

# Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada

Helga Halgrímsdóttir and Helga Thorson, Editors





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# Contents

List of Figures		3
Acknowledgements		5
INTRODUCTION	HELGA HALLGRÍMSDÓTTIR AND HELGA THORSON	7
<b>Section I</b>	<b>The Politics of Memory</b>	
CHAPTER 1	<i>Austerity Talk and Crisis Narratives: New Memory Politics and Xenophobia in the European Union</i> HELGA K. HALLGRÍMSDÓTTIR	15
CHAPTER 2	<i>I-witness Holocaust Field School Experiences, Indigenous Peoples, and Reconciliation in Canada</i> DAWN SII-YAA-ILTH-SUPT SMITH	35
CHAPTER 3	<i>Anti-Immigrant Propaganda and the Factors That Led to its Success in Hungary</i> ILDIKÓ BARNA	53
CHAPTER 4	<i>Echoes from Brazil: Remembering to Forget</i> TAMARA AMOROSO GONÇALVES	73
<b>Section II</b>	<b>Interacting with Sites of Memory</b>	
CHAPTER 5	<i>Studies in Contrast: Notes from the Field</i> CHARLOTTE SCHALLIÉ AND DÁNIEL PÉTER BIRÓ	105

CHAPTER 6	<i>The Individual's Interaction with Memorial Sites</i> <b>LORRAINE DUMONT</b>	117
CHAPTER 7	<i>On Ravensbrück</i> <b>MATTHIAS HEYL</b>	133
CHAPTER 8	<i>Unpacking My Jewish Identity through the Ravensbrück Memorial Site</i> <b>ETHAN CALOF</b>	139
CHAPTER 9	<i>From the Breeding Ground of Social Tensions to Genocide: A Resistible Spiral</i> <b>ALAIN CHOURAQUI AND LENA CASIEZ</b>	155
<b>Section III</b>	<b>Contemplating Memory through the Arts</b>	
CHAPTER 10	<i>The Impact of Listening to Luigi Nono's Il Canto Sospeso</i> <b>EMILY MACCALLUM</b>	179
CHAPTER 11	<i>Photographs and Memories: The (In)tractable Reality of the Still Image</i> <b>PAIGE THOMBS</b>	193
CHAPTER 12	<i>Inside-Outside: The Efficaciousness of Art and Culture within Social Movements</i> <b>ADAM SCIME</b>	209
CHAPTER 13	<i>"Vorstellen" As: To Put Forward, To Introduce, To Imagine</i> <b>KIMBERLEY FARRIS-MANNING</b>	237
CHAPTER 14	<i>Composing גבול (Border)</i> <b>DÁNIEL PÉTER BIRÓ</b>	255
CONCLUSION	<b>EMMANUEL BRUNET-JAILLY</b>	267
APPENDIX 1	<i>Syllabus: Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada</i>	273
APPENDIX 2	<i>Course Schedule: EU Summer Field School: Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada</i>	289
ABOUT THE EDITORS		303

## List of Figures

- FIGURE 8.1 The Gates of Ravensbrück
- FIGURE 10.1 Pitch series from Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*
- FIGURE 10.2 Arch dynamic form used in movement 4
- FIGURE 11.1 Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdî, washed ashore in 2015
- FIGURE 11.2 Inside the barracks of Buchenwald concentration camp
- FIGURE 11.3 Keleti Railway Station
- FIGURE 11.4 Crematorium ovens at the Dachau Memorial Site
- FIGURE 11.5 Crematorium ovens at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site
- FIGURE 13.1 Graphic for *Engrenages*: Inverting the Spiral of Fear for solo violin and electronics
- FIGURE 14.1 *Gvul (Border)*, movement I mm. 41-47
- FIGURE 14.2 *Gvul (Border)*, movement II mm. 36-39
- FIGURE 14.3 *Gvul (Border)*, movement III mm. 103-106



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# Introduction

## Helga Hallgrímsdóttir and Helga Thorson

*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)<sup>1</sup> 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 antisemitic<sup>2</sup> 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.

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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,<sup>3</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup> 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. Hallgrimsdottir 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 Mille 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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Section I

# The Politics of Memory





## Chapter 1

# **Austerity Talk and Crisis Narratives**



# Austerity Talk and Crisis Narratives: New Memory Politics and Xenophobia in the European Union

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## Introduction

This chapter has two purposes: first, to explore what the current focus on “crisis” in international and global politics reveals, both empirically and normatively, about the state of citizenship in Europe; second, to use the concept of crisis to call for an alternative rendering of citizenship, belonging, and social cohesion. The empirical focus is on the two defining crises of our time: the global financial crisis (GFC) of 2008 and the migrant crisis in Europe (starting in 2011 and continuing). I address these crises as narrative devices that intersect with memory politics in ways that heighten and intensify xenophobic and nationalist anxieties; at the same time I call for a re-imagining of both crisis and citizenship in ways that can sustain inclusionary and integrative narratives of a European future.

I begin with a broad discussion on citizenship as a construct for understanding the complex relationships between states and individuals in our current era; in particular, my focus is on how citizenship can help us think through the complex and deep webs of mutual obligations and interrelations that bind individuals to one another and to states and how citizenship can simultaneously call forth exclusionary and inclusionary narratives of social, economic, and political belonging. I follow this with a discussion of “crisis” as an empirical, normative, and narrative construct, and as one of the defining narrative constructs of our current era. I then focus on the framing of the economic crisis and the migrant crisis and how these framings intersect with reigning memory politics. I conclude that the most pressing current policy challenge that we face is the thinning of citizenship; as such a discussion of how crises exacerbate this thinning but could also be deployed in ways that support integrative agendas for social change is extremely timely.

## **The 2008 Economic Meltdown and the European Migrant Crisis: Challenges to Narratives of European Citizenship**

My focus in this chapter is on crisis as narrative device that draws on and is constitutive of collective memory. While the first two decades of this century have been dominated by various crisis narratives (including in particular climate crises and political crises), I focus here on the two crises that have most immediately preceded the current challenges facing European integration: the GFC (starting in 2008) and the migrant (or refugee) crisis in Europe. The use of the term crisis for both sets of events masks real and significant differences in the causes and outcomes of these events. For my purposes, however, the fact that both sets of events were predominantly framed as crises is significant, as is their combined effect on European discourses and narratives of citizenship and integration.

The GFC is generally dated to the fall of 2008 when the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression swept across the globe (Crotty 2009). Failures in the US subprime mortgage market in late 2007 triggered a series of other bank failures, leading to a crisis that then spread through the global financial market, giving rise to deep recessions across much of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

(OECD) countries. Much has been written on the economics of the 2008 global financial crisis, as well as of the global economic downturn that followed in its wake (Crotty 2009; Rose and Spiegel 2011; Stockhammer 2015; Stiglitz 2016). Recovery from the GFC was slow and varied considerably across Europe; in addition, the GFC solidified the dominance of austerity policies and discourse as the only valid response to economic downfall, and, in many of the worst affected countries, led to significant cutbacks to social services and a general retrenchment of the welfare state.

It is clear that the disruptive effects of the economic crisis are still playing out across Europe. On the one hand, there has been a resurgence of nationalist politics, including both ultra-right-wing parties as well as the mainstreaming of populist nationalist ideas within established parties (Vasilopoulou and Halikiopoulou 2015; Melzer and Serafin 2013). At the same time, activists from both the right and left have parlayed the financial crisis and the policy responses to it into a narrative that renders mainstream macro-economics, as well as liberal democracy itself, as morally and intellectually bankrupt (Serricchio, Tsakatika, and Quaglia 2013; Fukuyama 2012). In Europe, the Brexit referendum results, the rhetoric used by the far-right and far-left candidates in the French presidential elections, alongside of the waning influence of social-democratic ideals in nations on the periphery of Europe, such as Turkey, point more specifically to an emerging normative crisis with regards to the European integration project (Bruszt 2015).

The rise of populist politics, on both the left and the right, appears to be the most significant legacy of the GFC. A large-scale comparative study commissioned by the *Guardian* showed recently that the proportion of Europeans voting for populist parties has risen from about 15% in 2008 to over 25% in 2018 (Lewis et al. 2018). This trend has to be viewed within the context of austerity policies, welfare state retrenchment, and rising inequality in Europe. It is also important to identify the formation of nationalist parties as not just an outcome but also a cause of rising nationalist sentiments, in that nationalist and xenophobic politics also require resonant narratives in order to produce political outcomes.

The recent rise of nationalist and xenophobic politics that frame the works presented in this volume is thus embedded in a particular historical context. The financial crisis and its political fallout is one part of this context, while the European migrant crisis is another. The

European migrant crisis is both harder to date and define, however, than the GFC. The term is used to refer to an increasing number of people on the move from the Global South to the Global North starting in 2011 and continuing. However, mobility has been a feature of globalized social and economic relations for some time; the features that make this a crisis have to do with the scale of movement and the growing proportion of unauthorized migrants. In 2010, the World Bank estimated that about 216 million, or about 3.2% of the world's population was on the move; of these between 10 to 15% were unauthorized migrants (Tilly 2011). By 2017, this figure had increased to 244 million (United Nations Report on Sustainable Development Goals 2017). However, the term "crisis" came into more common use following significant media coverage of the tragic deaths of migrants attempting to enter the EU via the Mediterranean Sea, but soon came to connote not just the risks inherent in the crossings and also the risk to Europeans and European institutions posed by migrants once they arrived (Holmes and Castaneda 2016). As many scholars have noted, this rendering of the movement of people across borders and into Europe has fostered further representations of migrants as dangerous, undeserving, and of posing an unsustainable burden on the social services of receiving nations.

These narratives of migration are linked to and embedded with xenophobic politics that draw on nationalist narratives of inclusion and cohesion, aided and abetted by zero-sum renderings of the social good, which were given particular currency and life by the 2008 financial crisis. In this way, narratives of migration are hooked into narratives of citizenship. In our current context, these citizenship narratives are fueled by a rich resource of "forgetful" renderings of the past. As I aim to explore below, however, even though citizenship can be seen as a potentially exclusionary construct, in that citizenship denotes belonging and established boundaries and limits to that belonging, citizenship narratives also have integrative potential, one which was unlocked to a greater degree in past European crises.

The past is therefore a permanent dimension of the human consciousness, an inevitable component of the institutions, values and other patterns of human society. (*Hobsbawm 1972, 3*)

As elsewhere in this volume, I engage with the concept of memory as a social and collective phenomenon; collective memory is simultaneously a body of knowledge about a culture, an attribute of that culture as well as the process by which it is formed (Wertsch and Roediger 2008; Halbwachs 1992; Dudai 2004). Collective memory is about what we know about our past(s), how we know it, and why; and, as with all collective engagements with the past (whether through memory or history), social memory reflects and shapes our understanding of our present moment (Hobsbawm 1972). The social memorialization of the past is thus inherently a political act (Olick and Robbins 1998). Beyond this, memorialization of the past, as an ongoing, engaging, and emotionally intense social project, builds national identities and, importantly, conceptions of citizenship (Habermas 1996).

The politics of social memory are particularly relevant to citizenship studies in the European context. Pan-European citizenship — both as the legal status that affords mobility rights and civic, social, and political protections to all members of the EU, and as a mode of identity — is itself a mnemonic community centred around accepted memorializations of the Second World War (Mälksoo 2009; Rigney 2012). These memorializations counterpose the notion of a divided past against the integrated present, value universalism over fragmentation, and locate nationalism and xenophobia as part of a shared traumatic European past. Thus, the shared history of World War II and the memorialization of the Holocaust provide both meaning and content to European citizenship identities while also challenging ethno-nationalist constructions of citizenship (Rigney 2012; Rothberg and Yildiz 2011). However, recent years have seen the emergence of new nationalist politics in Europe that have formed new mnemonic European communities; these re-articulate and re-define the relationship of shared history to belonging, by, for instance, placing language, identity, and place at the forefront of citizenship identities (Misztal 2010). In other words, the politics of memory

are central to the construction of citizenship and the exercise of citizenship rights in Europe today.

Clearly, the relationship between citizenship and the politics of memory is well worth interrogating. Citizenship is the anchoring concept of the nation-state. The development of citizenship as a global, universal status, and one that puts, at least in principle, values of equality at its forefront, is the foundation of contemporary democracies. As argued by T.H. Marshall (1950), robust and “thick” citizenship — that includes not just civic freedoms but also social rights and economic protections — provides the basis of political equality as well as for social cohesion and sustainability, and political and social stability (Marshall 1950, 1964).

While Marshall cited universalism as a fundamental attribute of citizenship, it is clear that in practice citizenship is both particularistic and differentiated (Soysal 2000). Birthplace, gender, race and ethnicity, language, and legal status all interplay to create hierarchies and inequalities between and amongst citizens (O’Connor 1993). Indeed, citizenship’s potential to create inequalities has received much more recent scholarly attention than the reverse; in the European context, inequalities around birthplace, race, and ethnicity have been shown to be associated with significant “thinning” of citizenship rights for immigrants and migrants (Soysal 1994; Schierup, Hansen, and Castles 2006; Brysk and Shafir 2004; Dell’Olio 2017). In Canada, current debates about “birthright” citizenship as well as existing laws that do not allow for the transmission of citizenship beyond one generation have the effect of further differentiating citizenship in Canada. In the EU, legal regimes around work and mobility create significant differentiations, especially between migrants and residents, and produce both precarious and contingent citizens.

Nonetheless, I argue here that citizenship has conceptual potential to address concerns around integration. In particular, I argue that citizenship can carry the seeds of integrative discourses just as easily as of exclusionary discourses. Hannah Arendt’s thinking around the communal roots of citizenship is helpful here. Writing from a republican, or rights-based tradition, Arendt reminds us that co-existence with others like us and not like us — living collectively and in communities — is a fundamental condition of humanity. Further to this, all meaningful human rights to existence (i.e., life) are guaranteed by membership in a community. Thus, for Arendt, the genocide of the European Jewish community during World War II was possible because

Jews had been deprived and removed from community — from “a place in the world” (Arendt 1973, 268). The *right to have rights* is the fundamental premise of citizenship; the right to have rights requires a community that gives content and meaning to those rights (Arendt 1973). This is an important counterpart to the more dominant (at least in our current time) overtly individualistic rendering of citizenship.

In other works, including “The Human Condition” and “Freedom and Politics,” Arendt further clarifies the framework that citizenship provides to communal life (Arendt 2013, 1961). Citizenship requires both political engagement and civic responsibility; the exercise of these obligations is required in order to realize freedom. Arendt distinguishes between freedom from politics and political freedom: whereas the latter expresses and is dependent on a legitimate public sphere, the former leads to the erosion of the public realm, the attenuation of citizenship, and its replacement by clientelism. In our current context, clientelism is represented by a move, among other things, to the emphasis on services for rate-payers as opposed to a rights-based framework.

This emphasis on the communal dimensions of citizenship reinforces also the relationality of citizenship. Citizenship is embedded in and re-embeds social relations of mutual obligation: paying taxes, military service, voting, obeying the law (on the part of the citizenry) in exchange for the provision of services by the state, protection from enemies, and freedom from illegitimate exercise of violence (Somers 1993; Joppke 2007). The relations of citizenship extend into social, civil, and cultural realms, to include not only economic participation (i.e., the worker-citizen), but also social reproduction (the mother-citizen) (Hallgrimsdottir, Benoit, and Phillips 2013; Stoltzfus 2004; Anderson 2015).

Citizenship is thus a complex and multi-layered concept that involves not only the rights that flow from the legally recognized residence within a particular territory, but also identities and statuses that accompany those rights as well as the processes and actions that realize them (Isin and Turner 2007; Turner 1990; Isin and Nielsen 2013; Somers and Wright 2008; Somers 1993; Soysal 2000; Marshall 1950, 1964). Citizenship’s complexity is seen at one level in the fact that it can be wielded as both a weapon of exclusion as well as an integrative tool. However, at its foundation, citizenship is a normative construct that expresses equality as a social good (Somers 1993); as per Arendt, citizenship, at its best, expresses and rearticulates communities, sustains the autonomy of civil society, and safeguards against the tyranny of the state

(Arendt 1961). Citizenship conceived of as community-derived rights that draw on responsibility, mutualism, and political engagement has thus the potential to recast the conversation away from the *differentiation* of rights towards *universalism*.

This kind of universalism is the normative foundation of the pan-European project; as we detailed above, pan-European citizenship is effectively a mnemonic community rooted as much in memorializations and memory politics as in policy and practice. However, it is clear that in our current moment, universalism is not at the forefront of citizenship narratives in Europe. I argue below that the language of crises — cultural, political, and economic — presents a significant normative challenge to universalism in citizenship narratives. Instead, narratives of crises, given new content by alternative memorializations of Europe that draw attention to identity, culture, language, and place, give rise to attenuating and exclusionary narratives of citizenship. I turn now to a discussion of crisis.

## **Crisis and the Making of History**

The language of crisis pervades our current context: environmental, economic, political, and demographic events are predominantly expressed through the vocabulary of crises by scholars, commentators, and politicians. My goal below is to unpack how crisis functions as a narrative device and how this shapes current understandings of belonging in Europe — that is, citizenship.

Crisis, like citizenship, is a multi-faceted and complex construct. For our purposes here, it is important to point out how crisis operates simultaneously on multiple registers: as a theoretical or methodological lens, as an empirical descriptor, and as a normative and narrative device. For instance, the concept of crisis has played a key role in epistemologies of social change: crises trigger contingent events (events that alter path-dependent patterns of historical change) (Pierson 2000); and crises can operate as “external shocks” that shift policy solutions from the incremental to the substantive (Nohrstedt and Weible 2010; Jenkins-Smith and Sabatier 1999). Crises are also understood to generate critical junctures that force new choices or decisions upon institutional actors (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Peters, Pierre, and King 2005).

In the European Union context, crisis has a long empirical and theoretical history. The European integration literature itself is dominated by functionalist and neo-functionalist perspectives that place crisis at the core of European integration: the European project itself was triggered by the economic and political disarray that followed the Second World War (Desmond 2004). In addition, initial steps towards integration triggered further, smaller economic and political crises that were then solved through further integration, through for instance policy parallelism or economic and political unification (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2014).

The notion that crises are necessary for creating systemic change is rooted as well in Marxist and post-Marxist theories of large-scale social and historical change. James O'Connor, for instance, expands on and develops the role that economic and ecological crises play in terms of restructuring the social relations of production in a post-capitalist context (O'Connor 1988); crises foster contradictions that need to be resolved in order for the system to sustain itself.

Crisis need however to be identified as such in order to effect historical change. The meaning and directions of crisis is driven by context, and of course, the decisions and actions of human actors. Gramsci reminds us that on their own, economic crises cannot cause political change, but that rather they “simply create a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life” (Gramsci 1992, 276). Crises are always simultaneously narrative devices and constructs as much as they are historical “things.” The European migrant crisis, for instance, was as much a crisis of European migration policy, of European citizenship, and of European identities, as it was a crisis of migration; the valences and meanings of the migrant crisis were clearly driven by national and domestic political agendas (Berry, Garcia-Blanco, and Moore 2016).

As a narrative device, the concept of crisis is often nested in dystopian, even apocalyptic understandings of events: the future is both uncertain and unknown. Gramsci's definition of crisis as “The old is dying, and the new cannot be born” (Gramsci 1993, 276), captures how crisis can take on opposing valences, as simultaneously a moment of openness and possibility and risk, danger, and uncertainty. Crisis as a narrative calls for action and immediacy; in Europe as well as in the North America, positing the flow of migrants as a crisis has justified

moments of exception to the rule of law and the suspension of human rights (Turner 2005; Dines, Montagna, and Ruggiero 2015). The use of camps, detention zones, and expanded border zones within which migrants are reduced to “bare life,” within and inside established and wealthy welfare states, such as Italy and France, illustrates in part the power of a crisis narrative to suspend normal modes of state operation.

There is an additional difference between the responses to this most recent economic crisis and the kinds of responses that earlier crises in the European Union engendered, and that is the shift away from Keynesian economic responses and towards austerity economics (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2014). To the extent that there have been coordinated policy responses to the crisis, these have largely been driven by an austerity agenda (Karanikolos et al. 2013); interestingly Iceland has generally been understood as an exception to this pattern. This is important because austerity politics have in general led to poorer social and health outcomes but have also generated declining trust in politics and in public institutions (Lefkofridi and Schmitter 2014). In addition, while the financial crisis was instigated by increased economic inequality across Europe, as well as increased economic polarization (Stockhammer 2015; Cynamon and Fazzari 2015; Galbraith 2011), there is an emerging consensus that the policy responses to the crisis have, in general, exacerbated these trends (Vaughan-Whitehead 2011). Of particular importance from a European perspective is the variegation of these effects, seen in terms of both within and between nation economic inequality (Vaughan-Whitehead 2011).

In sum, the link between crises and integration in our current context is far from clear or certain. As Polanyi and MacIver argued, political, economic, and social change only comes from conscious human decisions (Polanyi and MacIver 1944). In turn, a crisis instigates change through necessitating new kinds of decisions and paradigmatic shifts (Block 2003). The logic of economic crisis in neoliberal regimes suggests that there is no endogenous mechanism by which crisis will trigger integrative reactions. Rather, if crisis is to trigger further or deeper integration, it will need to be explicitly made by policy actors. But the larger point here is that whether seen as disruptions to stable systems or as necessary triggers of progressive change, or the catalyst to societal transformation, in these readings crises *make history*. This understanding of crises is an important counterpart as we consider how crises as a narrative device function in political rhetoric.

## Conclusion

Crises are the key narrative device of our time. As a narrative device, it is a double-edged sword: while framing historical events as crises denote urgency and the need for action, this also creates totalizing narratives that fosters polarized binaries. Narratives of the migrant crisis rested on binary understandings of citizens versus non-citizens; deserving versus non-deserving migrants; and, importantly, rule of law versus lawlessness. In turn, the migrant crisis narrative was clearly framed by the narratives emerging out of the GFC: the need for austerity, the scarcity of resources needed to support the social good, the unsustainability of rich welfare supports. These narratives were in fact accompanied by real and significant action of the state, resulting in noticeable withdrawal of the state from providing social services and a general disassembling of the welfare state.

The power of the economic austerity narratives that took hold after the GFC can, at some level, be seen by examining social and political changes in European nations that were the least affected by the financial crisis, such as Sweden and Norway (Finnsdottir and Hallgrimsdottir 2019). Both of these nations have seen a resurgence in support for right-wing populist parties with anti-immigration agendas, in spite of not having suffered the kind of economic set-back that has fuelled the rise of left- and right-wing populism in Greece, France, Spain, and Italy.

In fact, the narratives of economic restructuring and recovery that emerged out of the GFC were equally polarizing and totalizing as narratives of the migrant crisis. While the GFC was a complex historical event with an equally complex etiology, as a narrative, the GFC is a relatively simple story of victims and villains that links together national debt with profligacy and moral failure. In this story, austerity and cut-backs to social spending are valorized as strength and determination; the political agency of state actors is in effect minimized, as there is only one plot-line, one solution. As a general comment, the very casting of the GFC as an economic story, as opposed to a story of political action, inaction, and failures, is interesting in and of itself.

In terms of the discussion above, the GFC can be linked to a *thinning* of citizenship while the migrant crisis can be linked to a *thickening* of borders. The basis for social inclusion, cohesion, and integration in Europe has thus simultaneously become more exclusive as well as more precarious and contingent. The kind of universalism that was the

foundation of the normative project of European integration is thus significantly challenged.

As I stated above, however, seeing crises as sets of contingencies and catalysts that trigger historical change is also suggestive that both the GFC and the migrant crisis could have been (and maybe still can be?) cast as opportunities and openings to new ways of social and economic organization. Certainly, the Occupy movement of 2011 attempted to draw on the disruptions of the GFC in order to instigate new conversations about economic inequality. While the reasons for the failure of Occupy to create meaningful change are beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worth noting that one of the challenges faced by the Occupy movement was the lack of institutional infrastructures of cohesion and belonging — in particular, political parties, unions, and civic associations — that in other contexts give meaningful collective identity, shared goals, and membership in mnemonic communities, to protestors and social activists. Drawing on Arendt again, we can understand that the Occupy protesters dissented without clear reference to a membership in community. Occupy was protesting neo-liberalism, but did so within a context of the already thinned fabric of citizenship and community created by neo-liberalism.

I end here with a brief call out to utilize and draw on a richer and fuller understanding of citizenship as a way of recasting crises as catalyst for progressive change. This requires drawing and considering several propositions. In particular, I conclude here by suggesting some alternative ways in which a narrative of crisis can be used to mobilize alternative renderings of European citizenship in which inclusionary and integrative politics are a possible outcome.

First, we should, as scholars and commentators, embrace the notion of crisis as a catalyzing construct when describing challenging historical events. A crisis *should* call for new solutions to social problems, not iterations of past policy solutions. Second, to the extent that citizenship denotes a mnemonic community, overlaid on the physically bounded community of the nation, let us encourage memorializations of European citizenship that emphasize the connections between universal values and the diversity of the European community, so that notions of Europeanism can exist in comfort alongside strong identification with a nation-state. Third, let us also recognize that while the austerity measures that emerged out of the GFC were a chosen outcome and not an inevitable outcome of the economic crisis, the resultant social and economic polarization is an expected outcome of austerity policies.

Building stronger, integrative, and inclusionary politics will necessarily involve addressing the social, economic, and political inequalities that have widened across Europe since 2007. It is worth returning to the seminal statements on citizenship discussed earlier in this chapter. Marshall's warning that political and civic inequality was impossible without some mitigation of social inequality can be expanded in our current context with the addition of the dimension of cultural citizenship to foster integration and inclusion in diverse societies.

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## Chapter 2

# I-witness Holocaust Field School



# I-witness Holocaust Field School Experiences, Indigenous Peoples, and Reconciliation in Canada

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## Introduction

In this chapter I discuss my personal and profound experiences, as an Indigenous student, on the I-witness Holocaust Field School (2012) at the University of Victoria.<sup>1</sup> This experience helped to shape my understanding of colonialism and genocide. This aspect of Indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> Editor’s note: While this book reflects mostly on experiences from the “Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada Field School, Dawn Smith’s contribution brings together these reflections with her own experiences as an Indigenous Canadian woman participating in an earlier field school organized through UVic – the I-witness Holocaust Field School.

peoples' lives, along with self-determination, are typically not something that most Canadians spend time thinking about. Although things are slowly changing with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada report (2015), surprisingly little is known about Indigenous peoples, including the issue of self-determination, the ugly history, the current reality, and the circumstances facing Indigenous peoples today. This chapter examines more closely the ongoing genocide and often overlooked colonial policies and practices that continue to plague Indigenous peoples and communities. Also, the current processes of truth and reconciliation are moving quickly, often overlooking aspects of "truth" in favour of advancing reconciliation.

As Nuu-chah-nulth-aht (a person of Nuu-chah-nulth ancestry) and a child of a survivor of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system, I have spent a good part of my life trying to understand why Canadians hate us (Indigenous peoples) so much. The daily experiences of walking in a colonized country teach me to be wary and cautious, but also to be courageous, particularly in an effort to confront the injustices Indigenous peoples still face today. Only recently have I been able to face colonialism with courage and with less fear, while recognizing that I could not have done this kind of work in isolation. It is difficult and challenging work that requires family and community support, especially when tackling oppression, dispossession, racism, and violence toward Indigenous peoples. Experiences of hatred and intolerance can instill a deep fear of non-Indigenous peoples (police, social workers, etc.), and this conditioned me to run and hide from such issues. As an adult, I never thought I would find the courage and strength to speak out publicly about colonialism, and specifically about acts of racism and intolerance, but somehow here I am, opening myself up to expression and dialogue.

At one point in my life, a particular experience of hatred and intolerance occurred, prompting me to take action (at least in an academic sense). This experience instigated my journey toward understanding the deep roots of colonialism. The following year I happened to stumble upon a poster for the I-witness Holocaust Field School at the University of Victoria (UVic) inviting students to critically examine intolerance, racism, and antisemitism. Curiosity led me to a pre-field school information meeting where I found myself amongst like-minded people. I became intrigued and registered for the course.

The field school shed light on the Jewish experiences of genocide and hatred, and for me this was life changing. The field school changed my

understanding not only of my family's experiences of colonialism, but also of the collective experiences of Indigenous peoples.

This chapter begins by exploring ethical considerations when discussing the relationship between memories of different groups in different historical contexts. I then share personal memories of the field school before sharing a Nuu-chah-nulth (NCN) perspective on self-determination. Finally, this chapter addresses the process of truth and reconciliation in Canada. For the purpose of clarification, it should be noted that I do not speak for all Indigenous peoples; I offer only an NCN perspective based on my experiences and observations. As such, it is important to note that NCN self-independence and/or determination, or more specifically, *?uu?uuq"aačii* (oo-oo-qua-chii), is at the heart of the struggle. It remains the most contested aspect of the relationship between NCN (as well as all Indigenous peoples) and the Canadian state.

David MacDonald's (2007) article "First Nations, Residential Schools, and the Americanization of the Holocaust: Rewriting Indigenous Histories in the United States and Canada" speaks to the idea that Indigenous peoples, like myself, use the Holocaust as a tool to advance Indigenous issues. He notes that "a debate has emerged about whether or not the Holocaust is appropriate as a frame of reference" for "other victimized groups seeking increased recognition of their past" (995). Further, he argues that this "victimhood" (995) advances "social and ethnic groups' plight while seeking an apology and/or repatriation" (995–96). MacDonald raises a concern that the Holocaust may become "trivialized" when used irresponsibly, thus minimizing the significance of the Holocaust (996). MacDonald suggests that using the Holocaust as a point of reference takes away from the group's — or in this case, from Indigenous histories — and I would add "takes away from truths."

MacDonald adds that "reinterpreting past victimization through a very distinctive and wholly different series of events" (996) overlooks a group's lived experiences, thus silencing them again. MacDonald's points are valid and must not be overlooked in any discussion of the Holocaust or of Indigenous peoples; to do so would be an injustice to all. Yet, I believe that if we do not discuss colonial and genocidal histories and experiences across time and space, we lose opportunities to learn from one another. Therefore, I find myself moving away from the debate on whether or not Indigenous peoples "hijack the Holocaust" (MacDonald 995) and turning my attention to Michael Rothberg (2009), who writes about remembering the Holocaust in an age of decolonization. Rothberg notes that we must get beyond a competitive

model of memory (5) and move towards a multidirectional one, “which is meant to draw attention to the dynamic transfers that take place between diverse places and times during the act of remembrance” (11).

A shift away from the competitive model, Rothberg argues, is a zero-sum approach to memory and identity where the perception of gain for one side is seen as a loss for the other side (6). Both MacDonald and Rothberg bring to our attention the serious nature of any discussion of the Holocaust, which must not be glossed over, but instead embraced and acknowledged. As such, I have included their voices as a way to highlight these important matters of appropriation of the Holocaust, memory, and identity, while finding ways to move forward with the much-needed conversation regarding global genocide.

My chapter’s focus is an exploration of what it meant to be a participant in the field school, and its lasting impact on my life. My intention is not to discuss every experience of the field school, but rather to convey the feelings that it left deep inside me. The evolving relationship between fellow field school participants, faculty, and others is the opportunity to further one’s own learning(s) while seeking some sort of justice.

This reflection is one extension of that relationship, which I hope supports the continued positive efforts of those who dare to confront global injustices. I have always struggled to articulate what I have learned about colonialism, racism, intolerance, and hatred; however, the field school was perfect for someone like me who has much to learn. I found that the field school not only provided an opportunity to study racism, intolerance, and antisemitism, but also provided a safe place to learn and reflect. As such, I embarked upon this learning journey, and it brought me to Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic, where I made a number of observations along the way. This section highlights three learnings from the 2012 field school, which include remembrance and the German infatuation with Indigenous peoples.

Memory serves a purpose, giving way to acts of remembrance, in this case the 2012 I-witness Holocaust Field School. This act of remembering does not ignore the current discourse of remembrance, which Rothberg (2009) notes is the focus of his work. Rothberg synthesizes his concerns regarding the “history, representation, biography, memorialization, and politics that motivates many scholars working in cultural studies” (4). He adds that his concerns are not separate “from either history or representation” (4) as “memory nonetheless captures simultaneously the individual, embodied, and lived side and the

collective, social, and constructed side of our relations to the past” (4). As such, I appreciate Rothberg’s multidirectional approach, and it helps me to be mindful as I move forward with sharing my field school experiences. I use the term “remembrance” to describe those experiences, as opposed to the word “memory,” particularly as a way to avoid the politics that surround memory.

## I-witness Holocaust Field School

After enrolling in the I-Witness Holocaust Field School, the class came together to socialize, fundraise, and prepare for the academic and experiential learning(s) of studying the Holocaust. The first week was spent in a classroom, at the University of Victoria (UVic), where professors, guest lecturers, and Holocaust survivors helped facilitate our learning(s) in terms of the violent and inhuman crimes of the Holocaust. The first week and the following three weeks were intense, particularly for someone like me who knew little about the Holocaust or Jewish peoples. It was emotional and filled with *ya?akmis*, a Nuu-chah-nulth (NCN) phrase that translates to “love and pain.” It was one thing to read about the Holocaust, and it was another thing to travel to Europe and meet Holocaust survivors; it was a life-altering experience.

This reflection is *not* an attempt to compare the Holocaust with the experiences of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island (an Indigenous term used to refer to North America), but instead to draw on and share field school experiences. It is an act of reciprocity. (I am giving back what the field school has given me.) What I recall the most about participating in the field school was this overwhelming feeling of ignorance in terms of what I knew about the Holocaust; however, it was a starting point for learning about global injustices. Berlin, Germany, was the first stop of many, but it was the place where I encountered numerous physical and other diverse types of commemoration or memorialization of the Holocaust. On the second day, the class journeyed to the Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum, a former concentration camp. It was a place like no other place I have ever seen.

Although now transformed, the open fields and facilities overwhelmed me, as I sat by myself feeling sad but also enraged. I quickly realized that nothing could have prepared me for the actual experience of going to Europe to visit these places of genocide. The following days

were spent in cemeteries, more museums, and also guided tours, where there was a deeper opportunity to learn about the peoples who died at the hands of the National Socialists (Nazis) and also the places that hold these memories. Walking through the old but beautifully lush and green cemeteries is where I reflected the most, particularly on what I had learned that I did not expect to learn. There was so much respect, as there should be, for those who perished in the Holocaust.

It was a feeling that resonated deeply, prompting me to think about family cultural teachings (FCT)<sup>2</sup> of respect, and how we honour our loved ones who have gone on to the spirit world; and I took great comfort in this. As a child growing up, I loved museums, particularly because I could go and visit the Indigenous part of the museum, where I would spend hours daydreaming about what it must have been like before the Europeans arrived. In Europe, as I wandered through the Jewish Museum in Berlin, I was incredibly impressed, and also taken aback, first by the magnificent architecture, and second by the sheer size of it. Still possessing the same kind of imagination that I had as a child, I wandered through the exhibits trying to absorb the vast amount of information and history. What struck me the most was that in Berlin, Germany (where it all started), there was a Jewish Museum housing artifacts and keeping the past very much alive in the present. This left me with a feeling of hope that perhaps one day there could be an Indigenous museum in Canada run by Indigenous peoples.

The second aspect of the field school that stood out for me was the way in which North American Indigenous peoples were perceived in Europe, or more specifically Germany. For some reason, I always knew that Germans had a fascination with Indigenous peoples and cultures, but what I did not know was how far back in time this fascination went. In a 2018 CBC documentary entitled “Searching for Winnetou,” Drew Hayden Taylor (Ojibway) notes that this fascination goes all the way back to the 19th century, adding that “James Fennimore Cooper’s romantic novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, published in 1826,” was the impetus for this fascination. However, Hayden Taylor states that “the genre really exploded with the publication of the *Winnetou* novels written by Karl May, starting in the 1890s.”

Further, Hayden Taylor travels to Europe to investigate and document this obsession with Indigenous peoples, making note of the influential

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<sup>2</sup> Family cultural teachings (Smith 2007) embody specific family knowledge(s) and pedagogies, which have been passed down from one generation to the next for decades.

entertainment industry, particularly in Bad Segeberg, Germany, where Karl May's books continue to have a huge influence, drawing thousands of curious people to the live theatrical shows. Hayden Taylor also makes the link to Adolf Hitler and this infatuation. He writes:

Disturbingly, Adolf Hitler and other high-ranking Nazis were also massive fans. The Lakota-Sioux, a nation of plains Natives, was elevated to the status of honorary Aryan. (There is no record of any member of the Lakota-Sioux trying to test what this meant in practice.) Hitler believed that, if the Nazis were to invade America, Native Americans would greet them as liberators.

Hayden Taylor does an exceptional job of unpacking this fascination while examining his own conflicted feelings about the appropriation of indigeneity.

It certainly is worth watching the documentary to determine for yourself if you think it is appropriate in the 21st century to dress up and act like "Indians." Is it appreciation or appropriation? Interestingly enough, there is another example of linkage between Indigenous peoples and Germany that sheds light on the connection to Adolf Hitler. MacDonald (2007) cites David Stannard (1992, 246), who writes that Adolf Hitler "was inspired by America's success at killing its indigenous peoples" (999), adding: "on the way to Auschwitz, the road's pathway led straight through the heart of the Indians of North and South America" (999). I decided to try and follow this theory, and I purchased Hitler's autobiography *Mein Kampf* (1925). It is a thick and intimidating book that I found challenging, and I admit I didn't read it front to back. I had hoped to find the connection to Hitler and North America using Hitler's own words, but I did not succeed.

The further I researched this claim, however, the more evidence I found to support it. In fact, in the Indigenous paper *Indian Country Today*, author Leon Donnelly makes note that "Adolf Hitler himself saw in the American conquest of the West a model for Germany's conquest of the East to achieve her divine right of "Lebensraum" there. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler sees the American expansion into the West as an expression of white Anglo-Saxon Germanic racial superiority" (Donnelly 2012). In Germany, this fascination with North American Indigenous peoples continues today, as it did when I arrived in Osnabrück, Germany. It was the second to last day of the field school where students had the

opportunity to wander about the city; and it was here that I ran into a fellow dressed like an Indigenous person. I approached the stand where nobody was willing to acknowledge or help me.

Indeed I had a few questions about the regalia and nature of their business. As I approached the man, he walked in the opposite direction trying to avoid me. Not wanting to make a scene, I decided not to pursue the issue any further; instead, I walked away, feeling saddened that there could be no respectful dialogue. While Hayden Taylor had mixed feelings when asking whether it is “appreciation or appropriation,” I, unlike Taylor, am *not* conflicted. If it were appreciation, there would be no appropriation; I personally take offense and find this kind of behaviour hurtful. In fact, I would add that this infatuation contributes to the ongoing dehumanizing experiences of Indigenous peoples today. This type of entertainment and hobby-ism comes at the expense of the dignity of Indigenous peoples, and it perpetuates ignorance, particularly the struggle for Indigenous self-determination.

## Understanding Indigenous Peoples

As Canada is in a time of reconciliation, it is imperative that people make an effort to understand who Indigenous peoples are, particularly beyond the stereotypical “they’re lazy, bums, uneducated alcoholics.” Therefore, I spend a great deal of time helping to connect with and create ways of understanding Indigenous peoples, self-determination, and colonialism. In Canada there are multiple terms in use to describe Indigenous peoples, which include First Nations (those who have ‘Indian Status’), Métis or mixed blood (usually Cree and French), and Inuit. However, the Métis and Inuit do NOT have Indian Status like First Nations people do; the Indian Act determines Indian status. Statistics Canada has determined that there are 634 Indigenous nations that make up Canada, which is about five percent of the overall population.

Each Indigenous nation respectively has its particular worldviews, languages, and customs that are uniquely theirs while belonging to a specific land base. Indigenous peoples currently occupy 2% of the entire land base in Canada, which includes “Indian Reserves” and treaty settlement lands. It should be noted that I do not speak or represent all Indigenous peoples or nations. What I do offer comes

firstly from NCN family cultural teachings, and secondly from Western post-secondary education.

Indigenous self-determination in Canada is widely misunderstood to have direct correlation with federal government agreements, such as treaties, both historical and modern day. These agreements are also interpreted differently by the federal government and by Indigenous peoples. In *Whose Land Is It Anyway? A Manual for Decolonization* (2017), Venne emphasizes this point:

Most Canadians assume that somehow Canada acquired formal title to this land 150 years ago in the *British North American Act*, the country's founding document. That this is not the case is clearly reflected in the fact that Canada is still desperately negotiating with hundreds of First Nations to have them surrender, once and for all, their title to the lands given to us by the Creator. (15)

This is problematic, particularly for Indigenous peoples who maintain their identity and responsibilities to *hišuk?išcawak* (everyone is one and connected) because this understanding does not allow for the surrender of Indigenous rights. Further, it should be noted that Indigenous self-determination varies from nation to nation, and it is not my place to discuss the self-determination of other nations. I speak *only* to what I know and that is a NCN perspective and understanding of *?uu?uuq<sup>w</sup>aačii* (self-independence). A NCN worldview is connected to the natural world, which includes all life forms created.

NCN scholar Richard Atleo or Umeek (2004) elaborates on this, bringing attention to the unity of the physical and spiritual worlds. He notes that, as NCN, we did not make a distinction between the spiritual and physical realms. He states that “unlike the contemporary division between the two, the NCN saw the physical world as a manifestation of the spiritual world” (10). The NCN worldview has been interrupted by colonialism, but never brought to cultural extinction. With the guidance of loved ones and NCN literature, we can better understand *?uu?uuq<sup>w</sup>aačii*.

Given the limitations of this chapter and the broadness of *?uu?uuq<sup>w</sup>aačii*, I am going to focus on three important aspects of *?uu?uuq<sup>w</sup>aačii*: the first is what it means to be *quu?as-sa* (an NCN human being); the second is the relationships to the natural world; and the third

is our [NCN] inherent responsibilities to *hišuk?išcawak* (everyone is one and connected).

The book, *The Sayings of Our First Peoples* (Keitlah 1995) is guided by NCN elders who place emphasis on being *quu?as-sa* and being proud of who you are; and also on self-respect and respect for others (20). Umeeek (2004) also stresses respect, but in relation to love, stating it was “the core and heart of the Nuu-chah-nulth way” (15). To be a good, kind, loving human being is what being *quu?as-sa* also means. We come to understand who we are as NCN, as *quu?as-sa*, from family cultural teachings, which, for me, derive from *čimixint* and *?iihatisath*. How we as NCN come to understand ourselves is linked to nature, and as such we acknowledge ourselves in relation to *hišuk?išcawak*, which includes (but is not limited to) the sun, sky, moon, stars, land, mountain, waters (lake, ocean, river, and stream).

The light connects us to *naas*, or the creator, and the moon prepares us for what we seek in terms of knowledge. Our navigation tools are the stars and sky, connecting us to our ancestors and the great beyond; the mountains aid life (water, trees, animals, plants) while the oceans connect us to the tides and help us prepare (i.e., for the whale hunt). With great rain come strong winds, and together they can create rainbows. The earthquake is also our strongest relative who shakes it up to remind us not to get distracted by that which does not value our NCN teachings of love, kindness, humility, respect, and generosity. As *quu?as-sa*, our worldview is alive today in the minds and hearts of our people who consciously embody family cultural teachings, and the sacred responsibility of becoming a good ancestor. To understand *?uu?uuq<sup>w</sup>aačii* requires much attention and a commitment to learning; it is layered and complex. *?uu?uuq<sup>w</sup>aačii* can obviously not be captured in one section of one chapter.

## Reconciliation?

Canada has and will continue to face political, social, economic, and spiritual opposition from Indigenous peoples, particularly on issues of self-determination and reconciliation. This troubled relationship is crippled by the outdated *Indian Act*, which was established prior to confederation and continues to be a source of great contention. It is the piece of legislation that has stripped Indigenous peoples of their

inherent rights and responsibilities to *hišuk?išcawak* (everything that is one and connected). Under the *Act*, Indigenous peoples are considered “wards of the state,” unable to care for themselves and in need of state intervention. Section 2.1 of the *Act* determines who is ‘Indian’ and who is not, undermining Indigenous forms of governance. And the *Act* continues to dictate and control the day-to-day affairs of Indigenous peoples to this day.

In *Whose Land Is It Anyways? A Manual for Decolonization* (2017), Diabo notes that the initial intent of the *Act* was to eliminate what is commonly referred to as the “Indian problem” (2017, 23). Indigenous peoples stood in the way of the civilized settlement of Canada and were expected to assimilate, or die off. In the 1870s, the *Act* also established Indian Residential Schools (IRS) where young children were separated from their parents, siblings, grandparents, and community and sent away to school. IRS were federally funded and operated by various church denominations with the stated purpose to “kill the Indian in the child” in an effort to integrate Indigenous peoples into the dominant society (*Facing History and Ourselves*). Both of my late parents as well as many other family members, including my grandmother, were survivors of IRS. Only recently has Gran begun to share intimate details of her residential school experiences, where she recalled either being fed moldy bread or going hungry (personal communication, 15 March 2014).

Sadly, thousands of Indigenous children were abused sexually, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually while simultaneously being neglected. The last school in Canada closed in 1996. Decades later, survivors began to come forward to share their stories and also to file lawsuits against Canada. This was followed by the implementation of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, which managed all the cases. Further, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada on Indian Residential Schools (TRC) was established in June 2008. Over the next six years, the TRC commissioners travelled across the country to hear the first-hand testimony of IRS survivors. I attended the 2012 TRC event in Vancouver, British Columbia, where I had mixed feelings about the process, as did others, but I respected the fact that many IRS survivors found comfort in it.

The event felt like a circus with thousands of people in attendance, and with public survivor testimony, cultural ceremonies, food services, and various other vendors. I intentionally remained open to the process and tried not to be critical; and I tried to be mindful of the fact that this was not about me. I closely followed the TRC until the final report and

recommendations were released in June 2015. In, *A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (2016), the TRC states “the establishment and operations of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as ‘cultural genocide’” (3). Further, the TRC put forward 94 Calls-to-Action that can only be described as ambitious. The Calls-to-Action ask provincial, federal, and territorial governments to consider revamping existing Child Welfare systems while noting the role education plays in teaching history and, more importantly, in processes of reconciliation (163).

The Calls-to-Action also include components of culture and language revitalization, health and justice issues, and more. Governments and educational institutions tout the report and reconciliation as the solution to the many issues that face both Indigenous communities/nations/peoples and other Canadians. It is now 2018, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s Indigenous series recently published *Beyond 94: Where is Canada at with Reconciliation?*, noting that 10 of the 94 Calls-to-Action have been completed. The TRC’s instruction guide supports a number of groups, such as local communities, various governments and faith organizations; *Beyond 94* monitors the groups and reports back on the action items being met.

On February 14, 2018, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a commitment to work with Indigenous peoples to develop “a Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework.” Further, the federal government’s announcement noted:

The Framework can also include new measures to support the rebuilding of Indigenous nations and governments, and advance Indigenous self-determination, including the inherent right of self-government. . . .

Through this Framework, we will lay the foundation for real and lasting change on issues that matter most to people, including eliminating long-term boil water advisories, improving primary and secondary education on reserve, and taking further steps toward reconciliation. (Trudeau 2018)

The promised Framework certainly speaks to recognizing Indigenous nationhood and the inherent right to self-determination/government. Further, Trudeau highlights the federal

government's commitment to address long-standing and critical matters related to drinking water and education while moving towards reconciliation. These major political commitments should leave Indigenous peoples, like me, feeling hopeful, but they do not.

There is no doubt that in Canada, along with other governments (municipal, provincial, etc.), Indigenous peoples, local communities, and others are embracing the Calls-to-Action while making strides to improve the relationship with Indigenous peoples. However, I am inclined to agree with CBC's Shelagh Rogers (broadcast/journalist) who stated that in Canada we have unfortunately jumped right from the TRC report to reconciliation, missing what is in the middle — justice and healing (Rogers 2018). As for healing, Canada's genocidal history with Indigenous peoples and residential schools is horrific and ugly, and it will require time to heal.

The justice aspect requires time as well, but what is also required is a deeper understanding of Indigenous people's current reality and the continued struggle for self-determination, which often lacks context. Instead, stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as lazy, alcoholic, and looking for a handout add an additional layer to the ongoing struggle for self-determination. Little is known about Indigenous peoples' worldviews and self-determination; therefore, ignorance continues to prevail, particularly during a time of reconciliation. What most Canadians do not know is that Indigenous peoples make up almost five per cent of the population, and that they have the highest rates of suicides, incarcerations, and child welfare apprehension. Decades of marginalizing Indigenous women means that they are vulnerable and that they are likely to encounter violence and poverty, to go missing, and even to be murdered. In *Whose Land Is It Anyway?: A Manual for Decolonization* (2017), Laboucan-Massimo adds that Indigenous women are five times more likely to die from violence than their non-Indigenous counterparts (39).

Most Indigenous peoples remain wards of the state, living under the *Indian Act* and landless in their own territories. The right to Indigenous self-determination has been an ongoing battle, and is now clouded by Canada's vision of *reconciliation*, the new government buzzword. Once again, Canada has gotten ahead of itself, skipping the truth and jumping to reconciliation while negating the persistence of *colonialism*. Laboucan-Massimo notes that “[t]he values of colonialism exist in the form of capitalism,” adding that these “colonial values of domination are embedded in patriarchy” (39). Barker and Battell Lowman (2015) argue that colonialism is part of Canada's identity, yet so misunderstood

(24). In addition to understanding Indigenous peoples, it is equally important to try to understand colonialism in the present-day context, especially in an effort to reconcile and dismantle colonialism. On the surface it appears as though Canada is leading the way toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. But once you get beyond the rhetoric of reconciliation and begin to unpack the layers of history and current Indigenous reality, you may become unsettled (Regan 2010). However, it is a starting point.

## Conclusion

The I-witness Holocaust Field School experience changed my life while providing me with a safe space to learn about hatred, racism, and intolerance. This experience gave me the confidence to go forward with the truth about NCN experiences of genocide and to name colonialism as it exists in its current form today. Adam Barker and Emma Battell Lowman (2015) state that “colonialism more than any other force drove the creation and shape of Canada, and that it continues into the present” (24). Colonialism is largely responsible for the destruction of *?uu?uuq?aačii*, which impacts NCN understandings of being *quu?as-sa*. It is clear that more needs to be done to educate and to create respectful dialogues, ones that cross cultures and differences while attempting to confront issues of racism, intolerance, and hatred. Like others before me, what I have learned is that, as humans, we are more alike than different, and there is more to be gained by working together than apart.

Genocide is genocide; it knows neither race nor bounds. Further, relying on governments and other organizations to address reconciliation is both unfair and unrealistic. Where does this leave us, as people who share this land called Canada? It leaves us with the responsibility, but also the opportunity, to get to know one another and create lasting, respectful relationships with one another, and to the land. Like Senator Murray Sinclair of the TRC, I believe that education is the key (see Anderson 2018) not only to reconciliation, but also to building an understanding of who we are as human beings.

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## Chapter 3

# **Anti-Immigrant Propaganda**



# Anti-Immigrant Propaganda and the Factors That Led to its Success in Hungary

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## Introduction

By the end of 2014, support for the governing party, Fidesz,<sup>1</sup> fell sharply as various scandals eroded its popularity. While a few months before Fidesz had won 45 percent of the votes in the parliamentary elections, resulting in 67 percent of the seats in the Hungarian National Assembly, by the end of 2014 only 25 percent would have voted for them if the election had been held again.

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<sup>1</sup> Officially, the party alliance of Fidesz-KDNP (Christian Democratic People's Party) governs Hungary. However, KDNP is subordinate to Fidesz and functions as a satellite party.

Fidesz found a quick “solution” to its problems by launching an anti-immigrant<sup>2</sup> campaign. It started on January 11, 2015, when Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, right after the solidarity march in Paris, told a reporter of the Hungarian nationwide public television M1: “We [Hungarians] do not want to see minorities of significant size with different cultural characteristics and backgrounds among us. We want to keep “Hungary as Hungary” (M1 Evening News, 5:51). From that moment, migration became, and has remained the number one political issue in Hungary. The governing party used the tools of propaganda to run its anti-immigrant campaign and connected it to a harsh campaign against human rights NGOs, George Soros, and the European Union.

This chapter focuses on the period between the beginning of the campaign and the April 2018 parliamentary elections. The aim of the chapter is two-fold. On the one hand, it aims at providing an overview of the events of the anti-migrant campaign; on the other hand, it intends to prove that the campaign falls under the realm of classical propaganda.

## Pictures in our Head and the Pseudo-Environment

In 1922, Walter Lippmann, the well-known and influential writer, journalist, and political commentator, published his book entitled *Public Opinion*. It is considered one of Lippmann’s most influential books, and some of its concepts can be employed to understand the modus operandi of the anti-immigration politics of Fidesz.

Although the opportunity for direct experiences is very limited, especially compared to the amount of information available, people have opinions and feelings even about things they have not experienced. “Inevitably our opinions cover a bigger space, a longer reach of time, a greater number of things, than we can directly observe. They have, therefore, to be pieced together out of what others have reported and what we can imagine” (Lippmann 1998, 79). Lippmann argues that people gradually make for themselves “a trustworthy picture inside

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2 The campaign is often referred to as an anti-immigration campaign. I would like to emphasize that, by using anti-immigrant or anti-migrant as an adjective, the campaign – as shown in this chapter – was directed not only against immigration but more importantly against migrants, portraying these people as enemies.

[their] head of the world beyond [their] reach” (1998, 29), and they act not according to facts but based on the “pictures in their head.”

According to Lippmann, these pictures make up a quasi-environment inserted between the person and the reality. This is their mental image, “the interior representation” of the world people do not have the time or opportunity to experience directly. However, this pseudo-environment is not only an image; it can also be the source of acts, and the consequences of these acts “operate not in the pseudo-environment where the behavior is stimulated, but in the real environment where action eventuates” (Lippmann 1998, 15).

## Propaganda

There have been several attempts to define propaganda over the decades (see, for example, Jowett and O’Donnell 2012, 2–6). For a long time, persuasion and propaganda have been regarded as synonyms; however, it has become clear that propaganda should be distinguished from other methods of persuasion. According to Philip Taylor (2003, 7), propaganda is “the deliberate attempt to persuade people to think and behave in a desired way.” He argues that the intent, namely that propaganda is “designed primarily to serve the self-interests of a person or people doing the communicating” (7), differentiates propaganda from any other form of persuasion.

Jowett and O’Donnell (2012) also emphasize the importance of differentiating between persuasion and propaganda. They state that “[p]ropaganda is the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (7). In many ways, this coincides with Taylor’s definition. However, there are some important differences. The most important one, for now, is the use of the word “systematic,” meaning that propaganda is carried out in an organized, planned, and precise manner.

Other scholars point to the problem that, since all forms of mass communication aim at changing or at least influencing people’s opinion, attitudes, and behaviours, it is hard to tell where the actual boundaries of propaganda lie. For example, Péter Bajomi-Lázár and Dorka Horváth (2013) suggest the importance of differentiating between political marketing and political propaganda. They argue that “political propa-

ganda is intended to establish ideological hegemony, while political marketing is based on the acknowledgment of ideological pluralism” (222). Furthermore, they suggest that “[t]he propagandist aims at re-socializing and indoctrinating the people in order to have them accept his views without reservation and with the long-term transformation of social order as the ultimate objective in mind” (222).

## The Elements of Effective Propaganda

According to Brown (1963),<sup>3</sup> propaganda includes: (1) the use of stereotypes (2) the substitution of names (3) selection, since “[t]he propagandist, out of a mass of complex facts, selects only those that are suitable for his purpose,” and censorship is one possible form of this selection (4) downright lying (5) repetition because “[t]he propagandist is confident that if he repeats a statement often enough, it will in time come to be accepted by his audience. (A variation of this technique is the use of slogans and keywords)” (6) assertion, meaning that “[t]he propagandist rarely argues but makes bold assertions in favor of his theses” since “the essence of propaganda is the presentation of one side of the picture only” (7) the pinpointing of the enemy since “[i]t is helpful if the propagandist can put forth a message which is not only for something but also against some real or imagined enemy who is frustrating the will of his audience” and (8) the appeal to authority (cited by Black 1977, 98).

In Lippmann’s view, propaganda is the effort to alter the “pictures in people’s head.” According to him, the pseudo-environment is essential for effective propaganda: “Without some form of censorship, propaganda in a strict sense of the word is impossible. In order to conduct propaganda, there must be some barrier between the public and the event. Access to the real environment must be limited before anyone can create a pseudo-environment that he thinks wise or desirable” (Lippmann 1998, 43).

Jowett and O’Donnell (2012) offer some additional techniques to maximize the effect of propaganda. One of them is “creating resonance” since messages have a greater impact on the audience if they are in

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<sup>3</sup> Brown established this list in his 1963 book titled *Techniques of Persuasion: From Propaganda to Brainwashing* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books).

accordance with existing values, opinions, and attitudes. This resonance can be best achieved through messages playing on emotions rather than rational thought.

## The Hungarian Case: The Anti-Immigrant Campaign

### The political and social context of the anti-immigrant campaign

As already mentioned, the statement of the Prime Minister in Paris signaled the beginning of the anti-immigration campaign. The political context, namely the sharp decline in the popularity of Fidesz, was the motivation the ruling party felt it needed to take action. However, it is the macro- and micro-social contexts that explain the choice of the campaign's topic.

Before the migration crises, Hungary had never been a destination of mass immigration: between 2004 (the year of Hungary's accession to the European Union) and 2012, the number of asylum seekers in Hungary was between 1,600 and 4,700 per year. In 2013, however, this number went up to 18,900 and in 2014 to almost 43,000. Paying attention to world tendencies, which Fidesz surely did, it anticipated that the number of immigrants would increase further, thus serving as the macro-social context for a planned campaign.

The micro-social context was provided by the generally xenophobic attitudes of Hungarian society. The European Social Survey (ESS)<sup>4</sup> uses three questions to measure attitudes toward different sorts of migrants.<sup>5</sup> Respondents are asked about the extent they think their country should allow (1) people of the same race or ethnic group; (2) people of a different race or ethnic group than most of the country's people; and (3) people from the poorer countries outside Europe, to come and live in the country. Respondents could choose from four options: (1) allow many, (2) allow some, (3) allow a few, and (4) allow none. In 2012, when

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4 The European Social Survey was established in 2001. Starting in 2002, the survey has been held every two years in many European countries. The surveys are conducted using nationally representative samples following very strict methodologies. The last round was carried out in 2016–2017 in 23 European countries. Hungary took part in all eight of the surveys.

5 ESS uses these three questions in its core module, which is used in every round of the survey. There are also rotating modules in every round dedicated to specific topics; for example, in Round 7, in 2014–2015 additional questions were included about immigration as part of the rotating section.

immigration was not at all on the agenda in Hungary, already 38 % of the Hungarian population responded that they would allow no one from poorer countries outside of Europe, and 28 % answered the same in the case of any ethnic group other than Hungarians. Moreover, 42 and 46 %, respectively, said that they would allow only a few. The results displayed the xenophobic tendencies of many of the survey respondents. The high level of prejudices can be seen even more so when considering the high rate of rejection of ethnic Hungarians<sup>6</sup>: 37% would have allowed a few ethnic Hungarians into the country and 15% no ethnic Hungarians at all.

With ethnic Hungarians viewed as one of the enemies, the topic of migrants was instrumentalized in the propaganda campaign. Since Hungarians, despite living in an almost completely ethnically homogeneous society, already had strong xenophobic sentiments, a new set of stereotypes did not need to be invented; the existing one was reinforced and intensified.

### **The National Consultation**

In the beginning of 2015, the topic of migration was not at all in the limelight when considering public opinion. In November 2014, according to the Standard Eurobarometer (European Commission 2014), only 4% of the Hungarian population listed immigration as one of the most important issues facing Hungary. However, there was a much bigger problem: the opposition had also not perceived the changes in the world's political environment and was completely unprepared when reacting to the government's messages, even though the campaign was already in full swing starting in January.<sup>7</sup>

Government and party officials were conveying an overwhelming number of systematic and consistent messages about the threat of migration. The rhetoric of the government linked migration to crime, unemployment, and terrorism, and instead of calling immigrants asylum seekers or refugees, they used expressions such as “economic migrants,” “illegal migrants,” or “subsistence migrants.” Subsistence was a term already used with a negative connotation and usually referred to the Roma. Refugees constituted the enemy that posed a threat to the

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6 In 1920, as a consequence of the Treaty of Trianon, when Hungary lost 72 percent of its territory and 64 percent of its total population, a considerable portion of ethnic Hungarians became citizens of neighbouring countries.

7 For the analysis of the discourses in January 2015, see Bernáth and Messing 2015.

nation, and against whom the “national interest” had to be defended (Barna and Hunyadi 2016, 16–21).

The pro-government media had been continually spreading the messages of the campaign. In 2010, soon after Fidesz won the parliamentary elections that resulted in a supermajority in the National Assembly, the government passed a new media regulation, and also established the National Media and Telecommunication Authority to supervise all means of communication, including private radio, television, print media, and the Internet. The Media Council heading the authority consisted of (and has consisted of ever since) members nominated by and elected by Fidesz. The Authority has constantly been distributing frequency allocations to pro-government stations, wealthy businessmen supporting the government, and the Prime Minister, while taking them away from stations where alternative voices could be heard. The Authority is responsible for content monitoring and may impose fines based on vague regulations (Bajomi-Lázár 2013, 81–82).

Public broadcasting has been completely restructured and filled with pro-Fidesz journalists who are used as the mouthpiece of government propaganda — while financed generously from taxpayer’s money. The Hungarian Press Agency also started to release news free of charge, resulting in an increased number of media outlets relying on them for the news. Bajomi-Lázár wrote in 2013 about the “party colonization of the media,” and defined it as “a strategy aimed at extracting from the media resources, such as airtime, frequencies, positions and money, and channelling them to party loyalists in order to reward them for various services” (Bajomi-Lázár 2013, 76); and he stated that “[t]his construction enables the governing party to control nearly all media” (Bajomi-Lázár 2013, 84).

In April 2015, the government launched a “National Consultation<sup>8</sup> on Immigration and Terrorism.” Not only did the title of the consultation convey the message of the government campaign, the letter from the Prime Minister was full of biased, one-sided statements, and

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8 The national consultation is an institutionalized political survey aimed at “discuss[ing] every important issue before decisions are taken” (Letter of the Prime Minister in the National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism). Since 2010, there have been eight national consultations in which a “questionnaire” accompanied by the Prime Minister’s letter is sent out to every eligible voter. The questionnaires are constructed disregarding all rules of quantitative social research methodology. The data processing of the questionnaires lacks any transparency, and the public has to rely completely on the results published by the government. All national consultations are financed through taxes.

the questions were crafted to ensure that the majority would give the answers that matched the intent of the government. The Prime Minister's letter drew the attention of the reader to the "unprecedented act of terror" that shook Europe when "[i]n Paris the lives of innocent people were extinguished, in cold blood and with terrifying brutality" (Orbán 2015). He also pointed out that these events were clear evidence that "Brussels and the European Union are unable to deal with the issue of immigration adequately," and therefore Hungary must "defend itself against illegal immigrants" (Orbán 2015). He used the same rhetoric that had already been propagated over the past several months before the consultation, describing "economic migrants" who "present themselves as asylum seekers" and who come only "to enjoy our welfare system and the employment opportunities our country has to offer." As with other national consultations, this was a tool of political mobilization concealed as public-opinion research.

The change in public opinion could already be seen at this early stage of the campaign. According to the Eurobarometer, in May 2015, 13% of the Hungarian population listed immigration as one of the most severe problems Hungary was facing. However, what is more important, according to ESS, is that the proportion of those claiming that no one belonging to a different ethnic group should be allowed to come to live in Hungary had increased by 5%, while those saying the same about people from poorer countries outside Europe increased by ten percentage points (European Commission 2015).

In June 2015, the government launched a billboard campaign "promoting" the results of the national consultation at the expense of taxpayers. Three types of giant billboards were placed in every corner of the country with the following messages: "If you come to Hungary, you mustn't take away the jobs of Hungarians"; "If you come to Hungary, you must respect our culture"; and "If you come to Hungary, you must obey our laws." Although the wording suggested that the messages were directed at migrants, they were all written in Hungarian. In September, a new type of billboard appeared that read: "The people have decided: The country needs to be protected."

### **A parallel campaign against the NGOs and George Soros**

Even at the beginning of the anti-immigrant campaign, conspiracy theories were incorporated into the rhetoric of the government and Fidesz. Government and party officials often referred to migration as a phenomenon that was not only encouraged but actively financed and

organized by those aiming to destroy nation states and European culture. The main targets of these allegations were George Soros, the US billionaire businessman of Jewish-Hungarian origin, and non-governmental organizations providing assistance to migrants or dealing with human rights issues and criticizing the government's policies. In 2015, a Fidesz press release read: "The pseudo-civic Helsinki Commission, which fulfills the political orders of the international financial speculators, brazenly tries to falsify black-and-white facts.... We call on the Helsinki Commission to stop lying, and at least in such an important and serious question not to be preoccupied with stuffing their pockets with the money of György Soros" (A Fidesz Közleménye 2015). In October 2015, the Prime Minister himself stated that "[h]is name [Soros] is perhaps the strongest example of those who support anything that weakens nation states" and he claimed that "Europe has been betrayed, and if we don't stand up for it, the continent will no longer be for those citizens living here, but for some well-organized, unelected activist leadership presiding over huge flows of capital, thinking in terms over and beyond the framework of nation-states; and if the Soros Foundation comes into your mind now, that is not entirely unjustified" (Orbán, October 30, 2015). Using Lippmann's term (1998, 10), Soros was used as the "omnipotent evil," and NGOs were constantly portrayed as Soros' henchmen.

The use of *enemies* also paid off for populist political leaders in the past. "By constantly identifying new enemies, and by maintaining an atmosphere of vigilance and suspicion, the regime creates a Manichean domestic political divide that hinders critical actors from efficiently mobilizing citizens" (Kopper et al. 2017, 110). "Referring to enemy images evokes strong emotions by suggesting that the internal core of members is threatened by an existential threat from outsiders" or from within. "The two types of enemy — internal and external — have different roles in politics: the former serves as a threat, a form of oppression; while the external enemy calls upon the 'community' to act" (112). In analyzing Orbán's speeches between 2010 and 2015, Kopper and his colleagues found that the Prime Minister constantly linked internal and external enemies and "domestic enemies were mostly identified as enemies that primarily serve foreign interests" (Kopper et al. 2017, 118). Orbán and his government followed the same path after 2015 — pointing to human rights NGOs as the internal enemy, financed and directed by the external enemy, George Soros.

### **The crisis in the summer of 2015 and its consequences**

The flow of immigrants to Hungary continued throughout the first half of 2015, with a total number of almost 67,000 asylum seekers entering the country by the end of June (Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016). The reception and detention centres became extremely overcrowded with two or three times more people than their capacity; the quantity and quality of food was unsatisfactory; conditions were horrible; and the treatment of asylum seekers was rough and included unlawful detention practices.

In July, the government issued a “Decree on the National Designation of Safe Countries of Origin and Safe Third Countries,” to be enforced at the beginning of August. The decree established a list of safe third countries, namely all the states along the Western Balkan route including Serbia. According to the new regulation — severely criticized by human rights NGOs and international organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) — the authorities could reject all asylum applications filed by individuals who had come through “a third safe country” as they could have applied for protection in that country. Since 99 percent of asylum seekers were entering Hungary at the Serbian-Hungarian border, the new legislation meant that the vast majority of applications could be rejected. The concept of the third safe country provided the opportunity for the government to reinforce the concept of migrants *illegally* entering Hungary.

By the end of July, more and more asylum seekers approached Budapest, while continuous attempts were made by refugees to break out of refugee camps and registration centres. By the end of August, thousands of asylum seekers waited in limbo at the railway stations in Budapest to leave Hungary for Germany. The situation was especially chaotic at the Keleti Railway Station. While human rights NGOs, volunteers, and many ordinary citizens were struggling to provide food, clothing, and even medical assistance, the Hungarian authorities refused to assist the refugees. Then in early September, the police closed the railway station, thus preventing the migrants from boarding trains bound for Austria. People were left completely uninformed as they experienced the hectic reactions of the authorities, and on September 5 hundreds of refugees gave up waiting and headed for Austria on foot. On the same day, Austria and Germany opened their borders to the migrants in response to the “humanitarian crisis.”

The images of the dirty, desperate mass of people were utilized in the propaganda demonstrating how Hungary would look if migrants were

allowed into the country. Gábor Bernáth and Vera Messing identified “five different frames of interpreting events and the sources of problems: the humanitarian crisis frame; the security threat frame; criticism of the European Union’s (EU’s) and other countries’ refugee policies frame; framing events in terms of the consequence of war; and the integration challenge frame” (2016, 58). In the Hungarian media, by mid-September, the frame of “the threat to national security” became dominant. The broadcasts of M1, the public 24-hour news channel, “explained all developments in terms of a threat to national security, whether it be a health threat (epidemic), criminal threat (violent, aggressive crowd) or security threat (invasion of Hungary and the EU)” (Bernáth and Messing 2016, 58). In their analysis, the authors shed light on a very important aspect of the working mechanism of the government’s propaganda. They argued, based on their in-depth analysis, that “even just by reporting about the speeches and actions of governmental actors, the media [also non-governmental] may have contributed to the dissemination of an anti-refugee agenda. We could see how the government’s dehumanizing terminology about illegal migrants, welfare migrants, and illegal trespassers, used only in Hungary, was reproduced in media reporting. Some of the media outlets ... used this terminology consistently, but it penetrated other media as well” (59).

The autumn of 2015 brought several legislative changes. In September, the Hungarian government issued a Decree announcing a crisis situation caused by mass immigration, and a crisis situation was declared in five counties out of nineteen.<sup>9</sup> Also in September, the *Act on Amendment of Certain Acts relating to the Management of Mass Immigration* came into force. The timing was not accidental, as the fence along the Hungarian-Serbian border had just been erected.<sup>10</sup> The Act introduced new border procedures — special “transit zones” — as the only places where applications could be submitted, and it limited the number of applications to only 100 asylum seekers per day.<sup>11</sup> The Act also included an amendment to the Criminal Code declaring crossing and damaging the border closure a criminal act (Barna and Hunyadi 2016, 8–9).

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9 In March 2016, the government declared a state of emergency for the entire country and has prolonged it several times since then.

10 Later in 2015, the Croatian-Hungarian border was also closed by a fence.

11 The number was gradually reduced to 10 by November 2016.

## Talking about immigration without migrants: the quota referendum

After the physical and legal closure of Hungary, the number of registered asylum-seekers fell from 177,135 in 2015 to 29,432 in 2016. However, they remained practically unseen by the public. In the absence of actual refugees, Fidesz needed to shift its communication in order to keep immigration on the top of the political agenda. The EU's *relocation quota plan* provided the basis for a new communication framework. In November 2015, Fidesz launched a signature drive spreading misinformation against the "mandatory migrant quota" entitled "Let's protect the country!" In one month, approximately one million Hungarians signed the petition against the quota.

In February 2016, the government announced a referendum to be held in October. Between February and October, the government initiated waves of campaigns that constantly thematized public discourse. It included three waves of billboard campaigns directly connected to the referendum. In May, the billboards read "Let's send a message to Brussels so they can understand it too!" In July, five types of billboards were put up with messages that all started with "Did you know ..." followed by untrue or half-true statements such as "Brussels wants to settle a city's worth of illegal immigrants in Hungary" or "The Paris terror attacks were carried out by immigrants."

In September, just before the referendum, billboards called to participants to say "No" to the "mandatory quota": "Don't put Hungary's future at risk! Let's vote 'NO' on October 2!" Also, there were television and radio spots, as well as ads in newspapers and on online platforms, all incorporating misleading information and distorted facts. In September, a booklet with this "information" was also sent out to every household (Barna and Hunyadi 2017).

In parallel with the propaganda tools mentioned above, the campaign against NGOs and the alleged mastermind behind them—George Soros — continued. NGOs providing support and assistance to migrants or those critical of the government were condemned as "organizations of the Soros-network," and Soros was portrayed as a conspirator and machinator, part of the "background power" that was accused of supporting and even organizing mass migration to the EU.

On October 2, 2016, the quota referendum was held, asking people the following question: "Do you want to allow the European Union to mandate the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the approval of the National Assembly?" Only 44 percent of the electorate

went to the polls, which meant that the referendum was invalid, since the turnout did not reach the threshold of 50 percent plus one. One would think that this failure would have held back the government — but that was not the case at all. Mere hours after the referendum, the government broadcasted a message with a newly invented term: “politically valid.” In the following days, all government and party officials, as well as all pro-government media outlets, were repeating the term, highlighting the fact that 98 percent of those casting a valid vote were against the quota. Since the referendum was invalid, the parliament had no obligation to change any law to reflect the result of the vote.

### **And the propaganda machine rolled on**

The rhetoric of the government did not change after the referendum. Disregarding the fact that the referendum was not valid, PM Orbán presented the results as a victory. While George Soros and the human rights NGOs remained the main targets of the anti-immigrant propaganda, they also alleged “the European Union is dancing to George Soros’ tune” by implementing the “Soros plan.”

In April 2017, a national consultation titled “Let’s stop Brussels!” was launched by the government, including two highly biased questions about NGOs. The government’s television advertisement regarding the consultation directly targeted the Hungarian Helsinki Committee (HHC). In June 2017, the vice president of Fidesz compared the HHC and Amnesty International to the Cosa Nostra in Italy, stating that Soros used these “mafia networks” to import 1 to 1.5 million migrants into Europe. By the beginning of July, Hungary was plastered with a new type of poster depicting the smiling face of Soros accompanied by the text “Don’t let Soros have the last laugh!”

The campaign led to a national consultation on the alleged Soros-plan in September. In October 2017, one of the MPs of the Christian-Democratic ally of Fidesz, KDNP, went so far as to compare Soros to Satan, while in December a mayor of one of the districts of Budapest compared him to Hitler and Stalin. The rhetoric and the images used in the campaign against George Soros clearly resembled the narrative of antisemitic conspiracy theories that accuse Jews of attempting to rule the world, controlling global financial institutions, subjugating economic and political leaders, and acting secretly (Barna et al. 2018).

## The social consequence of the anti-immigrant campaign

As mentioned above, according to the representative survey of ESS, xenophobia had already increased in the first few months of the anti-immigrant campaign. However, the results of the *eighth* wave of ESS, conducted in Hungary in early 2017, were beyond imagination. Both in the case of immigrants of different ethnic groups and immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe, the proportion of respondents stating that they would allow some of them into the country *decreased*; while those stating that they would allow *none* of them to come to Hungary *increased*.

By way of comparison, in 2015, right after the anti-migrant campaign started, *48 percent* of the Hungarian population would allow a *few* non-Hungarian migrants in to the country; and *33 percent* would allow *none* of them into the country. Whereas in 2017, only *39 percent* would allow a *few* into the country; and *48 percent* would allow *none*.

In the case of migrants from *poorer* non-European countries, the percentage of Hungarians saying they would allow a *few* decreased from 39 to 32 percent; while those saying they would allow *none* increased from 48 to 62 percent. It is important to note, however, that the acceptance of ethnic Hungarians from outside of Hungary did not change, further reinforcing the concept that changes in the magnitude of xenophobia were the consequences of the government's anti-immigrant propaganda.

## Conclusion

As has been demonstrated, the Fidesz government led by Viktor Orbán built a pseudo-environment full of lies, half-truths, and distorted facts, continually omitting any information that would contradict the message it wanted to convey. The propaganda campaign was not only a deliberate one (Taylor 2003) but also a “systematic” attempt “to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior” (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012). The campaign was designed to serve the self-interest of the Fidesz government, namely to remain in power. It was intended to establish ideological hegemony, and it did not tolerate any form of pluralism — making it political propaganda, and not political marketing (Bajomi-Lázár and Horváth 2013).

Bajomi-Lázár and Horváth (2013) argued that 2010, the year when Fidesz-KDNP came into power, was a paradigm shift in political communication, and that the campaigns initiated by the ruling party were a revival of old-school propaganda. The authors also used the above-mentioned list established by Brown to prove that the communication campaigns initiated by the Orbán government between 2010 and 2014 met all the criteria of propaganda.

Going through Brown's list makes it possible not only to classify the anti-immigration campaign as classical propaganda but also to identify the success factors of the campaign. In the campaign, the government used migrants, human rights NGOs, George Soros, and the European Union as enemies (*the pinpointing of the enemy*) against whom Christianity, Europe, and the Hungarian nation should be defended (*the appeal to authority*). Stereotypes were used extensively to describe the magnitude of the threats they posed (*use of stereotypes*).

According to Lippmann (1998), “[t]he subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those that create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes,” (90) and that is exactly what the Orbán government did. However, it also used existing stereotypes and prejudices that helped boost its efficiency. The general tendency of people to pay attention to facts that support stereotypes, and dismiss those that contradict them, also helped the government. However, the government and the media serving their goals also carefully *selected* events and facts, either by utilizing only those suitable for their purpose, or by using the “colonized media” to exercise censorship and thereby create a barrier between reality and the public — thus creating a pseudo-environment. Moreover, government and party officials did not refrain from lying about the facts; and the messages of the campaign were always formulated as assertions, leaving no room for questions or doubt. The campaign also used many substitutions, such as calling asylum seekers economic, illegal or subsistence migrants, and all messages were constantly repeated.

In its campaign Fidesz instrumentalized xenophobia. For this political instrumentalization to be successful, the high level of prejudice in Hungarian society was a necessary but not sufficient condition. Therefore, the government had to spread xenophobia into every sphere of the society and it became all-pervasive. Migrants were, in fact, the symbolic enemy, as they were not actually present in the country; nevertheless, many people were constantly on alert to fight them. For example, some women were almost attacked on the street when they were wearing a headscarf after visiting the hairdresser; and panic broke

out in a small town when residents thought that people coming to the cemetery on All Saints' Day were migrants. The lack of immigrants in the country did not decrease the level of fear but rather heightened it. On the one hand, people felt even more that they had to watch out all the time; and on the other hand, people had no chance to experience anything contrary to the government's propaganda.

The strategy of Fidesz proved to be successful. It resulted in a landslide victory in the parliamentary elections of 2018, and Viktor Orbán was elected for his third consecutive term as Prime Minister. And because Fidesz had a supermajority in the National Assembly, it was able to approve the seventh amendment to Hungary's Fundamental Law (i.e., constitution) in June 2018.

Among other things, the amendment states that “[n]o alien population shall be settled in Hungary” and that “[t]he exercise of freedom of expression and the right of assembly shall not harm others' private and family life and their homes.” The general reasoning of the amendment refers to “the activity of the pro-immigration forces” that is “threatening the national sovereignty of Hungary.”<sup>12</sup> On June 20, the Hungarian parliament passed the bill known as the “Stop Soros law,” according to which it became a criminal offense to provide financial means or conduct “organizational activity” that assists immigrants not entitled to protection with asylum requests, and such a criminal offense was punishable by up to one year in prison.

Unfortunately, these events do not predict a bright future for Hungary.

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## Chapter 4

# Echoes from Brazil



# Echoes from Brazil: Remembering to Forget<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Societies decide if and how to memorialize traumatic events in different ways. In some cases, the prospect of overcoming a particularly difficult time eclipses the fight for keeping the memory of such traumatic events, which might affect the possibilities of seeking the truth and punishing perpetrators of human rights violations. In others, even if memorialization processes take place, deep reflections on how to prevent future tragedies are not always part of them. Brazil had negotiated a transition from the latest authoritarian regime, which started in 1964, to a

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democratic one in 1985. The price paid for this negotiation was silence regarding the atrocities perpetrated by the military, accompanied by what I am calling a set of intended efforts to forget. This negotiation included an amnesty law that benefits perpetrators, established in spite of all international human rights recommendations.

In this chapter, I present and explore the connections between this negotiated transition with memorialization processes in Brazil, relating such discussions to my experiences during the summer field school on *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada*. Starting by connecting the course experience with my own and a general overview of the Brazilian transition into democracy, I justify the pertinence of this study. Next, I briefly go over the historical and political conditions leading to the negotiation and approval of the Brazilian *Amnesty Law*, in which I highlight some aspects of the law that can be helpful in understanding the current challenges to Brazilian democracy. From a constitutional standpoint, I describe this process of negotiated transition from dictatorship to democracy, exploring how the amnesty law failed to punish perpetrators of human rights violations during the military regime. I argue that both the amnesty law and the context of “authoritarian legalism” that prevailed during the dictatorship profoundly marked the birth of the subsequent democratic Brazilian period.

I then present a short discussion on challenges related to the memorialization of the dictatorship in Brazil, a process that can be considered an example of institutionalized forgetting. I propose that even after the establishment of a democratic legal framework, the intentional lack of memorialization has affected the way democracy is experienced in Brazil and has imposed challenges to human rights enforcement. I conclude with my personal reflections, relating the process of institutionalized forgetting in Brazil and the experiences from the field school. I argue that the lack of accountability, together with the efforts to erase memories of these traumatic events, bring significant challenges to the post-dictatorial period.

## **Why Include a Chapter about Brazil?**

At first, this chapter might seem out of place in a publication about *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European*

*Union and Canada*, since my discussion is focused on how the negotiated transition from dictatorship to democracy affected the development and strengthening (or lack thereof) of democracy in Brazil. But being from Brazil and taking part in the field school brought up for me many questions about memories of the dictatorial periods in Brazil. Even though the focus of the course and this follow-up publication is on Europe and Canada, I believe that experiences from the global south can enrich the debates around memorialization or institutional forgetting of traumatic events. Brazil has its own particularities within Latin America, but the imposition of dictatorships in South America share similarities, such as an ideological foundation rooted in the threat of a left insurgency (Htun 2003, 19), an aim to push for economic growth, the violent repression of opposition to the military regimes, and challenging processes of transitional justice.

Participating in the summer field school allowed me to experience places (Budapest, Hungary; Ravensbrück, Germany; and the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp, France) that held traumatic memories in different ways. While Budapest residents have competing memories regarding the Second World War and Hungary's role in it; Ravensbrück, being a former concentration camp, ostensibly addresses and discusses the surrounding community's role in the establishment of the camp. Lastly, Camp des Milles was an internment camp established in a brick factory. After the end of the war, the factory resumed its activities, and it was due to pressure from the public that a museum was created. It was public pressure that made it possible to expose and preserve the memory of the internment camp.

After experiencing how societies in these places dealt very differently with memories, I questioned how Brazilian society interacts with the memories of the 1964 dictatorship. The questions I had related to both my everyday experience as a Brazilian citizen and my work as an activist. I studied at a university that was a centre of resistance against the regime, but there is little information about this resistance on campus. Many of the streets of the city that I am from are named after generals who were engaged in torture and other human rights violations, something that has just recently been recognized as a problem. I felt that memories from the period are sustained by the victims' family members and survivors, almost like oral stories. Of course, these people started movements invoking memory and truth-seeking; they organized into associations; and collectively and individually are pushing for preserving the memory of how the dictatorship affected Brazilian society and people's lives. But

what was happening on the State level? Why was there so little effort to preserve or to problematize such memories?

As a human rights activist, I encountered many discussions about the right to know the truth regarding violations that occurred during the Brazilian military regime. But it was the summer school experience that forced me to re-think the spaces and practices of my birth country, looking at them from a different angle. I felt an urge to reflect on the experiences from the field school, relating them to my own work and the recent history of Brazil.

## **Remembering to Forget: The Negotiated Transition as a “Safe” Alternative to Establishing a Democracy in Brazil**

In this section, I briefly discuss the processes of memorialization or intentional and institutional forgetting, followed by an overview of the transition into democracy from the latest authoritarian regime in Brazil. My analysis includes information on the establishment and challenges of a National Truth Commission [Comissão Nacional da Verdade].

Memorialization is the process of creating public spaces, whether physical or in time, to remember particular events from the past. Such spaces are known as public memorials and are often institutionalized by pressure from organized civil societies after periods of traumatic violence in contexts of transitional justice. In fact, some see such memorialization processes as central for transitioning into democracies after dictatorial periods or other violent events:

“Sites of Conscience” seek to tap the power and potential of memorialization for democracy by serving as forums for citizen engagement in human rights and social welfare. Using deliberate strategies, public memorials can contribute to building broader cultures of democracy over the long term by generating conversations among differing communities or engaging new generations in the lessons of the past. Proponents of memorials contend that dealing with conflictive pasts is an essential component of the construction of national identity based on human rights and human dignity, and such initiatives can make a

Memorials sometimes constitute reparation measures determined by international human rights courts, commissions, or special rapporteurs. In such cases, creating memorial sites is part of a public process to restore the dignity and reputation of victims and family members, but also to guard against the repetition of the violence that is memorialized — standing as a collective reminder and keeper of the memories of the victims. Memory processes and memorials are embodiments of “the right to truth” that has been debated in many cases in international human rights law, particularly related to human rights atrocities committed during violent regimes as is the case with Latin American dictatorships.<sup>2</sup> A recent report from the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on its mission to Peru established that: “Remembrance processes can repair the torn fabric of society and encourage reconciliation among its members, by acknowledging and reconciling their memories” (2016). In short, memorial sites are seen as an opportunity to engage the public in meaningful conversations about the past and ways to move forward after traumatic events.

Often, memorial sites stand as recommendations of truth commissions and successor trials as ways to process and deal with the past, while trying to prevent mass atrocities in the future. The establishment of such memorials can be controversial, and which stories get to be told and which get silenced is a disputed topic: “the ability to remember, to speak of or to commemorate one thing may implicitly be predicated on the ability to keep silent on others. Needless to say, many of these silences and exclusions are far from benign and often reflect real desires to mute certain aspects of the past in order to (re)present its other aspects in specific ways, often more favorable to those in power. In this sense, the narration of certain memories and the silencing of others can oftentimes be conceptualized as the attempts of those with power to set the limits on what is speakable or unspeakable about the past” (Vinitzky-Seroussi and Teeger 2010).

On this matter, Ruth Teitel (2000) explains:

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<sup>2</sup> The right to truth has been much discussed in the Inter-American System of Human Rights in paradigmatic cases such as *Velasquez Rodriguez vs. Honduras* (1998), *Barrios Altos v. Peru* (2001), along with many others that discuss enforced disappearances in Latin America.

Criminal justice offers normative legalism that helps to bridge periods of diminished rule of law. Trials offer a way to express both public condemnation of past violence and the legitimization of the rule of law necessary to the consolidation of future democracy. Successor criminal justice is generally justified by forward-looking consequentialist purposes relating to the establishment of the rule of law and to the consolidation of democracy. (30)

Traditionally, this idea of purging and of seeking justice regarding gross human rights violations in repressive moments is often seen as a necessary step in moving forward and building a new or more democratic regime.

Teitel discusses extensively processes of transitional justice and how postwar trials started to be discussed and used beyond the postwar contexts to address past political violence and move into non-repressive, democratic regimes. Such trials were used to establish a divide between the two regimes, delegitimizing the predecessor regime and legitimating the new order (2000). Dornelles (2014) argues that in Brazil, as in other contexts, when societies do not deal with the past, the result is that human rights violations from the past (authoritarian regimes) are repeated and perpetuated in the present (democratic period). When the past is silenced or consistent efforts are made to forget what happened, such human rights violations become part of the social structures and the culture of a given society, leading to a naturalization of violent practices (324-25). The silence surrounding the dictatorship and its violent practices might be connected to the extensive and profound violence that permeates Brazilian society.

Brazil had other periods of non-democratic regimes, like the Vargas government which lasted from 1930 to 1945 (Fausto 2008), but my focus here is on the dictatorship that was imposed by the army from 1964 to 1984. The Brazilian dictatorship was different in many ways from other countries in the region. From a legal standpoint, the military regime in Brazil was imposed through a “façade” of legality. For example, for most of its 21 years, the Congress and the judicial system continued operating — severely controlled by the military, but still functioning, simulating a democratic ambient (Power 2018, 229, 250). While the Congress was controlled by the regime, the courts were largely composed of judges who supported the dictatorship. The latter meant that courts, instead of repealing the violent measures or the crimes sponsored by the State,

were, in most cases, validating them. Enforcing the abusive measures imposed by the regime was possible because the army gradually changed the laws, keeping human rights and due process at the margin of the procedures undertaken by courts.

According to Marcelo Torelly (2018):

the judicial branch of the government in Brazil strongly supported the *coup d'état*; courts applied authoritarian legality with very few restrictions; and broad cooperation was established between civil and military justice. Moreover, the Brazilian regime managed to control the political system instead of breaking away from it. Congress functioned during most of the military's rule, and elections were held on a regular basis despite the introduction of several reforms related to the electoral process. (196)

One consequence of being under strict control of the army but having the democratic institutions formally operating meant that repression was exercised by State agents with the courts' support, resulting in an ambience of authoritarian legality (Htun 2003, 20).

Despite strong opposition on the part of civil society, the transition into democracy was led by the Army, in a negotiated process for changing the political regime (Power 2018, 229). Being conducted by the state actors in power ensured that such transition was "safe," in a sense that it did not involve the society more broadly but started from an initiative from the officials in power and happened partially on their terms. The resistance to reviewing the crimes committed during the dictatorship and the denial of the similarities to today's practices is related to the way the transition to a democratic regime happened in Brazil: it was a negotiated transition (Koerner & Assumpção 2009; Reis 2010; Paganotti 2015, 37, 149), but a negotiation made by the military that pushed for an amnesty law that benefitted perpetrators. In Brazil, against all international recommendations regarding transitional justice, amnesty was extended to the State agents who were perpetrators of torture and forced disappearances (Tosi, Pessoa de Albuquerque e Silva, and Abrão 2014, 42). An amnesty law that applies for everybody indistinctly means that State agents who sponsored or inflicted gross human rights violations during the regime were never punished and probably never will be. Self-amnesty was the price the army imposed to grant a "slow, gradual and safe" transition to democracy (Tosi, Pessoa de

Albuquerque e Silva, and Abrão 2014, 42). As a consequence, there was no accountability for the wrongdoings of the previous regime, leading to many questions and challenges regarding the right to truth, memory, and consolidation of a democratic order (Power 2018, 250). Not completing the process of transitional justice and without proper accountability for the wrongdoings of the period, the subject became more and more silenced and obscured in an intended effort to forget this period of Brazilian history (Dornelles 2014, 324).

The way this transition was accomplished brought many challenges to the post-dictatorial order, since at the core of this process was the approval of an amnesty law that could be equally applied to State agents and citizens. The lack of accountability of State agents who promoted gross human rights violations was key to perpetuating violent State practices and sustaining the widespread idea (even if not accurate) that the dictatorship was less severe than in neighbouring countries, such as Argentina and Chile (Abrão and Torelly 2014, 83). Even if the numbers from Brazil might not be as shocking compared to other countries in the region, this impression of a not-so-strong repression might be more linked with particularities of the Brazilian dictatorship, like the “façade of legality” and the way the transition into democracy happened than to an actual less violent repression.

Brazil delayed the process of revisiting the wrongdoings of the military regime. While Argentina and Chile created truth commissions right after the end of the authoritarian regimes, Brazil’s National Truth Commission, as an effect of the negotiated transition, came only in 2012. In establishing a truth commission, Brazil had the opportunity to: i) acknowledge the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the Army and ensure reparations to victims and their family members; ii) punish the State agents responsible for such violent acts, which meant revisiting the 1979 Amnesty Law and breaking with the controlled narrative about the regime imposed by the Army and negotiated with the transition; and iii) recover truth and memorialization processes, amplifying knowledge about the dictatorship broadly within society (Tosi, Pessoa de Albuquerque e Silva, and Abrão 2014, 45).

Efforts to create a truth commission before 2012 always had a limited effect due to the presence of the Army’s representatives in the Commissions. The 2012 Commission was the first one to be established with no representatives from the Army, making it independent of the armed forces’ “informal veto power” (Torelly 2018, 202). Brazil’s Third National Plan for Human Rights (PNDH3), launched in 2010, had

explicit guidelines (recommendations 24 and 25) regarding the right to memory and truth related to the dictatorship, including recommendations to investigate and make public the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship (República 2010). Such guidelines would be implemented by a National Truth Commission, a body that should be established by the State, according to the Brazil's Third National Plan for Human Rights.

Following the PNDH3's recommendation, the Brazilian State started discussing the creation of a National Truth Commission, not without facing broad controversy and criticism. Reactive and conservative groups, mostly supported by the Army, were against reopening the discussion on the dictatorship, arguing it would be harmful to the Brazilian democracy and that the past should be left to the past. Members of the Army and of the Aeronautics positioned themselves against the creation of such a Commission. The heads of both organizations threatened to leave their positions and insisted that revisiting the dictatorial period would cause harm to society by bringing instability to democratic rule. According to them, the recommendations related to the National Truth Commission would risk peace in Brazilian society achieved through the approval of the amnesty law (Quero 2010). As the government pushed for the establishment of the Commission, acting to implement one of the PNDH3's recommendations, massive and controversial public discussions on the issue took place in the Brazilian newspapers through opinion articles and news on the topic, broadening the debates beyond groups traditionally involved in the issue, such as victims and the Army. The creation of the National Truth Commission was possible after an intense process of negotiation with multiple sectors of the society, including the Army. In 2011, a law was passed defining the role and the mandate of the Commission (Law 12.528/2011) that was implemented the following year.

In 2012, the National Truth Commission faced many challenges, including varying expectations from different social groups and representatives appointed to conduct the truth-seeking work. While human rights and social movement activists, victims, and victims' family members expected accountability for the wrongdoings, conservative groups expected the work of the Commission to "end the transitional process and close the books" (Torelly 2018, 204). As expected, the Commission frustrated the expectations of both sides, but it marked a rupture in the "informal veto power" previously exercised by the Army over the narratives regarding the regime (Torelly

2018, 210). When the Commission decided to exclude investigations about crimes committed by “both sides” (military and civilians), it opened the possibility of reviewing and re-discussing the narrative that the military’s intervention and abuses were necessary in order to deal with the supposed communist threat or the violent acts of civilians.

The possibility of breaking from this narrative and acknowledging that the army committed human rights atrocities might seem trivial, but in reality it marked a huge change in the Brazilian narrative, representing a rupture in the army’s informal veto power over the political narrative. According to Torelly:

Unlike the Argentine and Chilean cases, in which truth commissions were formed soon after democratization, the Brazilian National Truth Commission played a different role in a different scenario. Its first main accomplishment was not to report new facts but to assemble everything that was already known in a systematic way, thickening the narrative with testimonial evidence and legitimizing an account of evidence that the regime had mostly tried to cover up. (Torelly 2018, 211)

The work of the Commission also pointed to the future and the process for stabilizing a democratic regime, by making suggestions on how to improve democracy and promote human rights, both in society more broadly and within the courts. One of the alarming conclusions in one of the three reports of the latest Commission is that the Brazilian police continue to operate in a similar way to how they operated during the dictatorship. Therefore, there is a continuity of many of the illegal practices, such as illegal detentions, torture, and forced disappearances. The report also suggested structural changes in the operational mode for the police (Carlos Dias et al. 2014, 2.784, 2.816-818).

Because I am interested in how the intentional lack of memory is related to the current challenges of Brazilian democracy, the next section takes a deeper look into how the new constitutional<sup>3</sup> order is

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<sup>3</sup> Brazil had six Constitutions before the 1988 one was approved (1824, 1891, 1934, 1937, 1946, 1967). Some of them marked the beginning of a democratic order, some of them the establishment of a state of exception. The 1988 Constitution is known as a document that establishes a new legal order in Brazil and therefore creates a new state, grounded on the rule of law, as opposed to the previous period where the Brazilian legal system was marked by the abusive norms imposed by the dictatorship through the Army directly or through the

challenged by the persistent lack of memory and the continuity of authoritarian practices and its relation to an inappropriate amnesty law.

## **The 1988 Constitution: A Landmark in the Legal Transition to Democracy**

As this chapter discusses the lack of processes for memorialization and challenges to Brazilian democracy, with the amnesty law as the core of the intended efforts to forget, I think it is useful to better understand how the transition from dictatorship to democracy happened from a legal standpoint. This section presents some aspects of the new constitution and briefly discusses the discrepancies between the constitutional standards and the perpetuation of the State's violent practices in the present.

From 1984 and 1985 on, the military regime faced growing opposition and challenges to being in power. After being under strict surveillance and control by the Army, Brazil started to gradually be more open to influences of social movements and things that were happening in other countries. In short, the Army's ability to control the traffic of information, the economy, and people's lives was gradually reduced (for multiple reasons) and a slow transition to a democratic regime was led by the regime. By that time, a myriad of social movements called for a new constitution that included a human rights and social justice framework (Htun 2003, 124; Carvalho 2004, 206; Brandão 2011, 80; Santos 2014, 205), in opposition to the exception state rules that were prevailing during the dictatorship. Approving the 1988 constitution was a massive democratic process, engaging society through interest groups and social movements (Carvalho 2004, 199), and established a new and democratic legal framework for the country.

The approval of this constitution is also an important reference on how social movements got organized to push for changes in Brazil. Due to the context of violent repression imposed by the Army during the dictatorship, social movements tended to converge in fighting the regime. After the transition into democracy, the multiple social movements that were first engaged in fighting the dictatorship began acting in a more focused way, pushing for their own individualized

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Congress, which was subservient to the Army.

agendas. The discussion of the new constitution engaged the society massively and groups like the feminists, the consumer rights and environmental activists, for example, started fighting for specific prescriptions on the constitution regarding their interests (but so did other sectors such as the economic market, agribusiness, etc.) (Rocha 2008, 135–36), amplifying society's ability to contribute to public policies (Rocha 2008, 135–36). Such activism resulted in the 1988 constitution having the most comprehensive bill of rights, encompassing civil and political, economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as protection for vulnerable social groups such as children, youth, and elderly people. There are many examples that could be pointed out regarding the direct influence social activism has had on the constitutional provisions, and one of them refers to the feminist movement. As result of the women's and feminist activist movement known as the "Lipstick Lobby," equality between men and women was established as a fundamental right (Htun 2003, 125; Blay 2017, 88; Brandão 2011, 95, 125, 138–39, 164). Civil rights protections were also maximized (Carvalho 2004, 209), for example as consumer advocacy groups were able to define consumer rights as fundamental rights (Sodré 2007, 16, 147, 165).

The social trauma caused by the military regime also marked this moment of the creation of this new constitution as one of maximization of all forms of freedom and the search for consolidating the protection of constitutional rights. The Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil (*Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988*), also known as the 1988 constitution or the citizenship constitution, defined procedures for passing laws and constitutional amendments; indicated the federative sharing of power and competencies amongst the federative units; organized the state duties towards citizens, as well as the principles for running the public administration; established the structures required for the activities conducted by the executive, legislative, and judiciary (and the limits to each of these institutions); and declared fundamental and social rights. This constitution differs from previous ones in many ways, but a relevant singularity is that it places fundamental rights at the beginning of the text, indicating that human rights are central. The entire constitutional text has 250 articles. Regarding fundamental rights, the constitution presents a division between individual (article 5), collective, and social rights (articles 6 to

11). Social rights were amplified (Carvalho 2004, 206) and also the constitution universalized the right to vote (Carvalho 2004, 200).<sup>4</sup>

Article 5 presents a long list of fundamental rights (78 sub-articles and 4 paragraphs<sup>5</sup>) and concentrates on describing all individual and collective rights such as rights to: life, equality before the law and equality between men and women, access to justice, due process of law, interdiction of torture and other cruel, inhumane, or degrading treatment or punishment, and others. Article 5 is complemented by international human rights treaties ratified by Brazil.<sup>6</sup> Although the constitution defines an openness for international human rights treaties as an extra protection for Brazilian citizens, the Brazilian courts tend to resist implementing such treaties and show little room for incorporating these rights into judicial rulings (Torelly 2018, 214).

The constitution is an important milestone in the process for re-establishing democracy in Brazil, but many practices from the authoritarian regime were not eradicated simply by the change of the legal structure. For example, a similar structure and practices employed during the military regime were brought into the military police. The latter is focused on repressing illegal practices and ostensive patrolling, instead of focusing on preventive actions and tactics. The ideology of national security, and the image of citizens as potential terrorists and a risk to the State, were borrowed from the dictatorship and are deeply ingrained into the structure and practices of the military police in Brazil, making the police quite hostile to human rights values (Paz 1985; Lopes, Ribeiro, and Tordoro 2016; Adorno 1998; Bicudo 2000).

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4 The 1988 Constitution allowed illiterate people the right to vote. It also determined that all citizens older than 18 years of age must vote; while voting became optional for people aged 16 to 18.

5 While a sub-article might present a specific topic related to the “head” (caput) of the article, the paragraphs present general information or guidance related to the scope of that specific article.

6 Paragraph 3 was added to article 5 in 2005, and it states that any human rights treaty ratified by Brazil and approved by the Congress following the procedure to pass an amendment to the Constitution is considered as a part of the Constitution and an extension of article 5. The approval of paragraph 3 had the intention of clarifying doctrinal debates in the legal community regarding the status of human rights treaties ratified by Brazil. But considering that most international human rights treaties were ratified before 2005, what is the legal status of these treaties in the Brazilian legal system? The dominant view, supported by the Supreme Court, is that human rights treaties have the same legal status as any other general federal law. I share the understanding of Flávia Piovesan (2013), who claims that due to the very special content and the high emphasis the Constitution puts on human rights, human rights treaties are, materially if not formally, part of the Brazilian Constitution.

Jessé Souza (2016) contends that historically Brazil has been a very violent society — as represented in social structures that permanently and consistently deprive one third of its society of basic goods and services, and outside the reach of the rule of law. He talks about violence in an economic and social sense — violence as a deprivation of dignity and human status in the society, and linked to long-standing social exclusion. If such violence has multiple aspects (economic, legal, moral), Brazil also deals with massive physical violence and violence against one's life. These two forms of violence are connected in Brazil, since ostensive violence directed at poor, racialized, and marginalized people is a reality in the country. As a legacy from the last authoritarian regime, institutional violence targeted poor and marginalized people, thus replacing political prisoners (Dornelles 2014, 324, 328). This led to mass incarceration rates and high numbers of killings by police forces.

According to a 2018 Human Rights Watch Report, in 2016, 4,222 people were killed in Brazil by the police, while 1,035 were killed by Rio de Janeiro's police between January and November 2017. Brazil has one of the highest incarceration rates, with 726,000 adults in detention (in 2016, facilities held 97% more inmates than they were designed for) and 24,000 youths in detention (juvenile facilities housing 24% more youth than they were designed for) (Human Rights Watch 2018). This alarming situation is mostly problematized by human rights activists and is not seriously addressed by authorities.

Many things might explain this mismatch between the legal framework, which establishes a democratic State in Brazil, and State agents' current practices. One of them might be the lack of accountability for the wrongdoings of the dictatorial period, and also the resistance to re-structuring police forces, which keep operating in similar ways to the exception periods.

Investigative methods based on violence, torture, etc. are still a common practice for the police in Brazil (Quadros 2014; Fellet 2014), something that the First Report on the Truth and Commission pointed out as an obstacle to democracy in Brazil. Indeed, the Report identifies that abusive and violent practices commonly adopted during the dictatorship are still happening in Brazil; and amongst other initiatives it suggests: reforming the police forces to break its connections with the armed forces (recommendation 20); establishing mechanisms to promote the memory of the gross human rights violations committed during the dictatorship, such as the creation of a national museum for memory; and marking urban landscapes to identify where such viol-

ations occurred (recommendations 28 and 29) (Carlos Dias, et al. 2014, 2.784, 2.816-818). Therefore, persistent violent practices on the part of the Brazilian State challenge the establishment of the rule of law in the country, and also question the validity and efficacy of such rule of law (Quadros 2014; Fellet 2014; Carlos Dias, et al. 2014; Dornelles 2014, 324).

## The Amnesty Law

As noted before, the amnesty law is a centre piece in the transition to democracy in Brazil. If this law allowed the country to end the dictatorship, it also blocked further debates on truth-seeking and reparation for the victims of the regime. I will now turn my analysis to this law and the debates it generated in Brazilian society, and then include a brief overview of how this issue has been discussed by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The understanding that the amnesty law should be used to benefit perpetrators as well as victims of the regime is majoritarian in Brazilian jurisprudence. Even though the topic had been debated by different courts, in 2010 a decision by the Brazilian Supreme Court consolidated the understanding that the amnesty law applies to both citizens and state agents.

Law n. 6.683, approved on August 28, 1979, grants amnesty to all those who committed political crimes (or similar or related crimes) between September 2, 1961 and August 15, 1979. Equal amnesty is extended to all public servants, from all branches, including the Legislative, the Judiciary, the Executive, the Army, etc. (first article). Following such disposition, the law established that no amnesty will be granted to those who engaged in “terrorist acts, robbery, kidnapping and threats to individuals,” meaning that civilians engaged in these activities, often acting against the dictatorship, could not benefit from the amnesty law and should face punishment.

Unlike other amnesty laws in the region, which focus on the victims of the regime, the Brazilian law impedes the punishment of wrongdoings committed by State agents. The consequence of this law is the impossibility of holding military agents responsible for torture, forced disappearances, killings, etc. The absence of punishment also means that no investigation was or will be made, thus obscuring the truth about these events. Therefore, victims and family members have,

in turn, a hard time sustaining collectively the memory of what happened. These survivors and the families of the deceased individuals claim the right to know what happened to their family members who were illegally arrested and persecuted by the State. They are the ones pushing for changes in the interpretation of the law, and for reparation and truth seeking. These families have been sustaining the movement for truth-seeking in Brazil.

The federal branch of the Bar Association requested a review of the understanding of the amnesty law (Tosi, Pessoa de Albuquerque e Silva, and Abrão 2014, 50); and with a majoritary (7/2) decision, the Supreme Court judges decided that the law applies to perpetrators as well. One of the votes stressed the need “to forgive and to move on as a society.” This understanding stands in opposition to international treaties signed by Brazil and represents a continuing denial of the rights of victims and their families to know the truth and to have responsible State agents punished for their crimes.

On this matter, a recent decision (March 15, 2018) from the Inter-American Court of Human Rights regarding the case *Herzog and others vs. Brazil* condemns Brazil for maintaining this understanding about the amnesty law. This is a major case about illegal detention, torture, and death as a form of repression. Vladimir Herzog, the victim, was a journalist illegally arrested, tortured, and killed by State agents on October 25, 1975. The military claimed he committed suicide by hanging in his cell. His wife and other family members have been seeking reparation, including the reestablishment of the truth about what happened to him (that he was killed and not that he killed himself), and the punishment of the authorities in charge at the time.

On this historical decision, the Court found the Brazilian State responsible for violating Vladimir Herzog’s rights and the family members’ rights to truth and reparation. Amongst the multiple international obligations the Brazilian State failed to respect and protect, the Court pointed out that the crimes verified in the Herzog case are considered crimes against humanity and, therefore, cannot be subject to amnesty. The Court further stressed that Law n. 6.683/79 should not be an obstacle to investigating and punishing State agents responsible for such acts. One of the conclusions of the ruling is precisely that the Brazilian State cannot leave the crimes (which are crimes against humanity) committed by State agents during the dictatorship unpunished, and that the Brazilian amnesty law is contrary to international

obligations assumed by Brazil to protect and implement human rights (Humanos 2018).

Besides granting that no crimes would be punished, the Supreme Court's understanding (that the Amnesty Law benefits State agents responsible for human rights violations) supports a narrative that justifies State-sponsored violence as a necessary measure against violent actions taken by the citizens who opposed the regime, as well as the idea that such violence was justified to contain a supposed threat regarding a communist revolution. Giuseppe Tosi et.al (2014) indicate that the 1959 Cuban revolution inspired left-wing movements in Latin America, leading to radical solutions from elite and conservative forces to contain and avoid changes into socialist regimes in the region. (Tosi, Pessoa de Albuquerque e Silva, and Abrão 41). In Latin America, efforts to contain "the communist threat" resulted in the imposition of dictatorial regimes, with the brutal repression of opposition of any kind, and the suppression of fundamental rights and the democratic order. The idea that it was necessary to protect the country against such "communist threats" supported the establishment of a strong and centralized national system of control and vigilance (Gaspari 2014) and justified massive and systematic human rights violations, disguised as necessary actions to ensure "national security" and also order, progress, and development. This narrative was the ideological foundation for the military regime (Dornelles 2014, 327).

## **Lack of Accountability and Persistent Challenges to the Brazilian Democracy**

It has been suggested that the transitional justice process in Brazil was incomplete (Tosi, Pessoa de Albuquerque e Silva, and Abrão 2014, 45), and that the amnesty law and the right to truth and memory were some of the main challenges that needed to be addressed in order to complete the transition to democracy.

In Brazil, important steps towards preserving the memory of the gross human rights violations perpetrated by the State during the dictatorship have been taken by civil society, particularly by organizations or groups formed by family members of victims, survivors, and human rights activists. For example, the *Tortura Nunca Mais* (Torture never again) organization started in 1979, when a group of lawyers and

activists decided to access State official documents from the dictatorship and illegally copy them. These documents related to the political prisoners and the procedures that took place within police stations, army headquarters, etc. It can be considered one of the first big efforts to collect, organize, and preserve the memories of the dictatorship. This group ensured that a copy of the 707 process employed by the military courts between 1964 and 1979 was preserved. They gathered more than one million pages, making two copies, one of which was sent abroad to ensure it would be kept safely (Tortura Nunca Mais n.d.).

In 2016, former president Dilma Rousseff was impeached by what many called a *coup d'état*. Demonstrating similarities to what happened in previous years in Paraguay and Honduras, Brazil suffered a parliamentary *coup d'état*. This is a controversial topic that requires deeper discussion, but what I want to address is that social protests related to such impeachment processes often counted on a persistent group of supporters — supporters who claimed military intervention.

Brazil had been experiencing a huge wave of protests, at least since 2013, when millions went to the streets against the idea of hosting the World Cup and against the raising of fares for public transportation. I remember that those who initially supported a military intervention were also present during these protests. Their presence became more evident over time, and increasingly difficult to ignore.

The political chaos insuflated by investigations of the “Operation Car-Wash” (*Operação Lava Jato*), and the corruption scandals it unveiled, led to massive demonstrations on the streets. Political debate became extremely polarized as part of the population called for Dilma’s impeachment and another part argued against it. Operation Car Wash also stimulated a wave of nationalism, with many movements against corruption being created and then spreading all over the country. If fighting against corruption seemed to be a good thing, the association of these movements with highly nationalist and right-wing movements also raised concerns. Demonstrations against corruption and pro-impeachment tended also to call for legalizing the individual’s right to carry weapons, and often, for military intervention. Preceding Dilma’s impeachment, and then right after it, a discourse of crisis took over Brazil. The fact that the country was immersed in a deep economic crisis was also used as a reason to push for impeachment — even if this was not one of the reasons allowed by the constitution for impeachment in Brazil. Impeachment is only justified in cases of intentional wrongdoings and crimes against the Brazilian State.

But Dilma's impeachment is also connected to our problematic and disputed memories in yet another way. According to the constitution, the impeachment request is decided by the lower house of the Congress, which analyzes whether the acts committed by the President justify removing the President from power. The final decision is taken by the Senate. When Dilma Rouseff's impeachment was being voted on by the lower chamber, one congressman, Jair Bolsonaro, justified his vote by invoking Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, who is known to be responsible for at least 50 deaths and more than 500 procedures of torture during the dictatorship, including the torture of the former president. Part of his vote reads: "In memory of colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, Dilma Rouseff's horror, of the Caxias Army, in the name of Brazil and above all in the name of God, my vote is yes [yes to proceed the impeachment]" (Barba and Wentzel 2016; Falcão 2016).

The fact that a Congressman could speak in such a manner, praising an iconic figure of the dictatorship, in the place where representative democracy is practiced and receiving little criticism (except from human rights activists), can be seen as a paradox. It is paradoxical because it praises dictatorship using democratic tools (representative democracy), and also because it uses freedom of speech to reclaim a form of government that is known for suppressing freedom of speech. If freedom of speech is one of the pillars of democracy, dealing with such discourses might just be considered part of the democratic game. Even so, it is contradictory to make an apology for a repressive regime when advocating for freedom to express a particular opinion and exercise a democratic right (in this case, being a congressman and representing popular will). His vote is also problematic as it was mostly problematized by human rights activists and did not receive massive social criticism. Somehow, this lack of criticism suggests that the narratives of the memories of the dictatorship, from the standpoint of the victims of the regime, are not taken into account in public debates. Or, in other words, the army narrative is somehow still dominant, making declarations as the one made by Jair Bolsonaro normal, acceptable, and even praised by part of the population.

This whole situation (his vote, the naturalization of invoking a person who symbolizes torture, etc.) is only possible in a context where the memory of the dictatorship is constantly blocked or, as I argue, where intended efforts to forget are in place. Most striking, Jair Bolsonaro was elected the new Brazilian president on October 28, 2018 with 55.54% of the valid votes (Mazui 2018). Because Jair Bolsonaro is

openly in favour of torture, this topic came back to the debates during the presidential campaign. His opponent in the second round, Fernando Haddad (from the worker's party) produced a tv program explaining what torture is and interviewing Amelinha Telles, a woman who was tortured during the dictatorship of colonel Brilhante Ustra. She recalled the procedures that were inflicted on her and how Ustra brought her two kids, at the time 5 and 4 years old, to see her and her husband. Amelinha and her husband were transfigured by torture, covered in vomit, urine, and blood. Part of the torture procedures involved threatening her kids and introducing rats into her vagina. After this program was broadcasted, Jair Bolsonaro contested it before the electoral court (responsible for overseeing the elections in Brazil) and won the right to have the worker's party propaganda suspended (Pires 2018). Meanwhile, Amelinha Telles and her family were threatened. False rumours were also spread by Bolsonaro's supporters, saying that Amelinha was tortured because she killed army officers (Paulo 2018, BOL 2018).

Thinking about problematic and disputed memories such as the dictatorship in Brazil, the above incident reinforces the extent to which the army's narrative about the dictatorship is still prevalent. The argument that violent repression was necessary to contain violent activists and people who opposed the regime is still appealing to at least part of society, those who believe that in such cases torture would be justifiable. The second noticeable aspect is that the electoral court suspended the party propaganda that stated something that was true (torture happened during the dictatorship and Bolsonaro supports torture as a valid procedure, having stated this on multiple occasions and honouring a person known to be responsible for massive torture during the dictatorship), but did not take any measure to protect Amelinha and her family members, who were being threatened and slandered because of Amelinha's testimony during the Worker's Party [Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT] propaganda. All these facts just reinforce the idea that Brazil needs to have a deeper understanding of its own history and that all the efforts from civil society to seek and unveil the truth about the dictatorship were still not enough to oppose the army's narrative.

On another front, the discourse of economic crisis that justified the impeachment has also been used to impose all sorts of backlashes, including restrictions on rights and the few social benefits that exist in Brazil. If comparing two historical moments can be problematic, it is

hard *not* to note that the 1964 regime started after a discourse of chaos and crisis became widespread in society. So this leads to questions related to memories: the 1964 military dictatorship started precisely with the support of a particular group of society. In 1964, millions took to the streets all over the country for the March of the Family with God for Liberty [Marcha da Família com Deus pela Liberdade]. They were demonstrating their support for military intervention. In 2014, a repeated edition of this march took place in São Paulo and their leaders claimed the right to another military intervention — *against* the Worker’s Party government, *for* impeachment, and *against* communism. A second protest followed the first one, reminding people of the atrocities committed by the military regime and condemning impeachment, showing that memories are still being disputed in Brazil.

The military regime is over, but this does not mean that a democratic regime has replaced it. In Brazil, right now, democracy is more of a “façade” than a lived experience. If, on the one hand, the announcement of a social and democratic state with a new constitution was an important indication of the end of the dictatorship; in real life, authoritarian practices continue, not only through state actions, but also due to public perceptions regarding human rights. During the negotiations for the end of the military dictatorship, many state actors responsible for persecution and other crimes never left their jobs, and therefore perpetuated military ideas and perceptions regarding society, and mobilized public opinion “against human rights.”

This view is common in Brazil right up to the present day. The authoritarian apparatus was never fully dismantled, becoming either more or less visible depending on specific contexts. By the end of May 2017, the current Brazilian president called upon the army to repress a protest against him (“Temer convoca Forças Armadas após protesto em Brasília e causa controvérsia. Entenda,” 2017). Such things do not happen in democratic societies, where police forces are trained to protect citizens, including during protests. On the contrary, the army is trained to act in the context of war.

In spite of the many efforts and achievements obtained by the latest National Truth Commission, recent events in Brazil have shown how the memories from the dictatorship are still highly disputed, engaging society and the state in a debate about which stories get to be told and which are obscured. A striking example of this dispute is the fact that the current president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, has been making strong efforts to recall and reinforce the army’s narrative that the dictatorship

was a necessary regime to contain the “communist threat.” He is doing so by commanding the 1964 *coup d’État* to be commemorated (Londoño, Darlington, and Casado 2019; Human Rights Watch 2019). The government prepared and shared via official channels a video enhancing and glorifying the 64-military regime (Almeida and Maia 2019). Alongside, the Ministry of Education (MEC) declared that history books in Brazil should be changed so that both sides of the history get told (El país Online 2019). According to the ministry: “There will be progressive changes [in the content of the didactic books] so that a broader version of history can be contemplated. MEC’s role is to ensure didactic books are distributed. And such books have to be prepared in such a manner that children can have a real, truthful idea of what is their history.” As a closing remark, the ministry added that what happened in ‘64 “was a sovereign decision made by the Brazilian society,” the dictatorship then being a “forceful democratic regime.” Historians in the country protested against these measures arguing that there is no debate about whether there was a dictatorship in ‘64 or not — there is a consensus by historians that it was (Folha de São Paulo Online 2019). The efforts to deny the dictatorship as a traumatic and problematic event in the Brazilian history went as far as sending an official communication to the United Nations stating that “there was no *coup d’État* on March 31, 1964, and the following 21 years of military regime were necessary to preserve the country from a communist threat and ensure the integrity of Brazilian institutions in the context of the Cold War” (Senra 2019). These actions triggered protests in Brazil, both on the streets and online, with campaigns and actions to remember and commemorate the survivors and their memory, as well as to honour the ones who died (N. Almeida 2019).

Thinking about the memorialization processes experienced in Hungary, France, and Germany, it seems that the Brazilian case is closer to the Hungarian context, where competing memories from the past dispute public memory and debates. The 2012 National Truth Commission established in Brazil pushed for a more comprehensive debate on truth and memory from the dictatorship by recommending the creation of memorial sites and other initiatives. However, it seems that we have a not-so-optimistic prospective on this matter, as Brazil struggles to overcome a political and economic crisis and severe austerity measures are being imposed. With little or virtually no resources to expend on the creation of such sites, it is the individual memories of the family members of victims of the dictatorship that still

fight for the right to know the truth about what happened to their sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, spouses, uncles, aunts, and friends. Somehow, despite all the efforts to make people forget, some of us *insist* on remembering. We have to continue to hope and to join these families in the fight for truth and memory in Brazil, hoping that in the near future we can push our country, but also our society, to openly and frankly discuss our past, so that we can build something different for the future. This fight gains a particular relevance in the context of Bolsonaro's election, since he has the open support of part of the army (being a retired member of the army himself), has been openly declaring that he will ban all opposition and activists (Phillips 2018), and has been actively disputing the memories of the victims of the dictatorship — denying that the mass atrocities occurred or justifying them as necessary. In this context, fighting back to reinstate the victim's memories and preserve democratic institutions becomes imperative. As activists say in Portuguese, “*luto pra mim é verbo*” — grieving is a call to action!

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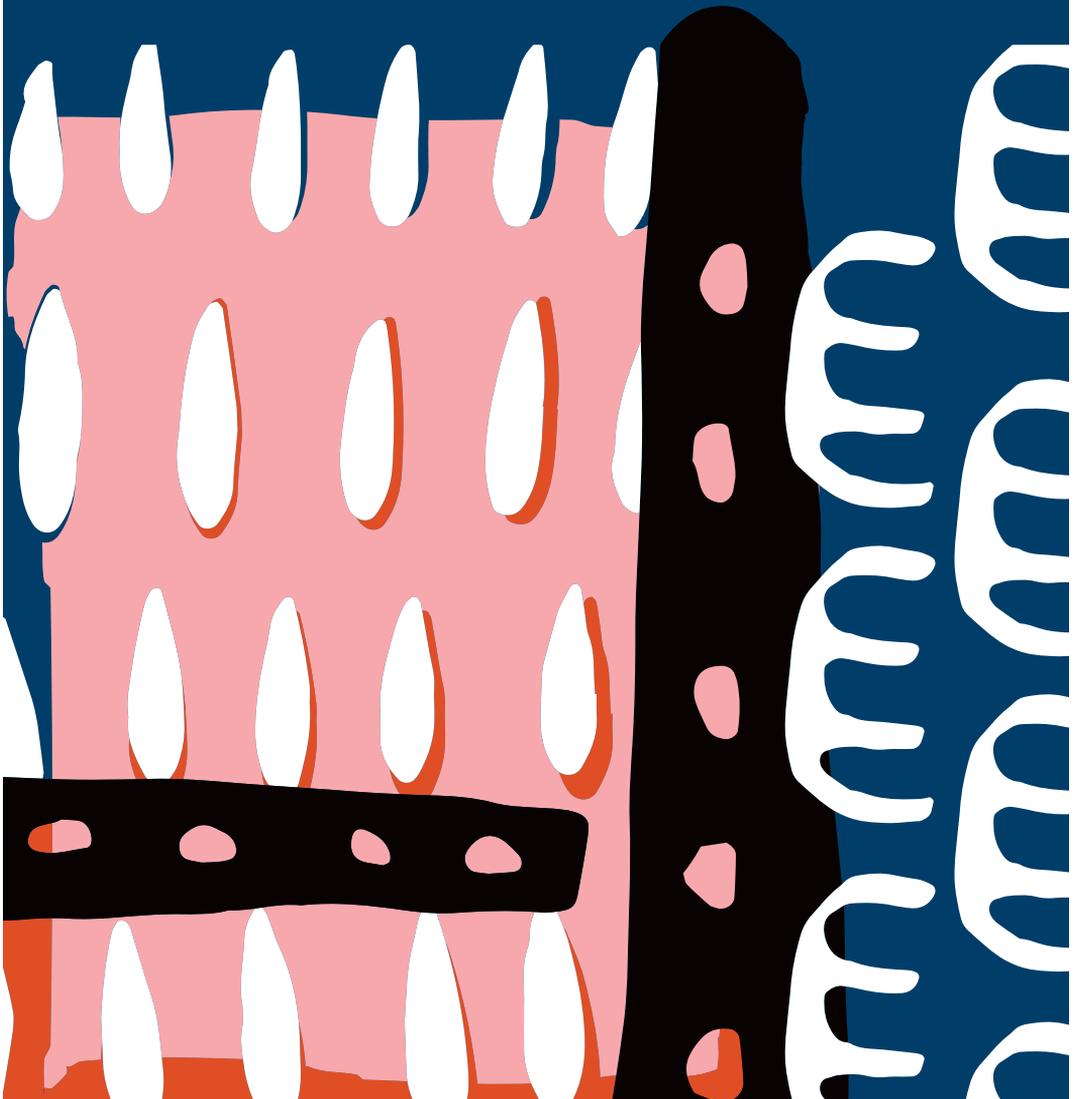
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Section II

# Interacting with Sites of Memory





## Chapter 5

# **Studies in Contrast**



# Studies in Contrast: Notes from the Field

**Dr. Charlotte Schallié** is an Associate Professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Victoria, Canada. Her research interests include post-1945 German literature and film, transcultural studies, Jewish identity in contemporary cultural discourse, and Holocaust education. She served as the director of the European Studies program at the University of Victoria for several years. Charlotte Schallié co-founded “The Future of Holocaust Memorialization: Confronting Racism, Antisemitism, and Homophobia through Memory Work” research collective. Together with Helga Thorson and Andrea van Noord, she was a co-organizer of the Global Connections: Critical Holocaust Education in a Time of Transition conference at the University of Victoria in 2015.

**Dániel Péter Biró** is an Associate Professor/Førsteamanuensis at the Grieg Academy, University of Bergen. After studying in Hungary, Germany, and Austria, he completed his PhD at Princeton University in 2004 and taught Composition and Music Theory at the University of Victoria. He has been commissioned by major festivals and venues and won international composition prizes. He has served as Visiting Professor at Utrecht University (2011) and Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University (2014-2015). He was elected to the College of New Scholars, Scientists, and Artists in the Royal Society of Canada in 2015 and awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2017. His compositions are performed around the world.

In summer 2017, we co-led an international graduate summer field school titled *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada*. Using the Canadian experience with

multiculturalism and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report as comparative touch points, we designed a curriculum that brought together musicians, scholars, and students from the University of Victoria, the University of Toronto, Aix-Marseille Université (France), Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary), and the University of Osnabrück (Germany). Over a period of three weeks, a core group of eleven graduate students, complemented by a research assistant and a student filmmaker — all from diverse disciplinary backgrounds — examined narratives of the past as they shape current political decision-making processes in the face of rising nationalism and xenophobic discourse in Europe and North America.

We opted to visit four Memory Sites in which narratives of the past intersect with present-day nationalistic discourses: Keleti Railway Station (Budapest, Hungary), Ravensbrück Memorial Site (Fürstenberg/Havel, Germany), Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp (Aix-en-Provence, France), and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (Winnipeg, Canada). In each location, we explored the interlayering of cultural narratives of the past and memorialization onto current public policy challenges pertaining to the migration crisis and the resurgence of nationalist politics.

Given that our collaboration with musical scholars and musicians was an integral part of the curriculum design, the UVic research team (Dániel Péter Biró, Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Charlotte Schallié, and Helga Thorson) commissioned three original pieces of new music to be performed in three locations: the Central European University in Budapest, Ravensbrück Memorial Site in Fürstenberg/Havel, and the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp near Aix-en-Provence. Through these performances, we raised the question of how music can address human rights concerns and contribute to a critical engagement with social justice.

Our three composers, Andrea Szigetvári, Zaid Jabri, and Dániel Péter Biró, each wrote pieces for site-specific performances that situated the Syrian refugee crisis within a larger historical as well sociopolitical framework. Hungarian composer Andrea Szigetvári wrote a piece, “Marhakaralábé Kantáta” (“Beef Kohlrabi Cantata”) based on a 2015 field recording at Keleti Railway Station in Budapest. At that time, hundreds of refugees were provisionally camping in a metro underpass awaiting permission to continue their journey to Western and Northern Europe. The train station became a representative case study location for us, as it was also the former site of mass deportations of Hungarian

Jews in 1944. A second musical performance — “30 Articles for Viola and Electronics” by Syrian-born composer Zaid Jabri — took place at the site of the former Ravensbrück concentration camp, which was the largest women’s camp in the German Reich. The “30 Articles” referenced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was adopted in the wake of the Second World War, in 1948. The third piece, “Gvul” (גְּבוּל; “Border”), by Dániel Péter Biró, was performed at the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp, a former internment camp that now serves both as a memorial site and as the UNESCO headquarters for the Chair of Education for Citizenship, Human Sciences, and Shared Memories.

At each of these locations, lectures, discussions, and guided tours were scheduled prior to and after the performances. The lectures dealt specifically with the relationships between music history, memory, and cultural trauma. As we were mindful not to create an interdisciplinary hierarchy within our various theoretical and methodological approaches, we co-designed teaching units, together with our local experts that complemented one another. Furthermore, the individual course requirements included both reading lists and listening assignments that tasked the students to personally explore colliding and intersecting narratives between historical injustices, memory politics, and present-day human rights concerns. For example, in Budapest, students were asked to listen to two string quartets, one by Béla Bartók and one by György Kurtág, probing the meaning of ideology and nationalism while comparing these works to Andrea Szigetvári’s new composition created for the makeshift camp at Keleti Railway Station. During a site visit on location with Andrea Szigetvári, students discussed how the composer integrated the spatial experiences of loss and trauma into her own work.

Up to this point, our engagement with the subject matter was entirely academic. We discussed the role of music as a tool of public protest, when—suddenly—the upcoming performance of Andrea Szigetvári’s *Marhakaralábé Kantáta* became a politically contentious issue that caused serious concerns for our concert organizers at the Central European University (CEU). Three months prior to our scheduled concert event, the ruling Fidesz party fast-tracked a law through parliament that could potentially force the Central European University, a foreign-accredited university, to close all of its academic programs. As Szigetvári had taken recordings of both refugee testimonies and right-wing Hungarian demonstrators at Keleti Railway Station and used them as raw material for her piece, the CEU was in a difficult position. Although the university unequivocally promoted freedom of

expression, they did not want to be perceived as a provocateur and risk being the target of a potential future shut-down. After negotiations with the government, a letter of support finally arrived from Michael Ignatieff, the current President of the Central European University, encouraging us to go forward: “I do hope we get an audience for this important initiative ... we have to be prudent, given our situation, but we don’t need to be overcautious.”<sup>1</sup> In the end, a compromise was reached between the university and Dániel Péter Biró, allowing us to go ahead with the event without publicizing it in the media.

In order for us to understand the competing memories and memory politics on display in front of us, we alternated several field trips — including an interactive testimony-based ‘Walk Tour’ in the Jewish Quarter — with seminar sessions at Eötvös Loránd University. The latter were facilitated by sociologist Ildikó Barna and other members of her department presenting lectures on the migration crisis in Hungary. Professor Barna also guided us through a complex set of contradictory historical narratives that were most palpable in the streets of Budapest where a government-sponsored billboard campaign targeted Hungarian-American philanthropist and CEU founder George Soros. What made these posters especially inflammatory was their use of antisemitic tropes showcasing a smiling Soros with the caption “Don’t let Soros have the last laugh”; and this inflammatory slogan was featured underneath a statement that pretended to be science-based: “99% [of Hungarian citizens] reject illegal immigration.” Suddenly, these images were all over Budapest, invading public spaces like at the height of a political campaign. The ubiquitous appearance of the anti-Soros poster campaign suggested that the country’s infrastructure was unable to adequately accommodate migrants and asylum seekers. Yet, as far as we could see during our time in Budapest, the cityscape was almost devoid of migrants; there were just so few of them.<sup>2</sup> It was only after Ildikó Barna gave a seminar presentation on Hungary’s conflicted Holocaust memory that we began to understand how the official version of Hungary’s purported role in the Holocaust was construed as a rationale for the country’s draconian anti-immigrant policies in 2017.

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1 Email to Dániel Péter Biró, 10 July 2018.

2 According to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, less than 500 asylum seekers were granted protection during the first half of 2017. (See <https://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/ННС-Hungary-asylum-figures-1-August-2017.pdf>).

In stark contrast, our next destination, Berlin-Neukölln, continues to be one of the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods in Europe. Given that our field school curriculum emphasized community-engaged learning approaches, it was critical for us to interact with refugees and immigrants on location. To that effect, a guided tour of “Berlin-Neukölln from the Newcomer perspective” (organized by the local grassroots organization *querstadtein*) allowed us to experience a brief snapshot of Berlin through the eyes of a Syrian immigrant. At the end of a thoughtful and informative tour, we visited the Sharehaus Refugio community centre and refugee housing. As it also serves as a hub for local pro-immigration initiatives (<http://www.refugio.berlin>), we requested an ad hoc meeting with one of Sharehaus Refugio’s project leaders. This discussion provided us with a fuller understanding of citizen-driven initiatives that foster intercultural dialogue and community integration in Germany’s capital.

During the next leg of our journey, which took us to the Oberhavel district in Brandenburg, several challenges came to the fore. How could we ensure that our fast-paced multilocation study tour would not end up being an accumulation of disjointed experiences and insights? How could we successfully combine the demands of on-location field studies with each participant’s need to carve out time for self-reflection? Consequently, we asked ourselves if we should include more joint on-site learning activities, or make more room for self-guided immersion at each location. Perhaps not surprisingly, these questions emerged as we arrived — together with a graduate class from the University of Osnabrück (Lower Saxony) — at the Ravensbrück Memorial in Fürstenberg/Havel. It did not escape our attention that, arriving directly from Berlin-Neukölln, we created a narrative that assumed a trajectory between Germany’s robust humanitarian response to the refugee crisis in 2017 and its catastrophic failure to protect human rights during the Second World War.

Although we selected this location for the purpose of illuminating the importance of memory work in post-Holocaust Germany, the next two days in Ravensbrück also reminded us that we could not easily assume that narratives of memory and migration were inevitably intertwined or even interrelated. The memorial narrative at Ravensbrück Memorial Site was conveyed to us by Matthias Heyl, the head of educational services, who presented the historical crime scene at Ravensbrück through the lens of individual eyewitness testimonies. Throughout our guided tours, Heyl reclaimed a sense of personal

agency and autonomy for those inmates whose lives had been completely dehumanized, and in some cases, destroyed.

On our second day at Ravensbrück Memorial Site, however, the course participants shifted the discussion from “commemoration” to “understanding.” The difficult question was asked regarding how heritage preservation sites dedicated to commemorate and memorialize state-sponsored mass crimes could become a place of dialogue and meaning. Many of our students (some of whom worked in human rights law or immigrations studies) were eager to redefine their own roles as visitors/eyewitnesses. They were keen on becoming more engaged as “memory interpreters” who would examine the history of Ravensbrück within the framework of pressing human rights concerns. With this learning objective in mind, we all looked forward to the presentation of Zaid Jabri’s “30 Articles for Viola and Electronics,” a contemporary music piece that affirmed the basic principles of human rights in a place that, over 70 years ago, did everything in its power to defy the declaration of such principles. Yet, instead of situating the history of Ravensbrück within the context of current human rights concerns, Ralf Ehler’s strong performance intensified the cognitive dissonance that reverberated for us throughout the entire memorial site. Some of us felt both intellectually and emotionally defeated. Perhaps this place was just too difficult to bear and impossible to understand. Given that we slept in youth hostel rooms that were formerly occupied by female camp guards made the experience all the more difficult.

We, the co-leaders, were at a loss for words. As both of us are Jewish, we decided to celebrate the arrival of Shabbat on Friday evening, inviting our two Jewish students to recite the blessings. It was a small act of defiance cut short by a stubborn breeze that repeatedly blew out the candles.

Despite these challenges, the last day at Ravensbrück provided us with one of the most memorable experiences of the entire field school. Our group of eleven students, complemented by the University of Osnabrück cohort and their instructors Maja and Danny Sturm, all participated in a sharing circle. For many of us who prefer an intellectual, emotionally distant engagement with difficult subjects, the communal setting of a sharing circle was a moving experience; some of us felt the weight of this place, the burden of history, more forcefully than ever before. We were deeply unsettled and perturbed but, at last, we were ready to let go.

Prior to moving on to our next location, the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp near Aix-en-Provence, the students were given the option

of doing a self-guided tour of Jewish memorial sites in Berlin (most of us decided to visit the Jewish Museum as a group). This was only Day 8 of our field school itinerary, but the experiences on the road had been so intense, and to some extent so physically exhausting, that most of us felt that we had been together for much longer. The students had also bonded over the course of the past week, and they formed fluid group configurations, avoiding clique activities. We were especially pleased to notice that the music students felt completely at ease with learning activities that were outside of their discipline's comfort zone. Likewise, our participants whose own research was grounded in social and/or cultural theory were receptive to thinking "outside the box," immersing themselves in the literature and the practice of contemporary music.

As the two co-instructors responsible for the delivery of this field school, we complemented each other well. Each of us prepared a specific set of reading lists, as well as an outline with core learning objectives, for individual students (depending on their disciplinary background). On the road, we had clearly defined areas of responsibilities as "concert organizer" (Dániel Péter Biró), and "tour leader" (Charlotte Schallié). As the planning and staging of the individual concerts was a time-consuming undertaking, our two schedules as "concert organizer" and "tour planner" were often quite separate from one another. Yet, we always made sure that music students received mentoring throughout the study tour (provided by Dániel Péter Biró, Zaid Jabri, and Andrea Szigetvári) and also had the opportunity to participate more fully in the pre-concert preparation if they chose to do so.

Our third and final destination in Europe was Aix-en-Provence, a tourist attraction that was so visually stunning that we temporarily lost sight of our course objectives. It took a concerted effort to avoid the many sightseeing activities in the city of Paul Cézanne, reminding ourselves that we were there to study the history surrounding of the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp. As we visited the memorial site of this large French internment and deportation camp (1938 – 1942) outside the city, we drew various parallels to Ravensbrück. Both memorial sites house large collections of artistic works that were created by the inmate populations as a means to resist systematic acts of oppression and dehumanization. Ultimately, the two sites are distinctly different, both in their curatorial choices and their educational messaging. The emphasis in the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp's main exhibition was twofold: on the one hand, it highlighted the country's failure to save its Jewish population during the Second World War; and,

on the other hand, a large portion of the permanent exhibition was dedicated to genocide prevention. Whereas the educational tour at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site predominantly emphasized survivor testimonies, thus approaching the historical site through a forensic lens, the focus in the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp was — as our educational expert and guide Coralie Pietrucci pointed out — on social activism and the need to fight hatred and racism in today’s world. In other words, the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp is conceptualized as a Site of Conscience,<sup>3</sup> inspiring its visitors to take action against everyday expressions of prejudice and hatred.

However, when we tried to put this mandate into action, we ran into a similar stumbling block as in Budapest. Prior to the concert that was to be performed on location — featuring an original composition by Dániel Péter Biró — the staff discreetly let us know that we would not be able to announce the concert in the local media. Southern France was on a high security alert during that time period due to elevated threats of terrorism. Therefore, a public event in a memorial site dedicated to the Second World War would have necessitated an additional set of security personnel; and this was deemed far too expensive for us to cover.

As we ended the European portion of our itinerary with this concert that was presented to a small invited audience only, we were reminded again of the intricate layering of history and memory politics. The fact that a Site of Conscience needed to be protected from publicly engaging its community with human rights issues was a difficult lesson to learn during this last stretch of our European journey. The participants of the round-table discussion, including sociologist Helga Hallgrimsdóttir, philosopher Gunnar Hindrichs, pianist Ermis Theodorakis, and composer Dániel Péter Biró, were acutely aware of the overall situation when discussing the social and aesthetic issues of the composition and the performance.

Over the ensuing two weeks, students returned home before then taking off to Winnipeg, the home of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. By the time we reconvened in Winnipeg in mid-August, our group would be one participant short. Our missing student — a PhD candidate in International Human Rights Law, and a citizen of the

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<sup>3</sup> “Sites of Conscience often deal with events in recent living memory and are focused on confronting the history of what happened at that place and spurring visitors to reflect on history’s contemporary implications” (<https://whc.unesco.org/document/165700>, page 15).

Republic of Côte d' Ivoire — could not join us because he was unable to obtain a visitor visa to Canada. This restrictive decision, made by the Canadian government, reignited a passionate conversation among the field school participants about racism in immigration politics. Once again, the unforeseen circumstances surrounding our study tour became valuable teachable moments and learning experiences.

Our three-day visit at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, guided by Interpretive Program Developer Sarah Watkins, addressed Canada's Residential School history, the question of reconciliation as a movement of hope or of guilt, and the curatorial choices surrounding the public exhibition of difficult knowledge. The individual lectures covered Indigenous Rights but also presented testimonies given by genocide survivors. Interactive activities included a blanket exercise, a sharing circle, and a dialogue activity. Throughout all of these teaching and learning units, students were encouraged to draw parallels or articulate distinctions between Canadian and European responses to human rights violations. Meanwhile, our music students had to excuse themselves from some of the seminar sessions in order to start rehearsing their own upcoming performances at the SALT New Music Festival and Symposium in Victoria.

The final segment of our field school consisted of four days in Victoria. It was our study tour reunion, as almost all our contributors — except for our student who was denied entrance into Canada, and two musicians who had different engagements — were able to join us again. Our field school student, violist Emily MacCallum was the solo performer in two pieces — *Engrenages: for solo violin and electronics* and *Void* — that were written by compositions students Kimberley Farris-Manning and Adam Scime, both of whom were also field school participants. This event was scheduled in tandem with a two-day *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada* symposium that constituted the final research activity of our field school project. At the symposium, all participating students presented their own research to a local audience of students, faculty, and community members. Their presentation topics included: “Borders and Body Politics”; “Xenophobia: Paving the Road Toward State Violence”; “Unpacking Jewish Identity in the Wake of Ravensbrück”; “Countering Radicalization: The Role Each of Us Plays”; and “Memories of the Holocaust through Individual Narratives.” The topics reflected the broad spectrum of approaches and research interests represented in our field school student population.

For the two co-leaders, *Narratives of Memory* was an extremely timely and rewarding experience. The course brought together European and Canadian students, musicians, and scholars to facilitate a fruitful exchange built around intercultural dialogues. The field school experience provided us with a deeper understanding of the interlayering of cultural narratives of the past onto current public policy challenges relating to multiculturalism and diversity. For our musicians and music scholars, the field school experience was truly unique, as it allowed them to take contemporary music out of the realm of the specialists, giving it a new social urgency and relevance. Our students from the humanities, social sciences, and law were introduced to arts-based research, and were simultaneously exposed to an interdisciplinary framework that conceptualizes music as a tool for human rights education. What made this field school so meaningful for both of us is that we took the classroom into the community, and then in reverse, drew on our community-based findings to articulate new pathways in cross-disciplinary scholarship.

## Chapter 6

# **The Individual's Interaction with Memorial Sites**



# The Individual's Interaction with Memorial Sites

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## Introduction

This reflection piece focuses on human interaction with memorial sites. It explores the possibility of the memorial as a testimony of the wounds of the past, or perhaps a warning for the future: a product of human madness or a product of human resilience. Places of grief and restriction or places of freedom and expression, the question of one's interaction with the memorial site is tied to the question of its purpose. This chapter draws on my personal reflections from the *Narratives of Memory* field school, and in particular how my interactions with a particular memorial site stimulated specific reactions as well as self-reflection.

A memorial site represents the real paradox between the goal of remembrance and the ugliness of some past human actions. Therefore, the meaning of the memorial site embraces both beauty and ugliness; there is hope and there is guilt embedded into this meaning (Duhamel

2016). The dimensions of this paradox often depend on the site itself as well as the ways in which individuals interact and engage with the site. Is there perhaps a universal conception of the behaviour that we should adopt when we are in these places of remembrance?

I must clarify that I am struck by the contrast between the potential beauty of our world and the latent ugliness of some human actions. However, the concept of beauty does not depend on aesthetic aspects of the memorial site. In this chapter, the concept of beauty is derived from a meaning that is built on hope, while, ugliness relies on guilt. This might be perceived as a controversial hypothesis. Nonetheless, this assumption is based on my own experience of the field school, which inspired these reflections. I tie shame to ugliness because I believe that shame does not offer enough perspective; it does not allow us to take a step back and apply our knowledge to other particular situations. For example, some people might criticize the Holocaust but make racist or heinous comments against Roma or Muslims. In contrast, hope allows us to apply our values and principles of open-mindedness and tolerance to other people and other situations.

One of my premises is that art is a powerful memory tool to discuss meaning, beauty, and freedom. Indeed, I have the deep-seated feeling that art should be about hope, not about guilt. When art is used to make you feel ashamed and guilty, we may wonder if this was its original intent. To blame — isn't that the burden of history? And yet, art is often used to express a "never again" statement. This attribute allows art to express guilt just as it expresses hope, even if this conclusion goes against my personal vision of art.

My other premise is that the interaction with memory, knowledge, or art depends on our choices to endorse or to refuse the emotions the site or monument sends to us. These emotions are framed by a historical, educational, and societal context, but they are at first a reflection of one's own personal experiences and empathetic capacity. Consequently, one's interaction with a memorial is individual, depends on one's choices, and reflects one's own perception of society.

All these assumptions are the result of the experiences I had this summer during the field school in which I participated. Indeed, one of the real challenges I faced during the field school, when we visited memorial sites, was to determine the appropriate way to behave. For example, I did not come across any particular rules of behaviour at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe [Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas] during our 2017 visit, although I have been told that these

do exist and can now be found on plaques along the edges of the site. My experience at this site generated thoughts about “memory reverence” compared to “memory reference,” as described by Alain Chouraki (2015, 14), director of the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp. These thoughts can be summed up in these questions: Is the duty of memory to generate emotions of guilt and reverence or to call for hope and reference? Should beauty triumph over ugliness, or should we carve the ugly in the present and the future in an attempt to prevent new tragedies?

In order to address this issue, I provide a brief summary of the destinations of the field school in Europe, before detailing my experience in Berlin. Then I question the transformation of memory, before addressing the best way to remember, if there is one. I would like to clarify that I focus on my own *experience* in order to discuss these questions because it was my personal adventure that created these thoughts that is the source of this chapter.

## A Brief Summary of Our Destinations in Europe

You must be the change you wish to see in the world...  
 We but mirror the world. All the tendencies present in the  
 outer world are to be found in the world of our body. If we  
 could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would  
 also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the  
 attitude of the world change towards him.... We need not  
 wait to see what others do. (Mahatma Gandhi 1999, 214)

In the summer of 2017, some Hungarian, Canadian, and French students in Social Sciences, Music Studies, and Law had the opportunity to meet in the context of a field school about *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia*, organized by the University of Victoria. On our journey, we had the opportunity to visit not only memorials but also different sites that engendered memories.

Budapest was our first destination. The Hungarian capital is in itself a testimony of the wounds of the past and the social breaks and tensions of the present. Squeezed between the previous collaboration of the government with the Nazi regime (which preceded the German Occupation) and the present instrumentalization of the refugee issues,

the country is prisoner of a torn identity (to explore this issue further, see Barna and Petó, 2015).

However, the population has not given up yet. An amazing example of the strength of the Hungarian people may be found in the creation of a counter-memorial in Budapest, in front of a memorial erected by the government. Specifically, the government-endorsed memorial only remembers the victims of the German occupation, glossing over the period of collaboration that happened before, and thus erasing the history of all the individuals and families who were killed during this time. In response, there was a grass-roots movement to create a living memorial with pictures, documents, and mementos symbolizing the persons who were killed or who disappeared prior to the occupation.

Then, in Ravensbrück, Germany, we spent a few days at the memorial site of a former women's concentration camp. I will not go into detail with regard to the challenges I experienced. I just want to express how disturbing it was to feel the emptiness of an incomprehensible past, in the full light of the gorgeous natural landscape of the Ravensbrück Memorial Site. How do I reconcile the vision of the crematorium and the silence of the mass grave with the sunset on the lake and the songs of the birds? This experience led me to separate the experience of history and the experience of the present. It was important for me to be able to appreciate every feeling of sadness or fear or joy or emptiness at any time it came. It was primordial for me to be able to feel free and alive. I underline this because it constitutes my premise about an individual's interaction with memorial sites, especially regarding these places of trauma and suffering. I think we need to be aware of the historical context, so we can understand the importance of the site. But I also think that our emotional response to the place has to play its own part, detached from any form of external moralization. Otherwise, how could we know if the reaction is due to an understanding that society is trying to impose on us according to its own standards; or if it is the product of our own empathy regarding the history of the place and the suffering of the people at that time?

We spent some time in Berlin before departing to our last destination, the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp, a French former detention camp that emphasizes the properties of art, resistance, and prevention. In the German capital, I had an experience that became the source for this paper. This experience led me to think more deeply about what the real point of memorials is — the true aim of remembrance, between perpetuation of pain and reconciliation. Facing the abstract structure of the

Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, I got lost in the freedom of interpretation offered by the place. I would like to share my memories and the thoughts that this memorial site generated for me.

## The Holocaust Memorial

Nonetheless, because the consequences of the affective force of an image are indeterminate, there are pedagogical (and political) risks associated with the practice of exhibition. (Simon 2011, 447)

The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin is a 4.7-acre space covered with 2,711 concrete slabs. It might look like a graveyard, but the designers say it is an abstract memorial that is open to interpretation. I did not notice any signs or indications about how to act in the memorial, which is kind of a labyrinth inciting the public to get lost in it. The blocks start small and then they grow bigger and bigger; at the centre of the labyrinth they are so big and so high that it is very impressive, and almost oppressive. The blocks are not far from each other; you can easily walk on the top of one of them and then walk from one to the other. These characteristics give this memorial site almost a sense of playfulness.

Holocaust memorials are typically austere places designed to honour the memories of the millions who lost their lives in the Nazi genocide. In our society of flux and pictures and social networks, the “selfie” has taken the place of the stories and testimonies, and therefore tourists can often be seen posing for photos in front of the memorial sites. The artist Shahak Shapira has created a project called *Yolocaust* to speak out against this. In order to demonstrate a different perspective of what tourists are doing in the Memorial to the Murdered Jews, Shapira gathered some of their photos and photoshopped them into actual historical photos from Nazi extermination camps (Zhang 2017; Shapira 2017).

The photograph of me that a friend of mine took at the top of one of the memorial blocks was not altered by Shapira, but my experience at the site was. I experienced the memorial as a place of freedom, of discovery, a place to take precedence over history, to get an overview of the place — of Berlin, of the people playing in the “labyrinth.” And this

reaction to the site was reflected in the photograph that I shared on social media, and specifically on Facebook. The post received a lot of comments, mostly negative. My friends posted that my behaviour was not appreciated, particularly by Germans, who considered it an affront.

At first, this did not disturb me because I understood that for Germans who live near the Memorial, their relationship with it is unique (Houziaux 2005, 40). Houziaux discusses trans-generational memory and states that culpability may exist, even if there is no conscious memory. The “ghost” of the memory of a committed fault remains in the spirit of the people as the trauma suffered by past generations. I cannot speak for a German person, but I can picture the ghost of their history and the subsequent necessity to look for resilience, to not get trapped by the past.

Furthermore, my previous experience at Ravensbrück had made me think that I should pay attention to how I felt at this memorial – as I explained in my introduction. Indeed, I experienced the need to seize the beauty of the moment, especially when I was confronted with terrible historical realities. This led me to cultivate a feeling of hope during the summer school, because, even if the wounds of the past are deep, the possibilities of the present are richer. This allows me, today, to make a critical appraisal of the reflected guilt that we feel. I think we should validate our own moral feelings outside of society’s wounds. If, during past tragedies, everyone had lived in accordance with his or her own individual values, i.e., not following a collective movement, who knows how it could have changed the course of history?

So, at first, I accepted the responsibility for my behaviour. However, this initial assessment of my reaction and how to contextualize it was altered once my friends showed me the work of Shahak Shapira. His work deeply moved me, not because his art woke up something in my soul, but because I pictured my photo as if it had been altered, as if the bodies of the murdered Jews, Sinti and Roma, homosexual persons, resistance fighters, and many others who died in the atrocities of the Nazi regime were all exposed behind my happy face. And I felt betrayed, ashamed, rejected. The experience of freedom I felt was suddenly inappropriate, and mostly undesirable.

Later, however, I began to reflect on the idea that perhaps Shapira’s critique of the site might, in fact, run counter to the spirit of the place. This led me to reflect more on this strange memorial and its ability to create such conflicting emotions. It led me to question the will of the designers, the meaning of an abstract design, the perceptions of the

German citizens, the public's duty to behave, and its right to behave. It also led me to ask myself if the answers to these questions mattered.

## The Transformation of Memory

To claim that we owe the dead our witness simply avoids the question as to what would constitute an adequate practice of witnessing. Contemporary ethics would have us attempt to guard against reducing another's suffering to imaginative or quite real versions of our own, by critically attending to the inescapable failure of comprehension that is always a component of ethical witness. (Simon 2011, 446)

I want to address the transformation of memory that is inherent to the transformation of our society, mostly in terms of communication technologies. We are a society in flux, dominated by *selfies* and self-absorbed communicational mediums like Facebook and Instagram (Goodnow 2016). This form of communication is probably superficial and depends more on a narcissistic perception of ourselves than a desire to share. However, selfies maintain a testimony that is diffused through boundaries, cultures, and experiences. Consequently, we can wonder if they might constitute an adequate practice of witness. It is important here to note that the transformation of society and of our ways of communicating are accompanied by a transformation of memory. This evolution in our globalized society of flux can also be noted through social networks, mostly Facebook. For instance, personal "walls" of people who have passed away still remain. They are not physical graves, but they persist as an electronic testimony of an individual's existence, and they probably receive more visits than cemeteries do nowadays.

As a result, open access to information has consequences when it comes to our attempts to connect, exchange, and remember. But it also has impacted our attempts to learn and to receive knowledge. Consequently, the different forms of knowledge and memory have had to adapt to the public's expectations; they have had to become flexible and interpretive.

Thereby, the evolution of knowledge and memory's diffusion can be observed through the evolution of museums. At first built as places of pure exposition, the museum was essentially a collection of various

objects that served as testimonies of the past or of the existence of other actual civilizations or species. Today, museums — and we had an amazing example when the Narratives of Memory School visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg — have evolved to Ideas museums. The Ideas museum not only collects objects but also stories; it creates spaces for dialogue and reciprocal learning, and it is mostly ruled by a shared authority (Czajkowski and Hill 2008; Rader and Cain 2008). Generally, the museum tends to become a site of conscience that turns memory into action, moving along the path from memory-*reverence* to memory-*reference*.

But if memory is transformed, if we go from reverence to reference, we are adding the factor of choice in the interaction of the individual with memory. Reference means we *might* refer; reverence means we *should* refer. Therefore, we can identify the issue as the eventual duty to remember. The inclusion of the possibility to *choose* is a result of the transformation of our societies. The choice is inherent to our freedom, inherent to the human rights that were guaranteed for every human being after WWII. However, this ability to *choose* whether or not to refer to the past mistakes and traumas also creates a risk that we might then forget, and then repeat the mistakes. The problem of memory is narrowly tied to responsibility and learning from our mistakes. This responsibility may be looked at as the result of self-identification with the victims, or through the feeling of culpability, or as an ethical responsibility — the product of our natural tendency to understand the suffering of others (Simon 2011, 435). The question would be: Is the exposition of structures or images of suffering and death sufficient to create an ethic of witness and historical repair? And will culpability result in further thoughts and actions (Reinhardt and Edwards 2006, 8)? What about the Memorial of the Murdered Jews in Europe in Berlin, which is so abstract and open to interpretation?

One premise we can probably agree on is that we *have to remember events*. It could be through an ethical path of understanding the reasons of a possible pre-figuration of the risks of the future, or a demonstration of humans' capacity to hurt themselves (Houziaux 2005, 52). The potential of memorial sites, not only as a respectful testimony for the victims but also as an acknowledgment of the past and a warning for the future, leads to the question of the adequate way to transmit memory. I often have the feeling that our duty toward the past is exaggerated compared to our duty toward the present and the future. We might interrogate ourselves regarding the dangers of a shameful memory that will not

offer actual and appropriate keys to fight against new challenges we face. In this sense, the duty of memory could be either well-used or abused. As Paul Ricoeur said, a “work of memory” might be a more appropriate burden than a duty of memory (Ricoeur 2000, 105).

This work of memory or the duty to remember seems to be a political duty at first, and so a duty that could differ for the Germans or the French, or for North Americans or Africans (Bienenstock 2010, 103-15). The ethical dimension of the political duty of memory and of the memorial site should, therefore, be questioned regarding the potential universal message they could send, if that is possible. Consequently, I would ask: Was the Berlin Holocaust Memorial built for the German people? For me? For our children? Was it for the past victims? For the next generation? Is it all of these? Can the memorial site be both beautiful and ugly, and about both hope and shame, at the same time?

The memorial site tends to commemorate the traumas and the victims, as well as to remember in order to prevent new crises and atrocities. However, the political duty to remember cannot, in itself, be enough to carry on this legacy, and the passage from reverence to reference has to be analyzed deeply.

Our societies understood the necessity of adopting measures of prevention and the repression of atrocities at the international, regional, national, and local levels. But the evolution of the museums’ expositions of knowledge, the conception of a work of memory and of political duty, and the links between memory and responsibility lead me to think that our tendency today is to provide a base for reflection. Each of us has to think about his or her own duty to understand and to integrate our knowledge. This assumption leads me to the conclusion that the research regarding appropriate behaviour, or the interaction between a memorial site and the public, might be meaningless — because the process of reflection is engaged thanks to the site, and the public policies or civil actions surrounding the site are by themselves an intrinsic and individual process (although this individual process is conditioned by cultural, political, and social parameters). Even the path from memory reverence to memory reference, if it can be a macro-choice operated by society, can also be a micro-choice, as it was for me in the Ravensbrück Memorial Site.

Therefore, I would like to underline two elements: the reflection undertaken as a result of the interaction with the memorial site or monument is at first an *individual act*; secondly, the reflective potential of the memorial site or monument leads the individual to question the

appropriate behaviour to honour the memory of the past and the freedom of the present. The memorial arouses and engages with one's own emotional needs: perpetuation of pain or resilience, grief or relief, ugliness or beauty — just like in a *game of mirrors*.

## Is There a Good Way to Remember?

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law [...] (Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, Preamble)

A tragedy as a victory may become a sacralized moment of history. The “archive,” far from being a reference anymore, then becomes a relic, dispensing its teaching from being re-actualized and implemented in the present in a new way (Houziaux 2005, 51). In consequence, the work of memory has to be seen in the context of the lessons we can learn, which would become scientific tools to fight against the future. Should these tools rely on hope or on guilt? Is memory subjectively shameful or should it make us aware of our responsibilities? I would argue that the danger with subjectivity is the inability to translate our feelings into a concrete and well-prepared action. Therefore, the objective interpretation of the purpose of the memorial should not put aside the emotional aspect of our interaction with the memorial and how reactions might vary from person to person. Guilt, like hope, must

make its way to our brains. But both guilt and hope are not ours as French, Hungarian, German, or Canadian individuals; they are ours as human beings.

Consequently, to find your humanity, you must look inside yourself, so as to see the special reflection the memorial site sends back to you. It is not the memorial that should be analyzed; it is your own reactions and feelings reflected by this special place. This is, in my opinion, the only way to interact with the memorial site in accordance with its purpose and with the universal conception of it.

I lived an example of sacralization in Berlin, through the shame of my attempt to capture what Shapira esteems to be the spirit of the site, and I confess that this experience marked me, probably forever. By taking this picture on top of the Memorial, I intended to carve my presence into that place; but then the place was carved into *me* in a deeper way than I expected. I do not know if I will behave the same way at the future sites I visit.

One thing I know and would like to share is that this human instinct to want to be engraved in the traumatic sites is more current than we would think. In Ravensbrück, we saw on the walls of the crematory ovens, inside the crematorium, the names of the Soviets soldiers who had freed the camp. Why did they write their name on these specific walls? Why not somewhere else in the camp? I assume maybe it is a way to be remembered; to say I was there; to say I saw what happened here. Maybe it was a *selfie* in those times, as suggested by our tour guide, Matthias Heyl.

## Conclusion

The established memorial sites encourage reflection regarding past traumas and regarding our current relationship with society — so different elements come under consideration.

First, the *voluntary factor* persists, as it should, because it is a part of our freedom to learn, to question, and to understand, or to refuse to do so. The ability to choose freely is inherent to the respect of human dignity and human rights, and also to the legacy of the Holocaust. It is inherent to every site that perpetuates the memory of the people who were deprived of their fundamental rights and their liberties.

Second, our interaction with the memorial depends on *our interaction with society*, our individual way of perceiving its legacy and knowledge. Consequently, to create an adequate practice regarding the interaction with memorial sites, society has to be able to pass on the knowledge, but also to accept that knowledge is always continuing to expand. Social media and selfies are tools of diffusion. In order to frame this diffusion in an adequate and ethical way, society has to respect the critical and the empathetic spirit of individuals, and to help them to develop their personal morality rather than imposing an external and disconnected morality onto them.

Third, and the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp insists on this point in its expositions, we have an individual burden to wonder: *what if it was me?* Everyone is a potential author or victim of violent actions. Once you know this, you never forget it: this is the path from memory reverence to memory reference, from guilt and passivity to hope and action. The consecration of human rights, the existence of memorial sites, the involvement of civil society, and initiatives such as the Narratives of Memory Field School give us the opportunity to live our part of this legacy and to become part of the solution. These actions, such as visiting memorial sites, are a matter of justice for the past *and* for future generations. Moreover, the matter of justice relates to present generations — because we know that atrocities still exist. Despite the progress the international community may have made, we are far from the eradication of human violence. Therefore, our reflection on our liberties, our potential for reflection, and our possibilities for action, as experienced in Budapest, Ravensbrück, the Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Europe, the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp, and in other memorials, structures, sites, and monuments, shall be carried on and expanded throughout the world.

In conclusion, I wish for everyone a deep and meaningful encounter with a memorial site that engenders both guilt and hope, reverence and reference, ugliness and beauty.

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# Chapter 7

## **On Ravensbrück**



# On Ravensbrück

**Dr. Matthias Heyl**, born in 1965 in Hamburg, Germany, studied history, psychology, and education in Hamburg. He finished his doctorate with a comparative study of Holocaust Education in Germany, the Netherlands, Israel, and the US in 1996. He served as the Head of the Research and Study Center on Holocaust Education in Hamburg from 1997 to 2002, and since 2002 he has served as the Head of the International Youth Meeting Center Ravensbrück and Head of the Educational Department of Ravensbrück Memorial Museum. He is the author of several books and articles on the history of the Holocaust and Holocaust education.

Sites like the Ravensbrück Memorial Site can serve as an important source of education. It is different to learn about the Holocaust in a classroom compared to standing in front of the crematorium in Ravensbrück. It is necessary to teach about the Holocaust in the classroom, but it is an entirely different experience to be confronted with the place where the events actually happened, where history took place. A historic site does not speak for itself — especially years after the events, with all the changes that have happened since. The remnants of the past — buildings, walls, fences, and paths — have lost their former functions, and they need to be explained. In a kind of “forensic” approach, these traces can be used as sources. But we need narratives and narrators to be able to tell the stories; and we need other means of information to make the invisible visible, and thus be able to read the place and understand it as a source and resource for interpretation. What a privilege that I have had — and still have — the opportunity to speak to and to listen to Ravensbrück survivors.

But the Spanish writer Jorge Semprun reminds me of the limits of perception. He tried to “guide” a group of women around the Buchenwald camp, on April 13, 1945, only two days after it had been liberated. The women were absolutely not prepared for what they would be confronted with, just as Semprun was not prepared to tell them

(Semprun 1990, 70). The women, laughing and giggling in the beginning, were expecting something horrific and horrifying, an emotional sensation somehow, without really having in mind what this would mean to them, and to their guide, a survivor himself.

The place had changed: “The big square where they had the roll call was deserted beneath the spring sun, and I stopped, my heart beating. I had never seen it empty before; I must admit I hadn’t ever really seen it. I hadn’t really seen it before, not what you call seeing” (Semprun 1990, 70).

He found that the place was not perceivable as the place it had been until two days before. When one of the women stated that it does not look too bad, Jorge Semprun decided to show them a few things.

I take the girls into the crematorium, by the small door, the one leading directly to the cellar. They have just realized it’s not a kitchen, and they suddenly fall silent. I show them the hooks from which the men were hung, for the crematorium cellar also served as a torture chamber. I show them the blackjacks and the clubs, which are still there. I explain to them what they were used for. I show them the lifts, which were used to take the corpses to the second story, to directly in front of the ovens.

We go up to the second floor and I show them the ovens. The poor girls are speechless. They follow me, and I show them the row of electric ovens and the half-charred corpses, which are still inside. I hardly speak to them, merely saying: “Here you are, look there.” It is essential for them to see, to try to imagine. They say nothing; perhaps they are imagining.

In front of a four-meter-high mountain of corpses, he felt it was “nonsense” trying to explain it that way. His audience had already left, except for one woman.

“Why did you do that?” she asks.

“It was stupid,” I admit.

“But why?”

“You wanted to visit the place,” I reply.

| “I’d like to see more” (Semprun 1990, 74).

137

You came to Ravensbrück, and you’ve seen more. Next time you come, you will see even more.

Ravensbrück is waiting for you, one by one.

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## Chapter 8

# Unpacking My Jewish Identity



# Unpacking My Jewish Identity through the Ravensbrück Memorial Site

**Ethan Calof** is a masters student in the University of Victoria's Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies and an Ian H. Stewart Graduate Student Fellow at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society (CSRS). He participated in the CSRS's annual public lecture series with a talk, "The Bold New Men: Jewish-Russian Literature and Masculinity," charting a large shift in Jewish self-conception and self-actualization in the early 20th century. Other research interests include cultural memory as expressed by contemporary popular culture, Holocaust memory and identity, fanfiction, xenophobia, and the manifestations of cultural trauma.

The *Harry Potter* series contains a single Jewish character — a student by the name of Anthony Goldstein. If his name is unrecognizable, it is likely because he is mentioned fewer than ten times in the entire series and has a single line of dialogue in *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* — when the main character Hermione Granger criticizes the educational direction of the school, Anthony responds, "Hear, hear" (2003, ch. 16). Scant bits of information are known about Anthony; we get details rather than a personality sketch. We know that he is a member of Ravenclaw, the house that prizes learning and wisdom, and that he is a high enough achiever to have been named prefect (Rowling 2003, ch. 10). We know that he is a member of the student resistance group Dumbledore's Army (Rowling 2003, ch. 16), indicating that he is equipped with a strong sense of social justice. And, above all, we know his name and that he is Jewish. He is not Jewish through his actions, or deeds, or attitudes, or even any indication in the text. It was only after the final publication of the series that J.K. Rowling issued a statement about his Jewish ancestry on Twitter: Anthony Goldstein, Ravenclaw, Jewish wizard" (2014). His surname, Goldstein, is the one aspect of his existence in the series that marks his Judaism. His given name, Anthony,

doesn't even reinforce this vision as the name is of Latin origin and steeped in Christian history rather than biblical Hebrew or Jewish origin. He has no textual expression of his own religious identity or engagement with his faith, and, as readers, we are left to construct a profile of "Anthony Goldstein, Ravenclaw, Jewish wizard" that contains little more information than that very sentence.

I refer to Anthony Goldstein not only because of my pathological need to inject Harry Potter into every discourse, but also because I think he can be a useful conduit with which to examine the concept of identity, and my personal Jewish identity in particular. The concept of identity is nebulous in and of itself, as its popular usage is at odds with its etymological roots. The word's common usage generally refers to an individual's statement about their own persona, or someone's name and personal information, a self-focused statement of uniqueness. However, the word derives from the Latin *idem*, which means "the same." This applies more neatly to the concept of a collective identity; if you are going to have an identity as part of a larger group, by definition, it's necessary to delineate not only what exactly constitutes membership in that larger group, but also what sorts of values and desired actions accompany the aforementioned membership. Theorist Alberto Melucci provided a definition for the term "collective identity" in his book *Nomads of the Present*:

Collective identity is an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientations of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place. The process of constructing, maintaining, and altering a collective identity provides the basis for actors to shape their expectations and calculate the costs and benefits of their action. Collective identity formation is a delicate process and requires continual investments. As it comes to resemble more institutionalized forms of social action, collective identity may crystallize into organizational forms, a system of formal rules, and patterns of leadership. (1989, 34)

This is where the *idem*, the Latin root of sameness, creeps back into the dialogue. If we follow Melucci's definition, because a collective identity is a shared and continual "delicate" process, it has a degree of

unanimity within it, some sort of cohesion over these values and mores determined through dialogue by the community in response to historical stimuli and other flashpoint moments. The person who takes membership in the group absorbs and reflects these values, slightly but not completely modulating the message. This output reshapes the collective identity, helping lead these values closer to the crystallized form that Melucci sees as the hallmark of a more institutionalized identity.

At its finest, collective identity is a dialogue, replete with engagement and interaction from all members. Yet this sameness and crystallization coming from the desire for a stronger identity can often lead to a flattening of the individual in the pursuit of the collective. In her piece on the role of values in Israel advocacy, Mira Sucharov suggests that “once they are associated with a particular group, individuals may be more inclined to adopt the group’s values as a way of maintaining group cohesion and their own place within it” (2011, 364), which can have a stultifying effect, preventing the dialogue from moving forward. By defining identity as a list of traits and then having all members within the group adhere to the defined list of traits, it leads to a flattening of the perception of that collective as nothing beyond said amalgam of traits. This is how we return to Anthony Goldstein. His author-chosen traits hew very closely to the Jewish values outlined and prized from the time of the Torah to the modern day. He is studious, as proven by his membership in the house that prizes learning, and a high achiever within his studious house. According to the Harry Potter mythos, the mechanism that assigns students to their houses (a magical hat) is a potent object capable of seeing into their inner essence. If we follow this, we can argue that the hat is reading Anthony’s inner Jewishness and assigning him based on that. As it says,

“There’s nothing hidden in your head  
 The Sorting Hat can’t see,  
 So try me on and I will tell you  
 Where you ought to be.  
 [...]
 Or yet in wise old Ravenclaw,  
 If you’ve a ready mind,  
 Where those of wit and learning,  
 Will always find their kind.”  
 (1998, ch. 7)

In essence, Anthony would never have had a choice vis-à-vis his affiliation; he was read before his introduction to the story as the intellectual, making him the stereotypical modern “good Jewish boy,” aligning with classical Jewish masculine values before even acting in his story. At our holiday meals, we Jews do not tell stories of warriors and duels, but of rabbis and humility. In the Torah, whenever a man of simplicity, intelligence, and faith is matched against a man of physical strength, the man of simplicity and intelligence is always prized over the man of aggression. In Genesis, gentle Jacob outwits brawny Esau, thus earning their father’s blessing despite being the younger sibling. Isaac praises Jacob’s “cunning” and states that, “I have made him a master over you” (Genesis 27). The invoked mastery and cunning are the causes and justification of Jacob receiving the religious token of praise, rather than condemnations of his deceit. This thread runs through the Bible to more contemporary interpretations of Judaism, even secular ones. Morris Cohen, a philosophy professor at the then-majority Jewish City College of New York from the 1910s to 1930s, aimed to instill a newer “construction of Jewish masculinity” in his students by abhorring football, prioritizing debate and cosmopolitanism, and creating a “combative” classroom that forced students’ intellects to the fore (Grinberg 2014, 143-44). This was in contrast to the prevailing Protestant attitudes of the era, which held that “character” consisted of “strength, honor and athleticism, particularly on the football field” (Grinberg 2014, 131).

Anthony’s pursuit of intelligence, already a hewing to both classical and modern Jewish masculinity, is burnished by his membership in the student resistance group, Dumbledore’s Army. Their enemies, the Death Eaters, believe in the purity of wizard blood and the exclusion of those who do not fit their pure-blooded ideals, a hearkening to Nazi ideology. They similarly share tactics of fear with the Nazi regime of old; once the Death Eaters take control of the government, they issue mass propaganda, create show trials for those who weren’t born to two wizard parents, and eliminate those who speak up against them (Rowling 2007). By being an active resister, Anthony is the embodiment of the common Jewish refrain to “never again” repeat the Holocaust. According to a 2012 report from the Public Religion Research Institute, 46% of all American Jews surveyed believed that a commitment to social equality was the most important quality in Jewish identity, more than twice the second highest number (Jones and

Cox 2012, 14).<sup>1</sup> Are these traits uniquely Jewish traits? Of course they aren't. Nevertheless, because Anthony is placed under the Jewish umbrella and is the sole character in the entire Harry Potter universe to be placed under this umbrella, they become Jewish traits and draw him in with the established collective. As Sucharov said, he is adopting the group's values in order to ascertain a place among the group's members. Goldstein is the barest of a bare bones representation of collective identity: he is not afforded individuality beyond the traits that reinforce his people's prized virtues. He contributes to the dialogue only to reinforce it.

For far too long, my personal dialogue with modern Jewish identity has felt less like a rich cultural exchange and more of an Anthony Goldstein-esque shell. I haven't felt like I played a role in the construction of this identity; I felt only its crystallization. I've felt as though I entered into a hardened and fully formed organizational identity with the attached expectations, the endgame of the process outlined by Melucci, rather than playing a hand in shaping it. Like Anthony Goldstein, my family name and the circumstances of my birth have led to my induction into the Jewish community; it is the result of existence, rather than actions, and I was designated as Jewish, rather than designating myself as Jewish. This has led to a twin feeling of both disconnection and definition. Because Judaism is something ascribed to be a part of me from my birth, I've felt owned by this collective, and because of the crystallized *idem*, the sameness, I've felt unable to own it personally. As an individual, you shape yourself by placing yourself inside chosen collectives, taking part in their value-based dialectic and ascribing parts of them to yourself. These Jewish values and mores handed down from time immemorial didn't neatly fit me and weren't decided upon by me. I had no sense of why exactly we couldn't eat pork or shrimp, nor why we weren't supposed to switch the lights on and off on Saturday. I'd read and fundamentally comprehended all the explanations for the religious practices, but the explanations never held much water for me, always boiling down to "It's just what we're supposed to do." The religious antipathy extended into internalized cultural pressure; I was keenly aware of the large number of doctors and lawyers in my extended family, an echo of the traditional expectations and stereotypes to be both well-read and well-compensated. I grew up half

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<sup>1</sup> According to the survey, the second highest valued trait (20% among all Jews) was support for Israel, with religious observance third at 17%.

assuming that I'd enter law, because I had neither interest in nor aptitude for the sciences. Like Anthony Goldstein, I was an academic high achiever, yet I felt it less a statement of my Jewishness and Jewish values and more a statement of my personal perseverance and desire. Like Anthony Goldstein, I felt a strong sense of social justice, yet I feel as though those attitudes were enhanced less by growing up in the Jewish community and more by attending a multicultural and open-minded high school.

The chief gap, however, came with the place seen to be the centre of Jewish cultural identity. Growing up, that was Israel. In his paper on diasporic security, Ilan Zvi Baron relays the nine common features of diaspora according to social scientist Robin Cohen. The fourth feature is “an idealization of the real or imagined ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation” (Baron 2014, 293). In my Ottawa diaspora community, Israel was promoted as such. I was raised to see Israeli culture as synonymous with Jewish culture. I learned how to speak Hebrew and sing *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem, and I went on four trips to the country. The Jewish youth group of which I was a member — United Synagogue Youth — had a special position for an “Israel Affairs Vice President,” whose role entailed promoting the country and giving back to it. Every Shabbos service contained a prayer for Israel, and a portion of my Bar Mitzvah gifts went to support Magen David Adom, the Israeli Red Cross. Israel was not chiefly depicted as the religious home of Judaism but rather as the secular home of the Jewish people; as Sucharov writes, “Israel was founded on a peculiarly non-religious definition of what it means to be a Jew ... citing the Zionist justification for existing as a Jewish state within the modern tradition of ethno-nationalism” (2011, 366). Yet at the same time, it felt as though the Jewish community's prior home for centuries was fading away. I learned very little about the traditional shtetls that many of Europe's Jews used to call home, and the only European Jewish culture I consumed came from an old storybook on the tales of Chelm. My grandfather was the only person in my family who spoke even beginner's Yiddish, and when I tried to study it in school, the class got cancelled because I was the only one who registered. None of my immediate family was born in Israel, yet three of my great grandparents were born in Europe. I felt a greater connection to Europe, yet it was not nearly as prominent in the Israel-centric cultural dialogue that formed the basis of the Jewish collective identity. As a result of this and many other tensions, my personal contribution to the collective

identity dialogue consisted of my name. I was born Jewish, and I would remain Jewish, yet I could not consider myself as having a share in these valued diasporic positions.

That said, there is a key commonality between the Eurocentric and Israel-centric visions of Jewish identity: the centrality of the Holocaust in the cultural dialogue. In the Israel-centric vision, it is a tragedy that shows the necessity of a Jewish homeland, safe from all those who wish to harm them. Much of Zionist ideology was built on the idea of the “New Jew,” who was responsible for defending the state of Israel and the Jewish people by extension (Sucharov 2011, 370). The Holocaust burnished this seeming necessity; Daniel Boyarin writes, “[o]ver and over again, Zionist writers in the 1940s wrote in near-fascist terms of the ‘beautiful death’ of the Warsaw rebels and the ‘ugly death’ of the martyrs of the camps” (1997, 293). The thought was that only a strong Israel could prevent the Holocaust from coming again. In addition, support for and unity with Israel, the surviving bastion of the Jewish people that had been lost in Europe, transformed into one of the key lessons of the Holocaust, whose resonance grew and grew in the North American consciousness approaching modern times. Daniel Navon discusses how contemporary Holocaust memory has evolved in both Israel and the United States in the wake of Israel’s Six Day War in 1967; when facing impending doom as per the rhetoric coming from Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, Israeli and American Jewish political leaders conveyed the message that it was not merely Israel but the entire Jewish people who were on the brink of annihilation. The spectre of a “second Auschwitz” in Israel was so terrifying to the North American Jewish population that both sides felt no option but to bond together (2015, 349-54). In this way, tangibly supporting and defending Israel with all your might became a form of atonement for the lack of aid from North America during the Holocaust. Both this desire for national strength and this lingering guilt ensured that Israel would remain at the centre of Holocaust memory in North America, and that Holocaust memory would remain at the centre of Israeli-North American interactions.

In the Eurocentric vision, it is an unspeakable trauma that must be spoken about constantly, a trauma that decimated families and touched nearly everyone on the continent. Monuments abound across the continent, from the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin to the cenotaph containing the ashes of the martyrs murdered in the gas chambers in Nice, France. German-American theorist Herbert Marcuse, who did not identify as a religious Jew, used the term

“Auschwitz” to describe unspeakable crimes after the Second World War, yet stated in a letter to Martin Heidegger that “only outside of the dimension of logic is it possible to explain, to relativize, to ‘comprehend’ a crime by saying that others would have done the same thing” (Tauber 2013, 122-23). It is not only a touchstone trauma for the Jewish population but for the non-Jewish as well. Annabelle Littoz-Monnet writes: “In the 1990s, the Holocaust was transformed into a definitional myth for the European project. A ‘definitional myth’ is understood, here, as a narrative chosen by a given society in order to explain how it came about and who it is” (2013, 489).

It was with some trepidation and anxiety that I approached my stay at Ravensbrück Memorial Site, my first visit to a former concentration camp. I was unsure how I would react. It was a site of historical touchstone trauma in a culture I was no longer feeling touched by, and I wasn’t sure whether I could fully approach it while I was still wrangling with my personal animus with the Israel-centric view of Judaism. Walking into the site, I was struck by a sense of disquiet. The site of so much horror was, paradoxically, stunningly gorgeous. The houses where we stayed were quaint and painted with leaves. The lake was still and shimmering from the sun. The garden was delicately manicured and full of bright colours. It was as though it were a scene ripped from a Monet painting ... and yet, every element of it was poisoned by its history. The quaint houses once belonged to the prison guards who terrorized the camp. The lake was where the Nazis dumped the ashes of those they burnt in the crematorium. The gorgeous garden was a mass grave. I could not properly react to these scenes; should I feel guilty for finding them pleasing, and if so, would I be betraying all sides of a Jewish identity?

My initial hesitancy at Ravensbrück became a mild paralysis, as when I was confronted with the specific nuances of the memorial site; I could not nail down how I felt like feeling. Education at Ravensbrück is shown through the lens of a “situational narrative,” which requires “[rendering] the history and its actors accessible and vivid to visitors” (Meyer 2014, 96). Dr. Matthias Heyl, the educational director and our guide, ensured that we experienced the history as vividly as possible. One key instance came at the entrance to the camp area itself. Dr. Heyl introduced us to the two gates: a larger one for the prisoners and a smaller one used exclusively by the guards. Decades before, the gates had been adorned with barbed wire; but when we visited the camp, the barbed wire was long gone, replaced by a simple, unadorned stone opening (see fig. 8.1 below).



FIGURE 8.1. The Gates of Ravensbrück. (Ethan Calof personal collection, July 2017.)

The gates themselves were more than merely an entrance to the camp; they represented the entrenched power dynamics and ideological constructions during the time of the Holocaust. The larger gate, the one for the prisoners, was designed to shepherd humans in a mass. Ravensbrück featured prisoners from many different societal classes, all of whom were suffering different forms of persecution and had differing forms of power within the internal camp structure. They ranged from political dissidents to Jews to Jehovah's Witnesses to criminals; yet all of them were homogenized beyond the gate into one massive clump.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, the overseers' gate allowed them to retain their individuality and superiority, as there was only enough space for one person at a time to pass through. This deliberate design was not unique to Ravensbrück, serving as a reminder that the dehumanization of the prisoners was so thorough that it was even built into the architecture.

When it came time to pass through the gates, I was frozen in indecision. They were not merely doors. If I went through the prisoner door, I'd be walking in the footsteps of my fellow Jews, appreciating their lives and pain in a walk of mourning and remembrance. If I went

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<sup>2</sup> Of course, there were differences in how the prisoners from each group were treated within the walls of Ravensbrück, many of which are outlined in Jack G. Morrison's book *Ravensbrück: Everyday Life in a Women's Concentration Camp*. Of note: Jewish prisoners were rarely if ever given desirable work assignments, and their barracks were the first to get overcrowded. I don't mean to suggest that the prisoners had homogenous identities and treatments; rather that they all existed on the underside of the prisoner-overseer binary.

through the guards' door, I'd be laying claim to the space, showing that I could rise above the labels placed upon my people by the Nazi government. Yet, in no possible situation would I, a Jewish man, have been considered for the guards' door; I could only have been a prisoner. Would I be disrespectful to my forbearers and holding myself above them? And by taking the prisoners' door, would I be continuing to live in fear and providing power to my forbearers' oppressors? I decided to go through the prisoners' door, but I remember that I only decided which door to take based on necessity, and only after a minute of contemplation. Of course, I was making a choice that could never have been made by the Jewish prisoners of Ravensbrück, yet the historical weight of power dynamics, symbolism, and unity were nevertheless guides for my processing. I had been situated in the memory rather than in the present.

Dr. Heyl's approach of turning Ravensbrück into a more interactive and situational educational site imbued the former concentration camp with a unique position in my own personal dialogue. There was no staidness in the site, which allowed me an unfiltered window into the potency of its history. Spaces, like identities, derive their meaning from a cooperative dialogue; meaning and weight are ascribed to the spaces by how actors engage with them through dialogue. I felt the full weight of the past trauma. It became clear that the language I needed to engage with Ravensbrück was a specifically Jewish one. I was drawing from my collective identity, or designated structure, to ascribe meaning to the site, and by extension contribute my share. I framed my door choice specifically as a Jewish person, not just an everyday person. When I saw memorials, artwork, gravesites, and placards that honoured the dead, I defaulted to the Jewish rituals of mourning. I placed a stone on every surface I could (a tradition signifying that someone has visited a grave), reasoning that the ashes and bones and death were not restricted to tombs. At the memorial for the women who were penned in a tent during the winter of 1944-45, one of my fellow students and I decided to say the Mourner's Kaddish, the traditional prayer to commemorate those who have passed. While I have never been a particular believer in the religious aspects of Judaism, it felt like the language I needed to communicate my sense of loss and absence. Ravensbrück may not have been a site created exclusively for the detainment of Jewish victims, yet it was still a site of Jewish death. They suffered for their faith, their race, their existence, and it was the least I could do to reach out in solidarity and respect. Like Anthony Goldstein and I, they had been designated

as Jewish by no choice of their own; yet unlike us, they suffered death and trauma due to their membership in this ascribed essence.

The most powerful event for me came on Friday night during our stay at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site. Two of my professors and the aforementioned student decided to do the traditional Sabbath services of candle lighting — a prayer over the wine and a prayer over the bread — and they invited me to join them. I sat down, again with trepidation. I had abstained from Sabbath services at home for a long while, reasoning that if I didn't believe in the prayer, it would feel exploitative and uncomfortable to participate in it. While at Ravensbrück, however, it had a radically different connotation. This was, again, a place where Jews had suffered merely due to the circumstances of their birth. To be unapologetically Jewish, to engage in our historical cultural dialogue and own an aspect of a persecuted people in a place of their persecution, felt like the most powerful form of rebellion to me, far more so than swimming in the lake or sleeping in the guards' houses. It felt as though I were not only using my individual power but the power of a far larger and more resilient whole to reclaim the space from the death and the horror. At that point, the Jewish collective identity ceased to be a crystallized external structure for me and became a facet I could engage with on a personal, interactive level.

It would be a mistake to say that my journey to Ravensbrück led to a religious awakening. I'm not suddenly a theist, nor am I going to register for the next Birthright trip. I still take issue with and feel estrangement from the diasporic community's attachment to an idealized version of Israel, and I have no plans on flattening my sense of self in order to fit into a larger whole. That said, my trip to Ravensbrück served as a reminder that my Jewishness is an inextricable part of me that must be acknowledged and dealt with. As with Anthony Goldstein, it was given to me, and as with Anthony Goldstein, it will stay. It does not have to be only a shell and an identifying marker; yet by the same token, I don't need to incorporate the whole *idem* to have an identity. In moving forward with Melucci's definition of a collective identity, I felt, for the first time, that I had a share in the interactive definition of what it meant to be Jewish. I could be unapologetically Jewish without feeling the need to resort to every aspect of the societal expectations accompanying Jewishness. While Anthony Goldstein never had a chance to define his own Jewishness by any aspects other than his traits, I had that opportunity, proving to myself that the only aspect necessary for a share in the collective was a willingness to engage.

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## Chapter 9

# **From the Breeding Ground of Social Tensions to Genocide**



# From the Breeding Ground of Social Tensions to Genocide: A Resistible Spiral

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Les Milles Camp Memorial Site. A digital interactive tool is available on <http://www.campdesmilles.org/mur-interactif/>.

The world is a dangerous place to live;  
not because of the people who are evil,  
but because of the people who don't do anything about it.  
Albert Einstein (1957, 11)

## Introduction

Les Milles Camp is the only French internment and deportation camp still intact. Through a rich and compelling collection of displays, audiovisual pieces, and illustrations, the 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> museography presents the complex history of Les Milles Camp, and the 10,000 men, women, and children who were interned there between 1939 and 1942, among them 2,000 Jews who were deported to Auschwitz. The Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp intends to be a relevant link between the past and the present. Indeed, today and tomorrow depend widely on people's ability to understand, on the one hand, how the Holocaust happened and how similar human mechanisms may lead again to the worst, and, on the other hand, how people are able to resist such dangerous spirals. The Memorial site houses a large history museum with a strong focus on citizen education in an original and innovative "reflective section" based on the relevant results of a 15-year multidisciplinary research program.

These results are based on a specific scientific approach, a "convergence approach," which aims to identify the common mechanisms revealed through the study of several genocides (individual, collective, and institutional mechanisms). From this scientific hypothesis — thus validated by this method — some of the fundamental human mechanisms uncovered in the Shoah are then universal. As a corollary, unearthing mechanisms common to different histories and continents can be considered as "recurrent and universal" in human societies and, therefore, potentially at work also in the current time. The museum's action then aims to promote vigilance and responsibility in the face of the recurrent spirals of racism, antisemitism, and/or extremism of any kind.

Opened in 2012, the site now welcomes more than 100,000 visitors and almost 60,000 students per year. Training sessions are also organized for police officers, firefighters, civil servants, non-profit govern-

mental organization (NGO) members, company managers, social workers, students, and others. The history of Les Milles Camp seemed to lend itself to such an effort and to citizen-focused pedagogy, the fundamental objective of which is to keep alive the critical values of liberty, equality, fraternity, justice, dignity, and secularity — words that can be seen at the entrance to the site. Les Milles Camp was not an extermination camp waiting for the victims at the end of their deportation; rather, it was the beginning of their agony.

Such a place makes us realize that the genocidal processes started at ordinary locations, with ordinary individuals, situated just next to their daily routines at the end of Main Street. Moreover, the Les Milles Camp was a site of not only successive and growing persecutions targeting foreigners, opponents, and Jews, but also of various and efficient rescue and resistance acts, including the use of art and creativity. According to the founders of the site, history has demonstrated the exceptional explosive and contaminating potential of racism and antisemitism. These elements threaten the fundamental Republican values of public order and peace. As such, they amply justify not only a duty of memory but also an exceptional vigilance and firmness, embodied in a renewed effort to analyze the situation and to educate today's and tomorrow's generations. This is amply demonstrated by the site's team of young people who share and convey the values and the missions of the Memorial Site.

## **A Research Project Widened to Other Genocides**

Major points of analysis were drawn from the Holocaust historical process (See Grynberg 1995; Bensoussan 1997) and then confirmed by the scientific analysis of processes that led to other serious genocidal crimes — against Armenians (see Trenon 1977; Marchand and Perrier 2013; Kévorkian 2006; Bozarslan, Duclert, and Kevorkian 2015; Dadrian 1996), Sinti and Roma (See Lewy 2003; Bordigoni 2013), and Tutsis in Rwanda (See Guichaoua 2013; Chrétien and Kabanda 2013; Bouhhal and Kalisa 2009; Des Forges 1999). The choice was made primarily to “validate,” as part of good research practice, some of the results obtained from the study of the Shoah. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that one of the greatest difficulties in human and societal sciences is the

impossibility, unlike in the so-called hard sciences, to “carry out experiments” and then reproduce them in order to ascertain the interpretation of reality. No researcher is likely to start a war in order to validate some hypotheses. It is, therefore, essential to study actual historical situations to validate hypotheses.

In the case under discussion, the analyses of genocidal processes carried out by the Shoah needed to be compared with the observation of other genocidal situations, even if the usual methodological caution must be applied due to the specificity of each situation. Such a “convergence approach” shows that the lessons from the Shoah are universal and that they provide keys for understanding some recurrent themes of humankind’s functioning. Therefore, we can say that the present can be precisely enlightened by historic experience and multi-disciplinary analysis.<sup>1</sup> This “convergence approach” has been notably developed in the UNESCO Chair “Education for Citizenship, Human Sciences and Convergence of Memories” (shared with Aix Marseille University). The memory of the Holocaust may then be “a reference for the present” and not only “a reverence to the past.” This specific approach points out some widespread individual factors (rejection of others, the group effect, passivity, blind submission to authority, conformism, egocentrism, jealousy, fear, etc.). It also defines the steps of the societal processes that, combined with individual factors, and on the basis of a common societal breeding ground, can possibly lead to such crimes.

## A Process that can be Resisted

The breeding ground represents the general condition of any society that, to various degrees, experiences permanent tensions between different situations, interests, and opinions that are normally managed by the democratic system. These include racism, antisemitism, xenophobia, fears, etc. When democracy weakens or when such tensions

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<sup>1</sup> The analyses are based on research led by the research team of the Camp des Milles Foundation-Memory and Education, in sociology, political sciences, history, philosophy, law, psychology, etc., and conducted in order to build the contents of the Museum. See also Arendt 1966; Semelin 2005; Welzer 2007; De Swaan 2016; Ternon 2016; Ricoeur 2003; Sironi 2017. See also Office of the Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide 2014.

become exacerbated, typically due to economic, social, political, or moral crises, a societal spiral can be triggered — in a three-step movement.

In the *first* step, groups get organized to spread racist ideas and violence. These groups are then allowed to thrive, thanks to the apathy of the rest of the population, and they proceed to exploit crises, loss of references, individual or collective failures, and the need for scapegoats generated by difficult times.

In the *second* step, the main momentum is institutional. Measures are taken to restrict liberties, and extremists may even seize power through force, provocation, or election. A new “legal” system is developed that enables the government to further accelerate the process. Provocations, disorder, and even resistance are used as reasons to harden the measures. Counter-powers, the Justice system, the media, and NGOs are first denounced, and then they are clamped down on or even eliminated. At that point, the regime may turn completely authoritarian, or even totalitarian. Racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia are easy and effective tools that powers facing difficulties can use to gain leverage. Violence is used as a State instrument. Even if elected, the Power becomes illegitimate with respect to human rights, since democracy cannot be merely reduced to an election process.

The *third* step comprises wider persecutions, or even mass crimes, that target not only the initial scapegoat group, but also opponents, “deviant individuals,” democrats, freemasons, homosexuals, the disabled, as well as numerous artists, journalists, and intellectuals whose freedom of thought and expression is a problem for the government. By then, every member of the society is under threat (including the Power’s own supporters), and there are many active or passive accomplices.

### **Breeding Ground: Prejudices and Social Tensions**

*Stereotypes • Prejudices • Fear or rejection of others • Racism •  
Antisemitism • Jealousy • Discrimination • Divergent interests*

#### ***Stereotypes and prejudices: From a simplification of the world to the exclusion of others***

“The French are dirty ... the Swiss are slow ... and women can’t drive.” The human mind willingly seeks out stereotypes: as fixed connections between ideas that have often crossed the centuries, stereotypes offer a simplified first approach to the world and to others. Such

well-founded or ill-founded stereotypes draw their often dangerous strength from their ability to satisfy the basic natural movement of the mind. Reality is represented in a way that makes it easy to cope with; it is divided, categorized, and classified. The list of such categories is long, and their fields of application are many: origin, gender, religion, physical appearance, place of residence, etc. Not all of them stem from bad intentions, even if they sometimes tend to give a depreciative representation of human groups, leading to prejudices and even discrimination. Prejudices are generally based on stereotypes.

Stereotypes are a form of *a priori* judgments that reflect a certain ignorance about, mistrust of, or even hostility towards a given group of people. Everything that can be used to fuel a given prejudice comes to be regarded as its confirmation, and everything that may challenge it remains ignored. This willed blindness constitutes a major obstacle in the struggle against prejudices, preconceived ideas, and all discourse of exclusion (See Légel and Delouée 2008).

As demonstrated by instances of racism and antisemitism throughout history, targets of prejudice may fall victim to exclusionary processes or to violence directed at the individual or the collective. But this type of behaviour can equally affect homosexuals, women, foreigners, and anyone who falls victim to prejudices. Prejudice often translates to a fear of the unknown fed by ignorance, or drawn from various kinds of fantasies or jealousy.

### ***Racism and antisemitism: An explosive and contagious potential***

Racism is the belief in the existence of human “races” and of some sort of inequality between them (See Ben Jelloun 1998). Such belief contradicts both the recent developments in genetics and the principle of the unity of mankind as professed by the major schools of thought, religious or otherwise. Racism is the result of confusing the concept of difference with the concept of inequality; that is to say, of confusing the legitimate affirmation of observable differences between human beings with the unacceptable belief in a hierarchy of races and of how to treat them. Based on the idea that certain races are superior to others, racism entails judging individuals according to their real or supposed belonging to a certain “race.” Even to this day, social or cultural differences are being demagogically exploited in a racist context, which leads to the transposition of complex social issues into dangerous stigmatizations. Among the many causes of human conflicts, history has shown that in

all societies, racism and antisemitism represent an explosive potential, warranting permanent watchfulness and reactivity. Thus, racism has been at the root of many mass atrocity crimes.

Antisemitism (Isaac 1956; Poliakov 1994; Rosenbaum 2006) can be considered as a specific racism regarding Jewish people. But its numerous specificities often lead to mentioning it separately. It is based on deep-rooted prejudices and vested manipulations. Throughout history, Jews have been an easy scapegoat for the world's evils. Depending on the times and circumstances, Jews have been called revolutionaries or capitalists, cowards or warmongers, lousy or extremely wealthy. Antisemitism has been fueled by a number of factors, some of which stem from the fact that the Jews have always remained a minority and, as such, an easy target for the majority. The concentration of Jews in a number of different professions, which resulted from the discriminations imposed upon them during the Middle Ages, has given rise to the idea of the existence of deliberate and coordinated Jewish action within certain key sectors of society, such as finance, politics, the media, and intellectual professions.

In the wake of World War II, the creation of the State of Israel opened a new era in antisemitism, even as that state became a refuge for a majority of Jewish survivors of the Shoah and of the most violent antisemitic movement in history. The territorial conflicts between Israel and its neighbours resulted in the multiplication of different discourses against the Jewish State. Opinions are divided on the relationship between anti-Zionism and antisemitism. Anti-Zionism (the hostility to the Jewish State) is supposed to be different from antisemitism (hostility to the Jews). In fact, Anti-Zionism is often used in order to bring new or age-old antisemitic accusations to the fore including that of some "global Jewish conspiracy." Additionally, Anti-Zionism is also sometimes given as a kind of "excuse" to antisemitic behaviour. We can see this illustration of antisemitism when anti-Israel gatherings become punctuated with "Death to the Jews!" slogans or when attacks on synagogues and Jewish children are explicitly based on hate against Israel. This long history of antisemitism demonstrates the strong adaptability of such a compulsive yet deep-rooted phenomenon whose many recurring signs serve as reminders of its dormant dangers.

## Step One: The Devil Is in the Everyday

*Active minority/Passive majority • Crises and destabilizations •  
Scapegoats • Insults and threats • Rumours and accusations  
of conspiracies*

The first step of this process leading to the worst situation commences within a context of societal destabilization. Social, economic, or moral crises impact society and lead to fear of the future, loss of references, identity-based tensions, and aggressive demagoguery. Organized groups spread racist ideas and violence. It is the passivity of the majority of the population that allows an acting extremist minority to exacerbate tensions within the breeding ground. This minority can utilize crises, social frustrations, and jealousy to single out the scapegoats that are often produced in such situations. During a crisis, it is easy to pinpoint a culprit, and it is always the “other,” the minority, the foreigner — different or perceived as such — who is targeted.

### *Language manipulation and discourse inversion*

One of the ways in which acting minorities spread their ideas is through the manipulation of language. Jews, Roma and Sinti, the Tutsis, and the Armenians — all have fallen victim to rumours or have even been accused of conspiracy. For example, in 1915, in one of his speeches, Talaat Pacha, Minister of the Interior of the Ottoman Empire, officially accused the Armenians to justify the massacres. Another example is the Protocol of the Elders of Zion (see Taguieff 1992). The Tsarist police forged this document to justify the ensuing pogroms. It supposedly proved the existence of a plot by a Jewish council to take control of the world. Hitler often referred to this document as propaganda material, and it continues to circulate in certain countries. In 1909 in New York, as has often been the case since the 19th century, the press reported so-called massacres of children kidnapped by the Roma. Later, in Rwanda, a false document attributed to the Tutsis was used to excite Hutus against them.

### *The aggressive lies become the truth and the victim is portrayed as the offender*

The demagogic discourse pleases the part of society looking for certainties. But the majority is unaware of the danger and does not feel

concerned by it. And so that which was unthinkable yesterday becomes normal today. In Germany, in the 1930s, antisemitic slogans multiplied, such as: “No Jews allowed in my restaurant” or “Germans, stand up against Jewish propaganda. Only buy from German shops.” Therefore, passivity turns the majority into accomplices, and cracks appear within the community of people.

***Being able to resist as a citizen and as a person***

Hence the question of an everyday resistance comes up, of one person to another, as well as that of the citizen within the political domain: to acknowledge and recognize within oneself the mechanism of blindness, of fear, of cowardice, and of violence. We are all involved, unwillingly, often unknowingly and unseeingly.

**Step Two: From Democracy to Authoritarian Regime**

*Loss of references • Attacked and weakened institutions • Elites are rejected • Institutions are confiscated • Legal instruments are put to the service of crime • Counter-powers are weakened or eliminated • Domesticated security forces • Manipulation of media • Promotion of new values • Freedom of expression muzzled*

The second step is accomplished when the acting minority gains power either by force or by elections. It relies first on the general loss of society’s bearings and values, and then it attacks and weakens the institutions. Crises spiral out of control, trouble and aggressions intensify, reactions become uncontrollable, violence becomes an ordinary part of life.

***State Propaganda promoting new “values”***

Propaganda is biased information designed to shape public opinion and behaviour. Among its goals: to spread truths and half-truths and even to lie; to spread selective information; to simplify complex issues and ideas; to promote new “values.” For instance, in 1937, Hitler promoted the idea that “the German man should be slim and sprightly, fast as a rabbit, solid as leather, and hard as iron.” He continued by saying that they were “determined to create a new race.”

*Fear takes hold*

Preferring order to freedom, many are ready to follow a charismatic leader or a fanatical doctrine. The comfort of the crowd prevails over individual freedom. Then, at the institutional level, a new legal framework serving the ideology may be implemented, and even the minority may seize power legally or illegally. The former restricts liberties and leads public authority to open or even accelerate the path leading downwards and downwards. The regime becomes authoritarian or even totalitarian. Racism is declared legal; violence becomes State violence; and it is only a matter of months before democracy is suppressed. During the last democratic elections of Germany in November 1932, Hitler and his extreme-right party won no more than 34 per cent of the vote. In January 1933, the German Parliament committed a form of collective suicide when voting full power of the State to Hitler for four years. Due to allegiance or to fear of reprisals, 444 Members of Parliament cast favourable ballots. Only 94 socialists had the courage to vote against the measure. There were no longer any communists in the Parliament since most of them had been sent to concentration camps. On February 27, 1933, the German Parliament building, the Reichstag, burned down; this event was later utilized to put an end to democracy and to intern tens of thousands of opponents. Seven years later, on October 24, 1940, Hitler shook the hand of French Marshal Pétain, who himself had just abolished democracy in France after having been granted full power by the French Parliament on July 10, 1940.

*Law is put to the service of intolerance and persecution*

Freedom of expression is muzzled. The media and radio especially are used as key vectors to spread racist ideas. This was the case in Nazi Germany, in Vichy France, and in Rwanda of 1994.<sup>1</sup> The legal framework

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1 For example: "I took three puffs, it's strong, really strong, but it seems to give you the courage, really, so take care to watch the gutter so that tomorrow no cockroaches (name given to Tutsis) pass, that you would be enraged, that we will be able to fight for our city, for our country, dear brothers" (Radio Mill Collines 1944). In 1944, the newspaper, *Toute la vie* (All of Life), published an article that praised the quality of housing in the internment camp of Montreuil-Bellay and insisted on the comfort that they allegedly enjoyed. In the news, during the exhibition "The Jews and France" (Paris, 1941), a journalist declared: "Statistics, graphics, deranged charts followed one after another. They proved how much France, victim of its generosity and its traditions of hospitality, had become Jewified, especially since 1936. It finally went on to demonstrate that all positions of power in France were in the hands of Jews. The result is well known: defeat." For more information on the use of the media in Rwanda as a genocidal tool, see Chrétien 1995.

also legalizes discrimination. The mention of “Jew” or “Tutsi” on identity cards, and the anthropological documents for the Roma and Sinti, are two examples of this kind of legalized discrimination.

***In order to resist, democracy must defend itself***

In crucial times, women and men were able to show insight and courage, each in their own way. Following the signing of the Armistice, General de Gaulle declared on June 24, 1940, on BBC: “There has to be a sun, there has to be hope, because there has to be a part that sparkles and burns with the flame of the French Resistance.” In the very midst of the Armenian genocide, four brave German school teachers installed in Aleppo signed a letter that was sent to their superiors: “It is our duty to alert the Office of Foreign Affairs to the fact that our work as teachers will be failing its moral principles and lose all authority if the German government is incapable of lessening the brutality that is taking place here. Unfolding before our very eyes, daily, are scenes of such a horror that our work as teachers becomes a challenge to humanity. How can we teach our Armenian pupils when beside our school, their kinsmen are dying of starvation.” Inversely, Colonel Luc Marchal, former commander of the MINUAR in Kigali (UN Blue Helmets), blamed the international community for its passivity during the Tutsis genocide in Rwanda: “Between mid-January and mid-March, whether for the Rwandese population or the extremists, the MINUAR did nothing. This behavior encouraged the development of a structure that, in early January, was probably still embryonic and could have been neutralized, stopped, had action been taken at that stage.”

**Step Three: The Extension of Persecutions and Threats  
Includes Everyone**

*Disappearances of opponents • Arbitrary detention • Denial of foreign observers • Mass surveillance and informers • Mass crime • All threatened • Exclusion and discrimination become the law • Dehumanization • Powerful paramilitary groups*

The third and final step includes the systematic exclusion of targeted individuals or groups, but also the extension of the range of targeted groups and of a banalization of crime. A reign of terror is installed, backed up by the omnipotence of the paramilitary groups, and accom-

panied by a forced discrimination and a will to dehumanize people. Even though we find countless accomplices in a society, in the end it is everybody who ends up threatened by arbitrary authority and denouncement. Actions then target not only the initial scapegoats but everyone, and mass crime replaces targeted violence.

### ***Dehumanization and systematic attacks on human dignity***

The victims are seen either as animals to be tattooed and herded into cattle cars, like at the Les Milles camp, or simply to be shot down. Dehumanizing adversaries allows the killer to no longer see them as fellow human beings.<sup>2</sup>

### ***The mighty power of the paramilitary groups***

The paramilitary groups become all-powerful and even sometimes spiral out of control. Leslie Davies, American Consul during the Armenia genocide in 1915, explained the role of the military police: “This chore was not only accomplished by the Kurds, but most often by the military police who circled the convoys of deportees, or by armed companies called ‘the Tchetas.’ These were prisoners who had been freed for the sole purpose of killing Armenians” (Chouraqui 2015). In Rwanda, Théodore Sindikubwabo, the Hutu Rwanda President, referred to the Interrahamwe paramilitary groups on national Rwandese radio as “traitors who want to exterminate us; you know them better than I. Point them out so we can take care of them” (Chouraqui 2015).

### ***Overcoming fear so as to be able to act***

Resistance takes many forms — among others, moral, practical, humanitarian, intellectual, artistic, armed — and their convergence induces efficiency. Joséphine Dusabimana, a Rwandese Hutu, gave this testimony: “When I would hide someone, I would say to myself: “If he dies, I too will die,” and as long as the person was there, I was terrified. The death that could take him could also take me. It’s for that reason that most people refused to shelter Tutsis” (Chouraqui 2015). Félicia Combaud tells of the actions the Roma conducted in the camp where she was held: “There were Roma there. These Roma did wonderful things for us Jews. Because there were a number of escape attempts;

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<sup>2</sup> As such, the “Mille Collines” Radio (1994) broadcasted that Tutsis were cockroaches: “If we exterminate the cockroaches one for all, no one in the world will be able to judge us.”

and to escape wasn't easy because we were guarded. So the Roma had thought of this method: they'd come together, simulate a fight, and during this time some Jews would be able to escape" (Chourauqui 2015).

***Everyone can react, everyone can resist, everyone in their own way.  
How does an ordinary person turn into a torturer or an accomplice?***

Human behaviours can lend themselves to dangerous societal processes, sometimes potentially genocidal ones; these include blind submission to authority,<sup>3</sup> the habituation to violence,<sup>4</sup> passivity and non-assistance to endangered people,<sup>5</sup> group-pressure, and a tendency to conform.<sup>6</sup> Here the reference is not to deviant or mentally ill individuals but to ordinary men and women, who may nonetheless become torturers or accomplices in atrocities. Some knowledge of scientific experiments dealing with such human mechanisms may reinforce our personal ability to avoid the traps of deresponsibilization. And even if the results show that a large proportion of people succumb to such dangerous mechanisms, they also show that a significant number of people "resist" and do not yield to mental conditionings.

***A thousand ways to not remain passive***

In opposition to the human processes that can lead to mass crimes or to passivity, some other mechanisms may enhance the capacity to resist: autonomy in thinking, openness to and respect for others, moral values and consciousness, civic standards and values, critical capacity, interest

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3 To go further, see the American psychologist Stanley Milgram's work, and particularly the still-famous experiments realized during the 1960s (Milgram 1974). See also the study of Christopher Browning (1992) related to the real behaviour of the members of a reserve battalion of German police sent to assassinate Jewish inhabitants of villages occupied by the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front who, under orders, also rapidly became criminals.

4 To test the effects of prison life on the psychology of prisoners and guards, the American Social Psychologist Philip Zimbardo carried out experiments at Stanford University. See Zimbardo 2007.

5 In New York in 1964, thirty-seven people watched the murder of a woman in the open street from their windows without intervening. Subsequent to this event, psychologists John Darley and Bibb Latané decided in 1968 to study assistance behaviour in critical situations. See Latane and Darley 1970. Editors' comment: Even though the reported circumstances surrounding this case may have been fabricated to a certain extent by the newspaper that reported it, the case did enter mainstream psychology at that time.

6 In 1951, the American psychologist Solomon Asch asked a group of volunteers to take part in an experiment purportedly on visual perception. The group of eight included, in fact, seven accomplices of the experimenter and one naïve subject who knew nothing of the real purpose of the experiment. See Asch 1951.

in education, memory and culture, and the ability to see the possible difference between legality and legitimacy. Such “righteous acts” are first of all acts of resistance or of reaction against discrimination, injustice, or persecution. They can take a number of forms: individual or collective, spontaneous or organized, public or clandestine. From artistic creation (see Galerie Espace d’art 1999) to armed struggle, from the printing or distribution of pamphlets to performing acts of sabotage, resistance makes use of a multitude of approaches whose outcomes are often uncertain. During all genocides, many individuals, men and women of all origins, and of all ages and professions, have acted, saved, resisted, each in their own way, often modest, always efficient — among them, the “Righteous among the Nations,” recognized by Yad Vashem Institute in Jerusalem, and so many non-recognized rescuers. All of them are role models for today and tomorrow.

### ***“Righteous acts” to oppose all genocides***

The history of genocides contains countless “righteous acts” in the very midst of barbarity (see Semelin, Andriev, and Glensburger 2008). What do we call a “righteous act”? It is any action carried out to help another person or fight an unacceptable situation. Such disinterested individual or collective action can appear as trivial or even passive — it can be violent or heroic — it may be a simple gesture of temporary support or it can be some decisive rescue action or that of armed resistance. Righteous acts have saved tens of thousands of lives, have been a major obstacle to criminal policies, and in some cases have even managed to reverse the situation through the use of force.

Some “righteous acts” are described below, from the hundreds proposed on the *Mur des actes justes* or “Wall of Righteous Acts,” which ends the visit to Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp.<sup>7</sup> But these short stories are only a minute part of countless and varied acts carried out by women and men from all walks of life, in the widest range of tragic

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7 Extracts from the “Wall of Righteous Acts”: The Véséli Muslim family sheltered a Jewish family throughout the war; Franciscan sisters asked to share the lives of the Roma in the Montreuil-Bellay camp; Max Ernst organized the exhibition “Free German art” in Paris (in 1939, he was detained in Les Milles Camp); the Minister Henri Manen and the guard Auguste Boyer sheltered several Jewish inmates, after having helped them to escape from Les Milles Camp; the head of a Turkish village saved an Armenian child and raised him as his own son; Frodouald, a Hutu bricklayer, hid Tutsis in his home for over a month and saved their lives; the Bielski brothers, renowned Polish Jewish resistance leaders, saved 1,200 Jews by hiding them in the forest and giving them military protection.

circumstances. They tell of the women and men — and sometimes even adolescents; of soldiers or simple civilians; of many members of the clergy; of shop owners or civil-servants; of heads of villages or monarchs; who, in some of the most amazing ways, figured out how to spread information, to speak out, to resist, and to save others. In order to stand up against an unjust or illegitimate legal system, they protected, sheltered, supported, cared for, disobeyed, accompanied, saved, or helped victims of genocide to escape. We can consider that such acts express the humanistic dimension inherent in every man and woman, and they are examples of the active and efficacious implementation of vigilance and responsibility.

***Finding support in education, moral values, courage and the memory of humankind's experiences***

Before taking the struggle to the Courts, it is by educating minds that one may counteract the most harmful ideologies, with their groundless fears, their identity-based mistrust, their fanatic and extremist tendencies, and their demagogical rhetoric. Such education begins with the development of critical thought to oppose manipulative rhetoric, and, above all, with the affirmation of the existence of universal values that have the potential to unify all humans, regardless of their differences. Education in humanist values also includes the teaching of history and of the past tragedies that form the collective experiences of humankind. As long as these remain poorly understood, some can be tempted to minimize their negative impacts and to see a solution to their problems in the extremist discourse that has proven disastrous in the past.

It is by learning from past mistakes that we can avoid making these mistakes again, and also ignore the calls to violence inspired by ignorance and fear.

***The responsibility of choosing to let things take their course or to react***

*We are equally responsible for what we do and what we do not do.* Etymologically speaking, being responsible means being able to answer for our actions. Responsibility applies to our choice to follow a certain course of action or not. It assumes that a person's action always bears consequences, which may be positive or negative. This suggests that all human situations put our responsibility into play, in more or less decisive ways. Even when knowing how to choose is difficult, or when choosing

involves a certain amount of risk, our power to choose still remains, and our actions as well as our inactions always engage our responsibility. **Therefore, taking action is more than an option; it is a duty.**

### *To alert without creating cause for alarm*

Often, we are told that we should stop referencing the past “because this isn’t the 1930s anymore.” Yet, this time dimension hides the many fundamental points to the benefit of presenting differences that do exist, for better and for worse. It is a common mistake to confuse *the call for alarm* with *the need to alert*. *The latter* gives people the means to assess the situation and make informed choices.

And yet, the survivors do alert us, before passing away, one after the other. And we know that the victims wanted us to remember so that it would never happen again. The Camp des Milles Foundation — Memory and Education project benefited from the support of major figures in the memory of genocides: Simone Veil, Elie Wiesel, Serge Klarsfeld, Robert Badinter, Denise Toros-Marter, Dafroza Mukarumongi-Gauthier, Ovsanna Kaloustian, Louis Monguilan, Sidney Chouraqui, and many others. They shared with us their concern, and sometimes their anger, and always their resolve in the face of the return of ancient nationalistic and sectarian demons that could easily turn a healthy patriotism and legitimate fears into hatred and a source of conflict. And this is especially possible in those nations whose political leaders play a dangerous game with racist passions and thus lay grounds for future violence.

### *Memory as a reference for today*

A memorial site can function as a long-term reference since it anchors collective representations. Both by its physical presence, and by the quality of its intellectual content, it can provide essential keys to understanding the genocidal process. Such tools are particularly important in today’s context of ideological and practical destabilization, caused, notably, by mighty technological power and rampant globalization — two phenomena on the verge of escaping human control. In this respect, the Internet is becoming the illustration of untamed might, of one of the numerous modern-day golems that humans have unleashed and now struggle to harness.

Faced with this unstable and menacing situation, but based on the principle of caution and respect for the past, we must take care not to confuse the present situation with the fundamental elements that led

to the Holocaust. Nonetheless, we must heed what our seniors tell us, and in the light of the converging analyses made possible by our interpretative framework, it would be a serious mistake to forget these terrible experiences. Their memory opens the way to a universal lesson and represents our strongest reference in modern history to react rapidly to hazardous mechanisms.

Today we know, and we know we can.

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Section III

# Contemplating Memory through the Arts





## Chapter 10

# **The Impact of Listening to Luigi Nono's // Canto Sospeso**



# The Impact of Listening to Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*

**Emily MacCallum** is a versatile Canadian violinist, comfortable in both the classical canon and a variety of genres (including folk, Celtic, Scandinavian, and Québécois). She was a member of the North Shore Celtic Ensemble for seven years, and recorded three albums with the group. She has travelled on tour across Canada and Scotland and participated in both solo and chamber competitions. MacCallum studied music at the University of Victoria where she started working with composers and quickly became an avid interpreter and performer of new music. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Musicology at the University of Toronto.

## Introduction

Luigi Nono composed *Il Canto Sospeso* in 1955/56 during the Cold War as a creative tool to respond to the 1950s' social and political environment of Italy and Germany. Both countries were emerging from the horrors of WWII and from fascist regimes. This was an environment of mistrust and rapid changes of allegiance and political power, as well as a musical world that was emerging from being controlled and regulated by militant forces (Thacker 2007, 1-30).<sup>1</sup> Young Venetian Luigi Nono became a member of the Communist party, along with many other Italian artists, and was living in Venice at the time. "Nono's experiences of the war, of

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<sup>1</sup> Music in Germany was emerging from the process of denazification, which was approached in different ways by the Allied forces controlling regions of Germany. These differences were especially noticeable between East and West Germany. Musical control offices were established, and performances had to be approved by military authorities. A high priority was creating programs for anti-fascist music and ensuring that the musicians did not support of the Third Reich in the past (although this was not strictly enforced, as many musicians who were supporters of the Nazis continued to work after the war).

the Nazi occupation, and the Resistance movement were fundamental to the development of his world perspective and political ideology, while musically his meeting with [Bruno] Maderna was critical” (Borio 2017). Both Maderna and Nono later studied with Hermann Scherchen, who recommended that Nono attend the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music in 1950 (Iddon 2013, 149-51).<sup>2</sup> Nono’s time in Darmstadt was highly important for him as a composer, and in the successive years he became one of the key members of the so-called “Darmstadt School” and a leading avant-garde composer.

Integrating politics and music became very important to Nono in the early 1950s; yet this pairing was not always met with approval. For instance, in West Germany “the idea of music as an abstract art form, resistant to and free from political manipulation, was strongly upheld” (Thacker 2007, 3). Nevertheless, Nono continued to pursue integrating politics and music to give voice back to the victims.

The social environment of uncertainty and mistrust in Italy and throughout Europe was still present<sup>3</sup> as Nono used his music as a tool to contextualize and honour the memories of the recent past, and, in particular, the crimes of fascism. But, while contextualizing the political in new music, Nono was also committed to forging an innovative, new compositional aesthetic, which led to new employment of space and silence, new sounds, and “new methods of organizing experience and memory” (Koestenbaum 2005, 591). Nono used his music as a way to personally and uniquely define history (Guerrero 2010, 580). This is also evident in his music of the 1950s, which integrated historical documents of the fascist period (Guerrero 2010, 578). The text used in his compositions *Il Canto Sospeso* and *Intolleranza* (1961) “revealed the extent of the political conflict in which the composer felt himself involved” (Borio 2017). In *Il Canto Sospeso*, Nono integrated texts from letters of condemned European resistance fighters. The initial response to the music with this text was powerful for audiences from the past as well as

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2 Darmstadt International Summer School for New Music was held annually in Darmstadt, Germany. Lectures and lessons were offered, which were valuable for emerging composers. They had the opportunity to meet and collaborate with others and to have their compositions performed. Nono was first a student at the Darmstadt Summer School and then came back as a lecturer and teacher. He had many of his compositions performed there over the years, such as *España en el Corazón*, *La Victoire de Guernica*, *Canti per 13*, *Il Canto Sospeso*, and more.

3 The complex physiological condition that post-war German society was facing is discussed by Toby Thacker (2007) and Christopher Fox (1999). People were starting the lengthy process of dealing with the past while coping with hardship and immense loss. Society was facing opposing ideologies while emerging from political and social upheaval.

today. Over time, the response to the music transformed as the memories it evoked changed with different audiences; yet this piece remains part of the modernist canon because it forces the listener to remember the horrors that past societies faced, and apply them to current injustices and possibly deal with these issues through musical means.

In a 1964 interview, the author and political theorist Hannah Arendt stated that in 1933 “it was impossible to be a bystander.” This claim continued to be true throughout the horrors of Hitler’s power and the years after. Nono’s composition, with its chosen text, presents itself as a protest against the persecution of innocent people in the fascist regimes of the immediate past, and how this relates to the continuing problems within post-war capitalist Europe. This chapter discusses the compositional techniques employed within *Il Canto Sospeso*, the historical situation of the listeners’ experience, and the past and current effectiveness of the piece as a musical commentary on politics and society at the time of its premiere in Cologne on October 24, 1956, and beyond (Nielinger 2006, 3).<sup>4</sup> I also discuss the context in which this piece was composed and the political environment of its creation and reception.

Composing was Nono’s means of political participation, and his artistic endeavors involved integrating texts to allow his listeners to confront and remember events of the recent past. As Nono commented on these texts via new methods of musical composition, he showed the relevance of recent movements within politics and history to a larger society. Nono succeeded in forging politically motivated text with a new serialist musical language, and he was passionate that contemporary music ought to directly relate to historical struggle (Fox 2007, 18). Nono played a key role in the development of the 1950s musical world of Italy and Germany (Fox 1999, 18),<sup>5</sup> and especially at the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music in West Germany. His integration of integral serialism with text-setting and vocal writing set him apart from other dodecaphonic serialist composers such as Webern and Boulez (Iddon 2013, 149-51). Unlike many of his contemporaries, Nono did not reject political themes in place of “rigid and abstract

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4 *Il Canto Sospeso*’s premiere was initially a success, but soon after it became veiled by Adorno’s and Stockhausen’s critiques.

5 Nono became a key figure at the Darmstadt International Summer School for New Music, and while *Il Canto Sospeso* was not premiered there (but rather in Cologne), it was commissioned by the school and was discussed and analyzed there during the summer sessions.

formalism” (Guerrero 2010, 575). Rather, he employed serialism to express political ideas, creating uniquely profound and complex serial works, as exemplified in his composition *Il Canto Sospeso*. During the Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music, Nono’s use of motifs and texture through instrumentation and silence was discussed thoroughly by his colleagues (Iddon 2013, 149-51).<sup>6</sup> By using all interval rows, serializing dynamics and pitch together, and by using wedge rows, Nono continued to expand his serialist techniques and increase their complexity. For Nono, it was the permutations and architecture of one or two rows that created the music (Iddon 2013, 143).

While Nono’s music daringly confronts critical social and political issues, his musical interpretation of these ideas is not presented as overt or grandiose, but rather he presents musical ideas for the listener to contemplate (Hewett 2007). *Il Canto Sospeso* is viewed in many ways as one of the highest achievements in this regard.<sup>7</sup> Nono’s use of serialism in setting text is vital to the emotional qualities evoked in this composition, as they create determinations for musical interpretation of the texts. *Il Canto Sospeso* features musical and political ties that continue to manifest a certain power over the listeners throughout time. This is in part due to the compositional techniques described below.

## Compositional Techniques

*Il Canto Sospeso* employs a compositional technique “as it was practiced in post-Webern style ... and is built on an expanding all-interval series” (Bailey 1992, 2-4) (see fig. 10.1). The essential element of the serialist techniques used in *Il Canto Sospeso* lies in the malleable qualities of Nono’s row usage. Nono uses the row in multiple inversions, permutations, and rotations (Bailey 4) and he treats the pitch series differently in each movement, presenting the full form of the row only in the ninth

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6 Composers such as Boulez and Stockhausen, as well as political theorist Adorno, were discussing Nono’s works, paying specific attention to his use of serialism and texture, and his treatment of voice. For example, at Darmstadt in 1957, Stockhausen gave a lecture in which he discussed the use of Nono’s chosen text in *Il Canto Sospeso* and its comprehensibility, and later in 1988, Adorno discusses it in his essay “The Ageing of the New Music.”

7 Many scholars, such as Carola Nielinger (2006), John Warnaby (1991), and Gianmario Borio (2001), have noted the importance of *Il Canto Sospeso* within the canon of Nono’s compositions. Its importance can also be inferred when Nono returned to the piece later in the 1960s while composing *Intolleranza*.

movement (Bailey 45). He uses different permutations of the series throughout the different piece. For example, in movement 5, Nono uses three versions of the pitch series in many different fashions, including prime, retrograde, and retrograde inversion, to generate pitch material (Bailey 22). While movements 3, 7, 8, and 9 are based on permutations of the series, movements 2 and 4 use cyclical rotation of the series, and movement 6a is based on neither a permutation nor a rotation of the series (Bailey 4). Yet this is juxtaposed with the little details, such as texture, that connect movements together. Using serialist techniques, the composer was able to use a complex musical language to create a piece that has received considerable attention in terms of in-depth music analysis. “[Serialism] — which to Nono was but a means, not an end — is used to express the work’s urgent message” (Nielinger 2006, 3).

vibr	m240	m250	m254	m259	m262	m265	m270	m271	m273	m278
	<i>ppp</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>ppp</i>
trp 2	m246	m247	m252	m258	m260	m262	m265	m269	m270	m284
	<i>ppp</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>mf</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>ppp</i>
bass clr	m244	m247	m253	m255	m257	m261	m262	m271		m278
	<i>ppp</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>mp</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>fff</i>	<i>mp</i>		<i>mp</i>

FIGURE 10.1. Pitch series from Nono’s *Il Canto Sospeso*.  
(Hyacinth, Wikimedia Commons, 2010.)

In *Il Canto Sospeso*, Nono serializes various musical parameters. For instance, dynamics are serialized and most movements incorporate independent dynamic series. The colours and textures in this piece are created through different pitch permutations, cycles of dynamics, and many different groups of durations, all of which change throughout each movement. Orchestration, instrumentation, and density are often structured in an interdependent manner, allowing for the creation of many complex layers of musical meaning within the composition. Such serialization of dynamics allows for moments of grand dynamic contrast, which proves effective in terms of creating a sense of dramatic development. At certain moments in the composition, for example, at the end of movement 5 and the beginning of movement 6, dynamic tension is created, allowing for intense, seemingly emotionally charged sonorities to be heard. The dynamics used by Nono also complement the large-scale form within movements — as in movement 4, where the

arch form is accentuated by the movement from soft to loud and back to soft dynamics (Bailey 1992, 20) (see fig. 10.2). Many scholars have analyzed Nono's serialization and coupling of dynamics and durations, and how he determines where a dynamic marking falls in terms of the durations of sounds. The textures used by Nono become heightened through the serialization of dynamics as the increasing feeling of agitation coming out of the textural formations in movement 3 is accompanied by an increase in amplitude and structured in a serial manner.



FIGURE 10.2. Arch dynamic form used in movement 4. (Emily McCallum, 2017)

While Adorno considered serialism as showing structural tendencies that resembled those of totalitarian regimes (Readhead 2015, 8) with its fixed rules and abiding techniques determining its use, Nono's use of serialism in *Il Canto Sospeso* displays a different path than that of the serialism described by Adorno (Nielinger 2006, 2). Nono's alternative concept of serialism incorporated a system so complex as to ensure the autonomy of the composer. He achieves immense expressive and musical qualities paired with a dazzling intricacy of the serial technique. The way Nono uses serialism to compose this piece "is ... powerful today because it forces us to slow down ... and tests our reflective abilities" (Biró 2007, 17). While certain perceptual aspects of the piece are not immediately attainable to the listener, the sonorous qualities lead the listener into a situation of close listening.

Simultaneously, moments of sudden contrast within the work can be startling for the listener. For instance, the texture of movement 7 is overflowing with lyricism harking back to the Italian tradition of *Bel Canto*. Nono's treatment of vowels that emerges from the text is intensified by the surrounding textural shimmer of the orchestra, with the glockenspiel playing a key role.

As material for the text of *Il Canto Sospeso*, Nono used the "letters written by people condemned to death for their resistance to Nazism and Fascism" (Fox 1999, 14). Within the post-war period, this decision can be seen as overtly political, as the text and its accompanying music forced listeners to remember the not-so-distant fascist past. In setting the text from the letters, Nono took the language apart, often using purely vowel

sounds as well as layering the syllables of the text amongst soloist and chorus parts. In the 1950s and beyond, much has been discussed about the comprehensibility of the text, and how such a politically charged text can still hold power if incomprehensible, but Nono knew that “in the world into which *Il Canto Sospeso* was projected ... it was surely unnecessary for every word of the text to be heard” (Christopher 1999, 127). This belief of Nono’s is also evident in movement 9 as he creates intricate layering and density with the voices.

A given listener of *Il Canto Sospeso* does not need to understand Italian to appreciate the emotional quality of this music, as the emotional experience is not exclusively bound to language, and the listening experience is substantially more than simply the translation of words. The structuring of textual syntax and sonority and their integration into the larger musical setting are essential for the impact of the music on the listener. The words, together with the music, create a story, and this, paired with the motions and nuances of each musical phrase, enables a larger instrumental and musical narrative, which serves to go beyond the realm of text-setting.

## **Text and Music: Structural and Semiotic Relationships**

It is Nono’s structural combining of text and music that creates the possibility for an enhanced reflection on the part of the listener, as the music opens up the ability to “eliminate the mythical distance that separates [the audience] ... from the historical event” (Guerrero 2010, 575). Understanding the sung Italian of the piece reveals a secret window into the world of Nono’s composition — like looking through a keyhole. For an Italian, and especially one who was listening to this after the time of the Holocaust, in those sections wherein the text couldn’t be understood, the content would be filled in by the memory of the listener. For the listener of that time period who did not know Italian, such a process of remembrance would be quite different. These listeners might imagine the music with their own words and this personalized musical narrative could have evoked emotions leading

these listeners to a different kind of self-reflection (Assmann 2006).<sup>8</sup> Such processes of self-reflection also relate to how the European listeners could have reacted emotionally during the 1950s, with the control of the Allied forces, the process of denazification, and the emergence of the Cold War creating immense psychological challenges in light of collective and individual memories of the recent past (Assmann 2006).

The process of orchestration in the composition, alternating from chorus to solo voice and orchestra to only orchestra, also contributes to the linguistic aspects of the piece. The textual narrative does not cease with the sung word, but rather the instrumental sections carry the meaning of the text forward. The tranquility of movement 7 is then painfully broken with the opening of movement 8. This section is an excellent example of how Nono uses the phasing in and out of notes within different instrumentation groups to create varying textures and colours. Neilinger (2006, 35) labels this technique the “structural use of density.” Nono’s vast palette of textures within the piece is critical to the success of the creativity of perceptive reflection for the listener. While Nono sometimes depicts tranquility and delicacy through his textures, he also employs violent changes of texture and dynamics where “*pp* is omitted in order to include *fff*” (Neilinger 2006, 39). Such changes prove to be shocking and often present a musical analogy to the content of the text.

The text travels throughout the piece in different states of comprehensibility, which adds to its range of colours, that in turn enhances the setting. Non-Italian speakers would have had a different approach to the text, as it was most likely first received through reading a translation, the meaning of which would enhance their listening and the corresponding musical ideas. This connection is vital for a better understanding of the text, the music, and how they interplay, but it is not vital for the appreciation and resounding impact of the piece.

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8 Aleida Assmann (2006) explains that people acquire memories “not only via lived experience, but also via interacting, communicating, learning, identifying, and appropriating” (211). As a listener of Nono’s *Il Canto Sospeso*, one finds oneself transforming the history that accompanies the music “into forms of shared knowledge and collective identification and participation” (216). Nono’s ability to take the listener into deep self-reflection makes this piece one that interacts with both individual and collective memory. It can be used as the “third category [of cultural memory], which is the combination of remembering and forgetting” (220) as well as the impulse needed to reawaken “buried” (220) individual memories.

The care Nono takes in text-setting is matched in his orchestration (Bailey 1992, 37). Nono's overlaying of the texts in movement 8 "is an 'intensification' of the original texts since it draws three separate experiences into a shared expression and, at the same time, creates new 'symbiotic' meanings" (Bailey 1992, 16). In movement 3, Nono combines compositional elements, such as the different pairings of voices and instruments with each instrument serving to uniquely represent each voice (Bailey 1992, 26). He creates a musical force for different vocal parts, which, in contrast to his shared expression of the voices, can represent the individuality of each author within the collection of suffering. This careful treatment of the text is one main reason why this piece is remarkable even for contemporary listeners, as it compels the listener to react emotionally within a situation of complex compositional structure. For its original audience, it would have been "a litany of suffering to which most members of the audience would have been able to add verses of their own" (Fox 1999, 18).

Nono builds towards a climax in movement 7, which coincides with the power of the text of a young Russian resistance fighter in a letter to her mother. "Her short testimony, representative of the fate of so many of those cited ... lies at the heart of the conception of *Il Canto Sospeso*" (Nielinger 2006, 5). This is a beautiful use of the text, as its essential rawness is highlighted so that the power of it is felt by the listener in current times, just as it was experienced at the time it was written. Nono builds to this climax through the use of layers of contrast in dynamics, texture, and structure. "This aesthetic process is perhaps the literal 'song unsung' in this work: the ability of the music to express the inexpressible is what cannot be discovered by formalist analysis" (Redhead 2015, 6).

## Nono: Then and Now

Many different interpretations of the actual text of *Il Canto Sospeso*, and of the setting, have been published (Nielinger 2006, 9), but what resonates is how Nono's text is still relevant at our time in history. The theme of *Il Canto Sospeso* is just as essential for today's audience in the current political climate of ever-increasing intolerance and division. The Italian musicologist and critic Massimo Mila states that this "music is worthy of its texts and that, within its own sphere, it manages to recreate the dramatic moral depth of the letters of the Resistance

fighters” (Nielinger 2006, 11). The memories of the past are integral to the steps that music and society must take towards progress, resolution, and evolution. Memories create a place from which music can emerge, and music helps memories create a narrative to follow. There is a lasting relevance for all listeners as they are still captivated by Nono’s music and placed in a state of awe and remorse. “*Il Canto Sospeso* is political not only in its materials but in the listener’s relationship to them, and in this respect, it is also beautiful” (Redhead 2015, 6). Nono’s music isn’t attached to a “time-specific” definition of beauty, which enables it to be timeless. This piece resonates with “Plato, [for whom] the ideal form of the beautiful was conceived as being of the intellect rather than of the senses” (Biró 2007, 4). The beauty that emerges from *Il Canto Sospeso* is not exclusive to the sounds it creates with voices and orchestra. It emerges from the way these sounds intertwine with each other and with silence. The beauty stems from its ability to create deep self-reflection in the listener and its ability to eloquently address pain and suffering. The beauty is not superficial; it is deeply embedded in the music, which ensures its endless significance. This music is able to make people feel uncomfortable, to make them question and think about what they are listening to and how it makes them feel. As Biró (2007, 16) states, “music refuses to present the answer of an image but rather challenges the listener to actively question how sound relates to the world.”

*Il Canto Sospeso* remains an incomparably beautiful work that continues to deliver meaning and wisdom to contemporary listeners. It enables them to delve deep into the music and find inspiration that impels them to resist the repetition of the history it describes. With its complex serial structuring of intense emotional experiences, the composition presents the listener with a unique listening and learning experience. In doing so, the listener can, in the best sense, become lost in their own mind, experiencing both a whirlwind of emotions and intense, reflective contemplation.

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Chapter 11

# **Photographs and Memories**



# Photographs and Memories: The (In)tractable Reality of the Still Image

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## Introduction

When people ask, "What is your earliest memory?" this is the story I tell....

"I am three years old and I am walking along a corridor with my dad, standing on his left side, holding his hand, entering a bright white room where my mom, on a very high bed, sits holding my brand-new brother. Because of this memory, I have no conscious life without my brother's presence. This is the memory I share because a) it is, in fact, my earliest memory; and b) people love this story. It is the kind of story that one tells at a wedding (which, in fact, I did).

Many people, while touched by this story, are also skeptical of it. Their argument is that I was barely three years and could not possibly have a memory this clear. They also argue that because the event was emotional, or perhaps because I have heard others speak of my brother's

birth, my brain has created a false memory to match that emotion (this is the pseudo-science behind the unproven theory of *false memory syndrome*). Unfortunately, there are no photos from this event, no visual evidence, to either confirm or deny that this memory did in fact take place. Admittedly, I also question this memory. In my mind, I can clearly see my brother, sitting upright on my mom's knees. For anyone who has had even minimal exposure to a newborn, you know that a one-day old baby does not sit upright. Regardless, my brain remembers it. I have often wished that there was a photograph from that day. Photographs confirm our memories. We take photographs of special events, our travels, our friends, landscapes, architecture. We take these pictures to keep our memories alive but also to prove that things occurred. As photographer Roland Barthes said, the reality of the photographic image is that of "*what has been*" (1980, 85). So to prove an occurrence, to boast of an event, to display with pride, we take, and share, an undeniable image. "Every photograph is a certificate of a presence" (87).

Beyond proof of an occurrence, however, what is the role of photography? Photographs are record keepers of the past, sometimes our own past and often the past of others. We, or someone before us, set up an image, looked through a small square, a hole, or now a screen, pushed a button, and what they/we saw appears exactly as we witnessed it. Photographs, because of their *reflection* of reality (the camera captures light and *reflects* an image back to us), have the power to provoke an emotional response more than any other medium. The photograph becomes an intractable reality, "the mirror with a memory" (Wendell Holmes quoted in Sentilles 2010, 39), a reflection of what we are seeing. Because of this, photographs are also used to produce a certain effect, to elicit an end result. In fact, more than capturing fact, the role of the photograph is to provoke emotion. Not all photographs are factual but rather are *assumed* to be factual. Because a picture "generally depicts a scene that actually existed at some point" (Meyer 2008-2009), even if the scene "existed" only long enough for a photo to be captured (as in the case of portraiture), the audience views it as representation of an event and therefore real. Due to this perceived reality, photography serves to provoke a response.



FIGURE 11.1. Syrian toddler, Alan Kurdi, washed ashore in 2015 after his family attempted to escape Syria. (Photo courtesy of Demirören News Agency.)

This photograph was widely published not just to move us, but also to move us to action. For those who were pleading with countries to open their doors to Syrian (and other) refugees, this photo was used to elicit greater empathy towards those escaping their homeland. In this way, photographs also act as propaganda. We set up an image in order to tell a story. While propaganda may not always be laden with “loaded language” or filled with misleading facts, it is always used to promote or politicize a particular point of view and to produce an emotional response. This is why the picture of Kurdi was so widely distributed—dead babies tend to provoke a strong reaction.

My interest in the Holocaust began in 1985 with a simple photograph — although not simple in its image: barely alive bodies stacked many deep into barracks, staring into the camera with hollow eyes, with empty expressions void of hope.



FIGURE 11.2. Inside the barracks of Buchenwald concentration camp near Jena where many died from malnutrition when U.S. troops of the 80th Div. entered the camp on April 16, 1945. (Photo courtesy of the Buchenwald and Mittelbau-Dora Memorials Foundation, public domain.)

While I am certain that this is not the exact photo that I first witnessed, it captures a similar image, or perhaps evokes a similar memory. Of course, when I look at this photo now, I am not nearly as startled as I was some 30 years ago. I find myself wondering if the photo I first saw was much “worse” (to use a horribly subjective word), or if I have become, if not numb, then at least accustomed to these images. I scoured the Internet looking for a similar photo, something that would impact me in that same early way. But I could not find one, leading me to realize that it was I, and not the photo, that had changed.

Small and lifeless, Alan Kurdi’s 15 minutes of fame is over for this same reason: the same photo that initially moves also serves to desensitize.

I do not recall how much I knew about the Holocaust prior to seeing that picture. I imagine that I had some knowledge of the event, but little enough that the photo was able to affect me in a way I cannot quite explain. I began to consume whatever information I could about the Holocaust. I read any information that I could access. As profound as some of the writings were — both the stories of survivors as well as academic comments, it was the images that I kept returning to. They

were the most “real” representations of what occurred. With art, music, painting, theatre, you can feign reality without ever having experienced the thing you’re representing. While Susan Sontag categorizes photography as “having the unappealing reputation of being the most realistic, therefore facile, of the mimetic arts (1973, 51)” it still remains true, however, that “photographs furnish evidence. Something we hear about, but doubt, seems proven when we’re shown a photograph of it” (1973, 5).

Photographic images help to situate a person at a particular place in time. In *Camera Lucida*, Barthes writes, “If I like a photograph, if it disturbs me, I linger over it. What am I doing, during the whole time I remain with it? I look at it, I scrutinize it, as if I wanted to know more about the thing or the person it represents” (1980, 99).

I was disturbed enough by those initial images of the Holocaust that the desire “to know more about the thing or the person it represented” was overwhelming. Within a couple of months, I knew far more about Nazi Germany and the Holocaust than my grade 10 history teacher. No one could understand my interest, perhaps even obsession, with wanting to understand what happened, and even more, how such a thing *could* happen. Many misunderstood my interest. In fact, when a question about World War II Germany came up in the aforementioned history class, my teacher responded with, “I don’t know. Let’s ask our resident Nazi.” He, of course, was referring to me. It took me many years to realize how incredibly offensive that was. In fact, that initial photograph and my desire to “know more about the thing or person it represented,” is what ultimately led me, not to a Nazi identity, but to a Jewish identity. It struck me as I was writing this that my teacher may have thought it would be more insulting to refer to someone as a Jew than as a Nazi.

While I appreciate the path that those photos have taken me along, I often find myself questioning the ethics of photography. The ease with which we can now take a picture means that many people are being photographed unknowingly and without their permission. (Think about this: nearly 1.54 billion smartphones were sold in 2017 (Statista n.d.). This means that over one-and-a-half billion people are walking around with a camera in their possession every day.) Amusing pictures of the poorly dressed roaming around Walmart (peopleofwalmart.com) have become a social media sensation; those individuals, likely poor, likely uneducated, many dressed in a way that would indicate mental illness, are not just the subject of a photo, but the object, too. Elizabeth

Edwards, in her essay “Objects of Affect: Photography Beyond the Image” speaks to this:

Photographs, in their global consumption, are often of people, thus blurring the distinction between person and thing, subject and object, photograph and referent in significant ways. These relations circumscribe the interlinked dynamics of a photograph’s social use, material performance, and patterns of affect as they are put to work through their material substance. (2012, 222)

In this way, the subject is objectified through the act of photographing him or her or it. While the question of ethics and photography is a relatively recent one, and there is no doubt that the “People of Walmart” is a grotesque display of objectification, can the same not be said for Holocaust pictures? While they may be significant evidence of a past event, and important teaching tools, were these photos not also further objectification of their subject? How likely is it that people — starving, dirty, and dying — would have consented to being photographed? Do we continue to objectify them every time we look at them? Photography, while being a social act, is also “bounded to a greater or lesser extent by power relations” (Edwards 2015, 240). In these images, it is easy to see on which side power, and lack thereof, existed.

As an object, the photograph is not the real but merely a representation of the real. If we look at a Holocaust picture, like the one that first fell into my hands, do we see real people or just a horrible event? I would argue that the people in those pictures became objects representing a bigger truth. But isn’t the Shoah a bigger truth made up of 11 million individual truths? Moreover, does a photograph have the “social agency ... to fulfill their social role” (Edwards 2012, 227) of eliciting affect *and* reflecting truth? Does a photograph not need to “fall into the right hands, both literally and metaphorically” (Edwards 2012, 227) for such things to occur? What of the photograph that falls into, or is taken by the wrong hands, the photograph that is manipulated to instill hate instead of compassion? Does it still elicit affect while reflecting truth? Regardless of the reality reflected in the photograph, does what one sees depend on the eyes seeing it? What of photographic “evidence” of things such as smiling, healthy-appearing children used to deny the Holocaust or the horrors of Indian Residential Schools?

Photos of real things in real time can be used to form false truths, as for example in this picture:



FIGURE 11.3. Keleti Railway Station; filled with the bodies of Syrian refugees, escaping their country, waiting for entrance into Germany, sleeping on cold floors, with little food, little safety, and an uncertain future. (Photograph taken by Bence Járány, posted by Rebecca Harms, Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic, CC BY-SA 2.0, September 2015.)

While two different sets of eyes will see the same picture, undeniable “proof” that an event occurred, those two sets of eyes may “see” it differently. While I may see people *forced* to sleep on the floor like dogs, another set of eyes may see people *choosing* to sleep on the floor like dogs. One impression elicits compassion while the other elicits hate. The effect is different because the *narrative* has changed. Stuart Hall, in his essay “Encoding, decoding” deconstructs the linearity of mass communication — “sender/message/receiver” — into a structure “produced and sustained through the articulation of *linked but distinctive moments* — production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction” (1993, emphasis mine, 128). Hall writes: “This would be to think of the process as a complex structure in dominance, sustained through the articulation of connected practices, each of which, however, retains its distinctiveness and has its own specific modality, its own forms and conditions of existence” (90-91). In other words, these images are linked in that they continue to go through the processes described by Hall, but “the specific modality” of each reproduction can alter the story completely. Fig. 11.3 with the slogan, “Let’s help those

forced to sleep in train stations to access a better life” holds a very different “condition of existence” than the same image that says, “Let’s help Hungarians have a better life by getting these people out of *our* cities.” Both elicit effects, but how do we decide which one reflects truth?

As so-called realistic or undeniable as a photograph may be, the narrative that accompanies a photo greatly impacts the effect. This is largely why photography has been a constant companion to propaganda. The narrative is placed onto the image first by the photographer and then by the audience. Again, the subject is objectified in a way that the photographer can weave together a particular story. In this way, the “photographer’s bias is unavoidable; therefore, no photograph can be completely factual” (Collins n.d.). What is shown on the piece of photographic paper, or on the screen, may look exactly as it was when the photograph was taken (although, as we will see, even that is not always the case), there is often much manipulation that occurs before an image is even captured.

Take, for example, the 1937 German exhibition entitled *The Eternal Jew*, an antisemitic art exhibition in Munich that contained hundreds of posters and photographs portraying Jews as communists, thieves, racially impure, and other negative roles in order to increase antisemitism and support for the Nazi Party.<sup>1</sup> While much of the exhibition was comprised of caricatures, cartoon-like drawings, there were also a number of photographs — real images — that served this same purpose. Photographs of Jews with full beards, large noses, long payot, served to exaggerate the difference of the “other.” These were photographs of *real* Jews, or perhaps *real* photographs of people dressed as Jews. Regardless, the images shown were real insofar as the photograph captured what was in front of the camera. And because we take photographs to be factual, their ability to coerce is used to the full advantage of the photographer. While I believe that the first Holocaust photo I saw of Buchenwald (fig. 11.2 above) was an accurate *representation* of an event, it is likely that even *it* was manipulated by the photographer.

While fig. 11.2 appears to be untouched by the photographer’s eye, when I look closer, I find myself asking: “Would almost every face — death peering out from behind their eyes — be staring into the camera if not directed to do so? Would a man, naked and emaciated, be

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1 “Der ewige Jude” opened in Munich on November 8, 1937, and drew over 400,000 people. See <https://www.haaretz.com/jewish/1937-the-eternal-jew-expo-opens-1.5197145> and [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/nazi\\_propaganda\\_gallery\\_05.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/nazi_propaganda_gallery_05.shtml).

standing there, posing for a photograph unless strategically placed?” The photographer’s job is not only to capture an image, but also to use that image to tell a story. And so, the photographer turns subject into object, knowing that every pose offers a different perspective, and that even the smallest gesture of the subject/object is crucial to the story being told. Consider this:

In the supreme instant, man, each man, is given over forever to his smallest, most everyday gesture. And yet, thanks to the photographic lens, that gesture is now charged with the weight of an entire life; that . . . moment collects and condenses in itself the meaning of an entire existence. I believe there is a secret relationship between gesture and photography. The power of the gesture to summon and sum up entire orders of angelic powers resides in the photographic lens and has its locus, its opportune moment, in photography. . . . A good photographer knows how to grasp the eschatological nature of the gesture without, however, taking anything away from the historicity or singularity of the photographed event. (Agamben 2007, 24)

While a “good” photographer may know how to capture an image “without taking anything away from the historicity or singularity of the photographed event,” they may also recognize the need to do just that. We have entered into a world where photograph manipulation has become readily available to even the most amateur photographer. In this way, it has become even easier for the photographer to tell a particular story.

In the Yoloocaust Project,<sup>2</sup> artist Shanak Shapira created a website to protest against people using the Berlin Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe as a place of amusement or fun. In the project, Shapira alters pictures of real tourists at the memorial and places them onto real images of the Holocaust. For him, these tourists, laughing, picnicking, taking selfies at a memorial site, are disrespectful. They have failed to acknowledge what this memorial represents. That is his story.

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2 Shanak Shapira, “The Yoloocaust Project.” See <https://yoloocaust.de>. Note: Mr. Shapira removed the Yoloocaust photos in 2017 after those depicted apologized for their actions and removed their selfies from social media.

He then uses these images to convey *his* story. As for the audience, in spite of knowing that these photographs have been manipulated, they still find them upsetting. The photos have clearly been doctored, but it is still that of a real person being placed with real bodies. That these two images existed in different times seems irrelevant. While these pictures, as misrepresented reality, have offended many, one cannot deny that through photography, his story has been successfully told.<sup>3</sup> As is often the case, however, it is the photographer's story alone that is told. As the consumer, we then agree with the story or not, or manipulate the image further to tell our own story.

As a viewer, we understand that the story in someone else's photo cannot really be our own. Perhaps this is why a photograph is not a substitute for the experience of being there, wherever "there" may be. Photos of the Eiffel Tower do not lessen or satisfy our desire to go to Paris. Instead, photos can increase our desire for a particular experience. Eiffel Tower = Paris is beautiful! Come to Paris! We understand that a photograph is a photographer's story but that it can become our story too. While it's true that I had both a bodily response and a brain response to my early consumption of Holocaust photos, the story that I read through those photos didn't feel like my own. *I needed to place myself into those photographs. I needed to create my own story.*

As a graduate student, there is this belief or at least practice of not spending time on anything that will distract you from your end goal: i.e., your thesis or dissertation. I had embraced that to the point of putting anything not related to my field of study on hold. I am not in the field of Holocaust Studies and so there was no academic justification for me joining the field school. So, when one of my thesis committee members asked me why I was doing this ("this" being something that was going to take my focus away from my thesis), my only response was, "Because I have to." Like seeing photos of the Eiffel Tower, "experiencing" the camps through photographic evidence only deepened my desire to experience the significance of "place." I am not likening a trip to Paris to the Holocaust; I am saying that horror can elicit the desire to better understand what you see in the pictures. For me, images of

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<sup>3</sup> Note: All twelve people whose selfies were used in this project apologized for their insensitivity and understood the artist's message. Each person agreed to remove their selfies from their own social media pages (Instagram, Facebook, etc.). As a result, I opted to not include these photos here. The photos are powerful and are worth seeing. For those interested, Google "Yolocaust images."

the Holocaust continue to be hard to view — they are agonizing, grotesque, so unimaginably horrifying as to seem unreal: people so emaciated that it is difficult to understand how they are still alive; dead bodies that are nothing more than skeletons sheathed in the thinnest layer of flesh; mass graves with people stacked three, four, or five high. These pictures continue to challenge my view of the world as an essentially good place.

As difficult as these images are, however, they created a desire for me to be in that place, in the same way that a picture of the Eiffel Tower may cause someone to dream of going to Paris. While the traveller recognizes that gazing upon a photo is many steps away from actually strolling down the Les Champs-Élysées, what I failed to recognize is that the photo also provides a filter, a safe place between the viewer and what is being viewed. I can look away from a photo; and, while a photo shows a real thing (with all the caveats previously mentioned) in real time, it is not reality. The truism of this was never more evident for me than in Ravensbrück. While some of the photographic images I saw were similar to what I had witnessed at the camp, it quickly became evident that looking at a photo and placing oneself into it are profoundly different experiences.



FIGURE 11.4. Crematorium ovens at the Dachau Memorial Site.  
(Photo courtesy of Adam Jones, used with permission.)



FIGURE 11.5. Crematorium ovens at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site.  
(Paige Thombs personal collection, July 2017.)

For example fig. 11.4 and 11.5 are essentially the same photo. With small exceptions (the colour of the bricks, the different metal), you could be convinced that you are looking at the same crematorium. I have experienced this image many times. In fact, I have experienced much more difficult photos than these. Some of the earliest Holocaust photographs I saw were of crematoriums filled with bones, hands, bodies not yet burned, and ashes. And yet, the photograph, the filter between the real image and the real, was far more protective than I imagined. When I unexpectedly walked into the crematorium, the experience was so completely different from what I felt by engaging with a photograph. It was visceral in a way that I have never experienced from a photograph. The real experience shut down my entire being: I could not move; I could not process the *actual* reality of what I was seeing. The real turned into reality. (I have spoken little of that day as I continue to process what I witnessed and how I responded.)

What is curious *now* is how my response to this photo has changed. Barthes says that “in front of a photograph, our consciousness does not necessarily take the nostalgic path of memory (how many photographs are outside of our individual time), but for every photograph existing in the world, the path of certainty: the photograph’s essence is to ratify what it represents” (1980, 85). But this photo is no longer only evidence of “what has been,” of historic trauma or evidence of someone else’s memory; it is now evidence of “my memory.”

A number of people have questioned why I would take a picture of a crematorium. It is a valid question, and one that I had to think about before answering. This image is no longer only someone else’s story but also my own. As I age, I am aware of the fleeting temporality of memories. Going back to the start of this chapter, this photograph now serves as

evidence of an occurrence. This event is undeniable because I possess visual proof that I was there. It is a reminder of not only someone else's history, but also of my own. It possesses the "social agency" to "reflect truth." Bigger than this, however, it also possesses the agency to elicit *affect*. When I now look at this photo, I don't just see what I saw; I feel what I felt. For me, this is the magic of a photograph: not simply to show proof that something good or bad happened, but to connect us to what we felt when that photo was taken. Through this photograph, the reality of that moment remains tangible for me.

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# Chapter 12

## **Inside-Outside**



# Inside-Outside: The Efficaciousness of Art and Culture within Social Movements

**Dr. Adam Scime** is a young composer, performer, and educator, who has been praised as “a fantastic success” (CBC) and “Astounding, the musical result was remarkable” ([icareifyoulisten.com](http://icareifyoulisten.com)). His work has received many awards including the 2015 Canadian Music Centre Toronto Emerging Composer Award, the Socan Young Composer Competition, the Karen Keiser Prize in Canadian Music, the Esprit Young Composer Competition, and first prize in the 2018 Land’s End Composer Competition. He was recently selected for the Ensemble contemporain de Montréal (ECM+) 2016 Generations Project during which his piece *Liminal Pathways* was toured across nine Canadian cities. Additionally, Scime’s music continues to be performed and commissioned by many renowned ensembles and soloists including Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne, The Esprit Orchestra, Array Music, The National Arts Centre Orchestra, The Thin Edge New Music Collective, The Hamilton Philharmonic, l’Orchestre de la Francophonie The Gryphon Trio, New Music Concerts, Soundstreams, The Bicycle Opera Project, Véronique Mathieu, Nadina Mackie Jackson, and Carla Huhtanen, among others. He recently received his doctorate from the University of Toronto.

## Introduction

It is because we act that we come to see, not before or after, but with and while we act. This is just one way of saying that it is impossible to express the meaning of the act in any but its own expression. What Beethoven said with his Ninth Symphony or Turner with his *Rough Sea With Wreckage* only that music or that painting itself reveals.  
(Martland 1970, 170)

Identifying an object as art — whether concrete or abstract — unweaves a particular chronology and invokes an ideal. When we contemplate the art experience, we envision a context through which our awareness is heightened amid universal expression. Inevitably being weighed against past canons, newly created art must satisfy a particular set of variables as mapped onto distinct tastes and genres.<sup>1</sup> But what of art created within the arena of social activism? Art created within social movements has the ability to mirror the attitudes and ambitions of contemporary society (Miles and Dawson 2012). Many activist works display cynicism and despondency, as often is the case with the gallery experience; however, others produce works of resistance and, in contrast, operate outside the gallery (Turner 2005). Whatever the case, is it necessary that creative impulses inspired alongside activist intentions undergo the tired and scrupulous criticisms typical of the so-called high-art<sup>2</sup> standard — a grossly exclusive and formalist ideology in its design? Further, when considering the importance and desire of social-activists to successfully project a politically charged message onto large groups, certain aesthetic questions reveal themselves concerning the efficacy of art activism. These questions are especially relevant if a particular work of activist art has been designed with fine art idioms, and readymade for the gallery or concert hall. That is, if social movements utilize fine art modes of expression, should these artworks be subjected to the rigorousness of fine art practices and critiques, and how should the art-world respond to such works — works that are often created without formal training?<sup>3</sup>

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1 Harold Bloom writes extensively on this subject in his seminal book *The Anxiety of Influence* (1975). This text explores the notion that artists are inevitably hindered in their creative process by the ambiguous relationship maintained with the canon.

2 A distinction between high art (or fine art) — what this chapter defines as “inside art” — and other art efforts is made clear below.

Further, if the application of such works is strictly intended to ignite social awareness, should the artist herself be concerned with fine art considerations such as criticism and institutional acceptance?

Spanning the duration of a 2017 summer field school offered through the University of Victoria, the above considerations became unexpected centrepieces of discussion and debate. The field school brought together an international cohort of artists and academics in order to elicit varying perspectives on contemporary narratives pertaining to memory, xenophobia, and migration. Part of this unique initiative included the commissioning of several new musical works that were subsequently performed at various sites of trauma visited by the field school participants. The material content of each of these works was inspired by subject matter relevant to the field school and intended to provide an artist's interpretation of current global issues relating to migration and xenophobia. This chapter does not aim to comment on the efficacy of the works specifically created for the field school; instead, it is the general discussion that was ignited by these works that is of interest.

Through contemplating the topic of art<sup>4</sup> created for social-activist purposes, many fascinating discussions occurred as the field school unfolded. Many of the field school participants — students and mentors alike — struggled to compute why any particular type of art aiming to comment upon highly sensitive social issues should be deeply inaccessible (to use an admittedly regrettable pejorative) to its audience members. Imagine the surprise of all involved (especially the mentors of the project) as group discussions became dominated with the effectiveness of fine art as a voice for social activism as opposed to broader discussions surrounding the social issues pertinent to the course.

As a participant of this field school, and as an artist who encourages certain rigorous art practices in appropriate contexts, my initial impetus was to defend certain ways of art making at all costs. It was my strong belief that many of the participants were simply reacting to contemporary art the way many do without much prior interest or

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3 Whether an artist possesses formal training or not is of course not requisite to making great art. Unfortunately the fine art-world is notorious for condemning works created within social movements (and similar contexts) as “outside art” — or art created outside recognized institutions — and therefore somehow inferior to art that is accepted inside institutional walls.

4 It should be noted that the composers commissioned to write pieces for the field school do not necessarily consider themselves to be activist artists, nor were the commissioned works necessarily created for social-activist purposes.

experience with the idiom: a combination of confusion and frustration for not being able to understand the inner workings of what is being heard or seen. I was convinced that they need only familiarize themselves with the expressive modes of contemporary art and that through exposure profound meaning would undoubtedly arise — any discussion of a work being subjectively good or bad notwithstanding. My initial defence was additionally fueled through a personal belief that an artist should never claim to possess the ability to predict and extract specific responses from an audience as it is impossible for any artist to gauge the intellectual capacity of any one audience member let alone any collective response to a work of art. More importantly, I stood firm upon the notion that an artist should never be told how to create, no matter the context.

It is often the case that after much deliberation and research one finds a third way — an undiscovered fissure between deep-rooted personal opinion and opposing perspective. Throughout the field school it was my opinion that fine art should never assume the role of tactical media: art rendered as an information pamphlet to be handed out at demonstrations. Conversely, many of the participants felt strongly that activist art should be accessible to the masses so that information might be more readily disseminated. In a way, we were both wrong in our extremes. As the field school came to a close and the passage of time allowed for some reflection, I began to reconsider the potential function of art within social-activist contexts.

While art-making activities regularly occur in a variety of contexts within social movements (singing, poster design, crafts, etc.), the purpose of this chapter is to examine social-movement art that satisfies two criteria: effective resource mobilization and artistic excellence. Through much serendipitous investigation, I encountered several compelling instances of activist-art efforts that fulfilled such a description. What follows is an examination of a few carefully selected examples from recent history that prove to be not only captivating artworks but also effective voices for a particular cause. I do not comment upon gallery — or concert hall-ready — activist art in this chapter as these practices provide only mere commentary on issues that may or may not resonate with an audience and are usually not mobilized as an effective resource within a particular social movement. Further, I do not claim to provide an exhaustive compendium of successful activist-art practices. Below is an analysis of select activist-art instances that managed to enact measurable change, empower individuals, and mobilize social-

activist organizations while also making substantial contributions to the fine art world. The evidence will show that when it comes to art activism, we must become divorced from the notion that art exists for its own sake. Although art making may be at times an activity of indulgence, there are impressive instances proving that art may bring about redirections and rearrangements of social constructs. Through access and participation, the members of a social movement can utilize art and culture as a resource for change. This type of art making has the power to eradicate harmful ideologies while introducing progressive models: the profound nature of the work rendered luminous by those willing to partake. The following examples confirm that art making within social movements has the potential to become a mobilized resource for a cause and to earn the attention and respect of the fine art world.

## **Get In and Get Out: Art Activism Removed from Institutions**

The world of art is an imposed world. Art imposes its world by giving a new life to old things in old environments. It builds up new universes of meaning, gives new patterns, moves what was previously concealed into unconcealment. (Martland 1970)

Social movements have received vast amounts of attention and sociological analysis over recent decades producing a matured and healthy field of study (Baumann 2001, 2006, 48). In many instances throughout the discourse (Chambon 2009; David and McCaughan 2007; Fine 1995; Roy 2010; Thompson 2015) the influence of art and culture within social movements is examined from a broad perspective. Despite some quality contributions (Adams 2002; Clay 2006; Forgács 2016; Jackson 2009; McCaughan 2006, 2015; Moravec 2012; Martin et al. 2016) there remains little written about the efficacious trajectory of specific artworks (or art movements) within social movements followed by any subsequent acceptance (or non-acceptance) within the art world. The efforts and contributions from artists to progressive social movements warrant increased attention from both leaders and scholars (McCaughan 2006). Much of the art created within repressed social movements is often accomplished in secret, in large groups of amateurs,

or in anonymous guerilla fashion, making the legitimization or documentation process difficult (Baumann 2006). Throughout the discourse, one encounters hopelessly unfortunate terms such as “insider art” and “outsider art” (Baumann 2006; DiMaggio and Fernández-Kelly 2010; Gaspar de Alba 1998; Leslie 2004; Levine and Levine 2011; Orange 1997). These terms were created by art dealers and critics with economic agendas to construct disturbing inequalities between art made for or permitted into museums and galleries as somehow superior to art created (most often by amateurs and individuals with disabilities) outside these institutions (Baumann 2001, 2006; Bürger 1984; Tekiner 2006). Art created within social movements is too often clumped into the “outsider art” category by default, suggesting it lacked the craft necessary to be taken seriously and, as a consequence, discarded into critical purgatory (Thompson 2015, 34).

Nevertheless, artists concerned with activism most often ignore established art-world prescriptions with respect to process and aesthetic; however, while most activist artists do not care for the established legitimization process (Thompson 2015; Weibel 2015), analysis must still occur on some level if we are to document activist-art efforts.<sup>5</sup> Baumann (2001) argues that studies of art worlds have previously relied on three basic components: a changing cultural opportunity space, the institutionalization of resources and practices, and a legitimating ideology. Legitimation renders the unfamiliar familiar, the disesteemed approved, and the unaccepted accepted. Throughout the legitimization process, a work of art may be repositioned from its intellectual or institutional point of origin. That is, what was once entertainment or experimentation may be rendered legitimate (whether as high art or otherwise) through some form of consensus. Such consensuses usually occur through the approval of various art-world gatekeepers who themselves possess the ability to sway the opinions of their followers. That said, consensus need not occur at the mass collective level. If the individual or the few may legitimate a work of art, the process may indeed yield a vast amount of cultural capital. The ability of a work of art, or an art movement, to influence or mobilize large groups must therefore depend on consensus metrics.

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5 For the purposes of this chapter, activist art will be defined as art efforts created within social movements that apply fine art idioms. Although one could argue that there is much crossover, this study is not concerned with folk art activities (effective as they are) such as poster making, crafts, group song, collective poetry, etc.

Nevertheless, even in extreme cases, legitimation and consensus occur only locally, not globally. Therefore, activist art need only be legitimated by the members of a particular movement to be effective. As Fine (1995) reminds us in his essay “Public Narration and Group Culture,” and as we shall see below, activist art can be used as a mobilizing force toward change where cultural discourse and performance often become resources for a particular movement and its members. In fact, some authors have gone so far as to suggest that a movement’s cultural activities are more enduring and important than any political consideration or achievement (Roy 2010).

In addition to established systems of art legitimation, one must also consider established patterns of art criticism. As stated above, any market-driven legitimation process — reliant upon both intellectual and institutional systems — is certainly not applicable when attempting to codify art activism as a legitimate form of expression. Undoubtedly, we must also do away with formalist art criticism in such a context as the critic system too often functions to appropriate art for market interests — a process rendering art as a commodity and not a tool for social activism. When art criticism is limited to form alone, it inevitably obscures the relationship of art to social contexts and the socially critical implications of art (Tekiner 2006). In this field of criticism we segregate ourselves into the realm of so-called “art for art’s sake”: a formalist ideology that resorts to quantifying the physical (or perhaps plastic) qualities of an art object only for its colour, shape, size, or texture, etc., but certainly not for any ideational constructs such as culturally significant social issues embedded within the work of art. Formal art criticism exclusively defines artworks as material items having no significance other than aesthetic appeal (Tekiner 2006). Such an approach to art legitimation is dangerous on account of its leanings toward cultural hegemony, elitism, and exclusivity — attributes that have no place in the struggle for social justice. When considering the quality or legitimation of activist art, one can still apply a certain amount of critique, however; such criticisms must favour contextual approaches as a dominant feature, leaving formalist qualities as secondary, or perhaps even moot, elements. Art historian Howard Risatti reminds us that when considering the legitimation of activist artworks, we must aim to “understand how art functions socially, economically, and politically in relation to status and power and the construction of world views” (1988, 31). In other words, we as creators, spectators, and critics must not only focus on a narrow set of art processes; on the

contrary, we must consider all aspects, especially when social justice is part of the picture. One can therefore determine that the legitimation and observation of art activism must not in any way be complicit with market ideologies to be effective. Activist art functions outside established structures of power. If one is to create, observe, and mobilize this art as a resource for a cause, one must approach such activist-art activities from any established art-world legitimating or critical construct.

As a reminder, artists with social-activist creative impulses often have no desire to acquire public esteem and certainly have no use for institutions as a force of legitimating their art. Despite this fact, we may still learn from art legitimation behaviour as mapped onto social-movement formation and success. As Baumann (2006) reminds us, art worlds and cultural fields can be sites of collective action as much as any larger social-movement proper. It is for this reason that one may draw striking parallels between the art-legitimation process and the success of a given social movement: both contain elements of collective action and consensus. If we retain the notion that all art *is* collective action (from creation to consumption), then the creation and deployment of resources will determine the ability of an art-world to attain recognition (Baumann 2006). Resources within social movements may be physical or non-physical. Similarly, factors enabling change or recognition may be exogenous or endogenous. It is the ability of a collective to mobilize available resources that may determine success of a movement.

If we consider art to be both an intellectual and physical resource, where the inspiration and execution for that art is in direct alignment with the goals of a social movement, art then has the potential to become a profound tool for mobilization and change. It therefore may be stated that one should not be concerned with the accessibility of art with regard to aestheticism — where the art-viewing experience is a passive one — but instead consider how the members of a social movement may access the creation process themselves as active participants. This is what has become known as the excellence-access debate: certain controversial principles have typically been framed as opposing policy motivators around public arts funding and support (McNeely and Shockley 2006). Such a debate posits the obvious concern of what the cultural and political implications are when approaching the arts in terms of access as opposed to excellence. Consider the following:

Art is a social construct. Art is socially constructed as a specialized cultural expression, conceptualized as fundamentally constituted from the inherent skills and innate talents of the artist. Moreover, it is precisely the social character of art and its interpretation relative to social value, significance, and power that frames it as a political issue and places it on the political agenda. It is against this backdrop that we address the meaning and effect of the excellence-access debate relative to democratic ideals and practice in the U.S. The influence of society on the arts and the role and influence of the arts in society are the fundamental issues in question, particularly in regard to the creation, evaluation, use, and distribution of the arts in society. (McNeely and Shockley 2006, 47)

Art functions within the public sphere; artists therefore have a unique access to this sphere. As a consequence, the reaction and interpretation of art occurs in a social context where a sequence of images (however abstract or concrete) connect to create symbolic and historic relevancies. If society at large has the ability to map certain meanings upon art in a general sense, we must infer that members of a particular social movement have the power to not only legitimate art created within, but also to recognize the values and advantages of mobilizing socio-political art resources. Making art is fundamentally about representation, signification, and sensorial perception. Understanding activist art is therefore directly relevant toward understanding the cultural politics of social change (McCaughan 2006).

A focus toward “excellence” in the arts historically has implicated an undesirable art-product commodity (Baumann 2006; Shusterman 1993). As a consequence, “excellence” and “access” as art constructs have been treated as separate worlds, only to the detriment of all involved. Perhaps an important reason the legitimation of activist art remains somewhat avoided in academic literature is that it posits conditions whereby a large group of people may appreciate the benefits of both “excellence” and “access” as symbiotic goals — a prospect that undoubtedly leaves many art world elitists aghast (Shusterman 1993). In common established art-world gatekeeping, elitists have insisted that increased access will threaten artistic excellence, the two constructs not being entirely compatible (Baumann 2006; Causton-Theoharis 2008; Cromwell 2005; McNeely and Shockley 2006; Shusterman 1993). That is, if we legitimate

all of society as artists there supposedly will be no way to gauge great works apart from endless seas of mediocrity. This of course is nonsense. In order to increase cultural capital and social awareness, access and excellence in the arts must be dealt with as interdependent processes that in turn will create highly inclusive environments. As Barber reminds us, the arts have the capacity to simultaneously “offer expression to the particular identities of communities and groups” *and* “to capture commonalities and universalities that tie communities and groups together into a national whole” (1997, 15). Arts education and access enables increased cultural capital and engenders participation and excellence. We must not render artists responsible for watering down art so that it may be easily consumed by large masses in activist contexts; instead, we must create wider access to art from the ground up — in the form of education, training, consumption, and especially participation — for all levels of society so that excellence becomes a natural by-product of the process, no matter the context. If access is expanded in this manner, social capital increases and art becomes a relevant cultural object. As a consequence, art then becomes available for mobilization within social-activist contexts on a deeper and more profound level compared to simply making posters or participating in group song. Art no longer is a means to an end but an end in and of itself, or perhaps both a means and an end (McNeely and Shockley 2006). Art and social cause become symbiotic elements: one is used to frame and inform the other, allowing the public to equip themselves with the tools necessary in order to consider not only what makes a work of art special from a formalist perspective, but also how that work of art may function as an active cultural apparatus. Those who benefit from art access transcend any aesthetic concern: arts education and participation become germane to accounts of social value and social-activist movements. As culture arises from the efforts of a movement, it becomes a resource for its members. For instance, consciousness-raising throughout the feminist movement was both a marker of, and a resource to, the women who participated — a process acting as a catalyst toward group solidarity (Clay 2006). When personal experiences are mapped onto culture politics, boundaries and messages are maintained as a narrative practice for a particular movement.

## Photography, Visual Art, and Social-Movement Framing

The art object itself is intrinsically related to the imposed world. It does not point to that imposed world, it participates in it. Not only does art bring about what was not, it brings about what could be without it. (Martland 1970)

Social-movement resources may be physical or non-physical. The nature with which certain ideas are framed within a collective (that is how they are rendered comprehensible and appealing) may assist with the inherent success of a movement. (Adams 2002; Benford and Snow 2000; Buechler 2011; Chesters and Welsh 2006; Johnston and Noakes 2005; Martin 2008; Rodgers 2018). When ideas are delicately framed, social-movement members are shown an ideal perspective and the path toward successfully transmitting the voice of a particular cause is revealed. In other words, framing ideas creates a model narrative for a movement so that identity is properly transmitted. History has shown that preconceived artistic ideologies forcibly implanted onto social-movement contexts — whether with good or bad intentions — are doomed to fail. This has been proven most notably by the Situationist International — assuredly one of the more famous instances of persistent post-war attempts to transcend art in a single revolutionary act (Rasmussen 2006). Part of the Situationist ideology was to obliterate art institutions such as museums, concert halls, or any established school of artistic thought in a bold attempt to reimagine the conception and function of art in society. Situationist scholars such as Guy Debord believed the historical avant-garde had regressed into a commodifiable object serving to feed the spectacle of consumer society (Debord and Knabb 2000). The once subversive power of art was thought to have eroded as art became fused with the spectacle: overproduction and consumption reigning high as society passively envisioned a world beyond their means. The Situationists rejected art institutions with “militant fervour, and argued that the isolated work of art no longer possessed critical potential” (Rasmussen 2006, 5). In the minds of the Situationists, art had to die and be reborn through revolutionary praxis. Situationist members attempted to “create a territory where art and politics were merged and transformed from specialized activities into

a kind of holistic mega-text in which historical rationality expressed itself” (David and McCaughan 2006, 13).

The Situationists found it impossible to free themselves from the already tested historic avant-garde experiments. Situationist artistic efforts unwittingly fell into an unavoidable avant-garde renaissance or neo-avant-garde system, resulting in a rather abrupt abandonment of any artistic activities for fear of simply repeating history. The Situationists were unable to re-establish the original intentions of the historical avant-garde: the negation of the freedom of art and the insertion of new art fused alongside revolutionary practices. As Peter Bürger (1984) explains, the neo-avant-garde was a farcical repetition of the heroic failure of the historical avant-garde. The Situationist art movement failed for two reasons: first, single artworks too closely represented historical avant-garde idioms and, second, attempts to completely subvert all art in order to reimagine art was impossible to locate in the minds of the collective as a successful framework for the movement. All Situationist art was eventually deemed suspect by its own members, and legitimation — whether by internal or external consensus — became impossible. To the horror of the Situationist collective, the movement itself began to appear as a work of art through its increasing attempts toward total art suppression (Rasmussen 2006). If an art movement is to be utilized as a resource within social-movement collectives, that art must successfully be legitimated and mobilized by its members as a utility for the cause. This art must be created and accepted from within, not imposed from above. Despite obvious failures, there are important examples of Situationist artworks that undoubtedly cleared the way for subsequent activist-art contexts of successful application. For example, the Situationist practices of *drifting* (*dérive*)<sup>6</sup> and *psychogeography* produced a decidedly Lefebvrian<sup>7</sup> understanding of public space whereby a relationship is constructed between the individual and the topography — an abstract concept designed to counter the limits of predetermined location (Hunter 2006). The Situationists were able to rewrite one’s

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6 A *dérive* may be understood as a wandering throughout the city, letting your desires guide your path as you roam from street to street. Situationist scholar Ken Knabb explains that, “[i]n a *dérive*, one or more persons during a certain period can drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there” (Knabb 2006).

7 French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre introduced concepts such the right to the city and production of social space through this critiques of everyday life. The concept of the “everyday” was central to Situationist ideology.

relationship to public space through a series of slogans displayed in the form of graffiti on Paris city walls. One particular slogan that is markedly “delicious in its duality” reads, “The Beach Is Under the Cobblestones” (Hunter 2006, 24). This slogan suggests that the user of public space constructs their own psychogeography in two ways: first the idea and function of the city being constructed by the individual and, second, by offering an invitation to public insurrection through reference to the revolutionary narrative of cobblestones traditionally being used as projectiles at barricades. For Simeon Hunter this slogan is both poetic gesture and direct action (Hunter 2006). This artwork was therefore a successful mobilization of formal and political resources, the framing of which resonated with activist members to a semantic effect.

The effectiveness of slogans as visual framework for a cause was further explored by artists such as Barbara Kruger, an artist who in the late 1970s began placing her own text upon existing photos in order to project a range of social commentaries. Kruger’s slogans implicate the viewer so that they might question established societal norms as related to beauty, capitalism, and misogyny among other issues. In her 1986 work *We Don’t Need Another Hero*, for example, a typical black-and-white photograph of a young girl pokes the muscles of a little boy — an image that clearly relates to the well-known 1942 posters by J. Howard Miller such as *We Can Do It!* Along with the implanted aforementioned text, the image perpetuates the gender stereotype that women have been trained to view men as equanimous beings of heartless power. Simply put, Kruger is reminding us that the past narrative of gender being mapped onto positions of power is seriously outdated. This contradicting binary between image and prose creates a compelling instance of intertextuality, or parody within pastiche, suggesting that another hero isn’t needed because the Second World War is over. The post-modern (and often more specifically pop-art) technique of modifying existing textual fragments so that any original meaning is circumvented through intertextuality is known as bricolage or culture-jamming. This tactic attempts to expose methods of domination in mass society and foster progressive change. The culture-jamming technique has proven to be most effective when attempting to frame the ideas of social activism; however, Kruger’s work is still an individual effort that, although usually displayed on public billboards and effective as a voice for a cause, does not involve the participation of numerous activist members. As we shall see below, it is through collective art processes

whereby a social movement may utilize artworks or art movements most effectively as a mobilized resource for a cause.

## The Homeless Photography Project

When Emerson College in Boston and The Neighborhood Action Coalition<sup>8</sup> collaborated on a photography initiative, staggering results were displayed at an exhibition titled *Images from the Streets*. The participants in this project included unsheltered homeless individuals who were supplied with disposable cameras and asked to document significant images from their world. The photographs varied from rather innocuous images of parks to depictions of personal items to scenes of rejection and despondency. These images obliterate any societal narrative of the homeless experience as one can't help but admit the similarity to one's own predilection for photographing their surroundings. In what became known as the Homeless Photography Project, the resultant images provided tools for exploring and communicating the experiences and identities of homeless individuals who live at the margins of society bereft of an identity (Miller 2006). The captured images convey a shared and yet unique narrative of physical environment and a grounded identity within the homeless experience. This act of reconnecting knowledge, identity, and place creates a "powerful strategy for grounding individual lives in time and space, weaving threads of interconnectedness through events in the photographers' personal histories, and constructing a sense of belonging and community through the images that are created and shared" (Miller 2006).

*Images from the Streets* is an excellent example of creating access and participation for individuals to make art as a voice for a cause or movement. Looking beyond the fact that the project bestowed a much needed sense of self-worth for the homeless individuals, a greater context of communication was created to express a connection to a wider community and an understanding of the homeless experience. This project proves that a combination of so-called "insider" and

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8 The Neighbourhood Action Coalition is a politically independent coalition of hyper-local neighbourhood councils, committed to combating oppression and supporting their neighbours where the state fails them through mutual aid, solidarity, and direct action ("Solidarity, Mutual Aid, Direct Action" 2018).

“outsider” art — initiated through larger institutions to create access to marginalized communities — can coexist in compelling ways and can be used as a resource for social change. In the particular case of *Images from the Streets*, the effects were not contained to the walls of the initial exhibition, as is the case with many museum-ready activists’ artworks. On the contrary, the images have travelled to many other viewable contexts and several of the photographers have been invited to speak to community groups about the homeless experience. Therefore, this community art project has not only allowed individuals to become part of a social movement through participatory art access, but also has provided a wider concept of humanity to the homeless condition. Art access is provided as a conduit, individuals are empowered through participatory art-making processes, and a cultural identity is created for a larger movement: a cultural critical mass enabling social activism efficacy.

## Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

There are other notable instances of visual art being applied as a vehicle toward social change. Throughout the oppressive rule of the Argentinian military regime between 1976 and 1983, many human-rights abuses led to one of the most widely recognized examples of photography used to resist repression. In response to widespread abduction and disappearance, the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo<sup>9</sup> led weekly marches in Buenos Aires to distribute photographs of kidnapped children. As Tandeciarz explains, this public display of mourning “interrupts the civilizing order of the city to generate awareness and acknowledgement of the Mothers’ plight from even the most casual passers-by” (2006, 115). The images locate the separation between the living and the dead. By using images of kidnapped citizens — by attaching a face and a name — the Mothers have returned a sense of humanity to these individuals while at the same time creating awareness for a cause — a cause that others could be inspired to follow. The

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<sup>9</sup> The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo is an association of Argentine women whose children disappeared. Through their efforts, they created an unexpected oppositional force that exposed human-rights violations committed by the regime.

photographs were proof that the disappeared citizens existed and created an undeniable past-narrative reality.

Therefore, there are extreme benefits to using visual art in social-activist contexts for it creates a distinction between narrative memory and traumatic memory — a process where “affective experience is not simply referenced, but activated or staged in some sense” (Tanderciarz 2006, 135). This process allows photography and visual art to be used as a powerful device toward successful mobilization. Throughout the discourse on the matter, framing literature mainly focuses on speeches, writings, and statements — that is to say, nonverbal aspects are quite often overlooked. With the above evidence, it becomes clear that visual artworks and photography are crucial to movement framing, and that increasingly, “it is through images that political communication, the production of meaning, and the making of issues are accomplished” (Adams 2002, 24). These framing attributes are especially important for social movements within regions where public protest is forbidden.

The aforementioned examples of visual art and photography create a recall function for the collective consciousness. In these instances, art documents the root narrative of society; it is the gatekeeper of memory. Art then becomes a collective resource for a shared history. Images function as conduits for identity and allow for dialogue and reflection. The act of photographing one’s world requires reflection on experiences, values, and identity to determine what one wishes to communicate, and which images will constitute that message. This product, the photograph, then continues the reflective process through acceptance or rejection as an apt representation, contextual narration, reception by its audience, and the dialogue it encourages. The photograph is a call for attention and a beacon for social-movement members. It captures a glimpse of unique subjectivity, of humanity, and of a collective history. The photograph has the power to “reveal and reflect, to create dialogue between individuals and social worlds” (Miller 2006, 127). Photography and visual art create meaningful catalysts for progressive social change insofar as they challenge hegemonic and ruptured ways of problematic societal contexts. Visual elements have the potential to empower the public with alternative ways of understanding past and current narratives of society. As Susan Sontag (2004) reminds us, simple narratives can help us to understand certain societal issues, but photographs go further — they haunt us.

## The Arpilleras: Art as Social-Movement Symbol

The Pinochet regime in Chile, lasting from 1973-1990, ruled with severe amounts of oppression, implemented neoliberal economic policies, caused periodic bouts of widespread unemployment, and committed a long list of human-rights violations. Many citizens engaged in protest demanding a return to a democratic state. Many were severely punished for open protest against the state and, as a result, protest often occurred in secret contexts. A particularly fascinating instance occurred through the artisan weavings of the Vicaría de la Solidaridad (Vicariate of Solidarity), an organization set up through the Catholic Church. Through this organization, Shantytown women were provided with the opportunity to create *arpilleras* (small tapestries commonly displayed as household decorative items) in order to generate a small income. The women began to design covert messages embedded within various depictions as woven into the *arpilleras*. Such depictions revealed raids by soldiers, public beatings, and protests among other repressive activities. The *arpilleras* were smuggled into post offices containing sympathetic post workers. This created an opportunity for foreign buyers, such as NGOs and other human rights organizations, to learn of the atrocities occurring throughout Chile — atrocities the regime attempted to keep hidden from international eyes.

The creation of the *arpilleras* in Chile is an exceptional example of how art can be used as a framing device for social-movement purposes. In fact, it was the art object itself that singlehandedly created a context for social change as opposed to activist art being used alongside other resources — a remarkable case indeed. Through the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, the Shantytown women were provided with an opportunity to share ideas, create art objects, and mobilize these objects as a resource toward social change. Through these efforts, horrific oppression was communicated to the international community. Here we must remind ourselves that activist art need not be tailored to the masses. Because the *arpilleras* were such an effective framing object, it did not matter how many individuals observed the frame, but only that the frame was created and shared by only a few. Further, any legitimization concerns are immediately rendered moot considering the organic participatory nature of the creation process. In this instance, it was the people creating the art who possessed the ability to define its

boundaries as a collective. Undoubtedly, the *arpilleras* were effective because they operated on both an emotional and cognitive level and portrayed the situation in Chile with symbolic and literal contexts (Adams 2002). When international organizations observed the messages embedded within the *arpilleras*, an emotional connection was established through the striking visual aspects of the artwork — a connection that mere statistics cannot provide. This is an example of a phenomenon known as “belief amplification” as labelled in social movement analytics (Snow et al. 1986).

Further, sustaining hope within a social movement is essential in order to maintain a sense of morale. The Vicaría de la Solidaridad created access and an inclusive environment for disadvantaged women to create art — a context that eventually became an arts-driven social movement. Many Chileans could gain a sense of hope when international buyers purchased the *arpilleras*, a factor that undoubtedly maintained a determination to continue the struggle. Therefore, the *arpilleras* were crucial as a framing device, a mobilized resource, and created both individual and collective identity for a movement. It was because a work of art became imbued with all these factors that movement success and resistance efficacy was enhanced. Creating what Thompson (2015) calls “transversality,” the shantytown women engaged with each other over a sustained period that deeply influenced their ability to create new forms of social awareness.

## The Guerrilla Girls

With the advent of modern technology and the accompanying advertising machines, it is often necessary that individuals living in today’s society require abrupt awakenings when it comes to the realities of social injustice present throughout the world. With the ironic effect of globalization setting us further apart, many artists feel it necessary to create striking public statements so as to cut through the noise of social media, advertising, and world news. One such group, known as the Guerrilla Girls, has managed to build a body of work that “combines a Derridean understanding of Masquerade as a means to represent an unspeakable truth” (Hunter 2006, 25). Through presenting their work in a highly visible context, such as demonstrations, protests, or places of high public density, the Guerrilla Girls’ efforts are indistinguishable

from direct action when considering the highly politicized nature of the artistic subject matter. Forming in the mid-1980s, and with over fifty members, the Guerrilla Girls are self-described feminist activist artists claiming their anonymity — achieved by wearing gorilla masks and assuming pseudonyms of notable deceased female artists, which allows viewers to focus on particular social issues while avoiding any romanticization of the artist herself. The work of these artists combines fact-based humour with outlandish visual displays in order to expose gender and ethnic bias in addition to providing striking commentary on current narratives of corruption in politics, art, film, and pop culture. The Guerrilla Girls undermine the idea of “a mainstream narrative by revealing the understory, the subtext, the overlooked, and the downright unfair” while framing their work within an “intersectional feminism that fights discrimination and supports human rights for all people and all genders” (Guerrilla Girls).

When observing a work such as *Guerrilla Girls Code of Ethics for Art Museums* (1990), it becomes evident how the Guerrilla Girls choose striking visual elements (often deployed as a subversive type of advertising in the form of posters) to provide effective social commentary on the distribution of art through institutions as related to privileged economic exchange, the environment, and gender equality issues. In this work, the Guerrilla Girls use identifiable iconography — a set of ten rules listed next to roman numerals and printed onto two stone-tablet images recalling the Old Testament. Using such a widely recognizable image infiltrates our sense of memory to suggest a narrative of outdated social constructs that are as antiquated and misguided as certain messages contained within the bible. Statements such as “Thou shalt not permit Corporations to launder their public images in Museums until they cleaneth up their Toxic Waste Dumps” and “Thy Corporate Benefactors who earn their income from products for Women and Artists of Color shall earmark their Museum donations for exhibits and acquisitions of art by those Groups” and “Thou shalt admit to the Public that words such as genius, masterpiece, priceless, seminal, potent, tough, gritty, and powerful are used solely to prop up the Myth and inflate the Market Value of White Male Artists” create humorous and perverse social commentaries. Much like the work of Kruger, this type of parody (as executed in the form of flyposting or wild-posting) is a guerrilla communication tactic designed to capitalize on a set of distinctive qualities and appropriates their characteristics to produce an imitation that not only mocks the original object, but also

re-contextualizes it for social-activist purposes. The Guerilla Girls seize power of visual advertising syntax in order to convey complex social-activist ideologies in a quick and ready manner. Other Guerilla Girls works using irony to reveal the double standards prevalent in the art-world include *We Sell White Bread* (1987); *Do Women Have To Be Naked To Get Into The Met. Museum?* (1989); and *The Advantages Of Being A Woman Artist* (1988). These works were publically displayed in the form of posters, advertisements on New York City busses, and peel-off stickers on gallery windows to successfully widen the focus of gender inequality and racial discrimination. This type of cultural expression, using humour as a critical tool of the empowered, has commonly been referred to as a “weapon of the weak” (Lo, Bettinger, and Fan 2006). The Guerilla Girls show that cynical and humorous art applications can facilitate political expression for the disempowered. For Du Bois (1989), humoristic elements used in this way do not distract us from important issues, but rather help us to better engage with the formulations and circulations of social commentary. With the combination of anonymity and cynical humour, the Guerilla Girls have created an opportunity to mock oppressors in highly visible contexts and get away with it.

This type of activist art has proven to set in motion a peculiar form of public engagement that “balances between self-restraint and provocation” and “facilitates a form of civic expression registered with criticisms of, and disbelief in, such participation” (Lo, Bettinger, and Fan 2006, 99-100). If one is “in on the joke,” one feels the need to pass it along, and in the process become a conduit through which a voice for a cause is permeated toward willing members ready to align themselves with a particular activist ideology. The art in this case has successfully been deployed as a mobilized resource for a cause. The Guerilla Girls have given a voice to a movement in the form of participatory art that is both aesthetically pleasing from a critical perspective, but also appropriately designed as an approachable creative device. While the Situationists surprisingly distanced themselves from humoristic elements in their art, the Guerilla Girls nonetheless deploy similar artistic elements from a politico-aesthetic level as their art tactics are both theoretical and transformative (Grosenick 2001).

With the above examples of art activism, one can clearly see that through the right circumstances of participation, curiosity, urgency, and creation, social-movement success becomes a reality. As Thompson explains:

What socially engaged art and the production of alternative infrastructure can offer are physical spaces of engagement over time. They are, in a sense, prolonged encounters of difference and affinity that transpire in the world and between people. As opposed to a political theory or critique, the encounters enact a range of transformations that exceed mere worlds. They are somatic. They are lived. These encounters come with feelings as well as ideas. This is a politics of doing that provides an entirely unique and powerful set of potentialities. (2015, 145)

## Final Thoughts

Cultural flow is never one-sided, but more like a continuum of dispersal and return. Within social movements there exist artworks at the cutting edge of community and nation-state. This art differs from any avant-garde, or neo-avant-garde, in that it attempts to redefine the meaning of democracy through creative participation. These works most often utilize visual elements for their ability to make an immediate and lasting impact on the viewer. It has been shown that for the purposes of social-movement efficacy, participation and access to the arts can be a vital resource for change. This chapter is but an introduction to the possibilities and examples of current art activism occurring outside the gallery or concert hall. This field of study deserves continued attention and depth throughout social-movement discourse. There currently exists an exceeding amount of art activism that has been successfully mobilized as a resource for social movements. For example, one could examine Indonesian artists that, over the past decade, have produced a powerful body of artwork opposing human rights abuses (Turner 2005), or the Critical Art Ensemble who demonstrate the importance of moving laterally between fields to disrupt the circulation of ideas within a particular infrastructure (Thompson 2015), to name only two important examples out of a vast many more. Art activism must not be forced onto its members from above, but must involve collective action through a network of individuals, each working toward an idea of counter-hegemony. Social movements can use art to carefully frame their ideologies and communicate information about the movement in the form of a symbol. By studying art activism, we may

better understand how framing and resource mobilization function within a particular cause. In the art-activism discussion, we might come to understand how emotion and identity are important elements in social movements and what they look like on the ground (Adams 2002).

Participatory public art within social movements is an active environment where both artist and audience take action. This is a public project whereby civic participation is grounded in a particular social experience. Activist art conducted in this way gives individuals pause to reflect on what it means to participate in collective resistance. In this context, the idea of art as a separate sphere must be abolished. The excellence-access construct must be broken down and rebuilt as a unified theory whereby creation, hope, and determination are transmitted through the art-making experience. Art must not be created for the masses without the masses being privy to and included in the creative impetus in an organic and inclusive environment. This process fosters a bond between social-movement members and (as shown above) attracts new recruits to a cause despite large geographical impediments. Art activism provides a coherent identity and legitimate recognition for a cause. Lo, Bettinger, and Fan aptly describe activist art as the ability to “express the shared, yet contentious, understandings of objects and actions [making] it the vehicle of social movements” (2006, 78). Lastly, activist art is especially useful in that it keeps members active and committed to a movement once they have joined. As is evidenced in the examples above, art has the ability to give existence and meaning to repressed individuals. Art in this context creates a journey for legitimacy, a narrative for change, and amplifies belief. In the study of this art, it is not appropriate to simply focus on the content of art, but also on how people relate to one another while actually making art in a collective fashion. What this chapter shows is that when many individuals *do* art in social movements, that is — not just consuming it — powerful modes of movement success are realized. This art both embodies and realizes the nature of a cause where citizens may imagine alternative social and political realities. As shown above, even when art is nested within hegemonic contexts, it still has the power to effect material change. In closing, it is Sartre (1957) who reminds us that we are only our authentic selves when we choose freedom — the freedom to create meaning in our own lives. Further, when we choose freedom for ourselves, we additionally choose freedom for others. This ideology occurs at its most potent within the participatory cultural activities of social movements. When we choose to create safe spaces for others to make art and express themselves within

oppressive environments, we choose freedom for ourselves and for the collective: Art is that kind of activity that can change the world (Martland 1970).

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## Chapter 13

# “Vorstellen” As



# “Vorstellen” As: To Put Forward, To Introduce, To Imagine

**Kimberley Farris-Manning** is a trained musician and sculptor, who completed her degree in Music Composition at the University of Victoria (BMus 18). Over the past few years she has enjoyed designing, installing, and performing various multimedia works. She is interested in how relationships between objects are manifested through material changes over time. More specifically, she is interested in the process of inscription: that is, how objects hold and convey experience and time. She makes art as a form of inquiry: to pose or construct a space in which to contemplate the fragility and contradictory nature of equilibrium.

The venture seems clear to me. One exposes oneself to the light of the public. As a person. Although I'm of the opinion one must not appear and act in public self-consciously. Yet I know that in every action that takes place a person is expressed by his action and his speech. Speech is also a form of action. That is one form of venture. The other is we start something. We weave our strand into a network of relations. What comes of it we never know. We all need to be able to say: Lord forgive them, for they know not what they do. That is true of all action. Simply and concretely true, because one cannot know. That's what is meant by a venture. I'd say this venture is only possible when there is a trust in mankind. A trust which is hard to formulate. But one which is fundamental. A trust in what is human in all people. Otherwise such a venture is impossible. (Arendt 1964, 58:10)

The general feeling of alienation from humanist values brought on by the rise in xenophobia and nationalism around the world today calls for an

immediate response: can this phenomenological response be adequately made through art? If so, is it appropriate? Philosopher R.G. Collingwood said, “So long as the past and the present are outside one another, knowledge of the past is not of much use in the present. But suppose the past lives on in the present; suppose, though encapsulated in it, and at first sight hidden beneath the present’s contradictory and more prominent features, it is still alive and active” (quoted in MacMillan 2009, 44); even in uncertainty can be found a certain truth. Within this whole gamut of experiences across time and space, how can one create art that is relevant to the understanding and perspectives of the present day? In the absence of certainty, should one (or, more specifically, the artist) take action in response to historical and ongoing socio-political events? Is it enough to have a strong moral compass and assumed good intent, or can action in the context of such freedom be irresponsible? How much must one already know, and how much can be learned? To what extent can one’s own philosophy and methodology be trusted, when the context for the reception of artwork and the ability of people in society to think and have a sense of morality are so vast?

These were questions I confronted when composing a piece for violin and electronics during the University of Victoria’s international and interdisciplinary summer field school: *Narratives of Memory, Migration and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada*.<sup>1</sup> The experiential learning offered by this program allowed me to explore intersections of art and politics in the composition of my piece *Engrenages*. If art is a means of engaging with ideas, then one can identify and position oneself in the world through engaging with artworks, thereby interacting with tangible sensory inputs. This connection with material allows for relationships to be made with concrete historical events and ongoing social-political realities. In visiting the sites of traumatic memory and collecting field recordings throughout our travels, I did not struggle to find impactful or important material; I struggled to find the means through which to synthesize these experiences into the

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1 From July 16 to August 26, 2017, an international group of graduate students from various disciplines visited sites of traumatic memory in Hungary, Germany, France, and Canada. Participants engaged with artistic material at the sites, and participated in discussions with each other to form balanced and diverse impressions of each unique experience. Individuals responded with written reports and compositions throughout our travels and then presented their findings at a symposium the SALT New Music Festival in Victoria at the end of August. The piece I wrote for solo violin and electronics aims to reflect how artistic narratives of the past may inform the present context of migration, xenophobia, and truth in relation to the sites of traumatic experience visited during this field school.

appropriate form of art. In this chapter, I discuss the steps I took in collecting material (citations and field recordings), creating synthesis (form), and developing structure (Appendix A) in the composition, in conjunction with discussion of philosophical questions that I encountered in the course.

Professor Moussa Magassa explained that all conscious humans have a “response-ability” when it comes to dealing with current or past traumas. The (in)tangibility of art allows it to address ideas that cross boundaries including time, place, and their accompanying accepted social thoughts. Art is made from a human perspective; it is a series of choices and examples made, usually in an effort to engage human interaction with the world. In this way, an artistic venture can be a socio-political venture, given the appropriate space, trust, and human agency.

The question then becomes: how does one create an artistic response that confronts these socio-political issues through time, one that acts as a stimulus for further rumination? When dealing with thought, memory, and politics it is important to allow for diverse individual experiences, for it is when actions are no longer questioned or challenged that the power of the collective becomes dangerous. An artist should not use politics as a tool, or allow art to become a form of ideology. Art can *stem* from politics but art still has to be art, foremost.

Due in part to the role of history and education in the sites visited during this field school,<sup>2</sup> I chose to create the structure of *Engrenages* in a way that is similar to the architecture of a museum: where the building (or structure) itself provides information with regard to the interactions between materials and space. Much as the building of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) leads in an upward spiral to a tower of hope, I wanted the very framework of the composition to focus on the potential for — and power of — resistance. The spirals of love and fear in *Engrenages* (see Appendix B) are both permanent potential realities within human existence. The possibility for hate is omnipresent; one cannot deny its existence, but one *can act against its force*. It is our responsibility as morally decent and conscious humans to resist the pull of collective hate and to invert the spiral of fear. The quest for a truthful history and a healthy future must begin with the

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 at the end of the book for more details about the the sites visited during the University of Victoria’s graduate summer field school, *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada*.

acknowledgement and pursuit of the many narratives that exist within our memories.

The idea of the “people” — as a community of fate — not only implies a communal consciousness, including a communal consciousness of the past; it implies a conscious communal consciousness, and perhaps even more strongly a conscious communal subconscious. And it could — and should — understand itself in a new light, reflecting our history, as something in the manner of a critical, as it were ‘sharp-eared’ communal consciousness. (Lachenmann 2011, 242)

Art is accumulative; therefore, in responding to historical sites, an artist must also respond to the art that has informed, justified, and resulted from these historical memories.

But it is not enough to remember, or to simply respond; to create contemporary art, one must bring the past into the present and keep memory active. Neither can exist truthfully when divorced from the other; in order to tell a comprehensive narrative or to offer a complete reflection, therefore, one must address the *complete narrative*. This history is not dead; the narratives are ongoing and very much alive. There were points of convergence between the past and the present visible to me even within the timeframe of this program: the nationalist billboard campaign in Hungary,<sup>3</sup> the resurgence of white supremacists in Charlottesville,<sup>4</sup> and the fear of and hatred toward migrants (visible in the case of Cedric Herrou in France<sup>5</sup>). Lachenmann describes the “possibility for art to affect people or society [...], to remind them [...] of their destiny as beings capable of spirit, so that from there they can reflect upon themselves and their reality. That means: the artist has nothing to say; [his] task is to create. And the creation will say more than its creator suspects” (Lachenmann 2011, 242). (*But if an artist has*

3 MWBP, “Billboard Wars Against Rational Thinking,” Meanwhile in Budapest, posted July 2017, <https://meanwhileinbudapest.com/2017/07/01/billboard-wars-against-rational-thinking/>.

4 See Astor, Caron, and Victor, “A Guide to the Charlottesville Aftermath,” *The New York Times*, posted Aug. 13, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/charlottesville-virginia-overview.html>.

5 For more information see “Cedric Herrou Convicted of Helping Refugees Over Border,” *Al Jazeera*, posted Aug. 8, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/08/cedric-herrou-convicted-helping-refugees-border-170808082804597.html>.

*a poor moral compass, is it still their task to create?)* This idea that art is not absolute goes all the way back to Plato's thinking that

the art object ... manifests what cannot be understood in terms of its knowable conditions, because an account of the materials of which it is made or of its status as object in the world does not constitute it as art. Art shows what cannot be said. Philosophy cannot positively represent the absolute because 'conscious' thinking operates from the position where the 'absolute identity' of the subjective and objective has always already been lost in the emergence of consciousness. (Bowie 2016)

An artifact is often assumed to be a physical object created by humans; however it can also be referred to in the scientific sense of the term, whereby it is "something observed in a scientific investigation or experiment that is not naturally present but occurs as a result of the preparative or investigative procedure" (Oxford Dictionaries 2017). There are six main 'historical artifacts' (source material) in *Engrenages*, taken from sound recordings made over the course of the field school. I gathered these artifacts as a form of documentation throughout our travels and worked them into the composition once we returned to Canada. Present in both the violin and the electronics sections of the piece, these examples are enumerated below and exhibited in Appendix C. Throughout the remainder of the chapter, I refer to them by their numbers, as seen below, for the sake of ease and clarity. Please refer to the Appendix for their full textual content.

- 1 Sound recording of rain falling on candles left near the memorial plaques at Ravensbrück Memorial Site.
- 2 Quotation from an interview with the President Alain Chouraqui of the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp.
- 3 Slogans from the Hungarian billboard campaign, read by Hungarian students in the course, recorded at the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp and in Winnipeg.
- 4 Article One from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as spoken by Ralph Ehlers in the performance of "30 Articles" by Zaid Jabri at Ravensbrück Memorial Site.

- 5 Quotation recorded at a later date, spoken by professor Dániel Péter Biró in a discussion at the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp.
- 6 Quotation from an interview with the Head of Educational Services, Matthias Heyl, at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site.

One can analyze the surrealistic and fabricated nature of an “artifact” in detail; however, what is perhaps of greater interest at this time is *how* an artist can venture thought into the world: what kind of process must they undertake? The above material alone is not a piece of art: these artifacts are powerful; they carry meaning; they evoke thoughts and feeling. What they lack, however, is form. In my compositional venture at this point, I had the medium but not the means.

- *What role can artists play in responding to a particular space and time?*
- *How can an artist’s work address the personal and the political, while finding a balance between the concrete and the abstract?*
- *How can an artist create a piece politically, without making political art?*
- *At what point does political art become propaganda?*
- *How do we get closest to the truth, when the truth is not specified or absolute?*
- *In musical terms, what tools or barriers do composers face in searching for these truths?*

I will begin by saying that, although all of these questions address one another, they do remain in essence unanswerable. They are unanswerable because of the very nature of art: because even art that is critically created does not lead to a specific *point*. Returning to the opening statement from Arendt, it becomes clear how pertinent it is that the breadth of an artwork be measured not simply by the final product; in fact, this final product should act perhaps more as a reflection (or artifact) of the process through which it came to be.

The physical and time-based artifact is challenged by the very fact that art responds to the “artificial”: that it creates a surreal or artificial world (art-world) to reflect reality. An artist may fear writing things down due to a concern for falsifying or misinterpreting information;

conversely, one should regard the *avoidance* of writing with fear, for this denotes an inability to develop and change over time. It is impossible to change what never was; therefore it is possible that the role of the artist is simply to dare to create — even in a space filled with abstract and fluid “unknowns.” Arendt explains part of her own experience with this in an interview, stating: “Writing is an integral part of the process of understanding ... because certain things have been established. If I had a really good memory and I was able to retain all my thoughts, I doubt I’d have written anything at all” (Arendt 1964, 58:10). What is pertinent here is the idea that understanding and knowing are two separate things: writing — be it music or text — establishes perception where memory cannot. (*Can understanding exist outside of memory? Can you understand what isn’t known?*)

An artwork engages the interpreter in discussion with the themes of the text or piece, regardless of whether or not they experienced the subject matter firsthand. In this way, art becomes a “force that pushes us together as a people in the more irrational sense, at times in a form of intoxication; as a force that art should not simply invoke, however, but rather, as an object of reflection, break or load with new meaning, ‘suspend’ and hence ‘sublate” (Lachenmann 2011, 244-45). A mathematician can find a solution to a certain problem, but the beauty of math lies in the *process*, not in the *product*. In many ways, art is like math: each provides material, form, and concepts for others to interpret in a multiplicity of ways, resulting in innumerable solutions and processes. When an artist “weaves their strand into a network of relations” (Arendt 1964, 58:10), what comes of it is not concrete, because it differs for everyone who interacts with that work; but what does come of it is understanding and awareness of the thought process and the dialogue between material and immaterial, body and mind, time and space, personal and political.

When encountering memory, it is easy to remain only in the past. The action of memorialization seems backward thinking: like a freezing of action, moving forward. Memorialization is different from remembering, however, and it is because of memorialization’s innate reference to action that it is appropriate when educating today’s world regarding the relevance of past atrocities. Chouraqui, President of the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp, stated that “there should not appear to be an opposition between these two terms (memorialization versus action), for memory can pull towards the past, but memory can also be a motor to the present and the future with the clarity provided from historical lessons, as we are trying to do at Camp des Milles” (Chouraqui 2017).

The duality of these terms was visible in each of the three main memorial sites/museums that we visited throughout the summer course, as well as at Keleti Railway Station in Budapest, Hungary, which has a contemporary and ongoing narrative. (See Appendix 1 at the back of the book for the course description and the full description of sites visited.) In a way, Keleti Railway Station shows the intersection of memory and action most vividly, even though this site is not highly “memorialized” as of yet. Perhaps, in this case, there is a different kind of memory in play — one that is still actively being formed in this place and for these people, but that reeks of so many other terribly memorable times.

In my experience, Ravensbrück Memorial Site had the strongest potential for “active memory.” As well as the artifacts and statements found in the on-site museum, the physical space is maintained in such a way as not to be a reflection of the past but rather an echo or shadow of what happened there. The forensic memory<sup>6</sup> approach taken by the memorial site ensures that the narratives and testimonies of survivors are recounted *in* or *on* a physical space that is pertinent to each story. The success of this site as a place for both memorialization and education lies in the simultaneous presentation of *fact* and *concrete historical narrative* (in the museum), as well as the crucial *relation to the world* maintained by the very human and physical interaction with the stories, people, and lives that previously occupied the space. The human and abstract connection achieved by this “forensic” approach to memory is surreal, and in this sense could be considered art in and of itself.

The CMHR is an “idea museum”: a museum that interacts with the visitors and educates them through the stimulation of thought and exposure to ideas, while leaving room for personal responses to the topics and material. With the architecture of the building as its guide, the museum presents a broad and thorough narrative of human rights violations, as well as progress, within Canada and around the world. Facts, narratives, and case studies guide a visitor through a platform of critical thinking toward the final point and height of the museum, the “Tower of Hope”: the idea being that once someone has learned and acknowledged these past human wrongs, there is hope for action, and for progress moving forward.

This is where I found the museum to fall short.

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6 Forensic memory is the scientific investigation and approach to documenting and establishing memory.

We spoke with one of the staff at CMHR about the difficulties of incorporating contemporary issues into the fabric of a museum before they can be fact-checked or properly curated. I understand the values, fears, and complications inherent to this quandary, but firmly believe that in a world of live issues — of atrocities that resonate too closely with past events — it is not enough to engage with these events from the distance of pure education. What the CMHR already does very well is to find points of convergence between historical traumatic events, as evident in the exhibit presenting genocides around the world. I look forward to seeing how the museum continues to grow, hopefully increasing the number of temporary exhibitions, art installations, and other creative ways of fostering thought and discussion around current events.

This may be where art can offer a sideways entry point: an avenue into the exploration of issues that lack the distance and perspective necessary to curate an informed and accurate museum exhibit, for example. The final section of the museum at Camp des Milles has a graphic that charts the four stages of genocide: this is a concrete and active tool that visitors can use to relate the past to current-day or ongoing situations, and to draw parallels between what has happened, what could happen, and what needs to be done. I look forward to seeing how the CMHR grows to incorporate more varied contemporary tools into their already impressive dialogue.

Art has the capacity to elicit a response in the absence of certainty. Where truth and ability to act seem elusive, art can highlight its own artifice as a means through which to find not just one truth, but all truths. The synthesis of multiple narratives, perspectives, and dimensions enables art to “act on the conscious via the senses” (Lachemann 2011, 243). It is “precisely here [that] the contribution from our perspective as artists is crucial — an imaginatively and intellectually electrifying awareness of what makes the concept of art so indispensable for all of us” (Lachenmann 2011, 245-46). The danger in this assumed power of art and of statement in the absence of knowing is the inherent power of the artist (or of art) to constrain or dictate thought.

The approach taken in the compositional venture is therefore of the utmost importance. In the absence of certainty, when “what comes of it we never know” (Arendt 1964, 58:10), the artistic *process* becomes foremost in establishing the integrity of a piece. The “venture” lies largely in its form, as well as the synthesis material.

Composed in five movements, each movement of *Engrenages* can be mapped onto a part of the graphic described in Appendix A, as illustrated below. A preliminary score can be found in Appendix C.

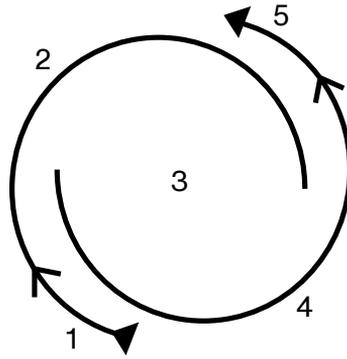


FIGURE 13.1. Graphic for “*Engrenages: Inverting the Spiral of Fear* for solo violin and electronics.” (Kim Farris-Manning, 2017.)

The piece begins and ends with *artifact #1*, framed by the acknowledgement of ongoing memory. In *movement one*, sound artist Jordie Shier manipulated the recording of the rain to sound like fire, while the violin plays pitches taken from the recording in fragments, as shadows. The violinist moves between *tasto*,  $\frac{1}{2}$  *col legno*, *flautando*, and *ponticello*, exploring the combination of noise and sound, clarity and confusion, at each point. Distorted and searching, the violin seems to be slowly engulfed by its surroundings.

*Movement two* begins with a rolling ostinato in the electronics, providing motion as the violin plays a sort of rhythmic and pitch translation of *artifact #2*. When the violin starts trilling at the top of page 3, snippets of text from *artifact #3* begin in a spatial 4-channel form. The fragments are meant to convey that this text is everywhere; the Hungarian students who read and recorded the text did not have to look up the billboards to remember what they said — this is a part of their world, and it is inescapable. In order to subvert or invert the original meaning of this text without denying its intention, this fragmented section is chaotic, loud, and an overload of information. The messages are there but they do not make sense, and the rest of the piece tries to shed light on this.

Hannah Arendt mused about what changed and what stayed the same over the course of Hitler’s reign: “What has remained? The language” (964, 37:15). She further explains, “The German language

didn't go crazy;”(, 38:30) the people using it — the syntax of the German language — is what became insane. Proved in reverse, this means that given the appropriate techniques, insanity can be challenged: its power can be harnessed and used in inverting its message. In presenting the text of the Hungarian billboards, I am not propagating their message: I am introducing material that needs to be confronted, parsed, and debunked. There is power in these words, and it needs to be deconstructed before it can be reconciled.

*Movement three* marks the arrival at the centre of crisis: devoid of reason, logic, purpose, and consistency, I struggled to find a way to render this negative space. If Lachenmann is right in saying that “art [as a force] should not simply invoke, however, but rather, as an object of reflection, break or load with new meaning, ‘suspend’ and hence ‘sublate’” (2011, 244-45), then perhaps a way to do this is to create a new perspective by construing the lens; by combining contradictory statements, thus creating a new complexity of meaning.

Shier and I developed a system of “perception distortion” through electronic convolution: taking the impulse response from the “fire” version of *artifact #1* and the original recording of *artifact #5*, Shier convolved and processed this with a recording of the violin playing a transcription of *artifact #4*. I chose to use Article One of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights here as a poignant reminder that law depends on our regard for memory (*fire, artifact #1*) and morals (*artifact #5*) in order to rule human behaviour. The violin is very sparse and noise-based in *movement three*, depicting the illogical and irrational human condition in this context.

*Movement four* begins with an embellished version of the quote from Matthias Heyl, *artifact #6*, on the violin. This shows how difficult an undertaking the spiral out — resistance — is, requiring the support of both the individual and the (balanced) collective. At system 3 of the score, the violin circles around the pitches B, C, and D, and recalls bow positions from earlier in the piece. This act of searching and of effort is accompanied by another piece of convolution in the electronics. In this case, the impulse response is taken from a violin realization of *artifact #5* (an internalization of the need to ‘repair’) and the consonants from the fragments of *artifact #3* (a reminder of what it is that needs repairing). These are convolved through violin interpretations of the Hungarian billboards, signifying ownership of the language and a simultaneous subversion of its meaning.

*Movement five* is the only time a field recording is played with no electronic manipulation except for added reverb: this is a return to *artifact #1* in its original state. The live violin plays alongside the recorded material, using a series of five intervals taken from the same source material, and a rotating a series of bow placements. The simple yet constant changes of interactions between bow technique and recorded source material creates space for listeners to hear and respond to the material presented, on their own. The piece ends with the first interval of the series played *col legno tratto*, implying a cyclical and continuous form. The formal lack of closure does not mark an end to anything, either artistically or in society, showing a connection between the past and the present in the time-span of this piece and beyond. This composition represents a necessary venture into current and past artistic, socio-political, and human thought. It is a personal response to what I experienced and witnessed at the sites visited during the field school. It is a collection of dialogues held with the people and places that we encountered during our travel. It is a venture into the unknown, simply and concretely because I do not know the answers, and I seek better questions. It is an act, and an evidence, of trust.

While this returns us to the enormous and age-old question of “what is art,” the power (or potential power) of art to dictate or constrain thought should not be overlooked — for “herein lies, not least of all, the danger that the horror might recur, that people refuse to let it draw near and indeed even rebuke anyone who merely speaks of it, as though the speaker, if he does not temper things, were the guilty one, and not the perpetrators” (Adorno 1998, 4). It is not the role of the artist to temper things, especially thought. As Arendt warned: “one must not appear and act in public self-consciously” (1964, 58:10). In order to allow others to respond as individuals, art must draw near the contentious: confront, reject, and recall differing ideas without directing and imposing one possible response.

The pressure exerted by the prevailing universal upon everything particular, upon the individual people and the individual institutions, has a tendency to destroy the particular and the individual together with their power of resistance. With the loss of their identity and power of resistance, people also forfeit those qualities by virtue of which they are able to pit themselves against what at some

| moment might lure them again to commit atrocity.  
 | (Adorno 1998, 2-3)

In order to maintain this simultaneous closeness and distance, the role of the artist may be to “bring closer what is too distant, thereby enlarging details, and [to] remove to some distance what is too close, thereby gaining perspective. Art and criticism both involve the active manipulation of perspective and detail, of wide-angle and close-up. Criticism, as well as art, brings reality into focus and also distorts it” (Schiller 2003, 94). Perhaps the question I was confronted with in approaching the composition of this piece, then, was how to find balance between distance and focus, perspective and opinion, memory and action, idea and truth, understanding and knowing.

- *How does one create an artistic response and space that confronts these socio-political issues through time, while allowing freedom for others to respond in their own way?*

There is a multiplicity of outcomes, *Engrenages* being an example. The problem is that with art as with politics, there is no universal method or way to venture forth other than to act and to trust.

**Engrenages: Inverting the Spiral of Fear***for solo violin and electronics***Engrenage** *n.*

1) (technique)

Mécanisme à roues dentées transmettant un mouvement de rotation.

2) (figuré)

Enchaînement de faits auxquels on ne peut échapper.

1) (*technical*): gears*Mechanism of toothed wheels that transmit a rotational movement.*2) (*figurative*): chain, spiral*A sequence of facts/realities that cannot be escaped.*

("Engrenage." Dictionnaire français.

<https://www.linternaute.fr/dictionnaire/fr/definition/engrenage/>)

The graphic in FIG. 13.1 depicts two simultaneous spirals leading in and out of a vortex, which is fed by the inward-moving spiral. In this case, the **inward spiral**, "fear," represents xenophobia, hate, and control. The **outward spiral**, "love," depicts the community and strength of xenophilia. The **centre of crisis** is a *point of stasis* removed from regular time: it is bereft of morals, and of basic human rights. It is devoid of normality, regularity, human dignity, and equality; and this alter-reality is nearly impossible to escape.

This piece analyzes the dualities, contradictions, and points of convergence between different sites and instances of traumatic memory. The listener is invited to travel with the violinist through simultaneous spirals, to feel the pull of the individual against the collective, the body

against the mind, motion versus stillness, memorialization versus action, and love versus fear.

Using field recordings from the travels to European sites of traumatic memory as acoustic and electronic material, the interactions between violin and electronics in the composition examine the pull of the dualities mentioned above: striving to take the outward spiral, invert the *engrenages*, and move instead toward a **centre of peace**.

## Appendix B

### Source Material in *Engrenages*

- 1 (recording)
- 2 «Il ne faut jamais regarder les sociétés et les situations de façons stables, mais il faut les regarder comme des processus.»
- 3 “We must never regard societies as stable; rather, we must regard them as processes.”
- 4 Billboard slogans:
  - “Hungary is a strong and proud European country.”
  - “If you come to Hungary, don’t take the Hungarian jobs.”
  - “If you come to Hungary, you must respect our culture!”
  - “If you come to Hungary, respect our laws!”
- 5 “Article One of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”
- 6 (translation from Hebrew) “Repair, repair, repair.”
- 7 “That they [the students] were raising questions together, that they were able to stand alone if they needed, that they were asked whether they need support.”

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Chapter 14

# Composing $\lambda$ -Calculus (Border)



# Composing גבול (*Border*)

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## Introduction

In 2016 – 2017, I wrote the three-movement work *Gvul (Border)*, premiered by Ermis Theodorakis at the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp in Aix-en-Provence, France, on July 25, 2017.<sup>1</sup> In this chapter, I will discuss the process of composing the work, how the composition deals with specific notions of recent European history, and the conditions for the performance in the context of the 2017 *Narratives of Memory* summer school at the University of Victoria.<sup>2</sup>

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1 The piece was explicitly written for Ermis Theodorakis, who has developed a very scientific methodology towards complex rhythms, proving himself to be one of the great musicians of our time. Before the concert of the work *Gvul (Border)*, a panel discussion took place with Dániel Péter Biró School of Music, University of Victoria, pianist Ermis Theodorakis from Leipzig, Germany, Prof. Gunnar Hindrichs from the Department of Philosophy, University of Basel, and Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Department of Sociology, University of Victoria. The commissioning of the piece was made possible through grants from Art Mentor Lucerne and the Canada Council for the Arts.

2 The course integrated students from Canada, Hungary, Germany, France, Korea, Pakistan, the u.s., and the Ivory Coast in the fields of music, law, the social sciences, and the

The task of writing for the Camp des Milles presented me with a conceptual challenge in terms of writing for such a space of historical and lasting significance. Les Milles camp functioned first as a French internment camp between 1939 and 1942. In Vichy France, Les Milles became a deportation camp for Jews.<sup>3</sup> In the initial stages of creation, I set out to explore the history of the camp from a contemporary perspective via the formation of musical material and form, seeking to explore the space as both a historical site of violence and trauma as well as to experience its present reality as a negative space, thereby investigating the contemporary sonorous ontology of the space. In planning the structure and conceptual framework of the composition, I proceeded to “translate” both the historical dimensions and the acoustic properties of the spaces within the Camp des Milles into musical material and form.

*Gvul (Border)*, scored for piano and electronics, explores the limits of memory, as it examined relationships between musical form, sonorous material, and historical perception.<sup>4</sup> The instrumentation for the composition became important in the context of the *Narratives of Memory* project, which aimed to investigate contemporary global issues through the visitation and study of historical places of violence and trauma.

In *Gvul (Border)* the piano is explored as both a resonant space and an object of history. The piano has existed, since the 18th century, as the representation *par excellence* of bourgeois music production, playing a significant role in the development of European art music. In writing for the piano as a historical entity, I purposely decided to investigate the “shadow world” of this instrument, as it corresponds to its history

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humanities. At each location, lectures, discussions, pre-concert talks and post-concert talks accompanied the performances. The lectures dealt specifically with the relationships between music history, memory, and trauma. As this was a multidisciplinary group of students, the discussions were fruitful, as each student brought their own perspective from their own discipline. While in Europe, students learned about historical sites that dealt specifically with the Holocaust and the current migration crisis; in Canada the focus shifted to the current Truth and Reconciliation Commission findings of the Canadian government. Music was directly woven into the fabric of the course discussions and learning outcomes.

3 For more on the Camp des Milles see United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Les Milles Camp.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*. Accessed 29 January 2019. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/les-milles-camp>.

4 The Hebrew word גבול (*Gvul*) can pertain to space (borders between regions), time (the border to the Sabbath), limits, and thresholds. In this piece, the term works to define the limits of memory and the threshold between environmental noise, sonorous space, and musical form.

as a bourgeois concert instrument of the nineteenth-century salon and concert hall. The composition *Gvul (Borders)* thus explores the piano as a place of ruin of previous centuries, and even as a place of historical trauma to be discovered in our own century, as depicted in the following excerpt of a poem by Celan originally published in German in 1959.

*Negative Space*

*Taken off into the  
terrain*

*with the unmistakable trace:*

*Grass. Grass, written asunder.* (Celan 2002, 119)

The composition of a piece of music entails both the creation of and a response to the history of sound. A piece of music can serve to awaken memories that have been repressed or forgotten. The composer, in creating a musical form for the listener, forms a dialogue between subject (composer), object (listener), and observer (listener). Simultaneously, the listener creates a personal form by “reading into” the composition. In the case of *Gvul (Border)*, such interpretation becomes heightened, as the materiality of the composition centres around absence or, in architectural terms, “negative space.”

In architecture, negative space relates to the hollowing out of a solid object that already exists.<sup>5</sup> Such “negative spaces” can be found in many central European cities, which have been formed in the course of history by countless wars, revolutions, demolitions of state planning. In terms of the Holocaust, negative space plays a central role in the architecture of the camps. In the visitation to Ravensbrück, during the *Narratives of Memory* field school, the ruins of the Siemens *Arbeitslager* present the negative space of the buildings, the visitor’s imagination needing to be informed by the description of the camp to imagine the larger context of the conditions within the camp during the National Socialist period.

Such a “negative space” was once found in Budapest as well. With each passing year, the ongoing renovation of buildings filled with bullet-

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<sup>5</sup> The term “negative space” is understood here as used in contemporary art and architecture. See Zdeněk Kočib’s “Quasi-Negative Space in Painting” in *Leonardo* 19, no. 2 (1986), 141–44 and Wolf Prix and Coop Himmelblau’s “The Tower of Babel Revisited” in *ANY: Architecture New York, Writing in Architecture* (May/June 1993), 26–29.

holes, missing spaces, and other traces of the violence of the past century disappear, allowing for a sanitized city to be part of a general historical amnesia. While renovation can serve to improve and preserve historical buildings, the ruling Fidesz regime's practice of renaming street names (often naming streets after politicians of the fascist era), means that new generations become more ideologically aligned with the present regime's right-wing narrative of history and forget the previous system of so-called socialism.<sup>6</sup>

The concept of "negative space" in *Gvul (Border)* is initially investigated via the resonance of piano. In the composition, resonance is used to present traces of sounds that "were there before" by means of "ghost instruments," resonating acoustic instruments that become activated by computer processing, in this case the piano itself. Investigating concepts of absence and memory, convolution is employed (a procedure in which the timbral information of one instrument gets processed by that of another instrument, acoustic space, or sound) in coordination with resonant instruments, which create sonorous "shadows" of corresponding instruments played by performers.<sup>7</sup>

In writing for the specific space of the Camp des Milles, I decided to incorporate the piano as an architectural entity, as "space of resonance" that would correspond to the very space of the performance. In so doing, I set out to create a form that would act as an analogy to the visitor's experience of the space as a historical entity, as well as processes of individual and collective memory that corresponded to such a place of traumatic experience.

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6 According to Daniel Nolan in the *Guardian* "among the contentious figures now on the map are writers and alleged war criminals Albert Wass and József Nyírő, alongside the less divisive, such as 1950s footballer Nándor Hidegkuti and actor Imre Sinkovits. Names forced to make way have included Köztársaság tér (Republic Square), Moszkva tér (Moscow Square), Roosevelt tér and Ságvári Endre utca, a street named after a communist resistance leader who was gunned down by a military policeman during the Arrow Cross rule towards the end of the second world war." "Hungary Drops Plan to Name Street after Antisemitic Author Cécile Tormay." *The Guardian* International edition, October 7, 2013. Accessed 29 January 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/07/hungary-drops-street-antisemitic-author-cecile-tormay>.

7 The electronic processing for the electronic components of *Gvul (Border)* was created in coordination with Sam Wolk. I am very grateful for his assistance in this project.

Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems. But it is not wrong to raise the less cultural question whether after Auschwitz you can go on living — especially whether one who escaped by accident, one who by rights should have been killed, may go on living. His mere survival calls for the coldness, the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity, without which there could have been no Auschwitz; this is the drastic guilt of him who was spared. By way of atonement he will be plagued by dreams such as that he is no longer living at all, that he was sent to the ovens in 1944 and his whole existence since has been imaginary, an emanation of the insane wish of a man killed twenty years earlier.” (Adorno 1973, 362-63)

In writing a music composition for such a space as the Camp des Milles, the composer must consider and respond to the unimaginable experiences of the individuals who were interned in the camp. My main purpose with recording the rooms of the camp was to allow the space to speak for itself. In so doing, the composition functioned to translate experiences of trauma into musical form and narrative.

Trauma as experienced by individuals and collectives are often accompanied by lapses in memory. In visiting the architectural spaces where traumatic events occurred, one can set out to investigate the nature of the space in its past and present existence and functionality. Therefore, I set out to incorporate the resonant nature of the spaces of the Camp des Milles into the compositional framework. First I created impulse response files of the various rooms within the camp. With convolution reverb, an audio signal-processing algorithm, based on the properties of a given space such as the rooms of the Camp des Milles, simulates the reverberation of a given acoustic space. In *Gvul (Border)* the impulse response becomes activated through the piano, and the virtual, recorded spaces of the Camp des Milles undergo a convolution process with the incoming acoustic signals (Hass 2013). Simultaneously, the musical form of *Gvul* shows a process of trauma, much like an

individual struggling to remember traumatic experiences of the past. The three movements present three types of analogy to memory loss.

The sound production in the first movement functions to re-enact a situation of complete memory loss, as the historical sound of the piano is negated. Here, the pianist produces only sounds related to hitting various parts of the piano (hitting the inside supporters with a hammer, striking with the palm on the wood underneath the piano, hitting with knuckles on the wood at the end of the keyboard, dragging a tuner along the tuning pegs and dragging guitar picks and knuckles along the keyboard). Each action relates to a proportion derived from the Fibonacci series. This sets up the proportional structure for the following movements.

41

Pno. dragging metal mallet on pins  $pp$  dragging nails on white keys  $sfz$

S.P. "pizz."  $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$  "pizz."  $sfz$

43

Pno. dragging soft mallets on black keys  $sfz$  "pizz."  $sfz$   $sfz$  hitting knuckles at end of keyboard UUU hitting knuckles at end of keyboard UUU dragging soft mallets on black keys  $sfz$  dragging nails on white keys  $sfz$

S.P.  $sfz$   $sfz$   $sfz$  "pizz."  $sfz$  "pizz."  $sfz$   $sfz$

$\downarrow = 63$  (accel. until m. 50  $\downarrow = 72$ )

FIGURE 14.1. *Gvul (Border)*, movement I mm. 41-47. (Biró, 2017)

The second movement incorporates resonant pitches, which are pressed down silently at the beginning of the piece and activated by the sustain pedal. The movement integrates a cannon process, which presents polyrhythmic lines of pitches moving from the lowest to the highest note of the keyboard, the rhythm of which being determined by an increasing and decreasing prime number series. Also here, negative space becomes integrated into this complex musical process, as the rising line avoids articulation of the pitches pressed down with the help of the sustain pedal.

FIGURE 14.2. *Gvul (Border)*, movement II mm. 36-39. (Biró, 2017)

In the third movement, the piece forms a dialogue with Schubert's last piano sonata, *Sonata in B-Flat major*, D. 960. This composition, written in the last months of the composer's life, acts as a kind of sonorous ruin.<sup>8</sup> In the course of the third movement of *Gvul (Border)*, isolated moments of the first movement of the sonata appear as single fragmented events, which are determined, once again, as the actions in the first movement, by the Fibonacci series. Here, musical form and memory acts as an analogy for traumatized memory, as Schubert's composition is revealed in mainly shorter, sometimes longer flashbacks. Simultaneously, other types of musical material, serialized pitches based on the resonant pitches of the second movement as well as noise elements, serve as an analogy to memory dissociation, the blurring of memory, identity, or perception, a psychological process related to traumatic memory.<sup>9</sup>

8 It was written in the spring and summer of 1828.

9 For more detail on the processes of traumatic memory in psychology see Katharine Krause Shobe and John F. Kihlstrom, "Is Traumatic Memory Special?" *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 6/3 (1997): 70-74, as well as Lynn Nadel and W. Jake Jacobs, "Traumatic Memory Is Special," *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 7/5 (1998): 154-57. I have also discussed how such processes of making analogies to historical trauma in the article "Remembering and Forgetting Lizkor VeLiskoach for String Quartet after Schubert" in *Circuit*, 18/2 (2008): 39-60.

The image shows a musical score for the piece *Gvul (Border)*, movement III, measures 103-106. The score is written for Piano (Pho.) and Soprano (S.P.). The tempo markings are  $\text{♩} = 44$  rall.,  $\text{♩} = 40$  rall.,  $\text{♩} = 36$  rall., and  $\text{♩} = 30$  accel. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, and *1/2 pressed*. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns and slurs, while the soprano part has long, sustained notes. The score is in 3/4 time and includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

FIGURE 14.3. *Gvul (Border)*, movement III mm. 103-106. (Biró, 2017)

## The Past in the Present

When Schubert composed his last piano sonata, he was living in a time of state control within the Austrian police state of Metternich and its reign of oppression, complete with artistic censorship, suppression, and surveillance.<sup>10</sup>

The act of composing music today, as authoritarian structures gain power and take hold in Europe and beyond, requires, in my mind, a different kind of composing, one that investigates history while forging the new. Following this trajectory, *Gvul (Border)* represents an attempt to bridge the past, present, and future in a critical and reflective manner.<sup>11</sup>

At the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp, the organizers of the *Narratives of Memory* field school were confronted with the problem of not being able to announce the concert to the larger public. Eventually, we learned that the southern section of France was put on a high security alert during that time period. In the end, the administrative staff could only allow a private invited audience including the students of the field school.

10 For more on the political culture of Schubert's Vienna, see Raymond Erickson's *Schubert's Vienna* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

11 For more on historically reflective modes of composing, please see "Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh, The Future of Historicized, Nonrepresentational New Music," in *Perspectives for Contemporary Music in the 21st Century*, edited by Dániel Péter Biró, Kai Johannes Polzhofer (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2016). For more on critical composition, see Dániel Péter Biró's "Emanations: Reflections of a Composer" in *Schönheit (Konzepte 2)*, edited by Gunnar Hindrichs (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2016).

In this way, the goal of the *Narratives of Memory* course, to present “the past in the present” with all the implications of historical trauma, was realized both in the artistic and social-political realms. The difficulties encountered in putting on concerts in Hungary and France gave both educators and students a sense that the project of creating art, which critically responds to the history in the present, is needed more than ever.

## References

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- Celan, Paul. 2002. “The Straitening.” In *Poems of Paul Celan: A Bilingual German/English Edition*, Revised Edition, translated by Michael Hamburger, 119. Persea Books: New York. The German is entitled “Engführung” and is found in Celan, Paul. 1959. *Sprachgitter*. Frankfurt: S. Fischer Verlag.
- Hass, Jeffrey. 2019. *Introduction to Computer Music: Vol.1*, Ch. 4: Synthesis. Accessed 28 January 2019. [http://iub.edu/~emusic/etext/synthesis/chapter4\\_convolution.shtml](http://iub.edu/~emusic/etext/synthesis/chapter4_convolution.shtml).



# Conclusion

**Dr. Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly** is a Professor at the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria. He is a political scientist, specializing in comparative and urban politics. He holds a SSHRC Partnership Grant on Borders in Globalization and is a Jean Monnet Chair in Complex Policy and Governance.

This collection on the narratives of memory has explored issues of xenophobia and migration in the European Union and Canada. Rather than being a systematic exploration of the memorialization of xenophobia and migration, the essays in this volume reflect the result of the participants' profound learning experience during the field school. The volume brings to the forefront the participants' confrontations, relationships, and

experiences with their varied pasts and, in particular, with what Ruth Kluger has termed “timescapes.” Timescapes builds on Appadurai’s “articulation of the five dimensions of global cultural flows” (i.e., ethnoscaping, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and ideascapes) (Appadurai 1996, 100-20), thus bringing in notions of time and memory to an important conversation about the global cultural flows.

A “timescape,” for Kluger, “indicates a place in time, that is, at a certain time neither before nor after” (2001, 65). Timescapes suggest a “standstill” position whereby one’s experiences are confronted and reshaped through memorialization. Kluger writes “I want my timescapes: Evocation of places at a time that has passed” (2001, 66).

The concept of a timescape is extremely useful to tease out the lessons learned from this innovative and ambitious project. The contributions to this edited volume reveal how the memorial experiences with migration and xenophobia were elicited with visits of Holocaust and human-rights memorial sites and museums. This is a significant outcome as it speaks to the power of the site itself to provide an important dimension of lived and embodied memory. Critics of memorial sites refer to them as “antiseptic and clean, utterly devoid of the stench of death” (Katz 2009, 55) because they are missing the “smell of smoke” (Katz 2009, 214); and indeed, museum sites tend to be deliberate, clean, beautifully and thoughtfully set buildings, and sometimes they include designed landscapes such as parks and lakes. Kluger recalls a visit: “I once visited Dachau with some Americans who had asked me to come along. It was clean and proper place, and it would have taken more imagination than your average John or Jane Doe possesses to visualize the camp as it was forty years earlier” (Kluger 2001, 65).

Yet, as noted by the students and participating faculty these memorial sites also generated both individual and group “timescapes.” These took the form of distinct reflections and self-reflections — the sum of these many experiences, for some, barely scratched the surface of the suffering, while for others, they were nearly intolerable. For all, however, they are memorial experiences that marked a summer, and a life, with indelible self-reflection and awareness.

Acknowledging their visits to concentration camps and other memorial sites such as Ravensbrück (Germany), Les Milles (France), and the Hungarian Keleti Railway Station, as well as, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, in Winnipeg, Canada, the authors to this edited collection build on their disciplinary knowledge to relate and

narrate their own personal and collective perception; including in deeply personal and transformative perceptions of events such as the Holocaust and concurrent issues of migration and xenophobia, and of the trauma of colonialism, as documented at memorial sites and museums. What is particularly extraordinary is the sheer emotional, sometimes heart-breaking engagement with the evidence with which the authors were confronted with when walking through the memorial sites.

While reading these chapters leaves the reader with the sense that experiencing memorial sites on the Holocaust in Europe was a significantly and qualitatively different experience than that at the Canadian sites, the timescaped reflections, critiques, and lessons were of the same standing and duress. Participants drew on profound feelings of self-reflection and on the re-discovery of aspects of their identity and humanity. These timescaped experiences changed their engagement with how memory shaped their perceptions of both past and present-day events.

Charlotte Schallié and Dániel Péter Biró were the two principal instructors of the summer school. They took all the students to visit all four memorial sites: the Keleti Railway Station in Budapest (Hungary) was the first site, the Ravensbrück Memorial Site (Germany) came second, the Site-Memorial of the Camps des Milles (France) was third, and on the way back to Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, they visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (Winnipeg). Each site was chosen for its exploration of cultural narratives of the past, memorialization, and as a site of engagement with public policy pertaining to the migration crisis and the resurgence of nationalism and xenophobia today.

The field school commissioned three musical compositions inspired by the various sites: Syrians held at the Keleti Railway Station in Budapest inspired Hungarian composer Andrea Szigetvari for her *Beet Kohlrabi Cantata*. This site has dual significance for the school, as Hungarian Jews were deported from the Keleti station in 1944. The visit to the Ravensbrück Memorial Site inspired Syrian composer Zaid Jabri, who composed, with reference to the Universal Declaration for Human Rights, *Thirty articles for Viola and Electronics*. Dániel Péter Biró composed *Gvul* (Hebrew for border) for the Memorial Site of Les Milles Camp.

We see that self-awareness changes everything in a number of the student contributions to the volume. Emily McCallum, who in discussing the music of Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*, notes that music refuses

to present the answer to an image, underscoring that music challenges the listener to actively question how sounds are related to the world. Similarly, Kimberley Farris-Manning highlights the gap between the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations)<sup>1</sup> and what she observes at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which she describes as an “idea museum.” She maintains that there is often a gap in linking exhibits of “historical traumatic events ... on genocides around the world” to “current events.” Farris-Manning suggests this gap should be bridged by art because “art can highlight its own artifice as a means through which to find not just one truth but all truths.”

Similarly, Paige Thombs’ focuses on linking memory to photographs because “every photograph is a certificate of a presence.” Thombs’ essay questions the role of photography as an act of memorialization; an act in between timescapes, or an act of social agency and reflective truth. The images of Buchenwald and Ravensbrück’s crematorium are at stake here; which one is most real — the one found on the internet or the one that is “my photo.” The act of taking the photography is much more “visceral.” Thombs writes: it “shut down my entire being; I could not move.” Indeed, the photo taken today is not just a photo; it is not just about what was seen, because it also encourages newer timescaped feelings imprinted onto the image: “I feel what I felt,” which fixates a sentiment of immediacy and of unforgiving reality.

Alain Chouraqui and Lena Casiez militate for a “duty of memory” and “exceptional vigilance.” Their argument is that the processes that lead to pan-social phenomenon of abuse, xenophobia, oppression, and violence can be resisted, that prejudices, xenophobia, and fear can and should be fought “every day.” They argue that such language is to be resisted and that all resistance starts with “righteous acts” as expressed at the Les Milles Museum’s Wall of Righteous Acts; a huge educational display three metres tall and eight metres long. The Museum’s primary function then is as a long-term reference across time and space, which includes representations of both memorialization of the past and daily exceptional vigilance in the present.

Memorialization is also understood through a more political and social lens by some of the authors. Ildikó Barna, in reviewing the various Hungarian political campaigns — the nationalist and

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1 Article One of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”

conservative Fidesz Party, led by Viktor Orbans and anti-immigrant and anti-European Party — points-out that propaganda uses “stereotypes,” “selections” of facts and “censorship,” as well as “repetition,” “lies” and “assertion,” “pinpointing the enemy,” and, ultimately appealing to “authority.” In sum, Barna surmises, instrumentalizing xenophobia, using stereotypes, and sustaining the illusory “symbolic enemy” has been so successful that fear of immigrants, even panic reactions, have led to laws criminalizing migrants and assistance to migrants. Yet, this is happening in a country where there are very few migrants.

In a similar vein, Tamara Gonçalves’ Brazilian exploration provides an important comparative point of view to the French, German, and Canadian studies, suggesting that the Brazilian regimes of the last 25 years compares well with the rise of the conservatives and nationalists, and today’s autocratic Hungary. What grounds her argument is the continuous presence of the political reflexes of Brazil’s post-dictatorship and militarized regimes, despite laws of amnesty instituted in 1979, a new constitution in 1988, and a post-2012 Truth Commission. To this day, Brazil remains deeply socio-economically divided, violent, and oppressive. Indeed, as Gonçalves reminds us, one-third of Brazilian people “are deprived of basic goods and services out of the rule of law.”

Coming back to Canada, Dawn Smith (Nuu-chah-nulth) provides the reader with the view of an Indigenous student, drawing on her reflections from a different field school, one that focused exclusively on the Holocaust. Smith’s essay explores memories of Self-Determination, and of Truth-and-Reconciliation, in parts because “the field school was an opportunity to study racism, intolerance, and antisemitism, but also a safe place to learn.” Smith admits an “overwhelming feeling of ignorance” about the Holocaust, and observes that “there was so much respect ... for those who perished in the Holocaust.”

Smith discovers a German, possibly European, fascination for Indigenous people and is dismayed at the discovery that there was a relationship between the Nazi regime’s Holocaust ambitions and the “American conquest of the west as a model for Germany’s conquest of the (European) east.” And, she underscores that in Canada, Self-Determination and Truth-and-Reconciliation guide the relationship between Indigenous people and settlers; indeed, “Canada is still desperately negotiating with hundreds of First Nations to have them surrender, once and for all, their title to the lands given to us by the creator.” She notes that Self-Determination varies from nation to nation and that Truth-and-Reconciliation remains a huge issue because

“Canada’s genocidal history with Indigenous people and residential school is horrific and ugly, and it will require time to heal.” Smith concludes: “genocide is genocide; it knows neither race nor bounds.... Education is key to reconciliation but also to building and understanding of who we are as human beings.”

In sum, interactions with memorial sites and museums led to self-reflection, to finding one’s humanity, to thinking about oneself and to reflecting on what memories are about; past and present intertwined. Confrontations, in particular with the survivors of genocides own expression of memories through art production or afterwards, indeed, led to “a whirlwind of intense emotional reflective contemplation.” In the end, each participant confronted their own timescapes, and in so doing, ended up bridging their own humanity and sense of self.

## References

- Arjun, Appadurai. 1996. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Katz, Art, 2009. *Dachau: A Silent Witness*. Bemidji, MN: Burning Bush Press.
- Kluger, Ruth. 2001. *Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered*. New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York.
- United Nations. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Accessed 10 August 2019. <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

# Appendix 1

## **Syllabus: *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada***

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**

**GRADUATE FIELD SCHOOL ■ GS 501 – SUMMER 2017 (1.5 units)**

### *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada*

This international graduate summer school\* is open to students in the Humanities, European Studies, Memory Studies, Holocaust Studies, Social Sciences, Education, Fine Arts and Music. Partnering with Faculty and staff from Aix-Marseille Université (France), Eötvös Loránd University (Hungary), the University of Osnabrück (Germany), and the University of Victoria (Canada), students will study and travel for three weeks in Hungary, Germany, France, and Canada engaging in inter-

cultural discussions and musical performances at sites of traumatic historical memory.

*\*Upper-level undergraduate students may be considered as space permits.*

At each location, students will reflect on how narratives (both written and musical) of the past inform the present context of migration and xenophobia, with particular notice of the current Syrian refugee crisis. Furthermore, students will examine how each of the four countries under study is responding through its own conception of multiculturalism and refugee settlement policies.

During the final week of the summer school, students will present their research projects (written, oral, and/or musical) at an interdisciplinary symposium at the University of Victoria. This symposium will bring together emerging and established scholars, students, musicians, composers, community leaders, and members of the public for an interdisciplinary and intercultural discussion on the role of memory and narratives of the past as a political tool and opportunity for cultural reconciliation.

A particular objective of this symposium will be for students to use the Canadian experience with multiculturalism and the recently published Truth and Reconciliation Commission report as comparative touch points for understanding pan-European challenges in light of the current refugee crisis.

The graduate summer school runs from July 16 — July 27 (Hungary, Germany, France), and from August 16 — August 26 (Winnipeg and Victoria, Canada).

### ***Course Instruction***

This is an interdisciplinary graduate course and will not be housed in any specific department; it is listed at UVic as GS 501 for 1.5 units of credit. The course instructor is Charlotte Schallié from UVic's Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies. Contributing and accompanying UVic faculty members are Helga Hallgrímsdóttir (School of Public Administration), Dániel Péter Biró (School of Music), and Helga Thorson (Germanic Studies). In addition, the following global partners will work with the students in a workshop format at each location:

- France: Bernhard Mossé (Fondation du Camp des Mille Mémoire et Education)

- Germany: Matthias Heyl (Ravensbrück Memorial Site), Maja Bitterer, and Christoph Sturm (University of Osnabrück)
- Hungary: Ildikó Barna (Eötvös Loránd University)
- Canada: Mireille Lamontagne (Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg)
- Dawn Smith: (UVic First Peoples House), Sabine Lehr (Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria), and Moussa Magassa (Human Rights Education Advisor at UVic)

The language of instruction is English.

### ***Learning Objectives***

- To use interdisciplinary/intersensory approaches that examine memory and narrative as political, social, and creative collective ventures,
- To examine layers of site-specific memory and understand how memory politics and narratives of the past shape current political decisions,
- To explore how memory and narratives of the past can be deployed as an agent of change and resistance to destabilizing and fracturing discourses,
- To bring together European and Canadian students, musicians, and scholars to facilitative fruitful exchange and comparative frameworks built around inter-cultural dialogues,
- To understand the interlayering of cultural narratives of the past and memorialization onto current public policy challenges relating to multiculturalism, diversity, and integrative national and trans-national identities in the face of rising nationalism and xenophobic discourse.

### ***Course Requirements***

Participation and Preparation	20%
Blog postings at each location	15%
Symposium Group Presentation	25%
Research Paper or Research	40%

***Participation and Preparation***

Course participants are expected to read the course readings (scholarly articles, memoirs, etc.) prior to arriving in Budapest and be prepared to discuss them during class sessions. In addition, students are expected to engage in dialogue with one another and with the guest speakers, scholars, and musicians at each of the sites.

***Blog Entries (500 – 600 words) on CourseSpaces***

Each day, one student will be responsible for creating a blog posting (with both text and visuals) about our discussions on that day. At each site, one of the following topics will need to be addressed:

- 1 How does the layering between the past and present emerge in Budapest, Berlin, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille, and/or at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site?
- 2 How do these sites intersect with (im)migrant experiences?
- 3 How do current memory politics shape political decision-making processes (relating to multiculturalism and diversity)?
- 4 What can art offer the refugee crisis?
- 5 Can / should art function as a medium of public protest?
- 6 Are public memorials or musical performances effective tools for challenging xenophobic discourses?
- 7 Discuss the public exhibition of “difficult knowledge” (e.g. at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, The Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations, or the Royal BC Museum).

***Symposium Group Presentation***

Working in small groups, with representation from each of the participating countries, students will give a presentation at the “Narratives of Memory” symposium (August 24 and 25, 2017) at the University of Victoria.

***Research Paper (3500 — 3750 words not including the bibliography) or  
Research Creation Assignment***

277

The research paper addresses one of the specific topics covered in the course. Students may use any common style manual (as long as they do so consistently). The paper may be submitted electronically or as a hard copy. The due date is August 30th, 2017, at 4pm (PST). Late submissions will lose two percentage points per day and will not be accepted after Sept. 1, 2017. Papers are expected to be well researched (making use of sources that are additional to any research bibliography that the instructors may have provided), appropriately documented, and carefully proofread. The bibliography should include at least six secondary sources.

Students will have the opportunity to present their research at the symposium in Victoria and submit their paper for consideration in an edited volume.

***Research-Creation Assignment for Composers and Musicians***

Create a composition based on your experiences at the visited historical sites. At each site write a short (one to three minute) compositional study for a solo instrument, with or without electronics, working with musician participants. Your piece might incorporate field recordings or be a more “abstract” sonorous analogy, which responds to the various sites. Consult with the course instructors and guest artists in the course of the field school. The pieces studied can also inform your own compositional work. Be ready to present a short presentation on your work in Winnipeg (work-in-progress) and Victoria and write a 10-15-page paper. All final projects will need to be pre-approved by Dániel Péter Biró who will also mark them.

***Symposium and Music Festival in Victoria***

The two-day “Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada” symposium will take place on August 24th and 25th at the University of Victoria, in conjunction with the SALT New Music Festival. A portion of this joint event will include presentations by the graduate students who participated in the summer school, and will culminate in the performance of three musical compositions that were created for the field school and conference by Andrea Szigetvári, Zaid Jabri, and Daniel Péter Biró. The papers presented, as well as the musical works performed, will explore how

varied agents of memory—including the music we listen to, the (hi)stories that we tell, and the political and social actions that we engage in—create narratives of the past that critically contest and challenge xenophobic and nationalistic renderings of political possibilities for Europe and Canada.

### ***Course Readings / Music and Listening Assignments***

All scholarly articles are available on UVic CourseSpaces. The three monographs can be purchased from amazon as Kindle downloads. Participating students are expected to have read all texts and to have completed all listening assignments prior to July 16th.

All monographs, articles, music and listening are listed at the end of the syllabus.

### ***Program Costs***

- Tuition and fees
- 500 Euro (CAD \$750) registration fee payable to the University of Victoria
- Round-trip airfare between Canada and Europe
- All meals (exceptions: breakfast provided in Europe, three meals provided in Ravensbrück)
- Own travel and living expenses between July 28 – August 15, 2017
- All intra-European travel costs (Budapest-Ravensbrück; Ravensbrück-Aix en Provence) will be covered by the program, as well as a one-way flight from Winnipeg to Victoria. All accommodation costs in Europe and Canada are covered for the dates of instruction.

All other travel (arrival in Budapest by July 15, departure from Marseilles after July 28, arrival in Winnipeg by August 15, departure from Victoria after August 25) are the responsibility of the student.

**16 July – 19 July 2017 (Budapest, Hungary)**

The Budapest Keleti Railway Station: At this location in 1944, trains deporting Jews, Sinti, and Roma headed to concentration and death camps. This railway station was also an important destination during the Hungarian revolution of 1956. In 2015 the periphery of this same site had turned into a makeshift migrant camp.

**20 July – 23 July 2017 (Ravensbrück Memorial Site, Germany)**

The Ravensbrück Memorial site (Mahn-und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück): The layers of memory at this location include the Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp (1937 – 1945) under National Socialism, barracks for the Soviet army in the immediate postwar period, the Ravensbrück National Memorial in the German Democratic Republic (1959-1990), the Ravensbrück Memorial (since 1993), and the Ravensbrück International Youth Meeting Centre (since 2002).

**24 July – 27 July 2017 (Aix-en-Provence, France)**

Le Site-Mémorial du Camp des Milles: This site, a former French internment camp, is now a memorial that serves as a link between the past and the present. Since the fall of 2015 it houses the UNESCO Chair of Education for Citizenship, Human Sciences, and Shared Memories.

**16 August – 19 August 2017 (Winnipeg, Canada)**

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg (Canada): Opening in 2014, this national museum explores five different world genocides as well as the Canadian context of human rights abuses, including residential schools for First Nations children, missing and murdered aboriginal women, and the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.

**20 August – 26 August 2017 (Victoria, Canada)**

University of Victoria: The summer school will culminate at the University of Victoria in Canada. Throughout the week, students will work collaboratively in groups on various projects that they will present at an international symposium, *Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada* (August 24th and 25th).

Each group will be made up of members from each of the countries represented. In this way, these presentations will be informed by the cross-cultural dialogue that is an integral part of the entire course.

At each European location, there will be a musical performance by fund-granted and chosen performers:

- The first composition will be written by Hungarian composer Andrea Szigetvári for the Budapest East Train Station (Budapest-Keleti pályaudvar). The East Train Station has been an important stage for the European refugee crisis in 2015. Simultaneously, the site is historically important in terms of its function during the Holocaust and cold war. The composer will investigate these historical relationships with an interactive composition at the site and at the FUGA Artist Centre in Budapest, Hungary.
- The second composition will be written by Syrian composer Zaid Jabri and will be performed at the Ravensbrück Memorial site in Germany. Mr. Jabri's new piece addresses his experiences in Poland and explores questions of memory in a larger European context.
- The third composition will be written by composer Dániel Péter Biró and will be performed at Camp des Milles in France. With the working title "Crossing the Threshold," this new composition will deal with the complex questions of immigration and colonial legacy within Canada, Hungary, France, and Germany.

### *Course Policies*

#### *Academic Integrity*

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individually or in group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences.

Plagiarism sometimes occurs due to a misunderstanding regarding the rules of academic integrity, but it is the responsibility of the student to know them. If you are unsure about the standards for citations or for referencing your sources, ask your instructor. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the students transcript, or a suspension. It is your responsibility to understand the University's policy on academic integrity: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html#>.

### ***Accessibility***

Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach us and/or the UVic Resource Centre for Students with a Disability (RCS D) as soon as possible. The RCS D staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations (<http://rcsd.uvic.ca/>). These services may also be available online or at your home institution. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

### ***Commitment to Inclusivity and Diversity***

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

### ***Grading***

Percentage scores will be converted to letter grades according to the university-wide standard table utilized by UVic, which can be found here: <http://web.uvic.ca/calendar2016-09/grad/academic-regulations/grading.html#>.

### ***Late Assignments***

Late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangement has been made with the course instructor.

**Monographs:**

Kertész, Imre. *Fatelessness*. Translated by Christopher C. Wilson and Katharina M. Wilson. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1992. pp. 1–50.

Sellars, Bev. *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School*. Talonbooks, 2012.

Snyder, Timothy. *On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century*. New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2017.

**Articles:**

Duhamel, Karine. “Why Reconciliation? Why Now?” *CMHR Human Rights Blog*, June 15, 2016, <https://humanrights.ca/blog/blog-series-1-why-reconciliation-why-now>.

———. “Reconciliation: A Movement of Hope or a Movement of Guilt?” *CMHR Human Rights Blog*, August 24, 2016, <https://humanrights.ca/blog/reconciliation-movement-hope-or-movement-guilt>.

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———. “Approaching the Human Rights Stories of Indigenous Peoples.” *CMHR Human Rights Blog*, December 14, 2016, <https://humanrights.ca/blog/exploring-human-rights-stories-indigenous-people>.

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- Kovács, Henriett, and Ursula K. Mindler-Steiner. "Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust Memory: The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014." *Politics in Central Europe*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2015, pp. 49–72. De Gruyter, doi: 10.1515/pce-2015-0010.
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“Official Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools,” 11 June 2008. YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ryC74bbrEE>.

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Szigetvári, Andrea. “Noise-Wrangling: An Attempt to Reveal Noises That Matter.” *Perspectives for Contemporary Music in the 21st century*, edited by Dániel Péter Biró and Kai Johannes Polzhofer, Wolke, 2016, pp. 47–65.

“Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action, 2015.” *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, [http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).

***Required Reading for Hungarian Students:***

Matthias Heyl. “Nevelés Auschwitzról, Auschwitz után. Az oktatás változzék szociológiává.” *Holokausztoktatás és autonómiára nevelés* (2001).

- Bailey, Kathryn. "Work in Progress': Analysing Nono's 'Il Canto Sospeso.'" *Music Analysis*, vol. 11, no. 2/3, 1992, pp. 279–334. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/854029>.
- Biró, Dániel Péter. "Bartók's Quartets, Folk Music, and the Anxiety of Influence." *The String Quartets of Béla Bartók: Tradition and Legacy in Analytical Perspective*, edited by Dániel Péter Biró and Harald Krebs, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 257–81.
- , and Martin Iddon. "Bartók's Present." *The String Quartets of Béla Bartók: Tradition and Legacy in Analytical Perspective*, edited by Dániel Péter Biró and Harald Krebs, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 43–60.
- Hicks, Michael. "Text, Music, and Meaning in the Third Movement of Luciano Berio's Sinfonia." *Perspectives of New Music*, vol. 20, no. 1/2 (1981): 199–224. doi:10.2307/942413.
- Metzer, David. "Modern Silence." *The Journal of Musicology*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2006, pp. 331–63. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2009.38.4.96>.

**Viewing Assignments:**

- Bosch, Roselyne. *La Rafle / The Round Up* (2010)
- Paquet-Brenner, Gilles. *Elle s'appelait Sarah / Sarah's Key* (2010)

**Listening Assignments:**

- Bartók, Béla. *String Quartet no. 1*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xaQvPhVvQaY&t=463s>
- Kurtág, György. *String Quartet op. 1*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V9LHyWJW3aQ>
- Kurtág, György. *Officium Breve: Im Memoriam Andrae Szervánsky op. 28*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DudbQDenyZw>

Nono, Lugio. *Il Canto Sospeso*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tdGWUKab724&list=PLfk82L7dXeDx7cMGzkQgG8GReMdZganyd>

Schoenberg, Arnold. *A Survivor From Warsaw*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGWai0SEpUQ>

Biró, Dániel Péter. *Lizkor VeLiskoach (To Remember and To Forget)*

[https://people.finearts.uvic.ca/~dpbiro/lizkor\\_exerpt.mp3](https://people.finearts.uvic.ca/~dpbiro/lizkor_exerpt.mp3)

Nono, Lugio. *Fragmente-Stille, an Diotima*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOeIEHGtx7w>

Berio, Luciano. *Sinfonia, Movement 3*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YU-V2C4ryU>

For all of these assignments, you are encouraged to investigate the music of the composers on their websites:

- Dániel Péter Biró: <http://www.danielpeterbiro.ca>
- Zaid Jabri: <http://www.zaidjabri.com>
- Andrea Szigetvári: <http://www.szigetvariandrea.com>

### ***Music Assignments***

*All music assignments are being discussed on location.*

*Music Assignment 1: Keleti Railway Station, Budapest, Hungary*

- Listen to Béla Bartók's *String Quartet no. 1* and compare this with György Kurtág's *String Quartet op. 1* and his *Officium Breve: Im Memoriam Andrae Szervánsky op. 28*. Consider how questions about ideology and nationalism played a role in the creation of these works, basing your listening on your experiences in the House of Terror and Keleti Railway Station in Budapest. Consider how these works compare and contrast to the new work created for the Keleti Railway Station by Andrea Szigetvári. You will have a chance to interview the composer about her piece and how it relates to place and memory during the pre- and post-concert discussions.

*Music Assignment 2: Ravensbrück Memorial Site, Ravensbrück, Germany*

- Compare and contrast the program and music employed by Schoenberg in his *A Survivor from Warsaw* to Luigi Nono's *Il Canto Sospeso*. How does time and memory function in Schoenberg's and Nono's musical narrative? What techniques do the composers use to give musical meaning to the text? For music students: compare how interval/scale structuring, symmetry and form functions in both works (discuss three specific sections from both works). Compare how the works express theological and ideological meaning through the use of text, religious chant, and techniques employed? Listening to the pieces, how do they compare to the new work by Zaid Jabri? How is memory and form expressed in this work? You will have a chance to interview the composer about his piece and how it relates to place and memory during the pre- and post-concert discussions.

*Music Assignment 3: Camp des Milles, Aix-en-Provence, France*

- Compare and contrast the work's *Lizkor VeLishkoach* (To Remember and to Forget) and *Gvul* (Border) by Dániel Péter Biró. How might these works be influenced by Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia* and Luigi Nono's *Fragmente-Stille, an Diotima* in terms of the use of citation as a memory agent? How is an archeology of memory formed in these works through citation, paraphrase, and deconstruction? How do processes of memory relate to musical material and resonance in the studied works and in the new work? You will have a chance to interview the composer about his piece and how it relates to place and memory during the pre- and post-concert discussions.





with Moussa Magassa – David Turpin Building (A136). To join the meeting on a computer or mobile phone: <https://bluejeans.com/195646986/>

### ***Budapest (Hungary)***

#### **Day 2 • July 16, 2017**

All field school participants arrive and transfer on own arrangements to the youth hostel. Dinner on your own.

Accommodation: Maverick City Lodge, Kazinczy u. 24, Budapest 1075 Hungary +36 1 7931605 (Breakfast included)

#### **Day 3 • July 17**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 7:30 – 8:30   | Breakfast at hostel  |
| 8:45          | Group walk to Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE Faculty of Social Sciences, 1117 Budapest, Pázmány Péter sétány 1/a, Room 0.100C) |
| 9:30 – 10:00  | Charlotte Schallié: overview of learning objectives and themes of the EU field school  |
| 10:00 – 10:45 | Ildikó Barna: warm-up and introductions  |
| 10:45 – 11:15 | Coffee break   |
| 11:15 – 12:15 | Presentation by Ildikó Barna: <i>Migration crisis in Hungary: The Visible and the Story Behind</i>                             |
| 12:15 – 13:45 | Lunch / free time  |
| 13:45 – 15:45 | Presentation by Zsófia Nagy: <i>Refugee Voices — an interactive map of the Balkan Route</i> — group discussion                 |
|               | <b>Required readings:</b>  |
|               | - Timothy Snyder, <i>On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century</i> (2017)  |
|               | - Márton Dornbach. “Remains of a Picnic: Post-Transition Hungary and Its Austro-Hungarian Past” (2013)                         |
| 15:45 – 16:15 | Coffee break   |
| 16:15         | Depart ELTE for Keleti Station   |
| 17:00 – 18:00 | Tour of Keleti Station with Andrea Szigetvári and Ildikó Barna. Discussion of historical relevance and migration crisis        |

- 18:00 – 19:00 Travel to the Central European University (CEU) together
- 19:00 – 21:00 Concert: Andrea Szigetvári: *Marhakaralábé (Beef Turnip)*  
Post-performance discussion
- 21:00 – 22:00 Further informal discussion at nearby restaurant (optional)

#### Day 4 • July 18

- 7:30 – 8:30 Breakfast at hostel
- 8:45 Group walk to ELTE
- 9:30 – 10:30 Presentation by Ildikó Barna: *Competing memories and memory politics in Hungary*  
**\*Required readings (all students):**
- Henriett Kovács and Ursula K. Mindler-Steiner. “Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust Memory: The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014” (2015)
  - Andrea Szigetvári. “Noise-Wrangling: An Attempt to Reveal Noises That Matter” (2016)
- Required readings (music students):**
- Dániel Péter Biró. “Bartók’s Quartets, Folk Music, and the Anxiety of Influence” (2014)
  - Dániel Péter Biró and Martin Iddon. “Bartók’s Present” (2014)
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 11:15 Presentation by Dániel Péter Biró: *The Béla Bartók Social Function of Music in 20th-century Hungary*  
**Required listening:**
- Béla Bartók. *String Quartet no. 1.*
  - György Kurtág. *String Quartet op. 1.*
  - György Kurtág. *Officium Breve: Im Memoriam Andrae Szervánsky op. 28*
- 11:15 – 12:15 Discussions in groups (“Music Assignment 1”)
- 12:15 – 13:45 Lunch / free time
- 13:45 Departure for Liberty Square
- 14:30 – 16:00 Tour in and around Liberty Square (Szabadság tér) and to the Shoes on the Danube Bank
- 16:30 – 18:00 Discussion in groups
- Evening Free

**Day 5 • July 19**

- 7:30 – 9:00 Breakfast at hostel
- 9:30 – 12:00 iWalk tour in the Jewish District including Dohány Synagogue by Zachor Foundation (starting from the hostel)
- Required reading:**  
- Imre Kertész. *Fatelessness* (1992), pp. 1 – 50.
- 12:00 – 13:30 Lunch / free time
- 13:30 Leaving the city centre for ELTE
- 14:00 – 14:30 Discussion in groups
- 14:30 – 16:30 Group presentations
- 16:30 Group walk to the hostel
- 18:00 Depart for Keleti Station (group walk or public transit)
- 20:05 Night train to Berlin (couchette compartments)  
Dinner on the train (not covered)

***Berlin / Ravensbrück Memorial Site (Germany)*****Day 6 • July 20**

- 9:07 Arrival in Berlin
- 9:10 Public transit to Berlin-Neukölln (163 Karl-Marx-Strasse)
- 10:00 — 12:00 Tour Berlin-Neukölln from the Newcomer Perspective“ (organized by [querstadtein.org/de](http://querstadtein.org/de))
- 12:00 Debriefing and lunch
- 14:00 Bus transfer to youth hostel at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site  
Pick-up location: Central Station  
Accommodation: Ravensbrück Hostel / Jugendherberge Ravensbrück – Internationale Jugendbegegnungsstätte  
Straße der Nationen 3, 16798 Fürstenberg/H.  
Tel.: +49 33 093 – 60590  
(Breakfast, lunch and dinner included)
- 16:00 – 18:00 Open rehearsal with Zaid Jabri (mandatory for music students)
- 18:00 Dinner (House “Kiefer”)
- 19:00 Presentation by Dániel Péter Biró: *Musical Responses to the Holocaust*

Music students meet with Zaid Jabri and/or  
Ralf Ehlers

**Required readings (all students):**

- David M. Schiller. “Bloch, Schoenberg, and Bernstein: Assimilating Jewish Music” (2003) (excerpt)
- Carola Nielinger. “‘The Song Unsung’: Luigi Nono’s ‘Il Canto Sospeso’” (2006)

**Required readings (music students):**

- Kathryn Bailey. “‘Work in Progress’: Analysing Nono’s ‘Il Canto Sospeso’” (1992)

**Required listening (all students):**

- Luigi Nono, *Il Canto Sospeso*
- Arnold Schoenberg, *A Survivor from Warsaw*

**Day 7 • July 21**

8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast (House “Kiefer”)

9:00 – 10:00 Welcome / Introduction / Presentation by Charlotte Schallié on *Human Rights, Social Justice and the Arts* (Garage Building)

10:00 – 12:30 Guided tour outside – Ravensbrück Memorial Site

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break (House “Kiefer”)

14:00 – 16:00 Guided tour of Siemens Camp and Uckermark

**Required readings:**

- Matthias Heyl. “Historic Sites as a Framework for Education”
- Wolf Kaiser. “Teaching about Perpetrators of the Holocaust in Germany”
- Angelika Meyer. “Shedding Light on the Invisible: Towards a Gender-Sensitive Education at Memorial Sites.” *Holocaust Education in a Global Context* (2014)
- Matthias Heyl. “Teaching and Learning about Perpetrators within Memorial Sites” (2009)

**Required background reading for students from Hungary:**

- Matthias Heyl. “Nevelés Auschwitzról, Auschwitz után. Az oktatás változzék szociológiává.” *Holokausztoktatás és autonómiára nevelés* (2001)

16:00 – 16:45 Pre-concert talk

- 17:00 – 18:00 Concert *30 Articles: Work for Solo Viola with Live Electronics* (Composer: Zaid Jabri; Violist: Ralf Ehlers)
- 18:15 – 18:50 Post-concert discussion (“Music Assignment 2”)
- 19:00 Dinner (House “Kiefer”)
- Evening Graphic novels about the Holocaust. Students from the University of Osnabrück present four graphic novels in small reading circles

### Day 8 • July 22

- 8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast (House “Kiefer”)
- 9:00 – 18:00 Self-reflection and feedback (Garage Building)
- 10:00 – 12:00 Introduction to the Main Exhibition (former “Kommandatur”)
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break (House “Kiefer”)
- 14:00 – 16:30 Gender-sensitive input (Workshop)  
Reflection: The Ravensbrück Memorial Site today: current challenges
- 16:30 – 18:00 Second session: Graphic novels about the Holocaust. Students from the University of Osnabrück present four graphic novels in small reading circles
- 18:00 – 19:00 Dinner (House “Kiefer”)
- Evening: Free

### Day 9 • July 23

- 8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast (House “Kiefer”)
- 9:30 Departure for Berlin (Generator Hostel)
- 11:00 Debriefing at hostel  
Accommodation: Generator Hostel Mitte  
Oranienburger Strasse 65, Berlin, Germany 10117  
+49 30 9210 37680  
(No breakfast included)
- 12:00 – 17:00 Jewish Berlin — Self-guided group walking tour (may include: New Synagogue and Centrum Judaicum; Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe; Jewish Museum; The Topography of Terror Documentation Centre; “The Abandoned Room”; The “Empty Library”; “Street of Tolerance and Death”; “The Missing House”; “Stolpersteine”/

	“Stumbling Stones”; Haus Schwarzenberg; Rosenstrasse Memorial)
17:00 – 18:00	Students meet for a debriefing at the Generator Hostel
Evening	Free

***Aix-En-Provence / Le Site-Mémorial Du Camp Des Milles (France)***

**Day 10 • July 24**

5:30	Transfer to Tegel Airport (20kg checked bag included)
8:10	Flight EW9049: Departure to Düsseldorf (arrival at 9:20)
10:55	Flight EW9450: Departure to Marseille (arrival at 12:50)
13:00	Public transportation from the airport to Hotel le Concorde Accommodation: Hotel le Concorde, 68, bd du Roi René, 13100 Aix-en-Provence, France +33 4 42 26 03 95 (Breakfast included)

**Day 11 • July 25**

8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:15	Public transportation to le Site-mémorial du Camp des Milles
10:00 – 12:30	Guided visit at le Site-mémorial du Camp des Milles
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch break
14:00 – 17:00	Guided visit at le Site-mémorial du Camp des Milles
17:00 – 18:00	Presentation by Dániel Péter Biró on “Historicized Composition”
18:00 – 18:30	Discussion
18:30	Public transportation to hotel
Evening	Free

**Day 12 • July 26**

8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:15	Public transportation to le Site-mémorial du Camp des Milles

- 10:00 – 10:30 Presentation by Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly on “Xenophobia and ‘Border Politics’ in France”
- 10:30 – 11:00 Presentation by Helga Hallgrímsdóttir on “Resistance and thinking through ‘crises’ as a social and political construct”
- Required reading:**
- Samir Amin. “The Return of Fascism in Contemporary Capitalism” (2014)
- 11:00 – 12:30 Student discussions
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 – 15:00 Facilitated Group Discussion on Cinematic Representations of Vichy France (facilitator: Charlotte Schallié)
- Required viewing:**
- Roselyne Bosch. *La Rafle / The Round Up* (2010)
  - Gilles Paquet-Brenner. *Elle s'appelait Sarah / Sarah's Key* (2010)
- Required readings:**
- John Flower. “A Continuing Preoccupation with the Occupation” (2014)
  - Sophie Ernst. “Entangled Memories: Holocaust Education in Contemporary France” (2014)
- 15:00 – 16:00 Student Group Work: Memory and European Identity Is there a ‘European Memory’? Comparing and Contrasting Cultural Memory and Memory Politics in Hungary, Germany, and France
- 16:00 – 17:30 Student discussions on ‘European Memory’
- 17:30 – 19:00 Dinner at Casa Les Milles
- 19:00 Pre-Concert Talk with Dániel Péter Biró, Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, and Ermis Theodorakis
- 20:00 Concert with *Gvul (Border)* for piano and electronics. Ermis Theodorakis, piano
- 20:30 – 21:30 Post-concert discussion (“Music Assignment 3”)
- Required readings (all students):**
- Dániel Péter Biró. “Emanations: Reflections of a Composer” (2016)
  - “Remembering and Forgetting Lizkor VeLiskoach for String Quartet, after Schubert” (2007)
- Required readings (music students):**
- David Metzger. “Modern Silence” (2006)

- Michael Hicks. "Text, Music, and Meaning in the Third Movement of Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia*" (1981)

**Required listening (all students):**

- Dániel Péter Biró. *Lizkor VeLiskoach (To Remember and To Forget)*
- Luigi Nono. *Fragmente–Stille, an Diotima*
- Luciano Berio. *Sinfonia, Movement 3*

21:30 Public transportation to hotel

**Day 13 • July 27**

8:00 – 9:00 Breakfast  
 9:15 Public transportation to Marseille  
 10:00 – 12:00 Migrantour in Marseille (European Migrantour project)  
 13:00 – 15:00 Lunch in the Quartier Le Panier / free time  
 15:00 – 17:00 Guided visit at the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations (Mucem) / free time  
 18:00 Public transportation to Aix-en-Provence  
 19:30 Farewell dinner

**Day 14 • July 28**

8:00 • 9:00 Breakfast  
 End of Field School Program in Europe

**Winnipeg (Canada)**

**Day 15 • August 16, 2017**

All field school participants arrive and transfer on own arrangements to the hotel. Dinner on your own.  
 Accommodation: Humphry Inn & Suites  
 260 Main Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 1A9  
 (Breakfast buffet included)

**Day 16 • August 17**

7:30 – 8:20 Breakfast  
 8:30 Group walk to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights  
 9:00 Welcome Activity

**Required reading:**

- Bev Sellars. *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School* (2012)

**- What are Human Rights?**

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Wherever we live, whatever our age, gender, or nationality, regardless of colour, religion, language, ethnic background, or any other status, we are all entitled to human rights. Always.

Our rights and freedoms may be expressed in many ways — on paper, in our traditions, and in how we choose to live our lives and treat others.

We have a responsibility to respect each other's rights and to protect fundamental freedoms.

Let's take this human rights journey. Together.

*Inspired by the United Nations' definition of human rights* (<https://humanrights.ca/act/what-are-human-rights>)

**Required background readings:**

- Senator Murray Sinclair Responds to Why Don't Residential School Survivors Just 'Get Over It'. CBC *The Current*. April 4, 2017

**CMHR Human Rights Blog Entries:**

- Karine Duhamel: Why Reconciliation? Why Now? June 15, 2016; Reconciliation: A Movement of Hope or a Movement of Guilt? August 24, 2016; The Nuts and Bolts of Reconciliation. November 18, 2016; Approaching the Human Rights Stories of Indigenous Peoples. December 14, 2016
- Matthew McRae: What Every Canadian Should Know about Truth and Reconciliation. November 10, 2015
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action. 2015
- Official Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools

**Required reading:**

- Roger Simon. "Curatorial Judgment and the Public Exhibition of 'Difficult Knowledge'" (2011)

9:30 – 11:00	Canadian Museum of Human Rights Museums 101 Workshop, Sarah Watkins
11:00 – 12:00	Self-guide tour (just a taste)
12:00 – 13:00	Off-site lunch
13:00 – 14:30	When Rights are Denied (Galleries)
14:30 – 15:00	Break
15:00 – 16:00	Personal History: Ali Saeed, Survivor, Ethiopian Red Terror
16:00	End of the day check-in
16:30	Free time (museum closes at 17:00)

### **Day 17 • August 18**

9:00 – 9:15	Canadian Museum of Human Rights, morning check-in
9:15 – 10:00	Indigenous Rights Lecture
10:00 – 10:15	Break
10:15 – 11:45	Rights and Indigenous Peoples in Canada Tour (Galleries)
11:45 – 12:15	Dialogue activity
12:15 – 13:00	Lunch (provided on site)
13:00 – 14:30	Focus group
14:30 – 16:00	Self-guide (galleries)
16:00 – 16:30	End of the day check-in
16:30	Free time (museum closes at 17:00)

### **Day 18 • August 19**

9:00 – 9:15	Canadian Museum of Human Rights, morning check-in
9:15 – 10:15	World Café activity
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 12:00	Blanket exercise and sharing circle
12:00 – 13:00	Lunch (off-site)
13:00 – 14:15	Metis Rights Tour
14:15 – 14:30	Break
14:30 – 15:30	Dialogue on Reconciliation
15:30 – 16:00	End of the day check-in (evaluation)
16:00	Free time (museum closes at 17:00)

*Victoria (Canada)***Day 19 • August 20**

- After breakfast Group transfer from hotel to the airport (public transit)
- 10:20 Flight ws261 to Calgary (arrival at 11:27)
- 13:05 Flight ws449 to Victoria (arrival at 13:35)  
(no checked bags included)  
Public transportation to local accommodation (bus passes will be provided)  
Accommodation:  
Male students: Female students:  
Ocean Island HI Victoria Hostel  
791 Pandora Avenue 516 Yates Street  
Victoria, BC Victoria, BC
- 20:00 Concert at Open Space (510 Fort Street):  
Ermis Theodorakis, piano  
EXPERAMENTALSTUDIO. Works by Heusinger, Nono, Mahnkopf, and others

**Day 20 • August 21**

- 9:00 – 10:30 UVic – Harry Hickmann Building (HHB) 110. Post EU Field School: Debriefing and Reflection
- 10:45 – 12:30 Workshop at First Peoples House (facilitated by Dawn Smith)
- 12:30 – 13:30 Lunch on campus (not covered)
- 14:00 Public transportation to PKOLS
- 14:30 – 16:30 Walking tour at PKOLS with Kevin Paul (Mount Douglas)
- 16:30 – 20:00 Free time
- 20:00 Concert at Open Space (510 Fort Street): *Narratives of Memory*. Works by Zaid Jabri, Andrea Szigetvári, Dániel Péter Biró, Kimberley Farris-Manning, and Adam Scime. Performed by Joanna Hood, Jessica Wagner, Ermis Theodorakis, and Emily MacCallum

**Day 21 • August 22**

- 9:00 – 10:00 UVic – MacLaurin Building (MAC) A168, Harry Hickmann Building (HHB) 110. PKOLS walking tour debriefing

10:00 – 11:00	Lecture: Zaid Jabri (Syria), School of Music (MacLaurin A168)
11:15 – 12:15	Lecture: Andrea Szigetvári (Hungary), School of Music (MacLaurin A168)
12:15 – 13:15	Lunch on campus (not covered)
13:30 – 15:00	Planning sessions for group work presentations (facilitated by Helga Thorson)
15:00 – 17:00	Working Afternoon
Evening	Free

### **Day 22 • August 23**

9:00 – 10:00	UVic – Harry Hickmann Building (HHB) 110. Debriefing
10:00 – 12:30	<i>Resolving Intercultural Conflicts with Immigrants and Refugees in Canada</i> (Workshop with Moussa Magassa and Sabine Lehr)
12:30 – 14:00	Lunch on campus (not covered) / free time
14:00 – 15:00	Wrap-up
15:00 – 17:00	Working afternoon
Evening	Free

### **Day 23 • August 24**

Symposium	Please see the detailed program schedule.
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University of Victoria Itinerary

V3	DAY 1 – Thursday August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Day 2 – Friday August 18 <sup>th</sup>	Day 3 – Saturday August 19 <sup>th</sup>	
9:00	Welcome Activity 30 minutes	Morning Check-In	Morning Check-In	
9:30	Museums 101 Workshop 1 hour 30 minutes Sarah Watkins	Indigenous Rights Lecture 45 minutes Classroom	World Café – Dialogue Activity 1 hour Classroom	
10:00		BREAK	BREAK	
10:30		Rights and Indigenous Peoples in Canada Tour 1 hour 30 minutes Galleries	Blanket Exercise & Sharing Circle 1 hour 30 minutes Classrooms	
11:00	Self-Guide 1 hour (Just a taste)	Dialogue Activity 30 Minutes	Lunch 1 Hour Off-site	
11:30		Lunch (provided) 45 minutes Classrooms		
12:00	Lunch 1 Hour Off-site	Focus Group 1 hour 30 min	Metis Rights Tour 1 hour 15 minutes	
12:30				BREAK
1:00				When Rights are Denied 1 hour 45 minutes Galleries
1:30	BREAK	Personal Story 1 Hour Ali Soeed survivor Ethiopian Red Terror	End of Day Check-In/ Evaluation	
2:00				End of Day Check-In
2:30	FREE TIME	FREE TIME	FREE TIME	
3:00	End of Day Check-In	End of Day Check-In	End of Day Check-In	
3:30	FREE TIME	FREE TIME	FREE TIME	
4:00	FREE TIME	FREE TIME	FREE TIME	
4:30	Museum closes at 5pm	Museum closes at 5pm	Museum closes at 5pm	

Housekeeping	Classroom Talk	Program	Self-guide	Dialogue	Tour	Focus Group
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Day 24 • August 26

After breakfast Departure

*Note: unexpected circumstances may cause changes to the events outlined in the itinerary.*

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# About the Editors

**Dr. Helga K. Hallgrimsdóttir** is an Associate Professor in Public Administration and a Research Associate in the Centre for Global Studies at the University of Victoria. Her research interests are primarily in historical sociology, comparative political sociology with a focus on grassroots mobilization and social movements claimsmaking. She currently holds a SSHRC Insight grant as Principal Investigator on the link between austerity policies, economic downturn, and the rise of nationalism in Europe; and the principal investigator on a Jean Monnet Erasmus+ grant and SSHRC Connections grant on memory politics in Canada and Europe.

**Dr. Helga Thorson** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Victoria. She is the Co-Director of the I-witness Field School, a 4-week course on

Holocaust memorialization in Europe, which she ran for the first time in 2011. In addition, she is the co-founder of “The Future of Holocaust Memorialization: Confronting Racism, Antisemitism and Homophobia through Memory Work” research collective and one of the co-organizers of the group’s first conference at Central European University in Budapest in 2014, followed by a second international conference at the University of Victoria in 2015. Dr. Thorson has received numerous teaching awards including the Faculty of Humanities Teaching Excellence Award at the University of Victoria in 2012; the Excellence in Teaching for Experiential Learning Award at the University of Victoria in 2017; and most recently a 2019 3M National Teaching Award.



***Narratives of Memory, Migration, and Xenophobia in the European Union and Canada***

is the distinct culmination of an intensive cross-cultural academic endeavour that explores how memories of the past are intricately intertwined with present-day realities and future aspirations. The book is based on a range of experiences that stem from a summer field school focusing on landscapes of memory in Hungary, Germany, France, and Canada, in the context of migration and xenophobia. Contributors include Canadian and European academics; directors, researchers, and educators working at various European memorial sites; as well as graduate students from a wide range of disciplines.

This cross-disciplinary investigation is based on a symposium as well as a series of concert performances in Europe and Canada highlighting the complex and multi-layered narratives of memory. The ultimate goal of this scholarly undertaking is to understand how 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.

**Editors Helga Hallgrímsdóttir and Helga Thorson are Associate Professors in the School of Public Administration and the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies respectively at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada.**



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