

Introduction

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Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada explores the role of memory and narratives of the past as political tools and opportunities for cultural reconciliation. This edited volume emerged from an interdisciplinary symposium that served as the culmination of a graduate-level field school, both of which took place in the summer of 2017. The field school and symposium brought together emerging and established scholars, students, musicians, and composers from three different European nations (France, Germany, and Hungary) and Canada to think through the narratives of memory involved in the European migrant crisis as well as an understanding of Canadian history and experience with genocide, colonialism, and systematic violence and oppression of indigenous peoples. Deploying a comparative focus by drawing on the recent Canadian experiences around the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as Canadian understandings of multiculturalism, integration, and identity, this volume aims to offer a unique lens with which to view narratives of memory and their relationship to present-day decision-making processes.

The individual chapters in this book not only investigate layers of memory in Europe and Canada but also explore field school participants' physical and emotional interactions with memorial sites. The

innovative graduate-level field school described in this book was created by a team of four professors at the University of Victoria: Dániel Péter Biró, Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Charlotte Schallié, and Helga Thorson. The itinerary included stays at sites and locations laden with historical significance. One of these locations was the urban landscape of Budapest, including the Keleti Railway Station [Keleti Pályaudvar], which is not only a site that signifies the deportations of Jews, Sinti, and Roma during the Holocaust but also a space that, seventy years later, was associated with migrants and refugees as it transformed into a temporary makeshift migrant camp in 2015. Another European site on the field school was the Ravensbrück Memorial Site [Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück]. Under National Socialism this space served as the largest concentration camp for women from 1939-1945 (with a much smaller men's camp existing on the site as well), transforming into barracks for the Soviet army in the immediate postwar period, before becoming a national memorial site — first in the German Democratic Republic and then in newly united Germany — as well as an International Youth Meeting Centre since 2002. The final European location the students visited was the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp [Site-Mémorial du Camp des Milles], a former French internment camp, now serving as a memorial. Since the fall of 2015 it houses the UNESCO Chair of Education for Citizenship, Human Sciences, and Shared Memories. In Canada, students visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg before their final week at the University of Victoria. Opening in 2014, this national museum explores five different world genocides as well as the Canadian context of human rights abuses, including forced enrollment in residential schools for First Nations children, missing and murdered aboriginal women, and the recent processes involved in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.

Along the way, field school participants met with academic and site-related partners, most of whom also contributed to this edited volume, to discuss topics such as how memory politics and narratives of the past both frame and influence current political decisions and decision-making processes and can be deployed as an agent of change and resistance to destabilizing and fracturing discourses, how cultural narratives of the past and memorialization are interwoven with current public policy challenges relating to multiculturalism and diversity, and the role of integrative national and transnational identities in the face of rising nationalism and xenophobic discourses. This book brings together insights that emerged as part of the cross-cultural dialogues

between students, professors, museum and memorial staff members, and heads of various organizations during the field school.

One main objective of this edited collection is to explore how varied agents of memory — including the music we listen to, the (his)stories that we tell, and the political and social actions that we engage in — create narratives of the past that allow us to make sense of ourselves in the present and to critically contest and challenge xenophobic and nationalistic renderings of political possibilities. As part of this overall project, we commissioned three composers to explore narratives of memory at one of the European sites under investigation: Andrea Szeigetvári created a piece about the Keleti Railway Station in Budapest, Zaid Jabri wrote a musical composition for the Ravensbrück Memorial Site, and Dániel Péter Biró put together a composition for the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp. Each of these pieces was performed on-site as well as at the 2017 SALT musical festival in Victoria, Canada, held in conjunction with the final symposium. In addition, two student musical compositions — by Kimberly Farris-Manning and Adam Scime — were written as part of the field school and performed at the final concert.

As the title of the book implies, this edited collection is an exploration into *narratives* (whether oral, written, artistic, or musical) and *memory* — and the dynamic interaction between the two. It concerns itself with how in our present-day contexts we reach back in time to help shape our present and our future. The book delves into what Andreas Huyssen (2003) has labelled “present pasts” and explores how the past and present continuously interact and intersect. In the words of William Faulkner’s character Gavin Stevens: “The past is never dead. It’s not even past” (1951, Act 1, scene 3). In her German-language memoir *weiter leben* (1992) and her “parallel book” *Still Alive* (2001) written for an English speaking audience, Ruth Klüger coined the word “timescape” to emphasize that time and place are intrinsically bound together. In her description of visiting a memorial site of a former concentration camp, she discusses the incongruity of her visit, having been interned in a concentration camp as a child:

The missing ingredients are the odor of fear emanating from human bodies, the concentrated aggression, the reduced minds. I didn’t see the ghosts of the so-called

Muselmänner (Muslims)¹ who dragged themselves zombielike through the long, evil hours, having lost the energy and the will to live. Sure, the signs and the documentation and the films helped us understand. But the concentration camp as a memorial site? Landscape, seascape — there should be a word like *timescape* to indicate the nature of a place in time, that is, at a certain time, neither before nor after. (*Still Alive* 67)

On the one hand, Klüger maintains that it is impossible to understand what someone else has gone through, that a sense of place or “landscape” is not sufficient, that “timescapes” matter too — making it difficult for anyone who did not experience internment in a concentration camp to understand what it was like. Yet, on the other hand, she tries to find common ground with her readers as a way to come together, to relate to one another, and to discuss shared memories. She writes: “But if there is no bridge between my memories and yours and theirs, if we can never say ‘our memories,’ then what’s the good of writing any of this?” (93). Klüger did not directly translate her German memoir into English but rather created a cultural translation (cf. Schaumann 2004) of it nearly a decade later. In her German-language memoir she makes connections to her readers by describing the Allied bombing raids and the throngs of displaced people heading west in the final months of the war just ahead of the Russian army as experiences she, a Holocaust survivor born in Vienna, shared with some of the German population. In her English-language memoir she discusses racist and antisemitic² persecution as an experience that she shares with many Americans. Similarly, she brings up the history of slavery, racism, California earthquakes, sexual abuse, and the Vietnam war as traumatic trigger points that bind people — not equating any one of these things with her experiences in the Holocaust — but helping her readers see that pain and trauma are related, as is relationship-building and empathy.

1 *Muselmann* is the German word for Muslim and also the name given to those individuals in the camps who appeared as walking corpses and whose lives were nearly over. Klüger maintains that this term was not used in a derogatory sense (90), yet we find it significant that the term was even used at all. Even if there was not derogatory intent, it still generalizes one group (who weren’t even part of the actual life in the camps) as opposed to another.

2 The spelling of antisemitic (without a hyphen) emphasizes that the word does not connote hatred toward someone who speaks a Semitic language, but rather specifically hatred toward Jews.

At its very core, the field school, from which this book emerged, was structured around intercultural communication and relationship-building. By bringing together students from four different countries, and creating a cohort of students from three different countries who enrolled in the course,³ participants were able to see things from different perspectives and to find commonalities and differences in their explorations of the layers of memory they were uncovering in Europe and in Canada. Similar to Klüger in her “parallel” memoirs, the students on the field school were able to translate things culturally for each other as they built strong relationships and bonds with one another and created shared memories.

Through scholarly research and personal reflections, the chapters of this book explore narratives of memory on migration and xenophobia across time and space, analyzing the forms of these narratives — from musical compositions to the stories and histories that we tell and that are told at the museums and public spaces we visit. The authors represented in this book discuss these narratives from their own social and cultural locations and positionalities, while simultaneously translating their meaning both linguistically and culturally in an attempt to make connections with one another as well as with the readers of this book.

By examining narratives of memory in Europe and in Canada, this book encourages us to think critically about how stories of the past are used, abused, and retold. In the Canadian context, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued a challenge to Canadians to participate in a nationwide process of acknowledgement, healing, and education to address the systematic inequities and gaps in the Canadian social fabric that were brought about by centuries of oppression, genocide, and colonialism. One of the key lessons of the omission is that this history, and the memory and memorialization of that history, has relevance for all Canadians, not just indigenous peoples in Canada. Repairing social, economic, and political rifts in Canada has meant, and continues to mean, mobilizing memory and history in ways to make positive change.

³ The students enrolled in the course came from three different countries (Canada, France, and Hungary). In addition to this, students from our partner European universities joined the class on location in their own country of study at each of the European sites visited (France, Germany, and Hungary). Students from Germany neither enrolled in the course nor travelled to the various field school locations outside the site in Ravensbrück, Germany.

In her book *Price Paid: The Fight for First Nations Survival* (2016), Bev Sellars describes the long history of indigenous people on these lands helping newcomers, first the European explorers and then the settlers, and how this is still happening with refugees today. She writes:

I believe that Aboriginal peoples can relate to the suffering refugees experience and that is why, when we can, we are still helping newcomers today.

It is the assumption of superiority on which this country's history has been based that must change. A society will never achieve its full potential unless all members can exercise their human rights and achieve their full potential. (11)

The goal of the volume as a whole is to foster innovative interdisciplinary and intercultural discussions on memory discourses as political, social, and creative collective ventures. In addition, the book aims to contribute to the development of curriculum geared towards exploring the politics of memory in shaping present-day tensions and conflicts. The Narratives of Memory Field School is one such example, and its impact can be gleaned from the various student reflections interspersed throughout this book. We hope that, above all else, this book will serve as a tool for thinking about agency and change in light of the many layers of memory that shape us as individuals and as societies.

The volume is divided into three sections. The first section engages primarily with the concept of memory as politics and within politics, and includes theoretical and empirical discussions from Canada, Hungary, and Brazil. The chapters in the second section discuss the transformative power of memorial sites, both for the individual authors as well as more broadly. The final section of the volume consists of discussions of the intersections and interactions between memory politics and the arts.

The book opens with a primarily theoretical discussion on how crisis, as a narrative device, has been deployed by social actors to heighten and intensify xenophobic and nationalist anxieties in Europe. Crises narratives interact and intersect with European memory politics in ways that encourage truncated and exclusionary understandings of European citizenship and, in turn, play into Eurosceptic claims with regards to the failure of pan-Europeanism. Hallgrímsdóttir notes here that the pan-Europeanism that is at the root of European integration efforts

draws also on narratives of crisis. Pan-Europeanism is in effect a mnemonic community that is based on a particular memorialization of the 20th century, one that counterposes a divided past against an integrated present and future. Our current moment, however, is characterized by new mnemonic communities that valorize ethnic and place-based identities, and draw on the narratives of crisis to pose significant challenges to pan-Europeanism. The chapter ends, however, on a more hopeful note, articulating several ways through which crisis can be harnessed to integrative discourses of European citizenship.

The second chapter in the volume moves the focus to Canada, and, in particular, to the interesting and salient ways in which Europe's ongoing struggle to engage with its traumatic past has implications for reconciliation in Canada. Here, Dawn Smith, a member of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nation from Ehattesaht, discusses her experiences as a participant in an earlier field school (the I-witness Holocaust Field School) at the University of Victoria, and how these experiences reshaped her understandings of both colonialism and genocide. The point of departure here is not to use the Holocaust as a point of comparison, but rather, Smith argues, as a kind of reciprocal history, where a deeper understanding of one can help foster a deeper understanding of the other and, in particular, can create a safe and meaningful space to engage in conversations about racism, genocide, intolerance, and hatred. This space lifts the discussion of genocide away from any one group and reveals the universalism of the politics of hate. It is also a space that emphasizes the power of education and of gaining mutual understandings as means and mechanisms of reconciliation.

Ildikó Barna, a sociologist from Hungary and one of the participating faculty members of the field school, takes us back to Europe, in a discussion of the role of anti-immigrant rhetoric in the 2018 electoral campaign in Hungary. Barna argues that anti-immigrant rhetoric functioned as a form of classical propaganda promoted by the government, and was used as a tool to ensure the perpetuation in power of a particular political group. Immigration was framed by the government as an urgent matter of concern, a problem to be solved by this same government. Barna's chapter reveals significant parallels between the divisive politics of Europe before the Second World War and the current use of exclusionary and xenophobic narratives to shore up political power in Hungary. As then, these events pose significant challenges to the European Union's stated objectives of safeguarding democratic governance as well as human rights.

The fourth chapter moves the empirical focus to the role of memory in shaping political discourse in Brazil. Tamara Gonçalves' chapter introduces into the discussion another important aspect of memorialization: institutional forgetting. Gonçalves argues that an institutional silencing of Brazil's past as a dictatorship was key to the negotiated transition from an authoritarian regime to a democracy. At the same time, this forgetting has benefited perpetrators of human rights atrocities in the past regime, and also prevented Brazilians from coming to terms with the past. Gonçalves compares Brazil's experience with collective memory with that of Hungary; it is interesting to note that since the symposium and the initial draft of this chapter was written, Brazilians elected a president who drew on references to the past dictatorship to shore up his campaign.

The next section in the volume shifts the discussion to the experiences of field school participants in interacting with the sites of memory that were explored in the field school. This section opens with an overview of the field school by Charlotte Schallié and Dániel Péter Biró. The authors discuss the lessons learned and challenges faced during the field school, and provide insights on the value of experiential, place-based learning. Their chapter highlights the dynamic and rich interdisciplinary curriculum on the past and traumatic memory that they co-developed as the two key instructors of the field school.

This chapter is followed by a personal reflection by Lorraine Dumont, one of the participating students. Dumont, a PhD candidate in Law at Aix-Marseille University reflects on her own experiences interacting with the Berlin Holocaust Memorial. This memorial site, likely one of the most famous public memorials to the victims of the Holocaust, is significant for the fact that there are few signposts indicating how individuals should experience it. As Dumont comments, as a result, this site generated conflict for her in terms of memory *reverence* versus memory *reference*. These two sides of memorialization opened up for Dumont normative questions: Is there a right way to remember? Is there a correct way to take lessons from a traumatic past into our understanding of the present? How do we, as individuals, take our interactions with memorial sites as calls to action in our individual praxis? Dumont's chapter concludes that there are no unitary answers to any of these questions and challenges us all to encounter memorial sites with both guilt and hope, reverence and reference.

The two pieces that follow reflect on the experience of visiting the Ravensbrück Memorial Site. Matthias Heyl, the Head of the Educational

Department at the Ravensbrück Memorial Museum, writes a short piece on the power of the Ravensbrück site in providing place-based and experiential education that humanizes and gives immediacy to the Holocaust to a generation that has not experienced first-hand the challenges of war and conflict. This introduction to Ravensbrück is followed by Ethan Calof's reflections on what the visit to Ravensbrück Memorial Site meant to him at the most individual level: his own identity. Calof, a graduate student in Slavic Studies and one of the participating students in the field school, draws on a range of sources, from Harry Potter to sociological theories of collective identity, to frame his journey at the Ravensbrück Memorial Sties as a young Jewish man.

This second section of the volume closes with a chapter written by Alain Chouraqui, President of the Camp des Milles Foundation and UNESCO Chair in Education for Citizenship, Human Sciences, and Converging Memories, and Lena Cazies, Research Officer at the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp. Chouraqui and Cazies describe in detail the Les Milles deportation camp, the only French internment camp that is still intact. They discuss the role of the site in engendering and generating discussions in France aimed at reconciliation with the past as well as human rights education that is directed towards the present and the future. The les Milles site is notable in that the camp itself has been left much as it was — visitors are given space to imagine how life unfolded within its walls. Graffiti and art on the walls have been preserved; the site is neither air conditioned nor heated, so one can experience in a sensory way what it would have been like in both the summers of Aix and the bright and cold winter days of December and January. The educational site attached to the memorial, however, draws links between the Shoah and other historical atrocities; as Chouraqui and Cazies write, this is done purposefully to remind us that while each event has its specificities, there are parallel structures that lead to exclusion, persecution, human rights abuses, and murder, echoing Dawn Smith's conclusion in the second chapter of this volume.

The third and final section of the volume contemplates the special role of the arts in engendering a relationship with memorializations and memorial sites. Four of the chapters here were written by students participating in the field school, two of whom composed a musical piece reflecting on their experiences that were performed at the final symposium that concluded the field school. The final chapter in this volume is written by Dániel Péter Biró, a composer and one of the four leaders of the field school. Biró led the arts-centred curricula of the field

school and composed a piece that was premiered at the Les Milles memorial site.

Emily McCallum, a violonist and graduate student in musicology, draws on critical social theorists, including Arendt and Adorno, to frame the experience of listening to *Il Canto Sospeso*, a composition by Luigi Nono written in response to the post-war political environment in Germany and Italy. Nono's piece represents an explicit effort to use music to address oppressive politics and was controversial at the time. McCallum takes the reader through the various ways in which Nono used musical structure and technique, including orchestration, to convey a political message while still retaining full aesthetic qualities. McCallum concludes by suggesting that the piece lends itself to a range of interpretations, echoing in an interesting way Dumont's observations on the transparency of memorial sites to different forms of memory.

The next two chapters shift the discussion towards how artistic representations can take a much more directive and active role in memorializations. Paige Thombs, one of the field school participants, discusses the role of photographs in creating and forming collective memories and as acts of memorialization. Thombs addresses the different roles of photography, both generally as well as specifically in the context of memorialization of the Shoah, in creating emotional as well as experiential connections with the past. Photographs are important ways in which representations of traumatic events mobilize us to act, but Thombs also discusses the ethical implications and limitations of the photograph as a tool for documenting history. Photographs blur distinctions between subject and object and can strip the people who are in it of the ability to tell their own story; photographs can also flatten historical renderings of complex events. Photographs of the camps, for example, become short-hand representations of the reality but, in that, they render invisible what was not documented in a visual record. Photography is thus equally a tool for propaganda as it is for truth-telling; both of course rely on memorialization.

It is interesting to reflect on the differences suggested here between music and photographs as agents of memory and memorializations. Thombs proposes that photography has significant emotive power while also being transparent to being used in a directive manner, that is, by explicitly, and even purposefully, shaping how the past should be interpreted, understood, and felt. Adam Scime's chapter continues this discussion through a reflection on the role of art and culture more generally as agents and triggers of action within social movements.

Scime, a composer and one of the field school participants, discusses specifically the notion of activist art — art made purposefully to engender particular kinds of social action. Scime uses a case study approach to address how art, but particularly visual art, is used by social movement activists to create identity and provide resonance and context to their demands. Scime's chapter thus focuses on the immediacy of visual representations and their emotive power to mobilize activists and supporters, while Thombs' chapter also provides a cautionary note on the power of a photograph to reframe our experiences of historical notes.

The two final chapters in the volume are reflections on the experiences of two composers (one of whom, Kimberley Farris-Manning, was a participating student, while the other, Dániel Péter Biró, was one of the leaders of the field school program) in composing music in response to and in conjunction with the memorial sites that were part of the program. Farris-Manning's chapter starts with the assumption that the segregation of body and mind contribute to the rise of xenophobia; musical responses to the memorial sites are useful to dissolve this separation. Her piece, *Vorstellen: To Act and to Trust*, a piece for violin and electronics, was written in response to her experiences at all the memorial sites. Farris-Manning confronts the challenge of how to create art that deals with thought, memory, and politics, while still being, first and foremost, art. *Vorstellen* explores the intersections between art and politics and uses artifacts (sound recordings) combined with technique and structure to challenge listeners to think through a socio-political issue, but without directing a particular kind of response.

In the final chapter in this volume, Dániel Péter Biró discusses the process and thought behind the three-movement work *Gvul (Border)*, which was premiered by Ermis Theodorakis at the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp in Aix-en-Provence, France, on July 25, 2017. The chapter outlines how the composition deals with specific notions of recent European history and also discusses the conditions for its premier performance. *Gvul (Border)*, scored for piano and electronics, explores the limits of memory, through examining relationships between musical form, sonorous material, and historical perception. Biró argues in his chapter that the current political and social context in Europe, especially as authoritarian regimes gain power and populist as well as anti-democratic thinking have gained prominence, necessitates a different kind of composition, one that challenges and engages with history while also creating avenues for understanding the new. For Biró, *Gvul* represents an attempt to bridge the past, present, and future in a

critical and reflective manner. In this, the piece is a culmination of the overall goals of the field school — to present “the past in the present” with all the implications of historical trauma, realized both in the artistic and social-political realms.

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