainly coughing, his humming has a mesmerizing, personal, almost intimate effect that is more important than the message. Krapp's vespers nearly fail to bring him to his old age, to his evening of life, since through the process of memory, it sends him back to his childhood. On the other hand, the music of Brecht's song-poem is like a lively patriotic and communist song, in which the message takes precedence over the effect. Today, this political message belongs to the past. The poem has not quite achieved the aura of the epic poems to which Brecht aspired. According to Kalb's (1987) review of the play, the night he was in the audience, spectators appeared to prefer the intimate effect of Krapp's shy and timid singing since almost 40% left before the second part of the premiere evening.[5]

Playing *Krapp's Last Tape* and then *The Rearing of Millet* opens the way for *Neues Deutschland*'s interpretation – the newspaper where Brecht had published the very first version of *The Rearing of Millet*. The newspaper noticed a "fantastic poetic imagery" (Ebert 1986, 4) in the confrontation of the two works. It drew a logical link between the isolated and lonely Krapp and the successful Chaganak Bersiyev, as if Krapp eventually achieved a rich and fulfilling life in and for the community (Ebert 1986, 4). The journalist emphasizes the actor's particularly cheerful interpretation of Brecht's poem. Krapp's loneliness is counterbalanced by Chaganak Bersiyev's achievement. However, another reading of the event is possible. In his interview with Kalb, Schall admitted to thinking about changing the order of the sequence. He hesitated to play Beckett in the second part to leave "a stronger impact" on his audience. This clarification invalidates the *Neues Deutschland* hypothesis about the production's intentions. Despite the music, Krapp's last lines have a powerful effect on the audience: "Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back" (Beckett 1958, 12).

Contrary to what the archive of his memories might imply, Krapp's words suggest the possibility of a change, of progress towards something else. Moreover, *the fire that burns inside* takes on a different meaning, considering the context of the latent revolution that will take place three years later. No doubt, this last line still resonated strongly with the audience who stayed when the second part began. The Kazakh farmer's feat may sound like the "best years" of a regime that was ending. One can now read in retrospect the juxtaposition of Krapp's last lines with Brecht's sung poem; the sequence announces the old age of the era described in the poem. The feeling, not to say the promise of something else, is also emphasized through props that did not exist in the GDR. The event opened the stage with a character eating big yellow bananas, which were not sold in the GDR. This fruit embodied the fascinating strangeness of foreign countries. Moreover, Schall used a tape recorder and a microphone from a brand unknown in the GDR (Bechert 1997, 299–300). With hindsight, Krapp's hesitant vespers were not a new way to listen to music in the theater. Still, they certainly appeared as a shy

5 The production had been staged several times. In *Keine Versöhnung mit dem Nichts,* Frank Bechert (1997) stresses that the audience generally enjoyed the production, albeit not enthusiastically (304).

lens to bring an inner fire to the spectator in search of another voice, another answer, whether it comes from the darkness for Krapp, or the West for East Germans.

A contrasting combination to mark the political distance

Krapp's Last Tape and *The Rearing of Millet* are inherently opposed. It is very hard to argue that the two texts were coupled for aesthetic reasons. As early as 1987, Kalb hypothesized that: "I suspected at first that permission to perform the Beckett was granted on condition that it be paired with the Brecht – which calls up a delightful mental picture of plays as alchemical laboratory beakers filled with colored liquids that can neutralize each other if mixed according to mysterious formulas" (76). In 1993, German professor of Irish Studies, Werner Huber (1993) concurred with this idea and wrote that "an evening of pure Beckett would have been [perceived] too dangerous" (52) for the communist regime. While Brecht was considered a national figure of the regime, Beckett was heavily censored in the GDR. His work was often presented as decadent bourgeois idealism, symbolizing a collapsing society. In this context, it is highly likely that the very first official performance of one of his plays caused great debate. However, in his interview with Kalb, Ekkehard Schall slightly deflected the question and claimed he saw no problem acting in a Beckett play.

> K: But this was the first Beckett production in the GDR?
> S: Yes.
> K: Does that mean you received permission to do it suddenly?
> S: I didn't receive the permission suddenly, just when I needed it. [...] I wanted to perform Beckett's play and have consequently performed it. I coupled it with a poem by Brecht, and the reason for that was that I thought of this common idea, this title, *Lebensabende*, [...] I don't think at all about playing Brecht off Beckett or Beckett off Brecht, using them that way. [...] The confrontation in the theater of socialism/capitalism doesn't interest me (Kalb 1989, 214–215).

The actor argues for a real personal, aesthetic and non-political choice. The Brecht/Beckett combination would come from features common to both Krapp and Chaganak Bersiyev. However, as Kalb (1987) states in his review of the performance, some "ingenious analysis of the relationship between this [Brechtian poem] and *Krapp's Last Tape*" very likely exists, "but [he has] not been able to discover one [himself]." (76). Huber Werner (1993) also points out that the link between Krapp and Chaganak Bersiyev was unclear to everyone in the audience. "The orthodox party organ Junge Welt summarized this Brecht/Beckett encounter in the theater with outright bluntness 'Why play Beckett, if you want to show that Brecht is closer to us?'" (52). This criticism has a strong political connotation, made even clearer in articles with an opposite stance, such as the aforementioned article in *Neues Deutschland*. In short, if an interference of the political powers is rejected as an explanation for the pairing Brecht/Beckett, aesthetic intention seems to be an insufficient, even weak explanation.

Frank Bechert (1997) puts forward several points to illustrate the extent to which the production was only an excuse to show how the two texts are "diametrically opposed" (301), in order to confront the ideologies they stand for. He stresses that the stage design and lighting went from a dark and black atmosphere on Beckett's part to a dazzling and colorful atmosphere on Brecht's part. Likewise, the change of costume is significant. While playing Krapp, the actor wore dark rags. In contrast, while singing Brech's poem, he wore a traditional colorful Slav garb with the "Kazakh National-Cap," a "Tjubeteika" (Bechert 1997, 301) – what Kalb called "a boyish skullcap". Frank Bechert (1997) points out how voice, whether acting or singing, was used as a strong marker of political distance. "Schall plays a completely powerless, broken, almost senile Krapp. He is a dead-living, a living dead, who hardly seems capable of human emotions. Krapp – in Schall's portrayal – creates distance. Quite different is his Bersijev. He radiates with vitality and dynamism and arouses the sympathy of the audience. [...] The use of music in the second part of the evening also promotes the production's aim of painting clear contrasts. While Krapp struggles to get by, with long tiring pauses, the really successful music arrangements by Karl-Heinz Nehring sustainably enliven Brecht's ballad" (301–302).

Overall, the two texts seem to have been coupled in order to contrast the two authors and the blocs they represent, albeit not intentionally. Thus, the reception of the production steers the interpretation toward social and political readings. The Beckett/Brecht combination not only stresses the contrast between the two texts but also illustrates a cultural progression rather than a polarization. I would argue that the production represented the decline of the GDR. The Beckett/

Brecht combination in 1986 foreshadowed the soon-to-be East Germany as a memory.

The Lebensabende of the GDR? – political and cultural resonance of the event

The 1980s: Theatrical peaceful coexistence?

In 1985, one year before the performance, Mikhail Gorbachev became head of the Central Committee of the USSR Communist Party. His policy of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *glasnost* (transparency) changed things considerably and led to the period of "Peaceful Coexistence" between the East and the West. The USSR showed its weaknesses, recognized the economic failure of its system and accepted greater social and cultural, thus theatrical, tolerance. Werner Huber (1993) explains to what extent Gorbachev's political measures opened the East German stage to Beckett. "Glasnost and the restructuring of East German society and politics have lent Beckett's reception there an impetus and have brought it to a level of acceptance which make it possible to survey in positive terms critical and theatrical responses to Beckett in East Germany. As history unfolds, Beckett, from being taboo and anathema, gains full acceptance" (50).

In 2014, director David Leveaux wrote an article for *Vice* about the absurdity of banning *Waiting for Godot* in Guantánamo. He draws a parallel between this contemporary censorship and the censorship of Beckett's works in the GDR. This article is an opportunity for him to come back to his experience as a young foreign director in East Germany and to give some key elements to help him understand the first performance of *Krapp's Last Tape*. His words confirm the assumptions of the German scholar. "The fact that it was possible to do it at all owed as much to the widely held affection and esteem for Ekkehard and the Brecht family in East Berlin, as it did to the stealthily influential effect of Mikhail Gorbachev's ascendancy in Moscow" (Leveaux 2014).

In his interview with Kalb, Schall also draws attention to economic issues as a springboard for Beckett's performance in the GDR. Because Beckett was famous worldwide, his plays were eagerly awaited in East Germany. The very first production of one of his plays guaranteed the event would be sold out. “Difficulties are sometimes simply a question of hard and soft currency exchange rates [Devisenfrage]. Formerly money was not the only consideration, that I admit, but now and certainly for some years we want to and will perform good and important plays from all countries. And hopefully that depends on us, and on our carrying it out. One can of course perform all plays by different means” (Kalb 1989, 215). Schall’s words confess to the will of East Germans to see something new. Planning a Beckett’s play appealed to people. The production bailed out the theater. The GDR was facing financial difficulties, and it had to admit that people were ready to spend money to see something from the West, especially because East Germany had one of the strictest censorship and repression systems.

The Theater im Palast: a hostile environment for Beckett?

The *Lebensabende* took place in the *Theater im Palast*, which was part of the huge building of the *Palast der Republik* (Palace of the Republic). The history of the place illustrates the dynamics of writing and erasing memory on the model of a palimpsest. In 1950, Walter Ulbricht, first Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) of Germany, decided to dynamite the ruins of a former Prussian castle heavily damaged during WWII. Instead, for more than twenty years, the place was left empty. Erich Honecker succeeded Ulbrecht as the first secretary of the SED and started the construction of the *Palast der Republik* in 1973. The new building opened three years later and quickly played an important role both in political and military decisions and in cultural and social life. The Palace included several restaurants and cafés, a discotheque in the basement, a bowling alley, a large modular hall often used for communist meetings (up to 5,000 seats), and an “improvised” theater in the main hall, the *Theater im Palast*. It was a popular place known as the *Haus des Volkes* (People’s House) (Hocquet 2013, 70). The architecture was also a prestigious model of the historical context. The inside was very spacious, open, and lit by either the windows or the numerous round lamps, which earned the place the nickname of *Erichs Lampenladen* (Erich Honecker’s lamp shop).

This building was a strange place to produce any Beckett play. The very bright atmosphere was a clear contrast to the traditional Beckett aesthetic. Moreover, the Theater im Palast was not really a traditional theater building. The stage was a small platform for entertainment, not really a place where classics were performed. Yet, "[t]he political significance of this [Palast der Republik] [...] was both the program and the obligations of the Theater im Palast." (Bechert 1997, 292). Indeed, in 1993, Peter Brook, in *The Empty Space* (1996), emphasized that "an act of theater" only needs an empty space filled with something to be watched and someone to look at it. In *The Haunted Stage*, Marvin Carlson (2001) used Brook's definition and added the impossibility for this "empty stage" not to be "layered with meanings": "The empty spaces that have been utilized for centuries for theatrical events are particularly susceptible to semiotization, since they are almost invariably public, social spaces already layered with associations before they are used for theatrical performance. Through history, as publics have assembled for theatrical events, they have assembled in spaces already familiar to them in other contexts" (133).

Carlson's analysis explains why the *Palast der Republik* was used for theatrical entertainment: because of its importance in shaping collective memory, both political memory and social and cultural collective memory. To that extent, Frank Bechert (1997) asserts, "[t]hat the Theater im Palast was chosen to be the first theater in the GDR to play Beckett is therefore not surprising. There was nothing to fear there" (292). It was a familiar place for East Germans and one with highly political layers of meanings.

Nevertheless, the political administration had something to fear, or at least feared something, since the program of the event was written with great political attention. The political aura of the building was not enough to counter Beckett. The administration of the Palast printed a pamphleteering program: "[T]he dominant article in that program was a lengthy essay by a Professor of Humboldt University, [Christophe Trilse], explaining how interesting it was to compare Beckett – apparently a fine chronicler but also a product of 'capitalist despair' – with the progressive energy of Brecht and other socialist writing" (Leveaux 2014).

"[A] photocopy of Beckett's polite note declining Barbara Brecht-Schall's invitation to the opening" (Kalb 1987, 74) was included without any further information. This was done to imply that Beckett and Krapp were cut from the same cloth, both embodying the damages of capitalism. The purpose of the program was to offer an interpretation of the play, that of socialism as a positive collective dynamism. The poem of Brecht aimed to bring this energy back to the audience. On the contrary, Beckett's play had to show the despair and loneliness of capitalism. At the very last minute, David Leveaux and Ekkehard Schall managed to add a counter text to stress the end of the censorship. They aimed to offer another reading to the audience, as Leveaux explains in his article for *Vice*: “I insisted on writing a counter-article, only to be told, of course, that the program had already been printed so it was too late. As it turned out, and largely thanks to Ekkehard, a compromise was reached whereby my piece could be typed up and ‘slipped’ on a separate sheet into the program” (Leveaux 2014).

Despite what they expected, this worked very well. The loose sheet of paper in the printed program was not insignificant. On the contrary, it happened to be invariably the first thing people glanced at. Therefore, it had precisely the opposite effect. “With almost comic consequences none of us had considered, this solution turned out to be hugely to my advantage. My piece was on a loose sheet of paper in a glossy program, which should have demoted its significance. But since a loose sheet of paper falling out of a program is invariably the first thing people glance at, it had precisely the opposite effect – an accidental illustration of censorship’s own arterial flaw: that it invariably, if unintentionally, draws more attention to the thing censored” (Leveaux 2014). This anecdote about the program embodies how the whole evening, despite its intentions, worked for Beckett. Nothing in the official framing was intended to serve his interests; everything was orchestrated to reaffirm the grand collective memory of socialism. Yet, in practice, greater attention was drawn to what the political administration sought to suppress – the promise of something new embodied in Beckett’s play.

Concluding remarks: archiving the GDR’s present

The Rearing of Millet, much renowned in the former GDR, is nowadays almost entirely forgotten. If Brecht’s work is now appreciated and recognized throughout reunified Germany, the poem is among the peripheral works, usually studied for its instructive properties than recognized for its aesthetic qualities. In 2006, in an interview for *FOCUS* magazine, the German essayist and literary critic, Hellmut Karasek, presented this poem by Brecht as the most “embarrassing” (Andres 2006). On the contrary, *Krapp’s Last Tape* and other Beckett plays have become famous classics all over the world.

David Leveaux’s production of *Krapp’s Last Tape* with Schall survived the fall of the Berlin Wall. After the revolution of 1989, Germany was reunited on 3 October 1990 and the political regime of the GDR disappeared. A year later, Schall played Krapp under the direction of David Leveaux again, but no longer coupled with *The Rearing of Millet*. The performance took place in the Theater of the Berliner Ensemble, again a location of significant symbolic importance. The Berliner Ensemble is a theater founded by Brecht and his wife in 1949 as a venue for his plays and the occasional classic. The very first play by Beckett to be performed in the GDR was no longer a production to juxtapose Brecht and Beckett, but rather a way to reconcile them. Or perhaps one should say, to reunite them, just like Germany. This time, the opposition or juxtaposition of the two playwrights, still accurate in 1986, is no more than a memory. The 1986 performance seemed to mimic Krapp's archiving of the present (here, the GDR) and his complex relationship to memory. History allows us to analyze *a posteriori* the becoming-memory of the Palace of the Republic. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Palace was abandoned. People looked for cultural life elsewhere, away from a place that was so reminiscent of the communist era. Then, due to a too high level of asbestos, the Palace was shut down. In the years 2004–2005, it was temporarily reopened for cultural and art exhibitions before its demolition in 2006–2008. The announcement of it was difficult for many former East Germans, for whom it was an important and ambivalent place of individual memory. This ambiguous and painful memory is reflected in the art installation by the artist Lars Ramberg: the word *ZWEIFEL* (doubt) displayed on the roof of the Palace in 2005. The artwork epitomizes the relationship between Germany and its painful memory as much as the difficult beginning of Samuel Beckett in East Germany.

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Recreation of the past in Gaito Gazdanov's *An Evening with Claire* and *Night Roads*

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Abstract

This article is a comparative study of Gaito Gazdanov's novels *An Evening with Claire* (1929) and *Night Roads* (1941). The narrators of both novels reconstruct their individual past from scattered fragments of memories; however, each pursues his own goal. Nikolai Sosedov, the narrator of *An Evening with Claire*, focuses on personal history and recounts experiences that relate to him alone, while major historical events, such as the Revolution and the Civil War, serve only as a background. The anonymous narrator of *Night Roads* is making a portrait of Paris of the thirties: he depicts diverse social classes inhabiting the French capital and thoroughly describes the brutal life of Russian emigrants. The protagonists contemplate the way their memory operates and try to explain how it is organized; their ideas are reflected in the narrative structures. Although Nikolai Sosedov and the narrator of *Night Roads* are not the same person, the analysis of their memories shows that *Night Roads* may be read as a continuation of *An Evening with Claire* and sheds light on how Gazdanov's personal experience is expressed in fiction.

Keywords

Literature and memory; Russian émigré literature; Gaito Gazdanov; individual memory; communicative memory; cultural memory; experiential mode of narration; reflexive mode of narration

Introduction

Gaito Gazdanov was a Russian émigré writer born in the Russian Empire in 1903. At the age of sixteen, he participated in the Civil War, fighting on the side of the White Army. In 1920, after the defeat of the White Movement, he was forced to leave Russia. He lived in Gallipoli for a year, spent some time in Constantinople and Shumen, and finally moved to Paris, where he settled down. His worldview, literary stylistics, and unique manner of narration quickly put him in an exceptional position among other Russian littérateurs in exile. However, his works were not published in Russia until the collapse of the Soviet Union, and today his name remains largely unknown to non-specialist audiences.

Individual and collective memory are recurring themes in Gazdanov's work; however, their importance has not been addressed in sufficient detail. Gazdanov uses his life experience as material for his novels and short stories; thus, the borderline between autobiography and fiction is deliberately blurred. Gazdanov identifies himself with the narrator in just one work, *On the French Soil*;[1] all others should be counted as fiction. Nevertheless, the narrators of *An Evening with Claire* (1929) and *Night Roads* (1941) may be viewed as Gazdanov's autobiographical doubles since much of their fictional lives were drawn from the author's experience.[2] Here, I will examine how the past is rendered in the present in *An Evening with Claire* and *Night Roads*, analyzing what the narrators of both novels remember, how they recapture mnemonic images and put together their scattered memories. I will also consider the significance of such storytelling. Furthermore, I will reflect on the articulation between memory, history and temporalities. Whether these two novels constitute a medium of either Gazdanov's individual memory, or the collective memory of his contemporaries is beyond the scope of my analysis.

As a theoretical framework, I will use the works of Jan and Aleida Assmann, who coined the notions of communicative memory and cultural memory. According to them, cultural memory is shared by a group of people, providing them with a cultural identity. It refers to the distant past and, for that reason, requires an institutional organization and rep-

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1 In the epigraph, Gazdanov explicitly states that this book is not fiction and that everything described in the text took place in reality.

2 Although the genre of these two novels might be defined as autofiction, I avoid using this term, for lack of consensus on what autofiction is. Different interpretations of autofiction are given by Philippe Gasparini (2009), Gérard Genette (1992); Vincent Colonna (2004); Marie Darrieussecq (1997).

resentation in order to be transmitted from generation to generation. The content of cultural memory is carefully selected, cultivated and preserved by specialists who spread their knowledge among the group members (J. Assmann 2008, 109–117). History is inevitably mythical: power structures "produce narrative versions of their past which are taught, embraced and [considered as] their collective autobiography" (A. Assmann 2008, 101). Communicative memory, as opposed to cultural memory, is neither shaped by institutions nor transmitted by specialists. "It lives in everyday interaction and communication and, for this [...] reason, has only a limited time depth which normally reaches no more than eighty years" (J. Assmann 2008, 111). It consolidates families, groups, and generations who share the same memories of the recent past. History assumes the form of autobiographical memory (J. Assmann 2008, 109–117).

To explain how the past can be reconstructed and conveyed, I will apply Astrid Erll's theory of narrative modes of remembering. She introduces five different modes, namely experiential, monumental, reflexive, antagonistic, and historicizing; I will only use the first three modes, since the other two are not relevant to my analysis. The experiential mode "is constituted by literary forms which represent the past as lived-through experience" (Erll 2009, 220). Its main characteristics include first-person narration, which enables the storyteller to establish an intimate dialogue with the reader; "representation of everyday ways of speaking [...] to convey the linguistic specificity and fluidity of a near past"; and long passages in which the narrator seeks to reconstruct his experience (Erll 2011a, 159). In the monumental mode, on the other hand, the past acquires a powerful mythical dimension and is closely associated with cultural memory. Texts in which the monumental mode prevails are full of generalities and approximations. They contribute to the elaboration of the self-image of a group. The reflexive mode makes it possible to contemplate processes and problems of remembering: the narrator may give comments on how his memory works or describe the same events in different, sometimes contradictory ways (Erll 2009, 221).

An Evening with Claire and *Night Roads* are first-person retrospective narratives, and according to Erll, "the occupation with first-person narrators is always an occupation with the literary representation of individual remembering" (Erll 2011b). Gazdanov uses interior monologues and complex time structures to depict how memory operates. His protagonists' recollections resist simple classification by periods of time or topics; their memory is a space where they move in diverse directions, regardless of the sequence of events. Consequently, the past in those two novels is represented by the combination of experiential and reflexive modes.

Both narrators are emigrants of Russian origin: they fled Russia with the remnants of the White Army when the Red Army gained control of Crimea, and both end up in Paris. They recall people they met, give detailed accounts of the incidents they witnessed and the events in which they participated, and analyze and comment on their past selves' actions, thoughts and feelings. In other words, both narrators *re-create* the past. However, each pursues his own goal.

An Evening with Claire – a personal history

The narrator of *An Evening with Claire,* Nikolai Sosedov, seems to focus on his *personal* history and recount experiences that relate to him alone, while major historical events, such as the Revolution and the Civil War, serve merely as a background. He vividly depicts his life in Russia: a happy childhood, periods spent at the cadet corps and the gymnasium, his first love, participation – out of mere curiosity – in the Civil War, and forced departure, which eventually brings him to France. The time span is limited to no more than twenty-five years. At first glance, some of Sosedov's recollections may appear random and even unimportant, which is typical of the experiential mode – the narrative is non-linear and fragmented: there may be several episodes in one paragraph, barely connected to each other, and the reader has the impression that the story unfolds at the time of its narration as if the narrator were improvising. Towards the end of the book, however, it becomes obvious that Gazdanov built his novel in compliance with a predesigned conception that enabled him to stage internal memory processes (Erll 2011a 88). Each episode reconstructed by Sosedov is significant, helping the reader to trace the development of the narrator's personality, as there is a temporal and spatial distance between the "experiencing I" and the "narrating I", which can be travelled only by memory. He represents the events that impacted his development and formed his *Weltanschauung* (worldview): a strong emotional bond with his father,[3] growing interest in reading

3 For Kolia [Nikolai Sosedov], father was a reliable friend and a model to follow. Every evening he would tell his young son a story about travelling on a boat and "while the [boy] was sitting on [his father's] lap, he experienced real happiness, the one which can be accessible to a child alone …" (Gazdanov 2009a, 59). But father died when Kolia was eight years old and "the ne-

(which shaped his peculiar inner world),[4] intense dislike for church service,[5] summer holidays in grandfather's company,[6] and eye-opening conversations with his uncle just before going to war.[7]

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ver-ending story" about travelling was cut short, his carefree childhood ended with it. It was the first time he had realized that death is the point of no return: "Me and my wonderful boat and the island [...] I discovered in the Indian Ocean perished with [my father]" (Gazdanov 2009a, 60). Later he will see life as a journey that ends with the death of the traveler. Life is also an escape from death, a futile attempt to forget about the inevitable end. The narrator of *Night Roads* uses the same metaphors (see p. 8).

4 Kolia was so immersed into reading that he completely disregarded his own existence: "... it was the period of my life when I lost myself [...]. I read a lot back then [...]. At that time, I was almost unaware of my personal existence. When I was reading *Don Quixote,* I imagined everything that happened to [him]. I didn't perform feats by his side [...]; it was as if I didn't exist at all [...]. I think I could compare that time to a deepest soul swoon" (Gazdanov 2009a, 52). Later he will experience such "falls out of his consciousness" at the moments of sheer happiness and utter despair and will call them "bouts of illness"; he continuously tries to describe what exactly happens to him using experiential mode of narration. The narrator of *Night Roads* also suffered from such "attacks of soul fever" (Gazdanov 2009b, 196), which are described in almost identical terms.

5 Since early childhood the boy has been capable of critical thinking; he refused to implicitly believe in Orthodox doctrine, as no one was able to answer his questions concerning faith and religion: "Everything in [church services] seemed disgusting to me: greasy hair of the fat deacon, who was blowing his nose loudly in the altar [...] and the thin, funny voice of the priest, answering to him from behind the closed holy doors, covered with gilding, icons and thick-legged, poorly drawn angels with melancholy faces [...] all that seemed ridiculous and unnecessary to me ..." (Gazdanov 2009c, 71–72). This quote may serve as an example of circumstantial realism – yet another feature of experiential mode of narration.

6 Sosedov's grandfather spent all his life in one place, in the Caucasus; he is a man of the nineteenth century, which seems unusually slow and peaceful comparing to the twentieth century. The narrator is looking for the mysterious connection between different generations and trying to understand what links him to his ancestors who had an entirely different way of life. What knowledge has been transmitted to him across the sequence of generations? Is he a bearer of communicative memory which ties him to his grandfather? The figure of grandfather also appears in the memories of the protagonist of *Night Roads*: "I got used to imagining [...] an old house, with the same porch and the same front door [...], the trees that [...] existed before my birth and would continue to grow after my death [...], and this slow charm of the family saga, one powerful and long breath, weakening as my life slowed down [...] until the day, [...], when I could see myself similar to my grandfather [...], and I know that my years were numbered [...]. Then, if it could be so, I would have probably known and understood much more than what I knew and understood then [...] far from my homeland ..." (Gazdanov 2009b, 152).

7 Gazdanov adopted his uncle's highly critical attitude towards history. He considered it to be a free interpretation of real events, which might vary according to the preferences of the researcher: "If you are still alive when this massacre is over, you will read in special books a detailed account of the heroic defeat of the Whites and the shameful accidental victory of the Reds – if the book is written by a historian sympathetic to the White Army, and the heroic victory of the working class army over the mercenaries of the bourgeoisie – if the author is on the side of the Red Army" (Gazdanov 2009a, 119). In other words, *history*, in Nikolai's opinion, is *a commonly accepted representation of real events*, which means it necessarily distorts the

Sosedov describes brief encounters with his beloved, Claire, in detail. She rarely appears on the pages of the novel yet seems to be omnipresent as her name figures in the title and the story begins with her name and ends with it. The narrator is constantly thinking about her from the moment they met in Russia until their long-awaited meeting in France. She links Sosedov's past to the present, helping him grasp scattered seemingly unrelated events into a single story. She also serves as a reminder, a catalyst for memories to come flooding back: the first night spent with her triggers Sosedov's memory and returns him to the past. Claire is a powerful symbol of an unattainable ideal, a riddle never to be solved. She often reminds the narrator of missed opportunities and provokes a sense of bitter regret.

Moreover, Sosedov recalls his thoughts, feelings and impressions of the past. His story contains personal reflections on happiness, love, friendship, memory, fate, death and *raison d'être*. He laments the impossibility of finding a rational explanation for what happened to him and his country. In his opinion, "the memory of feelings,[8] [...] was immeasurably richer and more powerful [than the memory of thoughts]" (Gazdanov 2009a, 79). He regrets that personal perceptions defy analysis and can hardly be expressed verbally because of their uniqueness. Nevertheless, he keeps trying to find the right words to record the details of his life.

The narrator confesses that "he remained too indifferent to external events; [his] desolate inner existence carried an incomparably greater significance for [him]"[9] (Gazdanov 2009a, 49). It was not so much the events proper as his purely personal perception of those events that concerned Sosedov: "... in the same way that important incidents which occurred at home and the gymnasium often left me cold, while trivial matters – which, it would seem, should be overlooked – were of particular significance for me, so during the Civil War, fighting and the killed and wounded passed without leaving a trace in my memory, while some feelings and thoughts that had little if anything to do with the usual thoughts about the war were forever retained" (Gazdanov 2009a, 127).

past. In addition, history is always full of gaps and conjectures. This idea lies at the heart of Jan Assmann's theory of cultural memory: "Memory always and inevitably instrumentalizes the past. Memory is interested in the past not for the past's sake but for present claims and arguments. The past is a resource of power" (Assmann 2015, 345).

8 Such memories are "triggered by an aspect of the sensuous engagement with the material world" (Bal 2015, 220).

9 All quotations were translated from the original into English by the author.

He seems reluctant to recreate the scenes of fierce battles; his story is not a heroic narrative since, from his point of view, war is a tragic event wrecking people's lives rather than a confrontation of heroes and their enemies. At the heart of the meaningless military conflict are *individuals*, and Sosedov is far more interested in depicting his fellow soldiers.[10] Instead of using a monumental mode of narration, he opts to bring his individual experiences and impressions to the fore. Thus, the novel stages the communicative memory of the narrator, whose stories constitute a counter-memory, an alternative version of the past, which differs drastically from the grand narrative characteristic of national memory (Erll 2011a, 45). Furthermore, he scarcely speaks about the Revolution: "It was late spring of nineteen seventeen; the revolution broke out a few months ago; and finally, that summer [...] something happened, something which my life gradually and slowly led me to, and all I had lived through and understood was merely a trial and a preparation for it: on a stifling evening [...] I saw Claire" (Gazdanov 2009a, 86–87). According to the narrator, his first meeting with Claire is much more worthy of detailed coverage than a sudden change in the political regime in Russia.

Although Sosedov does not state it expressly, he probably turns to his past and puts his recollections down on paper in order to know himself, trace and examine his inner transformation.[11] To see the gradual changes clearly, one must look back on his actions, feelings and thoughts and compare his past self to his present self. Apart from that, self-knowledge is always mediated: just as we need a mirror to know how we look, our inner essence can solely be captured when reflected. Hence, the protagonist must "extract" and record his reminiscences because he seeks to analyze his development "from the outside looking in" and needs to retain a certain distance from his *persona*. Sosedov attempts to reconstruct his individual past from scattered fragments of memories which appear and disappear and constantly metamorphose thanks to his active imagination. When perceptual inputs preserved in Sosedov's memory in the form of images, smells and sounds are verbalized, his hazy recollections become fixed, distinct and permanently visible. He tries to order

10 "There were many incredible things in the artificial junction of different people shooting from cannons and machine guns: they moved through the fields of southern Russia, went on horseback, [...] died, crushed under the wheels of the retreating artillery, died and moved dying, and tried to make sense of a huge space of the sea, air and snow [and justify what was happening to them each in his own way]" (Gazdanov 2009a, 148).

11 Having found themselves in a new, alien environment, emigrants usually need to reconsider their identity and their past.

his ideas about the past: the narration is the only way to put seemingly separate stages of his life together[12] and re-establish continuity. Setting his path down retrospectively he wants to figure out what circumstances brought him to Paris,[13] and comprehend who he is: the sense of self is not innate; it is acquired with the aid of memory, which endlessly searches for the lost and thereby allows man to reconsider and grasp his own past. Sosedov is also desperate to find any *sense* in what occurred to him and to his country.

By recalling episodes from the past, the narrator goes back in time through mental effort and lives through these episodes once again. What seems to be lost forever resides in him due to his memory, which conquers death. One of his goals is to preserve the *individual* past through narration: the representation of past events, the recreation of portraits of people who died a long time ago, and the revival of the old world, which no longer exists, let him bring all that to life. The events of the past repeat again, the dead resurrects, and imperial Russia, forever gone, rises in the imagination of the reader.[14]

Night Roads – a Portrait of Paris of the 1930s

Unlike Nikolai Sosedov in *An Evening with Claire*, the anonymous first-person narrator of *Night Roads* neither seeks to comprehend who he is nor does he describe the years spent in Russia. He settled in Paris a long time ago and lost all hope of ever returning to his homeland. There was no place to return to as Tsarist Russia, where he was born and raised, has disappeared: “and, of course, no future Russia and no consolation from

12 Sosedov tends to use the word ‘*life*’ in reference to different *periods of his life*, thereby stressing their *separation* from each other: “… if so, then why did I experience deep and constant sadness about the snow and green plains and all the lives that I was living in the country that hid from me behind the fiery curtain?” (Gazdanov 2009a, 160).

13 Though he knows in advance that he never will: “the reasons which made me [become a soldier then] ceased to exist a long time ago because no one has retained them” (Gazdanov 2009a, 143). Yet another reason to claim that historical memory is imperfect, since it does not register people’s true motivations and focuses primarily on the results of their decisions.

14 This idea could be illustrated by a quote from another novel written by Gazdanov, *Evelyne and Her Friends* (1968–1971)*:* “After a while, I will cease to exist, and does it really matter to me, it would seem, what happens fifty or a hundred years after that? None of my coevals will be remembered, while the book I wrote about myself will remain. It will be a kind of an open grave, a reminder that I existed. […] And if, many years after I am gone, there will be at least one person on earth to read these lines, it will mean that I have not lived my difficult and sad life for nothing” (Gazdanov 2009c, 333).

the moment when on a smoky autumn evening the steamer packed to capacity steered out to the stormy sea, leaving forever the shores of the conquered Crimea" (Gazdanov 2009b, 37–38). The necessity to reside in Paris weighed heavily on him: "Throughout the years of nomadic reality which preceded my life in Paris, I got used to the fact that everything changed frequently living conditions, cities and countries. In the end, I started to think that there must be some personal meaning in [...] constant motion – and that I would break this journey when I feel tired or suddenly realize there is no better life than the one, I have [...]. And in Paris it suddenly stopped [...] against my will. I could not do anything ..." (Gazdanov 2009b, 130–131). The end of the journey symbolizes the impossibility of overcoming adverse circumstances. Motionless is also a metaphor for a life cut short.

The narrator "was a worker, then a student, then a civil servant, then he taught Russian and French, and after the insignificance of these occupations had become absolutely clear to him" (Gazdanov 2009b, 29), he obtained a driving license and started working night shifts as a taxi driver. Looking back, he makes a portrait of the strange world where he was forced to dwell; he is motivated by "an insatiable desire to know and endeavor to perceive the meaning of [...] other people's lives" (Gazdanov 2009b, 16), – his gaze is directed outwards. His memories of people and events prove that he was a keen observer intensely interested in everything surrounding him. His narration is an attempt to recreate in prose the fantastic space of Paris of the 1930s.

The protagonist (i.e., the narrator) of *Night Roads* also uses the experiential mode of narration but in a slightly different way. Depicting diverse social classes who lived in diverse districts of the French capital,[15] he intends to be as objective as possible: "My attitude towards what I saw wasn't biased, I was doing my best to avoid generalizations and conclusions" (Gazdanov 2009b, 6). He draws the reader's attention to the ways representatives of distinct social strata dressed and behaved, makes comments on the language they spoke, reveals their highest aspirations and most terrible fears, and defines the unwritten rules they obeyed. According to the narrator, each person's worldview was strictly determined by the social stratum to which that person belonged. This illustrates the idea that cultural memory is not necessarily all-encompassing or homo-

15 "Paris is divided into several *fixed* zones; I remember, an old worker once [...] told me, he had never been on the Champs-Élysées in forty years [...], because, he explained, he had never worked there. In this city, in its poor quarters there was still a [...] way of thinking proper to the fourteenth century, next to modernity" (Gazdanov 2009b, 9).

geneous. Maurice Halbwachs (1992) points out that individual memory depends on interactions with other humans within a social group and that the memory of a group is present in individual memories (40). Gazdanov's text confirms this idea, suggesting that a particular social stratum may be perceived as a social group with its characteristic collective memory which does not necessarily fit in with the cultural memory of France.

He recalls accidental meetings with those who used to flood the streets of Paris late at night – thieves, drunkards, vagabonds,[16] beggars,[17] pimps,[18] prostitutes,[19] and their never-ending clients – and identifies common features typical of each "occupation." Some characters, such as Plato, Raldi and Fedorchenko, are recurring; the protagonist knew them well and was a witness to their progressive degradation: "… any life that fit into *familiar and conventionally incorrect schemes* – the beginning, the development, the end – was of great interest [to him], and any event that related to these things was forever imprinted in [his] memory" (Gazdanov 2009b, 176–177, my italics).

The narrator of *Night Roads* describes in detail a turbulent and brutal life of Russian emigrants in France.[20] He recalls taxi drivers (Gazdanov 2009b, 186), singers (Gazdanov 2009b, 164), factory workers, visitors of Russian restaurants and cabarets (Gazdanov 2009b, 202), and helpless

16 "They seemed to have never existed differently and looked as if they were born to stroll about the night streets of Paris, […], on this long journey, which invariably led them […] to the anatomical theatre" (Gazdanov 2009b, 123). The narrator often says that external conditions change people irreversibly, sooner or later they become reconciled to their lot.

17 "… In Paris, on its night streets, I saw beggars who did not stir up sympathy; and no matter how hard I tried to convince myself that […] one cannot become so callous as to experience nothing but disgust at their sight, I could do nothing" (Gazdanov 2009b, 38). The narrator repeatedly asks himself: What is the point of such barren, miserable existence?

18 "And yet, despite beggars' tragic […] non-existence, they seemed to me worthy citizens of the universe, when compared to pimps. […] They did not have some sort of moral syphilis…" (Gazdanov 2009b, 124).

19 "Every night I came across prostitutes […], my ideas about women of this type significantly differed from the ideas of their clients, and the difference was that I really knew them because they spoke to me as if I were of their own kind […] In the early morning […] I often gave a lift to these women […] returning home after night work […]I usually put them at the back of the car, […] as they were all wearing strong cheap perfume, […] and their close presence caused a nasty taste in my mouth" (Gazdanov 2009b, 63–64). This quote shows that the narrator did not belong to the social group he describes and, consequently, did not share the views of its members. Furthermore, it proves that the protagonist of *Night Roads* also uses experiential mode of narration.

20 "They, brother, were lawyers, doctors, officers, they had servants and everything rich people are entitled to have, and now they are taxi drivers just like you and me. This, brother, is hard. I think it takes courage to [live this lifestyle]" (Gazdanov 2009b, 155).

intellectuals who spent their lives idly talking about "an imaginary future of Russia" (Gazdanov 2009b, 170). He tries to explain what distinguished them all from Europeans, why they failed to become an integral part of French society,[21] what common memories they shared, why most of them were apparently under the delusion that someday they would return to their native land and everything would be just as it had been before the exile. It is also worth noting that the image of Russia they cherished was highly idealized and unrealistic – they preserved the memory of something that never existed.[22]

The narrator attempts to write an alternative history that differs drastically from the official history which, as a rule, disregards those on the fringes of society. Usually, the marginalized groups remain invisible and voiceless, doomed to live in isolation. But the narrator plays the role of a witness eager to listen to and, most importantly, write about them. He often uses the words "I knew" and "I saw," gently insisting that his record is reliable. It consists of scattered individual memories reflecting his personal experience as well as the experience of his contemporaries, and consequently, could be treated as part of communicative memory. Most importantly, his recollections are recorded, which means they are not an object of oral history anymore and will not vanish in eighty years (J. Assman 2004, 53).

Similar to Sosedov in *An Evening with Clare,* the protagonist of *Night Roads* points out that any narrative is a representation and interpretation of real events, where even cause-and-effect relationships are often artificially established. He refrains from turning the life stories of his acquaintances and friends into "ready-made plots for cheap novels" (Gazdanov 2009b, 139). His purpose is to write about them truthfully and capture what constitutes their essence.[23] Therefore, the seeming incoherency between different memories is not a coincidence: both Sosedov and the narrator of *Night Roads* focus on reminiscence – the path taken to find the desired memory is perhaps the most accurate evidence of the veracity of the things remembered. In addition, the way Gazdanov structures *An Evening with Claire* and *Night Roads* illustrates how memory

21 And, as a consequence, of French cultural memory.

22 "Even dreamers' love for the past, for the old wonderful life in the old wonderful Russia, [belonged in the realms of fantasy], since what they described with disinterested and authentic affection typically existed only in their imagination" (Gazdanov 2009b, 171).

23 The narrator is aware that history consists of a historical and a narrative constituents, which are always connected because "what is remembered and preserved (the historical) depends on how it is remembered (the narrative), what is told (the narrative) depends on what can be told, that is on what has been passed on (the historical)" (Nikulin 2015, 18).

operates:[24] a memory never comes alone; it is attended by many other memories appearing simultaneously. Moreover, memories of external events and internal metamorphoses are closely intertwined and have equal value for the narrators.

> Due to what inconceivable combination of circumstances did my youthful wanderings – winter, Russia, a huge red sun above the snow, Caucasus, Bosphorus, Dickens, Hauptmann, Edgar Poe, Ophelia, the Bronze Horseman, Lady Hamilton, a three-inch cannon, in whose panorama so many city walls and groves where the enemy batteries were stationed passed, and, finally, a terrible mess of human faces – the regiment that attacked our armored train [...] – the mess of these faces that I have been seeing in front of me for many years; Shakespeare, the Grand Inquisitor, the death of Prince Andrew, Budapest and the bridges over the Danube, Vienna, Sevastopol, Nice, fires in Galata, shots, the sea, cities and silently flowing time, [...] due to what inconceivable combination of circumstances did this plurality of alien and magnificent existences, this infinite world, in which I have lived so many distant and wonderful lives, limit itself to the fact that I came to be here, in Paris [...]? (Gazdanov 2009b, 131).

In a single stream of memories appear writers and characters of the narrator's favorite books, places he visited, the Civil War, endless faces, and sounds of gunshots. Repetitions produce the impression of improvisation: memories seem to emerge at the moment of writing, and the narrator is so absorbed in the reminiscence that he loses the thread of thought. The past makes up a whole "world" that the narrator, against his will, always keeps in himself.

Furthermore, just like Sosedov, the protagonist of *Night Roads* puts his dispersed memories together with the aim of examining his life "from the outside looking in". It enables him to fully realize how strange and hostile Paris was at night, as well as understand how he managed not to lose his moral bearings under almost inconceivable circumstances: "... it was possible to compare the different successive lives I had to live; they seemed distant and sad, regardless of whether they were taking place at that time or many years ago. And then the tragic absurdity of my existence became so apparent that [...] I perfectly understood the things a man should never think about, as they are followed by despair, an insane asylum or death" (Gazdanov 2009b, 22).

24 This corresponds to the reflective mode of narration.

Paris is represented as a surreal space that could be easily taken as a figment of the protagonist's imagination, "a continuation of [his] perpetual semi-delirious state, where actually existing and living pieces were weirdly embedded, surrounded, however, by dead architecture [...], music [...] and those human masks, whose deceitfulness [...] was evident to anyone but [him]" (Gazdanov 2009b, 194). There is a sharp contrast between the protagonist's life during the day (when he read books, went to the cinema, and met other Russian emigrants) and during the night (when he was surrounded by prostitutes, criminals and alcoholics along with well-to-do people who behaved no better than the poor) (Gazdanov 2009b, 195). At night-time Paris acquired a theatrical dimension; it was the daytime life that the narrator viewed as authentic and plausible. In this respect, he might have needed to recreate the past to make sure it happened.

The reflexive mode in Gazdanov's novels

As the analysis of the novels has shown, Gazdanov is particularly interested in the organization of memory. Both narrators try to clarify how personal and cultural memory is formed. What is retained, and what is left out of memory? Which form does anything memorized adopt to remain extant? How does the imagination change impressions of real events? And how to reflect their ideas on memory in text? The protagonist of *An Evening with Claire*, Nikolai Sosedov, speaks about this in greater detail, but some remarks and recollections of the protagonist of *Night Roads* make it clear that both narrators have similar ideas of memory.

Sosedov asserts that he lacked the "quickness of understanding" of the present (Gazdanov 2009a, 65). Since his "perception was not immediately conscious, [...] the full meaning of what was explained [to him] [and what was happening around], he understood only after some time" (Gazdanov 2009a, 65). Sosedov's hazy perception and, therefore, delayed reactions to what was happening to him were due to his failure to fully perceive his being in the present: instead of focusing on the world around, he often moved away from it, sometimes completely falling out of reality. In those moments, the young man forgot where he was and why. He himself explains such aloofness by dwelling – since early childhood – in two parallel realms at a time: the real world and his innermost semi-fantastic abode. Sosedov's inner world comprises "dark spaces with thick and tangible air" (Gazdanov 2009a, 49); it is timeless and exists "in spite of immediate events" (Gazdanov 2009a, 53). In essence, the narrator of *Night Roads* echoes him: "… my own existence took place in some other space, the rhythm of which was inconsistent with external circumstances; in this relatively quiet and infinitely long delirium, encounters with anything identical in meaning, value or duration – in a word, bearing a degree of analogy – to what was happening outside myself were exceedingly rare" (Gazdanov 2009b, 183).

Sosedov writes that "geological strata of [his] personal history" are kept in a "distant and phantasmal region" of his inner world (Gazdanov 2009a, 79); it is there that his memory resides. Everything that happens to him in the external world incessantly moves to that place in the form of memories (to remain there forever). The past appears as a reality, which both narrators constantly carry in its entirety. Never disappearing, it flows into and intertwines with the present: "in contrast to most of my acquaintances, I forgot almost nothing of what I saw and felt; and a multitude of things and people, of which some were no longer alive, burdened my perceptions" (Gazdanov 2009b, 24–25). Sometimes the narrators complain that the "load of memories" does not allow them to see the world differently to believe in some "blazing and harmonious idea[s], like an intricate and harmonious symphony of happy humanity" and live light (Gazdanov 2009b, 118). Nevertheless, both narrators realize that loss of all knowledge, sensations and impressions once acquired by the memory is tantamount to spiritual and physical death: "… everything that I saw and loved – soldiers, officers, women, snow and war – will never leave me, not until the time comes for my last, fatal journey, the slow fall into the black depths […], so prolonged that I will forget, while falling, all that I saw, and remembered, and felt, and loved; and when I forget everything that I have loved, then I will die" (Gazdanov 2009a, 144). In other words, memory stands against oblivion and triumphs over death: it is in the memory that people who have died continue to live and cities that have been erased still flourish.

Both narrators indicate that they frequently were unable to grasp the essence of an event and live through it as they should have at the time of its occurrence. This is related to their being self-absorbed and, in fact, dwelling in another dimension; they watched from the inner world what was happening in the external world. This hazy perception, called "a kind of deafness" (Gazdanov 2009a, 129) by Sosedov, manifested itself most clearly in moments of true happiness (Gazdanov 2009a, 97) or danger. The understanding of what actually happened usually came to the narrators much later when the events – already relocated into the space of memory – lost completely "the impact on the receptivity of [the narrators], [acquiring] that significance which they [should] have had [at the time of occurrence]" (Gazdanov 2009a, 79). This could happen in a few days or many years later, at the moment of recollection: All details of this or that event would then instantaneously be remembered, making it possible for the narrators to eventually feel and realize what had happened. That is, the event is generated by a reminiscence thereof: "What happened then and what I witnessed did not reach my consciousness for a long time […] But I somehow did not think about it; and whenever I tried to reconstruct this day, either some motive or a recently seen film [recurred to] my memory, but not [what I sought to recall]. And only two weeks later, in the south, on the seashore, one morning, I distinctly and clearly remembered everything" (Gazdanov 2009b, 210).

Therefore, memory has the function of understanding. Both narrators recreate the past in the text because they want to make sure that what they remember happened in the past. The reconstruction of individual and communicative memory through narration constitutes a method for the appropriation of the past. The protagonists know that memories build on past reality but never reproduce it: "… by no effort can I suddenly grasp and feel that endless sequence of thoughts, impressions and sensations, the totality of which appears in my memory as a series of shadows reflected in a vague and liquid mirror of late imagination" (Gazdanov 2009a, 47).

Images recurring in the memory of Sosedov and the narrator of *Night Roads* are ephemeral and unstable; in order to give memories deceptive clarity and "quiescence" (Gazdanov 2009a, 49), imagination reconstructing the past unintentionally distorts it, replacing details that have been forgotten with alternative ones, unrelated to what actually happened. Over time, life experience inevitably changes both the reminiscences (current views of the past) and the attitude towards the past.[25] After repeated rethinking of the path travelled, episodes from the past undergo transformations and their significance changes: "And, returning home […] I was thinking about the roads at night and the vaguely disturbing meaning of all those recent years […] and realized that in the future I will see everything otherwise" (Gazdanov 2009b, 214). As a result, the past seems to both narrators vague, elusive, and constantly changing.

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25 "… remembering occurs as a rule reconstructively; it always starts from the present, and this leads inevitably to a displacement, a distortion, a deformation, a reevaluation, and renewal of the remembered at the moment of its recollection" (A. Assmann 1999, 29).

Conclusion

The narrators of *An Evening with Claire* and *Night Roads* recreate their individual pasts. However, Nikolai Sosedov focuses primarily on *personal* history, while the second novel's narrator seems more interested in writing a portrait of Paris in the 1930s, rather than attempting to explore the evolution of his identity. Instead of using a monumental mode of narration, the protagonists of both novels depict their past as a lived-through experience. Moreover, they contemplate the way their memory works and reflect their ideas in a literary form, thus opting for a reflexive mode of narration. The idea of an all-encompassing cultural memory is problematized in *Night Roads* – the narrator is aware of the existence of memories that fall outside the realm of cultural memory and seeks to fill the gap. Although Sosedov is not declared in any way to be the same person as the narrator of *Night Roads*, this comparative close reading of their memories shows that *Night Roads* may be viewed as a continuation of *An Evening with Claire*. This is key to understanding how Gazdanov's personal experience is expressed in a mediated literary form.

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