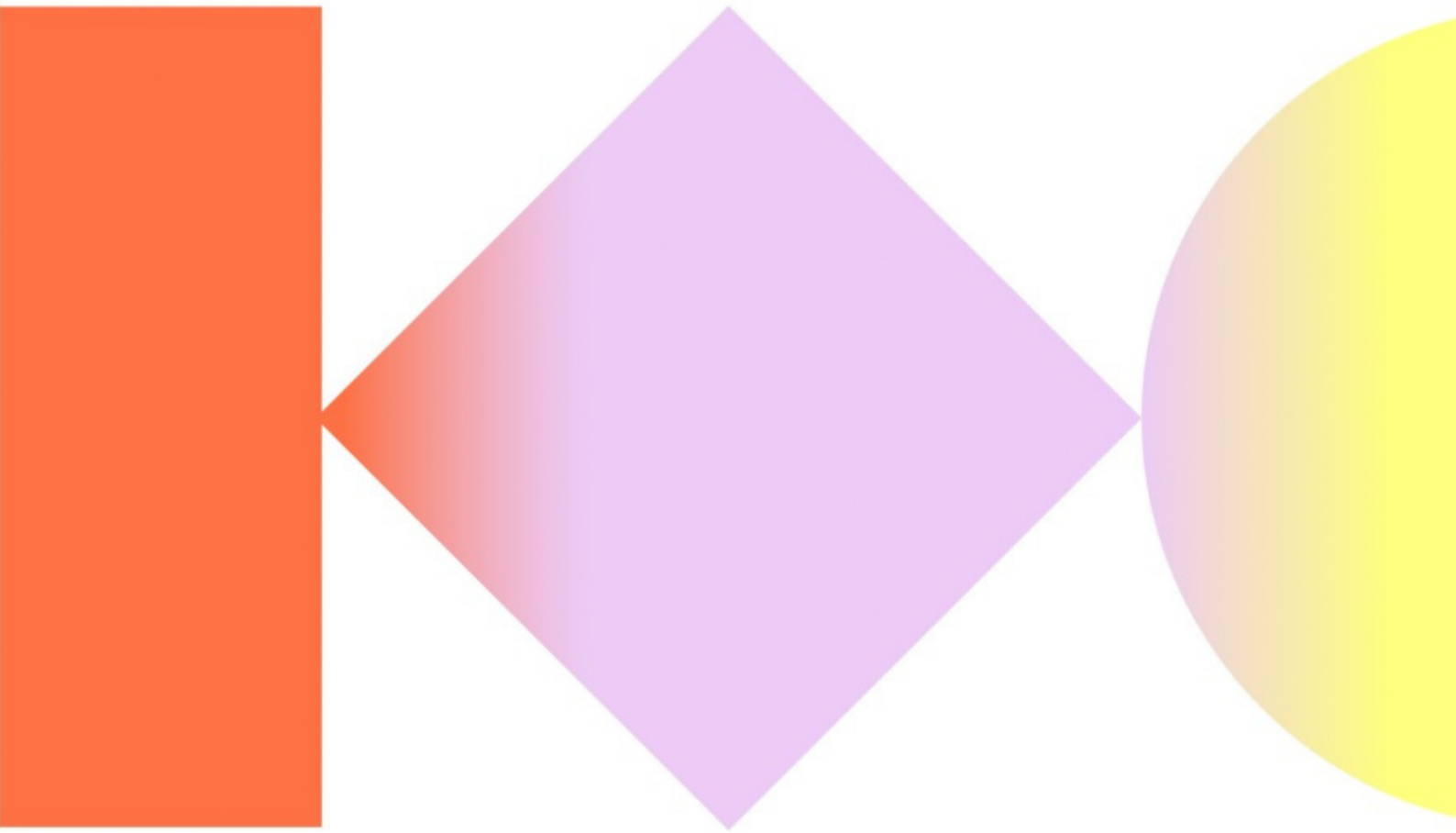
Dissonant Heritage

Concepts, Critiques, Cases

Una Europa Cultural Heritage Series

Edited by
Patrizia Battilani
Maria Giovanna Belcastro
Krzysztof Kowalski
Teresa Nicolosi



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Una Europa Cultural Heritage Series

About the Series

Una Europa Cultural Heritage Series is a collection of edited and single-authored volumes that addresses cultural heritage issues, with a focus on the main social, cultural, and environmental challenges of our time.

Using a multiplicity of methodologies, approaches, and theoretical frameworks, scholars address questions related to the construction, use, reuse, change of meaning, and cancelling of cultural heritage, and the way communities deal with and connect their past to it.

The book series also includes theoretical analysis, description, and discussion of cultural heritage resources and institutions. It is open to all disciplines that can contribute to the understanding and design of actions in the field of cultural heritage.

The series brings together researchers devoted to understanding the cultural heritage ecosystem and its role in transforming our society. It aims to motivate both experienced scholars and young Ph.D. students to develop and publish research dealing with cultural heritage in its multifaceted aspects.

Series Editors

Book titles in this Series

Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
edited by Patrizia Battilani, Maria Giovanna Belcastro, Krzysztof Kowalski and Teresa Nicolosi

Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases

This volume is the outcome of the Una Europa PhD Workshop "Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases," which took place simultaneously at the Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna and at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków in November 2021. The book explores dissonant heritage in relation to three primary cross-cutting themes: (1) unveiling the dissonance of scientific museums and collections, (2) designing the social sustainability of dissonant heritage, and (3) examining the role of art in addressing dissonance. As evidenced by the essays gathered in this book, eradicating dissonance from our pasts and presents can prove to be an insurmountable task. We can remove statues, abandon buildings, forget paintings, but the painful past will endure.

Consequently, dissonant heritage necessitates interpretation that acknowledges the negative emotions experienced by those who lived the dissonance. At the same time, we must remember that narratives of dissonant heritage can be politically manipulated and may fuel revisionist, negationist tendencies. In order to mitigate these risks, interpretation must both expose the propaganda hidden within certain forms of dissonant heritage and uncover the ways in which art can be (ab)used in order to create illusory consensus or even to bolster anti-democratic, supremacist ideologies. In essence, dissonant heritage offers an invaluable opportunity for modern societies to reflect on their values and on their strategies to promote and defend them in a changing and globalized world.

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Preface

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In 2024, Una Europa European Alliance brings together eleven European universities: Free University of Berlin (Germany); Alma Mater Studiorum – University of Bologna (Italy); Jagiellonian University of Kraków (Poland); University of Edinburgh (Scotland); University of Helsinki (Finland); KU Leuven (Belgium); Complutense University of Madrid (Spain), Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University (France), University College Dublin (Ireland), Leiden University (The Netherlands) and University of Zürich.

Conceived back in 2017 and prefigured by an initial memorandum of understanding signed at the Sorbonne in February 2018, Una Europa acquired legal personality in 2019 through the formation of a non-profit association under Belgian law. In June 2019, the 1Europe project was selected for a three-year funding programme under the Erasmus+ call for European Universities Alliances. The creation of an association, with its own governance to manage all the Alliance's projects, has provided Una Europa with a long-term framework for action, aimed at structuring long-term projects with the long-term vision of creating a truly European campus.

In June 2018, Una Europa outlined a series of priority themes, including cultural heritage. The development of the cultural heritage theme within Una Europa has been centred around several projects bringing together all the member universities—first and foremost, a Joint Doctorate in Cultural Heritage (Una-Her-Doc), which offers an international, multilingual, and radically interdisciplinary training programme. One of the key aims of the programme is to foster a cohort spirit among doctoral students in order to encourage peer-to-peer learning.

Interactions among doctoral students, facilitating the exchange of methodologies used in different disciplines, and discussions on diverse disciplinary theories and approaches regarding cultural heritage constitute an essential characteristic of this doctoral degree. The creation of Ph.D. student cohorts was facilitated through a series of Ph.D. workshops which enabled Una Europa students and professors to experiment with different research training formulas, both physical and digital. The themes of these workshops were defined so as to bring together doctoral students from different disciplines interested in the field of heritage. They are thought-provoking and critical: “Heritage Hybridisations Concepts, Scales and Spaces” (2021, Paris), “Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases” (2022, Bologna and Kraków), “Digital Cultural Heritage: Mobilities, Mutuality and Heritage Futures” (2022, Helsinki), “Cultural Heritage and the 21st-Century City: Research Horizons” (2022, Madrid), “Restoring the Cultural Heritage. Critical Approaches” (2024, Paris).

The workshops are co-designed with the Ph.D. candidates, who meet regularly online over the months preceding the workshop and stay connected afterward. On-site and online conferences, round tables and methodological seminars, fieldworks and research visits are prepared by groups of doctoral students from different universities. The Ph.D. workshops are thus the linchpin of the Una-Her-Doc programme. It was the Una Europa Ph.D. Workshop “Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases”, held simultaneously at the Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna and at the Jagiellonian University of Kraków, that served as the catalyst for this volume. This event gave nineteen doctoral

students from all the universities the opportunity to discuss their dissertation topics, conduct fieldwork, and explore how the theme of dissonance pertained to their own doctoral dissertations. It analysed the concept of dissonance in heritage studies, encompassing geographical, anthropological, sociological, economic, and legal perspectives. The collaborative group work carried out on these topics has consolidated the relationships among Una Europa's doctoral students and has provided important milestones in our understanding of the many dimensions of heritage dissonance today.

The thematic domain of Cultural Heritage within Una Europa aims to be one of the liveliest "think tanks" in contemporary heritage studies. This inaugural volume in the Una Europa Cultural Heritage Series offers a valuable contribution by Una Europa researchers and doctoral students to contemporary debates on the various uses—political, geopolitical, economic, and social—of heritage today.

We hope you enjoy reading it!

Introduction

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The present volume collects the results of the second Una Europa Ph.D. Workshop "Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases," that was held simultaneously at the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna and at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków on 16-20 November 2021. The aim of this workshop was to bring together Ph.D. students and scholars from across Una Europa universities in order to offer participants insights from different backgrounds, to contribute to their education through a transdisciplinary approach, and to create new synergies and collaborations in the wide field of heritage studies. In consequence, the book gathers the research essays that Ph.D. students wrote on the basis of the theoretical framework of this international event.

1. The Chosen Theme: Dissonant Heritage

The difficulty or dissonance of heritage appears in interpretative strategies created by various stakeholders carrying out its evaluation, which stems from the type of materials (e.g., highly sensitive ones) and objects, historical and cultural conditions, current political determinants, ethical, religious and legal issues as well as the personal beliefs and motivations of individuals and groups involved in the interpretative process. The consequence of these discrepancies, tensions and, in some cases, real entanglements and conflicts, is that there are many challenges in sustaining and managing this kind of heritage. Even if plurality and awareness are today a part of heritage discourses, there are monuments, intangible assets and memories which still remain difficult to manage and which deserve special attention. In order to provide a framework through which we may analyse dissonant heritage, we may turn to Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). In their view, dissonance can be considered as an attribute of every place which is dependent on its past, together with the existence of conflicting communities or heritage users.

They list three main sources of dissonance: (1) dissonance implicit in commodification, (2) dissonance implicit in products associated with place, and (3) dissonance implicit in the content of the message. To understand the nature of dissonance, we can also borrow the concept of authorised heritage discourse (AHD) from Laurajane Smith's pivotal book *Uses of Heritage* (2006). Following the theoretical framework

of critical discourse analysis (CDA), Smith introduces the issue of power relations at the base of heritage discourse. In any society, dominant groups use their own view of the past when identifying important monuments as well as those of the experts responsible for preserving them. The authorised heritage discourse is the expression of hegemonic power. The excluded communities can only create their own discourse in contrast to the dominant one.

Therefore, heritage is dissonant by definition because it comes from a social process that aims both at legitimizing and at working out, contesting, and challenging a range of cultural and social identities. The progressive extension of the tangible and intangible heritage to be conserved (Fairclough 2009; Clark 2000; Heinich 2009) has paved the way for a dynamic change in the authorised heritage discourse, which can be seen in the pluralization of communities and stakeholders involved, as well as in heritage functions. As David Lowenthal (1998) noticed: "[a]ll at once heritage is everywhere – in the news, in the movies, in the marketplace – in everything from galaxies to genes." In light of these statements, participants have been invited to reflect upon the question of whether "[h]eritage today is more a question of affect than intellect, sociability than expertise" (Turgeon 2010, 390-391) and discuss to what extent heritage is a battleground where political, economic, social and cultural priorities come into conflict with each other. Furthermore, we encouraged participants to take up the challenge of their own interpretation of heritage which they have physically explored, as well as of the nature of the dissonances between different interpretations.

2. Format and Activities

In order to discuss these topics from the very beginning of the activities that included a pre-workshop online phase made up of four online seminars, the multidisciplinary nature of the backgrounds of the twenty-one students was particularly useful. In fact, the group included anthropologists, archaeologists, sociologists, historians, musicians, and experts in literature and art history; the differences in their education and geographical origin were invaluable points of strength during the whole duration of the workshop. During the central workshop phase, participants were physically split in two groups between Bologna and Kraków, communicating and interacting with each other at specific moments through online platforms. The programme was divided into five days of seminars, teamwork, and two fieldworks in each of the two locations: the Nowa Huta district and the Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, the Anthropological Collections of the Museum System of University of Bologna, and the area of fascist urban development in Forlì in Italy. The outcomes of the activities consisted of an online final conference that was held on 31 March 2022.

3. Fieldworks

In academic practice, fieldwork occupies quite a specific niche. Intramural activity constitutes the lion's share of teaching in universities, taking place within the confines of a safe space where the exchange or transmission of knowledge can occur without too many external variables or threats. Fieldwork, going on site to a place outside the university, accepted and acknowledged as part of the normal research methodology of many academic disciplines, is less practised as a pedagogical tool, even in higher degree courses. For heritage studies, however, direct contact with the specificities of place and occasion may be considered to be a real prerequisite for grasping the complexities and multi-perspectivity which characterise it. What is true in general for heritage studies may be particularly so for work on dissonant

heritage, which, we may say, is premised on an accentuated appreciation of the possibility of different perspectives on the material legacies of the past.

3.1 Fieldwork in Bologna. Lidio Cipriani's Plaster Face Casts Collection at the Museum System of the University of Bologna

(Maria Giovanna Belcastro and Patrizia Battilani)

Many scientific museum collections represent important natural and cultural heritage but, in many cases, their meaning and value are still not fully disclosed. Among these, anthropological collections (e.g., human osteological remains, anthropometric instruments, ethnographic materials) may contain critical and dissonant meanings that have not yet been highlighted. Indeed, some objects are on display in many museums, but a proper narrative about their contents has not yet been built and their meaning is still misinterpreted or hidden. These anthropological items were collected all over Europe for research and didactic purposes, with the dawn of physical or biological anthropology as an independent scientific discipline between the 19th and 20th centuries. At that time, these kinds of collections were mostly used to describe and study human variability from an alleged hierarchical point of view, typically framed in a Western-centred perspective. Although anthropological research has definitively moved away from these paradigms, proving the non-existence of the races, the discipline is still affected by this heavy legacy, the result of an improper use of science.

For this reason, these collections enclose a sensitive nature, especially when displayed in museums, and their fate is still uncertain and the subject of debate. In particular, we refer here to the 95 polychrome reproductions of the original plaster face casts of Lidio Cipriani, housed and exhibited at the Anthropological Collections of the Museum System of the University of Bologna and acquired by Fabio Frassetto, founder of the Institute of Anthropology at the University of Bologna in 1908. These casts were realised by Luigi Cardini, working with Cipriani at the Anthropological and Ethnographic Museum of Florence. The replicas belong to African and Arabic tribes, to one Sardinian, one Philippine, and three Chinese individuals, that correspond to the populations studied by Cipriani in the years between 1927 and 1932. Each cast is labelled with the name of the tribe, its origin, and the age and sex of the individual. The importance and the success that the plaster facial casts received at that time, is testified by the spread of their copies across Europe, the work of Cipriani and Cardini.

As regards the display of this collection at the Museum System of the University of Bologna, it lacks a proper interpretative apparatus aimed at its historical contextualization and a proper narrative of its contents. The valorisation of this collection is clearly a complex challenge, due to the dissonant values it incorporates. The fieldwork organised at the Anthropological Collections of the University of Bologna wanted, therefore, to reflect critically on the meaning and value of the plaster face casts collection. With this in mind, we organised different moments during which to share knowledge and discuss these issues.

Students first visited the Geological Collections of the Museum System of the University of Bologna, in order to notice the different types of scientific collections hosted in the university and to test their expectations and reactions. Subsequently, we provided students with the cultural tools to unveil the dissonance of the Anthropological Collections thanks to three seminars: the first one, by Maria Giovanna Belcastro focusing on the scientific approach at the origin of the collection; the second, by Giulia Crippa dealing with the hierarchical representation of human variability at the end of the 19th century and the consequent connection between this scientific approach and the origin of racism; the last given by Andrea Borsari on the concept of dissonance in music and society as a way to conceptualize and overcome the tragedy and the horror of the war and persecutions which prepared and accompanied the Second World

War. During the visit to the Anthropological Collections and the Cipriani Collection, the new principles of Physical Anthropology were again emphasised in order to highlight the distance between the new and the old approaches of this discipline. In addition to this, there was also a discussion of the scientific, cultural, and social implications of the old approach in order to appreciate the distance between what happened in the past and present concepts of cultural diversity.

Finally, we promoted a discussion on the possible use of the Cipriani collection to improve the knowledge of that part of the European past that hurts the conscience of today's citizens. To use or to forget? If we exhibit it, how can we avoid promoting the negative values that are connected to it and its history? These are the questions around which we steered the discussion on the possible valorisation of the collection. Many useful comments came from the students and colleagues of the Una Europa alliance who participated in the activities.

3.2 Fieldwork in Forlì. The Dissonance of the "Città del Duce" and the ATRIUM Cultural Route

(Patrick Leech)

The Bologna group then moved to Forlì to look at the architectural and urban heritage left by the Fascist regime and the transformation of the city into the showpiece "*città del Duce*" in the 1920s and 1930s. The focus of the visit was twofold—both the architectural and urban material heritage itself, its history, origin, and form, and the attempts to interpret this heritage with a full awareness of its dissonance on the part of a European Cultural Route, ATRIUM (Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes in Europe's Urban Memory – www.atriumroute.eu) which has its transnational offices in Forlì. As such, the fieldwork, rather than exemplifying the anthropological trope of the view "from the door of [his] tent" (Rosaldo 1986), perhaps bore out more closely the dictum of the British economic historian R. H. Tawney who rated a good pair of boots to be an essential part of the historian's armoury (Manning Clark 1976). For if the objects of the previous fieldwork (the Cipriani Collection at the Anthropological Museum in Bologna) confined their dissonance to those visiting the safe place of the anthropological museum, those of the ATRIUM cultural route are necessarily outdoors and involve city spaces.

The fieldwork was concentrated on two places in particular: the *Viale della Libertà* and the mosaics narrating the history of flight to be seen in the *Ex-Collegio Aeronautico*. The *Viale della Libertà* was an integral part of the construction of a new area of the city under the direct impulse of the head of state, Benito Mussolini, in order to showcase the new regime. Pilgrims to the symbolic origin of the regime, the birthplace of the dictator in Predappio, would arrive in Forlì and, rather than experience a fairly typical rural centre on the Po plain with its renaissance and mediaeval patrimony, would arrive at the new station, built in 1925, and walk along a large and newly constructed boulevard (*Viale Mussolini* at the time) to an alternative centre of the city, the *Piazzale della Vittoria*, celebrating the victory of Italy in World War I. The mosaics of the history of flight adorn the internal courtyard of what was built to house the *Collegio Aeronautico*, now a building shared by a middle school and a high school. Designed by Angelo Canevaro, they narrate the history of flight from the myth of Icaro through the invention of air flight by Leonardo and the brothers Wright (spelled 'Wrigt' on the mosaics), to a celebration of the exploits of the Italian First World War ace Francesco Baracca, the Italian entry into the Second World War and the bombing of Greece in 1940-41. As an example of Fascist propaganda, the dissonance of this material heritage, on display in a school catering to Italian children of the 11-14 age group, is striking. The fieldwork consisted of a typical tourist experience in both cases. The visit to the *Viale della Libertà* replayed the typical experience of a visitor to the town: a walking tour of the street with an explanation on the part of an

expert guide of the salient historical, aesthetic, and architectural features. This activity was coordinated and led by two members of the Department of Architecture of the University of Bologna, Marco Pretelli and Giulia Favaretto. The visit to the courtyard displaying the mosaics relating to the history of flight consisted instead of an interactive workshop designed for and usually involving school children of the 14-18 age group carried out by Cristina Lentini of the Deina Association.

The fieldwork experience thus started from the point of view of the end-user in the interpretation of dissonant heritage—adults and schoolchildren—and privileged a hands-on, non-mediated approach. No prior knowledge was assumed on the part of the Ph.D. students and no prior material was distributed, enabling all the students to experience the interpretation of this heritage in a manner as near as possible to the 'normal' experience of the tourist or school student.

The subsequent activities went deeper into the perspectives on the particular dissonant heritage of the city of Forlì and the problems and issues relating to its interpretation on the part of the ATRIUM Association. Patrick Leech, the president of the Association at this time, illustrated the ways in which its work complies with the priority criteria of the Council of Europe cultural routes programme, namely research and development; the representation of core European values; a focus on young people and educational exchanges; activities which enhance sustainable tourism; and particular attention to issues relating to European memory. He argued that the recognition of the cultural routes on the part of the Council of Europe has given the city of Forlì and the partner cities of ATRIUM in Albania, Romania, Croatia, and Bulgaria a unique opportunity to engage with the dissonance of this legacy from a comparative European perspective.

Tania Flamigni (Historical Resistance Institute) then presented the types of local activities and workshops used with schools, while Cristina Vallicelli (ATRIUM) illustrated the ATRIUM PLUS project, a prototype of historical and cultural education through school exchanges. The work closed with a reflection on the ways in which the options and choices which have to be made when considering the restoration or preservation of this material heritage cannot ignore complex cultural issues relating to the differing perceptions of the buildings concerned.

3.3 Fieldwork in Auschwitz. More than Words, Anthropologist's Visits to Auschwitz–Birkenau

(Łucja Piekarska-Duraj)

The study trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau was designed to encourage workshop participants to critically approach their own tourist experience in the best-known Nazi concentration camp in Europe. Every visit to Auschwitz Birkenau presents some kind of challenge for visitors, especially as heritage provides opportunities to establish personal relations with the past, and framing its elements in the context of tourism makes this opportunity a part of the experience. At the same time, many doubts and questions arise. From "How was Holocaust possible at all?", through "Have we learnt a lesson?" to "What am I personally supposed to do with what I see here?"—they all gain new significance here. It was the immediate, multi-sensual visitor experience of the tourist visit at the iconic site of dissonant heritage that we wanted to focus on and—if possible—to include in the research process, conducted on-site and later by the participants of the study trip. We were pushed out of our comfort zones, also those of theorizing. We were faced with the pieces of evidence of atrocities, surrounded by silent spaces that seemed to shout, and struck by the limitations of our own comprehension. Still, following the same paths as millions of tourists before us, we found ourselves on the continuum between an individual and the masses. The

unique site of memory and heritage proved to be a provocative identity platform, forcing us to ask fundamental questions that demanded answers. Surrounded by so many voices that had been silenced, many of us felt helpless. And very lonely. The aim of the study visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau was to awaken even more emotions than a regular tourist experience by framing them with certain anthropological references. How does a visitor's emotional yet cognitive process affect the research? Can we use our sadness and solitude to help us understand, explain, and interpret the site? What can we learn from the study of our own behaviour?

With observation questionnaires, we were mindful of how our bodies and minds reacted. The experienced heritage space gave rise to many different perspectives. Both being together and reflecting on the comments provided by our guide and educator helped gain understanding of the space. Many of us felt relief after having left Auschwitz-Birkenau: we were given time and space to talk about our experiences. Even non-conclusive statements seemed to help, even if what was said was just emotional. To me, the organizer of the study visit and an anthropologist, it was not the first time in Auschwitz-Birkenau. I have been coming here regularly with people of various faiths, ages, and backgrounds. I am never comfortable, yet I always find these visits profoundly important for both the participants and myself. This experience is also one more way of connecting identity and self-definition with the past. The context of authentic space plays an enormous role in this process.

What strikes me in all my travels to Auschwitz is the contrast between the ordered and small "town" of the first camp and the vast fields of Birkenau, the tangibility of the ground carrying ashes, its speechless authenticity, and most of all – its bizarre picturesqueness. The moment we got off the shuttle bus, and a new, seemingly unending space opened in front of us, another camp, much bigger and—just when we believed that it was nearly the end of the trip- it turned out to be the beginning of another part of the visit, probably even more devastating than the first, more educational part. They say that poetry after the Holocaust is impossible, although the words might help channel the experience. "The Book of Names" from the Israel pavilion, one of many attempts to record the unlived lives of those who were killed here, remains a symbol of insufficient commemoration.

What stays with many of us is not the data, not the words or metaphors, but our own attempts to read between the lines of the words spoken by the guide, as if trying to understand what and why happened here. The guide's story does not, however, seem to be convincingly "connecting the dots" to give us a clear picture in the end. The really dissonant part of the visit is the feeling we are not able to understand it all. The (in)famous gate and railway line of Birkenau close the horizon limiting its imagined infinity, but our inner landscapes will stay with us.

Can we use them to describe the world of which we are a part? The study trip was supposed to be there, look and feel, and see what we can learn from this presence. The essays included in this book are highly illustrative comments and testimonies of the experience.

3.4 Fieldwork in Nowa Huta. Dissonances of Post-socialist Architecture and Urban Planning

(Magdalena Banaszkiewicz)

The workshop in Nowa Huta aimed to create the conditions for an auto-ethnographic view of the tourist experience, not just as a situation of a visit to learn about heritage, but as a performative practice of constructing heritage narratives. Nowa Huta is the northeastern part of Kraków, a city designed from scratch, the construction of which began in 1949 on the historically important territory of suburban and rural communes located near Kraków. The urban layout of Nowa Huta is considered to be one of the best

architectural developments in Poland after World War II. However, in the period of political and economic transformation in the 1990s, Nowa Huta was increasingly seen as having a dissonant heritage or even an unwanted legacy, and its inhabitants often felt stigmatized. The dissonance of heritage in the context of many places can be discussed concerning how the inheritors of a certain heritage see themselves and how they are perceived from the outside. Such outsiders are tourists who come to heritage sites, often motivated by curiosity; particularly for foreign visitors, the difference is valued positively, even if it represents an uncomfortable ballast to the local community (slum tours or DMZ tours are radical examples of such experiences of Otherness).

Led by experts working with local heritage on a daily basis and using the stimulation of different senses and the introduction of an entertainment strategy of heritage interpretation, the workshop aimed to reveal that heritage may acquire different meanings, depending on the person who explores it. Particular attention was therefore paid to the strategies for excluding and including residents in the management of heritage, particularly in its commercial dimension as a tourist attraction. Visits to sites (such as the Nowa Huta Museum, the shelters in the Administrative Centre of the Nowa Huta Steelworks, and a walk through the housing estates) were interspersed with discussions focused on the challenges of developing post-socialist heritage. At a theoretical level, the physical exploration of the case study was an attempt to answer the question of what inclusive heritage discourse means as a practice for managing narratives about the past—why and for whom the heritage sites are designated, providing meaningful narratives for the users to ensure the preservation and sustainable development of them.

4. The three Cross-cutting Themes

During the workshop, Ph.D. students and the many researchers involved explored three main cross-cutting themes related to (1) unveiling the dissonance of the scientific museums' collections; (2) designing the social sustainability of dissonant heritage; and (3) the contribution of arts in overcoming dissonance.

Many anthropological collections (such as the polychrome plaster casts of the faces of non-Western people, made during the period of European colonial expansion, and with stylized representations of racial differences) represented a propaganda tool for racist ideologies and a source of inspiration for authoritarian and nationalistic Nazi and Fascist regimes (Nilsson Stutz 2013; Nizzo 2015; Williams and Giles 2016). Moving from this framework and working on some of these collections, the issue aims at critically reflecting on their meaning and value, unveiling and drawing attention to their dissonance, from that hierarchical representation of human variability to the promotion of cultural diversity. It is also a process of giving a voice to marginalised minorities in the dominant heritage discourse, one in which the geography of knowledge is still reflected in the asymmetry of the centre-periphery relationship. Cultural heritage is usually considered a basic means for promoting social and cultural sustainability, namely social justice, the participation of the local community in the decision-making process and the promotion of cultural diversity. However, the presence of difficult heritage can weaken the link between cultural heritage and sustainability. Dissonance prevents people from feeling proud of the place in which they live; the unwanted past becomes an unwanted place. Residents might prefer to forget the unwanted past and avoid any kind of cultural promotion for the difficult heritage of their city (Battilani et al. 2018).

Then, if dissonant heritage is used to highlight the uniqueness of a place, the distinctiveness can assume a negative connotation and weaken the identity of the place. When difficulties come from a conflicting narrative between different social or ethnic communities, cultural heritage can foster conflict instead of contributing to dialogue and reciprocal recognition.

In this context, two of the main elements of social sustainability, the promotion of cultural diversity and the empowerment of the local community, can become difficult to implement. Dissonant heritage places comprise different risks from issues related to removing contentious historical contexts (Goulding and Domic 2009; Roushanzamir and Kreshel 2001) to political manipulation by extremists supporting racial and ethnic exclusiveness or totalitarianism (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). In this context, international conventions provide useful tools and frameworks (the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001 or the Faro Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society of 2005) to cope with difficult and dissonant heritage. They propose the description of heritagization as a common bottom-up process. In conclusion, difficult heritage deserves specific attention in order to contribute to the sustainable development of places. Theatre, visual arts, architecture, the film industry, music, literature, graphic design, and the arts in general have played an important role in many countries, allowing individuals to deal with their dissonant past: a cultural reality often censored, removed, and forgotten. Through theatre, film, music, architecture, visual arts, and literature, it is now possible to understand the relationship between the younger generations and the cultural heritage of the dissonant past, identifying the sedimentations left in the social individual by different languages: the language of totalitarian power, the language of democratic societies, and the language of art that reads reality through the impressions that it arouses.

4.1 Unveiling the Dissonance of the Scientific Museums Collections

(Natalia Bahlawan, Joanna Ślaga, and Francesco Mazzucchelli)

This working group focused on a very particular aspect of dissonant heritage represented by sensitive collections—either those including human remains, such as anatomical collections, which are often also marked by colonial burden, or those related to human suffering, bearing testimony of racism, colonialism, and genocide, representing individual or collective tragedies, and documenting past and now obsolete scientific visions (especially in anthropology), which have been exploited for ideological reasons.

The underlying idea of the working group was to discuss the aims and adequate strategies of representing and working with the dissonant element, i.e., the problems that arise with the musealisation of sensitive collections. A particular emphasis has been placed on the ways of highlighting dissonance and building a narrative that surrounds dissonance and its presentation. These issues carry great importance for custodians of sensitive collections, museum and exhibition curators studying and managing dissonant heritage. How can the experience, which evokes strong emotions extending from despair and sadness to anger and terror, be shaped and translated to become educational and to raise awareness? Prior to the session the participants had been divided in two groups and exposed to one of the two sites chosen as case studies for this workshop—the Cipriani Collection at the University of Bologna or the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Oświęcim. The individual experience resulting from their visits was to become a starting point for discussions within the joint working group, during which the participants shared their observations and reactions. The second part of the session involved discussions between the two teams, one based in Bologna, the other in Kraków, regarding the possible strategies of working with the dissonant element, building its interpretation, and understanding, or—as the participants expressed it—"activating" its potential in raising awareness among the audience.

During this discussion, participants were asked to identify common questions and themes between the two case studies, which, although very different (the best-known Nazi camp in Europe and a museum collection including artefacts produced and used by anthropology during fascism), were similar in terms

of the issues raised. The focus was on the presence of the collections of "difficult objects" in both examined cases, even though these collections had different origins. The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial preserves and exhibits personal objects or biological remains (e.g., glasses, shoes, hair) of the victims, while the exhibition of the Anthropological Museum in Bologna includes artefacts that were used by the scientific community during fascism to scientifically justify ideological racism (Cipriani's plaster face casts). Thus, participants had to reflect on the relations between instances of material legacies of both victims and perpetrators. Moreover, in both cases, participants were asked to think about the materiality of (dissonant) objects that incorporate meanings that can be interpreted, communicated, and valorised in different ways (also through an amplification of the dissonant features of these collections aimed at eliciting pluralistic reflections). Based on this premise, we then attempted to create a "semantic map" of dissonance, additionally identifying the semiotic dimension of dissonant heritage.

An interesting observation made throughout the working sessions and reflected in the essays concluding our work concerned the verbs that were selected by the participants in speaking about studying and management of dissonant heritage. Employing verbs such as "unveiling," or "activating," or even "provoking" carries a hidden and intuitive understanding of all the complexities surrounding the problem and the need for creative and brave strategies in dealing with it. In addition, the discussion dealt with other themes, such as the role of the museum in minimizing or enhancing dissonance, which is not per se a negative aspect, but can help interpret the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the past. In some cases, it was noted, museums should also take an active role—capable of provoking and raising questions rather than proposing simple narratives—and open themselves to public discussions that can engage different audiences. Other issues were raised during the workshop included the ethics of preserving or presenting human remains, the issue of digitization to counter the fragility of these types of objects (with the related issues of authenticity), the problem of predicting the different emotional and cultural responses to these collections and the related issue of the "prospectivism" of dissonance (Is it subjective? Are there collective "cultures of dissonance"?).

4.2 Designing the Social Sustainability of Dissonant Heritage

(Patrizia Battilani)

Sustainability includes three main pillars: economic development, social sustainability and environment protection. When we deal with dissonant heritage the social pillar becomes particularly relevant. It concerns how individuals live with each other, communities implement the development path they have chosen and chart a course of action aiming at resolving problems or achieving the socio-economic goals they have targeted.

Social sustainability blends traditional social policy areas and principles as equity and health, participation, the notions of happiness, well-being and quality of life, but includes also a crucial cultural dimension such as the promotion of diversity. In a nutshell, social sustainability is based on community empowerment and promotion of cultural diversity, and implies the transferring of power and legitimacy to community.

Literature highlights the many benefits linked to the residents' involvement in heritage valorisation, such as the fact that public values and opinions are incorporated in the decision-making process, new ideas are generated, there is a reduction in conflict and an improvement in the quality of life. When these concepts are implemented in tourist planning, not only the community but also visitors can be asked to play a more active role and to become contributosr and creators. In this way, the cultural product is not a finished "object" designed by experts or enterprises but an experience that will take its shape through

the interaction between locals and visitors. In conclusion, participation includes the local community empowerment and the involvement of visitors in co-creating and co-designing the cultural experience itself.

Strictly connected with participation is the promotion of cultural diversity as defined by the 2005 Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Culture takes diverse forms across time and space, therefore, cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature, as a source of exchange, innovation and creativity. Moreover, cultural diversity is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people and nourish cultural pluralism and democracy. In this framework, the Unesco Convention also provides the boundary that cultural diversity cannot overcome. "No one may invoke cultural diversity to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law, nor to limit their scope."

Therefore, the concept of sustainability is crucial for the interaction between cultural heritage and the fundamental freedoms. In this way cultural heritage becomes a nourishment for democracy and the promotion of human rights. The main question is then how dissonant heritage can play a role in promoting the values that frame our democracies and provide the cultural foundation for the respect of human rights. It could represent an opportunity to design experiences aiming at understanding the different cultural practices and overcoming ethnic divisions and discrepancy in values perceptions by communities. Furthermore, it could stimulate debates, exhibitions, and a general reflection on the way democracy and pluralism were achieved or lost by the past generations. This is a challenge that involves not only communities and residents but also visitors. In this framework, the second question is whether fostering "crossing borders" cultural experiences helps in building common future and identity, giving new values also to contested heritage/history/memory through the visitor's gaze.

However, despite all these potentialities and opportunities, there is often a gap between the theory and the practical implementation of sustainability. Due to its complexity, dissonant heritage can be perceived by local communities as a threat to democracy or as a memory that hurts and needs to be forgotten. In this case, the conciliation between community empowerment and the promotion of democracy throughout the valorisation of dissonant heritage becomes impossible due to the lack of consensus on development projects.

The interest in developing heritage tourism on the one hand, and the need to avoid a counterproductive dissonant heritage space on the other, call for a workable solution, allowing the implementation of heritage tourism plans on a consensual basis.

4.3 The Contribution of Arts in Overcoming Dissonance

(Łucja Piekarska-Duraj)

Although for centuries the arts have continued to be a shelter for harmony and ideal beauty, they can also be the domain of conflict and dissonance, which are often rooted in the past—the evergreen inspiration for many. Complex events from the past are portrayed and interpreted differently by different artists, and much of the arts can be seen as driven by heritage. The voices of artists may have a significant impact on the domain of heritage. Furthermore, the arts scene is often seen as destined to expand the audiences' cognitive horizons by suggesting innovative forms and surprising viewpoints on various subjects. Societies seem to be needing artists also for self-reflection. The unlimited domain of the arts offers many opportunities for debates around identity. This goes far beyond the mythical potential for structuring the diversity of various contents by narrowing them to simplifying, yet universal storytelling. Another important link between the arts and heritage can be found in art's own heritage, where the works

from the past are quoted, recontextualized, and appropriated. The dialogue with the old masters does not have to be kind, but it definitely makes the recipients aware of the interpretative processes that are also present in culture, not necessarily limiting them to the art scene.

The arts are about reflection, expression, concept, craft, and dialogue. It is about the meanings stemming from different forms and contents. As such, the arts may be seen as a perfect way of looking at the past from the present perspective and have the potential for creating open and inclusive situations that embolden the viewers to establish personal links with the past.

It might be said that the arts have always struggled for relevancy in the public sphere, and this is certainly the case when artists engage with the most tragic and problematic heritage, such as the inheritance of World War II, especially the Holocaust. This is the case with graphic novels, where a question of the legacy of the Holocaust symbolised by the authority to narrate the story coexists with a pop culture inspired form. The inheritance of the Holocaust gains a new format, both informal and sensitive. By accepting to read graphic novels that deal with the trauma, we, the readers, seem to confirm that we are all used to the presence of the Holocaust, as much as we are used to the ubiquitous images of violence that we come across every day. Not only do we agree on their simplicity and sometimes superficiality, but we also seem to be accepting a "lighter" version of the past. Yet, even if the difficult past is painted in vivid yet light colours, its significance for maintaining reference frameworks in the public discourse is evident. The interplay between relevance and enjoyment has a deep impact on the reception of the art. Finding new, often surprising contexts for diverse fragments of heritage may also result in reframing the discourse, especially by managing a diversity of formats, topics, and contents. For example, street art, traditionally developed by less privileged groups, proves to be a powerful medium to express inequalities—also those resulting from unfair access to the official making of history. Street art, as operating in between private and public spaces (often using the external walls of households), is a perfect genre for the critical approach to the past. Performative arts, with music and theatre, are very interesting examples of spontaneous reception, dialogue and, at the same time, the impact of canons—with all their codes and principles. Isn't such communication specific also for heritage? Respect for what is gone equals the thrill of looking for new forms of expression.

Poetry, on the other hand, allows us to contemplate both the language structure and its symbolic powers, so often unseen in everyday life. Is it superfluous? Is it really affordable nowadays? And with regard to the tragedies of humanity, is it possible at all? Analysing poetry often allows us to look closer at the sensitive and personal part of the past, while its interpretations speak much of the societies in (and for) which the poetry was created. It is, after all, the interpretations and what is "lost in translation" that eventually determines much of the meaning in the processes of communication.

There is one more aspect of the arts and heritage alliance that can be highlighted. It lies in its obsession with identity and self-reflection as rooted in the past or, rather, the present perfect tense of history. In postmodernity, to question who we are by looking at where we come from means—among others—to question the sources and methods used for analysis. Anxiety, one of the consequences of late modernity, is, however, not silenced or diminished by the artists; it is just the opposite. The arts look very often for dissonance in order to highlight it, to focus on it and to elaborate its complexities. And while the past is so rich in dramas and traumas, it does not cease to provide artists with new insights that further inspire the recipients.

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Part A

Unveiling the dissonance of scientific museum collections

Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
edited by Patrizia Battilani, Maria Giovanna Belcastro, Krzysztof Kowalski and Teresa Nicolosi

1. Cast Out of Context: Unveiling Dissonance in Scientific Collections

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Abstract

This chapter offers an anthropological analysis of the proposed strategy for unveiling dissonance at the Anthropological Collection of the Museum System of the University of Bologna. For the purpose of adding to the working concept of dissonance in cultural heritage management, this chapter further reflects on the wider issues at stake for applying the concept in similar scientific collections. Following preliminary fieldwork at the museum network and with a specific focus on the Cipriani collection, this chapter states that activating dissonance is important for a continued educational role of this and other museums and collections. However, rather than problematising isolated elements by archiving specific objects or reframing consumable narratives, I argue that provoking dissonance would require highlighting existing material and discursive entanglements. This can reposition the objects in question both in a network of references and in 'thicker' dialogues, enabling them to be better-suited instruments for reflexivity and historical literacy, all the while dealing with the present issues of exhibiting the material.

Keywords

Entanglement, Resignification, Museology, Scientific collections, Anthropology

1. Introduction

It is easy to imagine how the collection of polychrome plaster facial casts became a focal point as a difficult, dissonant collection of artifacts. Even without historical context, their painful expressions can make anyone grimace and hold their breath in solidarity. As a cultural anthropologist, I see gruesome faces of anthropology's past. They represent all too well Fabian's (1983) historical critique of anthropology, temporally and spatially freezing individuals in an agency-defying essentialism for the sake of fabricating otherhood. It is no wonder, then, that university and museum professionals inheriting similar pieces have shared their grimaces and set out to rethink the meaning they are capable of representing. Some have found their gaze so problematic that they have committed them to archive. Others have found an opportunity. The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam displayed the plaster casts unpainted, while the University of Florence reframed them within celebratory multiculturalist narratives. Treating them as dissonant, however, a recognition and application of disharmony or incoherence in relation to other objects and narratives, is more complicated.

Image 1 – Cabinet displaying Lidio Cipriani's plaster facial casts (Photo by author)
Image 2 – An example of a Cipriani cast (1933) taken of a living person (Photo by author)

The Bologna collection of plaster casts is indeed in need of a reframing, but a dissonant framing of the casts in this particular collection would only create a new problem: the loss of assonance with fellow artifacts of scientific racism. Therefore, throughout this chapter I argue that any treatment of dissonance in a scientific collection cannot be achieved by framing singularity (i.e., acknowledgment of any one scientist or mode of fabricating objectivity as dissonant). Isolating and problematising artifacts of a scientific past, essentially fracturing singular objects and narratives, is, after all, tantamount to an ironic harmonisation. It harmonises those objects and narratives excluded from the treatment, and most importantly, their work with the present.

Rather than rendering these artifacts palatable for the here and now, especially in regards to science and its history, a provocation of dissonance would be better achieved by activating tensions, addressing connections, and entangling them with other material and discursive contents. In this way, representations can enable exhibitions to become more effective instruments of reflexivity and historical literacy, engaging objects in both historical questions ("How did scientific thought develop and change?") and museological ones ("Why and how are these objects here?"). In a museum context, this not only steers away from the linear and hegemonic narratives that dissonant heritage approaches strive to deconstruct but steers it toward a museification on processual and situated terms.

2. From Representing Dissonance to Reading Cipriani

This particular case considers Florentine physical anthropologist[1] Lidio Cipriani (1892–1962),[2] his infamous plaster casts, support of fascism, and endorsement of eugenics. Delving into even the most superficial layers of Cipriani's expeditions in occupied colonial territories and his work at the fascist branch of Italian race research, *Ufficio Razza del Ministero della Cultura Popolare*, makes it easy to cast him out as a scientific pariah. However, Cipriani was neither unique nor particularly ground-breaking in his prejudices, practices, positivism, politics, or even plaster casting (Sysling 2015).[3] Therefore, in order to address the question of activating dissonance in the Cipriani collection, his casts should be historicised in relation to other objects, as they share not only exhibition space but also a role in the history of scientific racism and its direct correlation to politically legitimating racial violence. Three objects (pictured below) from the Bologna collection, a stone's throw from the plaster cast display, will be used to represent three possible lines of research and contextualisation that can enable a reading of Cipriani in a wider, somewhat Geertzian, web of scientific significance.

Image 3 – A portrait based on Rudolf Martin's photograph of an "Australian" (Photo by author)
Image 4 – A bust of a "Fire Islander" originating from the Vienna Museum of Natural History (Photo by author)
Image 5 – A metal eye chart based on Rudolf Martin's work in anthropometry, used in Nazi racial surveys, designed by SS officer Bruno K. Schultz (Photo by author)

This chapter argues and attempts to demonstrate how—rather than representing Cipriani's pseudoscientific[4] wares and fascist role as inherently dissonant or more dissonant than other objects—provoking dissonance must connect objects. Activating connections can put objects in a deeper context, in a 'thicker' dialogue with the related people, politics, and processes that preceded, legitimated, and even contradicted them. Preliminary research of the three chosen objects—a portrait, a bust, and an eye chart—and the people and processes responsible for them, revealed constant intersections both in the history of scientific racism and its direct impact on fascist racial policies in Italy, Germany, and Austria. In the following section, each of these objects will be discussed separately but in relation to Cipriani and his

[1] The term "physical" will be used in this chapter for general consistency, despite some scientists identifying with biological or forensic anthropology.
[2] For more biographical information on Cipriani, see Moggi-Cecchi (1990); Iannuzzi (2021); Moggi-Cecchi and Stanyon (2014).
[3] For instance, his professional Alma Mater, the University of Florence, holds several facial casts by Cipriani's predecessor, Elio Modigliani (1860–1932).
[4] For an entertaining analysis of the extent of Cipriani's pseudoscience, see Gardner (1967).

facial casts. The portrait, the bust, and the eye chart analyzed in this chapter highlight three intersecting processes which speak to:

1) the precursors that supported and enabled Cipriani's and others' racist thinking and practices;
2) the academic debates and radicalisation of the period that divided and bridged disciplines;
3) the instrumentalization and politicisation of science with the purpose of legitimising racist policy and genocide.

3. A Portrait of Positivism in Racial Sciences

Plaster facial casts may be gruesome artifacts of a distant scientific past, but they were only able to be understood, received, and legitimated in scientific circles based on what had already been established by previous generations of scientists. An example of these predecessors literally precedes the collection. Lining the university halls leading to the facial casts, hang several portraits of typological subjects (e.g., "Eskimo," "Dakota," "Karaibe," "Australier," "Melanisier") published by German physical anthropologist Rudolf Martin (1864–1925) from fieldwork photography. They predispose any museum-goer to the same frames of thinking and academic context in which Cipriani and countless others operated: a positivist science adapted from zoology that insisted on Linnean taxonomies of human types and evolutionary hierarchies to make race and its study credible.

In the history and practice of science, credibility, as Thomas F. Gieryn points out (1999), is a key resource to be won. He argues that it is part of a contest incapable of being made on "auto-pilot", and like any social construction of meaning (Berger and Luckman 1966), rhetorically constructed; ". . . bearers of discrepant truths push their wares wrapped in assertions of objectivity, efficacy, precision, reliability, authenticity, predictability, sincerity, desirability, tradition" (Gieryn 1999, 1). The credibility that Cipriani and an entire generation of eugenicists were arguing for, the evolutionary evidence and function of a presupposed human biological hierarchy, was building on decades of racial research grounded in a paradigm of positivism.

Image 6 – Lining the corridors leading up to the Bologna collection, hang a series of typological portraits ("Eskimo," "Dakota," "Karaibe," "Australier," "Melanisier") published in 1903 by Rudolf Martin. They depict types based on Martin's fieldwork photographs; an instrument he defended as fundamental in collecting objective data on human types (Photos by author)

While never professionally overlapping, Martin and Cipriani were part of this scientific tradition as classic positivist scientists, heavily influenced by zoology and evolutionary studies to empirically map and reify human biological variability. They not only shared a fascination for the study of South African subjects but also enjoyed the lack of ethical ground rules in procuring data from and on living individuals.

This practice of epistemic violence, which is at the very heart of reworking the representation of Cipriani's casts, is also a central part of Rudolf Martin's body of work. Martin infamously collaborated with other physical anthropologists, including Felix von Luschan (also an avid facial caster), gathering data from and on prisoners of war during World War I. Not unlike Cipriani, he relished and benefited professionally from the opportunity of working on coerced and forced research subjects.

Still, Martin's success appears to have overshadowed Cipriani's. For one, as Evans (2010) points out, Martin's career had a demonstrable, game-changing impact on German anthropology, particularly in developing a conceptualisation of race during an important time in the rise of German nationalism, where ideas of 'blood and soil' had already been well underway. Morris-Reich (2013) further argues that Martin unintentionally set much of the important groundwork for fascist racial research, policy, and eugenics in Europe, which included standardising physical anthropology and firmly solidifying it as a scientific authority. Morris-Reich positions Martin as an innocent, albeit influential precursor of the determinist, racist, politicised shift in German anthropology. Many of Martin's students went on to work for the SS, and Martin may have very well harboured some of their hierarchical prejudices grounded in a Eurocentric view of human types.

This is evidenced in his photographing of non-European subjects juxtaposed with and in similar postures to gorillas and chimpanzees (Morris-Reich 2013, 511). The following sections offer evidence of Martin's posthumous impact, considering the use of his textbooks and the standardised eye identification employed in Nazi racial surveys.

Image 7 – While Cipriani and Martin shared interest in empirical work in South Africa, they categorically diverged on theory, methodology, concepts of race, and supposed hierarchy (Photo by author)
Image 8 – Plaster casts from South Africa (Photo by author)
Image 9 – Fieldwork picture taken during one of his many trips to Africa. Both Cipriani and Martin enjoyed a lack of ethical boundaries to procure data during their careers. (Photo by author)

While they diverge on methodological tools—photography and plaster casting—as well as suppositions of racial hierarchy, Martin and Cipriani are similar examples of scientists working within the same grain, both in regards to scientific traditions and frames of thought. Moreover, they both offered a

scientific justification and legitimation for emerging radicalisation in politics. For example, Evans (2008, 96) clearly shows how Martin's patriotism influenced his increasing and tacit endorsement of eugenics in research directly aimed at benefiting the "genetic health" of the nation.

Can highlighting Cipriani's singularity in relation to eugenics and fascism support historical literacy? Connecting the background of racial thinking and the work of his academic predecessors suggests not, as it builds references to his own intellectual past, situating him and his objects within a context of shared scientific tradition and budding political relationships.

4. Racial Busts and Natural History Museums

Connecting the work of Cipriani's academic contemporaries incorporates important references to the plaster casts, situating them both within a context of shared practices and emerging politics. For one, the boundary-work (Gieryn 1999) and public debates provoked by many eugenicists at the time, Cipriani included, were further legitimated by the use of museum spaces to display their research. This practice offers a narrative better able to contextualise Cipriani and the plaster casts.

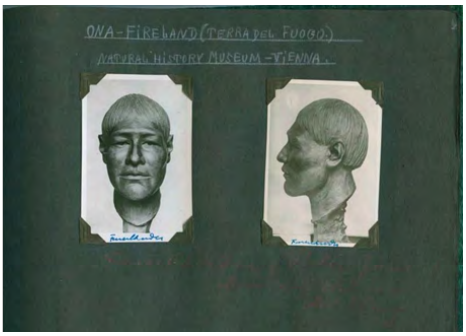

Image 10 – A 1933 bust of a "Tierra del Fuego man" made by sculptor Erna Clara von Engel-Baiersdorf (Photo by author)
Image 11 – Von Engel-Baiersdorf's scrapbook page of the same bust. The album contains photographs of her sculptures before she, along with members of her family, were interred at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald concentration camps (Page taken from Erna von Engel-Baiersdorf album, RA007-03-00-02, Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, von Baiersdorf, Reif family fonds, RA007)

In the Bologna collection, typological racial busts, another popular mode of reifying racial differences in Cipriani's time, may actually outnumber plaster casts. The museum holds a handful of busts which came from the *Naturhistorisches Museum Wien* at a very significant time, both in terms of politics and science. Before the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938, and the subsequent takeover of the Natural History Museum in Vienna, many anthropologists had already been feeling pressure from the growing popularity of eugenics. As a result, some of them united in working to counter the eugenic baseless, racist arguments. An example of this resistance can be found in Erna Clara von Engel-Baiersdorf's sculpture.

This typological bust titled "Feuerländer" was an artistic rendition of photographs championed by Austrian priest-ethnologist Martin Gusinde (1886–1969) in collaboration with Viktor Lebzelter (1889 1936), a fellow critic of eugenics. Both fervent opponents of any supposition of racial superiority,[5] Gusinde and Lebzelter were part of a larger network of Christian researchers insistent on identifying and

[5] It should be noted that, despite this divergence in their thinking, Lebzelter favourably, if briefly, reviewed Cipriani's research; see Lebzelter (1934).

saving "endangered" groups while arguing for a more egalitarian view of diversities (Szilvássy 1985). Gusinde worked to document the cultural diversity of groups residing in the southernmost regions of Tierra del Fuego, particularly, persecuted peoples who were not only the victims of epistemic violence (Ballestero 2019) under the tenure of German nationalist Robert Lehmann-Nitsche (1872–1938) but were being systematically wiped out by territorial domination (gold mining and farming ventures) and genocidal hunting.

However, following the Nazi takeover of the Natural History Museum in Vienna, the institution underwent radical changes. These included not only the ousting of the museum director Hermann Michel (1888–1965),[6] but a pointed shift in using the museum to promote Nazi ideology—a transformation that was carried out by Josef Wastl (1892–1968), who had replaced Michel. This included conducting forced racial surveys in Austria; in one of them, Rudolf Martin's textbook played a central role and the researchers performed forced plaster casting of living individuals (Berner 2017).[7]

Image 12 – Plaster cast reproductions from Eshowe, likely made during Cipriani's consultation work for Attilio Gatti's 1927 silent film *Siliva Zulu* (Photo by author)
Image 13 – Similar casts, or possibly the same, hung by Cipriani in his exhibition booth exhibited at the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

This shift in radicalising racial studies was not new, nor was it exclusive to Europe, fascism, or Nazism. Several years before the changes in Vienna, the American Museum of Natural History in New York was hosting the third, and final, International Eugenics Congress. In 1932, Cipriani travelled there with an enthusiastic Italian delegation (Stillwell 2012). His particular contribution was an exhibition under the theme of "Eugenics is applied anthropology." There, he displayed the same infamous plaster facial casts under the title "South African Negroes" (International Eugenics Conference 1932, 489), a possible link to the Eshowe masks displayed in Bologna. However, these sorts of race exhibits were not uncommon; for instance, a similar exhibition by the Chicago Field Museum (also home of von Engel-Baiersdorf's sculptures), "The Races of Mankind," toured the country the following year.

Here, another opportunity to promote a specific reading of the masks presents itself. Unveiling the shifting debates and disciplinary breaks in physical anthropology exemplified in the use of museum

[6] He both earned a role under Nazi leadership and was reportedly instrumental in the collaboration with the Allied forces in salvaging artwork at Altaussee in 1945.
[7] For an emotional and graphic testimony of one of the plaster casted victims of a racial survey on Jewish males, see Gershon Evan's testimonial in Berner (2009). He speaks not only to the physical pain of the casting process, but also to the emotional pain of being forced to produce a stereotype of himself. For him, the plaster casts only represent death masks.

spaces to legitimise research in the 1930s, shows the foundations for the politicisation of the eugenicist project. These practices, after all, were followed by eugenicists and their proponents were taking advantage across the globe. A recognition of this chapter in the history of science and physical anthropology offers a more complex reading of Cipriani and the wider context in which he operated.

5. Instruments of Power: From Scientific Racism to Fascist Policy

Image 14 – An eye chart based posthumously on Rudolf Martin's chart was designed by German physical anthropologist Bruno K. Schultz, an SS officer, Schultz educated professionals and physicians in racial identification (Photo by author)
Image 15 – The same eye chart example on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The main motivation for painting Cipriani with a dissonant brush comes from his contaminated CV as a fascist eugenicist. However, singling him out and distancing him historically from fellow objects and scientists could be construed as tacit approval of those who had a far more direct and disastrous impact. After all, Cipriani represents just one actor in the wider radicalisation of the discipline and its role as handmaiden to fascist policies. Within that wider radicalisation and influence on burgeoning "racial hygiene" initiatives, next to German SS physical anthropologist Bruno K. Schultz (1901–1997), whose wares are also on display in Bologna, Cipriani becomes virtually eclipsed.

Schultz enjoyed a central role as a bridge between academia and governance. As head of The Race and Settlement Main Office (RuSHA), he set up criteria for racial purities in SS marriages and trained academics and medical professionals in race identification. He is even credited with creating and normalising the "five races" under Nazi rule (Šimůnek and Hossfeld 2015). A huge collection of his posters and charts for race education is archived and on display at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,[8] including the same metal eye case (pictured in the previous page) that is on display in Bologna.

This *Augenfarben-Tafel*, a tin containing a "race-identifying" eye colour chart of twenty artificial eyes, was designed for use in the field, such as the aforementioned forced surveys carried out in Vienna. It was also included in one of several racial science textbooks by Julius Friedrich Lehmann's (1864–1935) publishing house (credited for its construction in the picture previous page). A notorious servant to Nazi propaganda, Lehmann not only published decades of science-oriented material to serve Nazi ideology,[9] but was also an active figure in the birth of Nazism. He organised far-right political groups with war

[8] The metal case and several other Schultz-Lehmann collaborations are currently on display in the Dr. Irmgard Nippert collection, described as "artifacts used at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute of Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics, the Berlin center for racial experiments and research in Nazi Germany"; https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn4728.
[9] Lehmann's impact was important enough for the Nazi regime to make him the only publisher to ever receive an annual prize for services to the German Nation, the Eagle Shield of the German Reich, a year before his death.

criminals, was imprisoned for one of the group's militant activities, and even purportedly aided Hitler in the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch (Phelps 1963).

Schultz, under Lehmann's publishing company, *Lehmanns Verlag*, produced and edited several works on race and eugenics for both academic and non-academic audiences, earning arguably the widest readership through their famous journal-pamphlet "*Volk und Rasse*," "People and Race" (Šimůnek and Hossfeld 2015, 99).[10] In one of the 1933 issues, Dr. Schultz's photograph appears amongst other academic pioneers serving Nazi Germany, his portrait positioned to the direct right of Heinrich Himmler and under the photographic centrepiece of the Führer.

Image 16 - "*Volk und Rasse*" co-edited by Bruno K. Schultz, an example of Nazi scientific racism-propaganda machine, run by J. F. Lehmann's publishing house for almost two decades
Image 17 - "*La difesa della Razza*," a similar publication ran from 1938 to 1943. In this issue (Interlandi 1938), Cipriani writes on race and admonishes French populations on racial mixing

Once again, next to Bruno K. Schultz, Cipriani is neither unique in his scientific racism nor particularly exceptional in his use of scientific authority in order to wield political influence to spread the tenets of eugenics. Cipriani's most famous declarations, as writer and signatory for the bi-monthly journal "*La difesa della Razza*" (Snowdon 1940), seem to pale in comparison to its German counterpart, "*Volk und Rasse*," which enjoyed almost two decades of circulation (1926–1944) and exerted unmeasurable influence on racial beliefs in Nazi Germany.

6. Conclusions

Whether or not dissonance is, as Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996) argue, inherent to the very concept of heritage, its display is not easily harmonised by the slippery slope of 'resignification' (renaming and reframing), especially within a scientific context and with the focus on one isolated scientific figure. That being said, the Anthropological Collection of the Museum System of the University of Bologna is a space bursting with possibilities for engaging with seemingly inexhaustible lines of research that can lead to

[10] In an attempt to come full circle, Rudolf Martin apparently rejected an offer to publish a racial textbook by Lehmann's (Robertson 1988).

contextualising and entangling objects in a wider network of references and 'thicker' dialogues, enabling them to be better suited instruments for reflexivity and historical literacy.

The three objects discussed in this chapter can clearly activate and add colour to the rarely harmonic interrelations of science, politics, policy, ethics, human rights, and colonialism, aiding in the strategy to challenge hegemony. Lidio Cipriani's life and work undoubtedly speak to all of those interrelations. His work making and selling plaster casts is steeped in the politics of racial hierarchies and the epistemic violence that further reified both in the field and beyond. And, his particular entrepreneurial use of scientific authority did not end in politics, as evidenced in his eventual firing for selling museum artifacts (Moggi-Cecchi and Stanyon 2014, 27). His plaster facial casts are like countless other objects intended to make racism credible – objects that museums and universities have inherited; objects that are being revaluated in their capacity to represent something other than an uncomfortable past.

In the case of dissonance as a solution to that problem, it has been argued that it is a treatment that requires further research in order to better contextualise equally relatable objects and narratives, rather than putting Cipriani on posthumous trial for scientific crimes committed. In that way, we can avoid an even bigger problem: imposing new moral hierarchies that problematise some (Cipriani and death masks) and tacitly approve or whitewash others (Martin, Schultz, and anthropometric instruments). Contextualising Cipriani by activating entanglements, or a network of references (other scientific figures and objects in the collection), enables a more complex and reflexive representation of him and his masks. In this case, this can include engaging in a wider context that provokes questions around the construct of race in scientific domains and their direct correlation to state-sponsored racism and violence. Such engagement puts Cipriani in context of his political role and fosters historical awareness of the intersections of science and governance. It addresses the relationships of authority centres in the mutual legitimisation of their causes – the very nature of Foucauldian circulation of power.

One possible avenue to re-represent Cipriani without singularising him or his objects could take a note from the 2016–2019 Chicago Field Museum's exhibition "Looking at Ourselves: Rethinking the Sculptures of Malvina Hoffman." This reframing of Hoffman's racialised sculptures, originally created for the aforementioned 1933 exhibition "The Races of Mankind," engaged in contextualising her work and in wider scientific debates of the day regarding race and evolution. Reflexivity was not just a branding tool for the exhibition's title, but part of the overall strategy on display. The exhibition reoriented the typological sculptures in a reflexive view of race, and entangled it with the role of sciences in colonialism and reifications of racism through, for example, titling one section of the exhibit with a question: "How was racism advanced by science?" It even reintroduced divergent views of scientists on the nature of race and hierarchy, putting ancestral academics in a performative dialogue. For instance, framing some of Hoffman's sculptures, the following quotes were juxtaposed on the wall, positioning her work within the processes of construction and development of the concepts of race, racial hierarchies, and evolutionary theory:

> The highest places in the hierarchy of civilization will assuredly not be within the reach of our dusky cousins, though it is by no means necessary that they should be restricted to the lowest. (Thomas Huxley 1885) . . . all races have contributed in the past to cultural progress . . . so they will be capable of advancing the interests of mankind if we are only willing to give them a fair opportunity. (Franz Boas 1911)

Furthermore, as Lucia Procopio (2019) states, The Field Museum even addressed their own role as a museum head-on, particularly in their role in the touring 1933 exhibit. This was done while maintaining a current critical gaze at how the legacies of race and racism are still very much part of our present—their deconstruction long overdue. This approach is an example of the sensitivity that must be maintained in order to avoid museifying contemporary issues (i.e., placing them safely in the past), and tend to the

famous James Clifford (1988) declaration of a processual transparency: "The making of meaning in the museum classification and display is mystified as adequate representation. The time and order of the collection erase the concrete social labour of its making" (1988, 220).

While the Cipriani case may be seemingly specific to the heavy intellectual heritage of anthropology, disciplinary debates and the politicisation of sciences are universally relevant, today possibly more than ever. Especially important, considering his representation and the casts on display in a university context. More importantly, race and the supposition of evolutionary hierarchies are not out of our vocabulary or thinking; after all, scientific racism, as Rachel Caspari (2003) claims, will always be prevalent as long as racial thinking persists, continuously present in masked euphemistic uses of collective others.

Scratching the surface of just three of the objects in question – a portrait, a bust, and an eye chart – leads down a rabbit hole of polemic radicalising of racial sciences in the 1920s and 1930s. These small depths of historicising objects point to an opportunity for further research with multiple angles for highlighting historical narratives deconstructing race, scientific racism, and extremist consequences. In fact, a specific meaningful timestamp keeps emerging throughout this analysis. Not only is 1933 the year when "The Races of Mankind" exhibit went on tour, but also the year when the Bologna Museum established its current permanent home; when the "Tierra del Fuego man" was chiselled; and when Cipriani returned to plaster casting in Africa after displaying his South African examples at the New York eugenics conference. It is also the year that witnessed Bruno K. Shultz and Friedrich Lehmann's work with genocide advocate and physical anthropologist Otto Reche to publish the eighth-year issue of "Volk und Rasse." On a much larger scale, 1933 saw Mussolini put his first directive policies on racial hygiene into motion against miscegenation in occupied Libya (Robertson 1988), and began with the appointment of Adolf Hitler, and his own first policies on "racial hygiene." Certainly, 1933 is a reductionist catchall that simplifies entanglements. However, it also encompasses and connects multiple objects and people in a geography of eugenicist knowledge and enables a specific reading of just one of its many advocates.

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2. Unveiling the Dissonance in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum as a Form of Resisting Mnemonic Populism

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Abstract

This chapter outlines the results of the research on the strategies of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum for dealing with mnemonic populism. "Mnemonic populism," a term coined by Kornelia Kończal (2020), is understood as "poll-driven, manifestly moralistic and above all anti-pluralist imaginings of the past." The chapter characterises the populist narratives aimed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum and how museum professionals resist their influence. The populist turn that is reflected in Polish cultural institutions, including museums, is undoubtedly an important phenomenon of contemporary culture, both due to the growing popularity of museums and their prominent role in the process of shaping knowledge. However, the impact of populism on museums has not yet been comparatively described and no literature indicates strategies for dealing with populism in the Polish museum world. Initiating the discussion on the functionality of counterstrategies for mnemonic populism will not only fill the gap, but also have an impact on further development in the field of critical museology *and studies on heritage/memory cultures.*

Keywords

Populism, Museum, Heritage, Memory, Auschwitz-Birkenau

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on contemporary practices of mnemonic populism aimed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum after 2018—the year when the so-called Polish Holocaust Law was implemented under the Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) government—and outlines the ways museum professionals respond to those practices. "'Mnemonic populism," a term coined by Kornelia Kończal, is understood as "poll-driven, manifestly moralistic and above all anti-pluralist imaginings of the past" (2020, 2). Kończal argues that the development of mnemonic populism "can hardly be controlled from within because it consists of a variety of means and measures that are . . . less visible than legal regulations" (2020, 9).

Based on ethnographic research on practices of mnemonic populism in the field of European/Polish museums, this chapter builds on Kończal's concept of mnemonic populism and outlines counterstrategies that museum professionals might develop and apply in practice. In focusing on the case study of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum, this contribution is concerned with the question of how the process of unveiling the dissonance in the museum might be a constructive strategy that paves the way to counter the influence of mnemonic populism on museums in Poland.

Since the success of the right-wing Law and Justice party in the 2015 national elections, its government has ignited a revolt against the post-1989 "liberal consensus"[1] and turned towards a regime rooted in populism and nativism (Bill and Stanley 2020). The PiS government has consequently pursued to destabilise the independence of the judiciary system, the media, and civil society.[2] Changes have also occurred in the field of historical policy. Following Mateusz Mazzini, the process of change can be called "the current mnemonic revolution," which means that the PiS party has effectively brought the politics of memory and remembrance back to the top of the political agenda (2018, 47). One of the first announcements of the reforms was made during the Address by the President of Poland Andrzej Duda, before the National Assembly on 6 September 2015. Duda expressed the need to fight for "historical truth" and defend the "good name of Poland" through an active historical policy (Duda 2015).

A significant example of such an active approach to the historical policy is the so-called Polish Holocaust Law,[3] the amendment approved by the Polish Parliament on 26 January 2018. This bill, which penalises claims of Polish complicity in the extermination of Jews, is perceived as a threat meant to stifle academic debate and "muzzle research" (Gerra and Scislowska 2021).

> Whoever, publicly and contrary to the facts, attributes to the Polish Nation or to the Polish State responsibility or co-responsibility for Nazi crimes committed by the German Third Reich . . . or for other crimes constituting crimes against peace, humanity or war crimes or otherwise grossly diminishes the responsibility of the real perpetrators of such crimes, shall be subject to a fine or the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 3 years. (Act of 26 January 2018, Art. 55a)[4]

[1] The PiS party "openly views the post-1989 democratic transformation and accompanying market reforms as products of an illegitimate compromise between the former communist regime and the opposition liberals who allegedly sold-out Poland's interests when they held power" (Grzymala-Busse 2018, 96).

[2] For an in-depth analysis of the changes made by the PiS government, see Bill and Stanley 2020; Grzymala-Busse 2018.

[3] The Amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance of 26 January 2018, the Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the Act on War Graves and Cemeteries, the Act on Museums, and the Act on the Liability of Collective Entities for Criminal Offences.

[4] Following Kornelia Kończal: "Under international pressure, the legislation was amended on 27 June 2018. As a result, offences committed against the good name of Poland are no longer subject to criminal law and can only be reported to civil courts" (2020, 2).

Marta Bucholc and Maciej Komornik, in their text *The Polish 'Holocaust Law' revisited: The Devastating Effects of Prejudice-Mongering* (2019), outline the alarming consequences of this amendment. According to Bucholc and Komornik, the so-called Polish Holocaust Law belongs to the category of the "memory laws" that Anna Wójcik identifies as laws that endorse "certain narratives about the past, often aimed at strengthening the collective identity of a nation or community" (2018). Memory laws scholars such as Aleksandra Gliszczyńska and Wojciech Kozłowski (2018) argue that

> [a]ttributing responsibility for very broadly defined crimes amounts not to historical facts, but to opinions. It must not be denied that Poles, such as *shmaltsovniks*, were complicit in Nazi crimes. On the other hand, attributing the role of individual people in such crimes to the Polish people (not even all Polish people, but only a portion of them), does not amount to historical facts, but to opinions about facts. If the legislative changes become effective as enacted by the Polish Parliament, such opinions could provide too broad a basis for prison sentences for e.g. Holocaust survivors accusing Polish *shmaltsovniks*. (Gliszczyńska and Kozłowski 2018)

On 27 January 2018, the day after the Polish Holocaust Law had been passed, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum held a ceremony to commemorate the 73rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz. A particularly important moment was a brief speech by the Israeli ambassador, Anna Azari, who expressed Israel's concern about the Polish Amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance. Azari, in her statement, declared that "the state of Israel treats this amendment in a way that truth about the Holocaust cannot be spoken out loud" and that "it is a possible punishment for those who testify, for those who survived the Holocaust." Azari emphasised that "Israel understands who built KL Auschwitz and who built other camps. Everyone knows that it was not built by Poles" (Azari 2018). Azari's statement strongly resonated in the press and media. The fact that these words were uttered at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum had, and still have, a considerable impact on this institution. As one museum employee points out,

> For some time now, we have been the target of attacks from organizations that are, let's say, extreme, and I don't want to say only from the extreme right, because that wouldn't be a true statement either, but at one of the anniversaries of the liberation [of Auschwitz], the Israeli ambassador Anna Azari limited her speech to one sentence, where she said that this new law, that this is simply... "the state of Israel does not agree with any of this." Well, this has resonated in Auschwitz, and because it resonated in Auschwitz, we have been such an object of attacks ever since, by most extreme organisations . . ..[5]

It can be said that, since 27 January 2018, another wave of the dispute over the commemoration of Holocaust victims at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum has arisen.[6] In this text, I will examine what specific

[5] Except from a statement made by a museum employee during an interview that I conducted on 9 December 2021. The interviewee remains anonymous. The quotation is translated by the author.

[6] This is another act of ongoing dispute. In the last three decades of the twentieth century, Auschwitz became a religious symbol for Catholics in Poland. A number of events had contributed to this outcome: "the beatification in 1971 and sanctification in 1982 of Father Maksymilian Maria Kolbe, a Franciscan monk imprisoned in Auschwitz who gave his life for a fellow Polish Catholic prisoner; pilgrimages to Saint Maksymilian's death cell; Holy Masses and processions on the grounds of the former camp; the visit of the 'Polish Pope' John Paul II to the site of the former Auschwitz I main camp and Auschwitz II Birkenau camp in 1979; the establishment of a Carmelite convent in a building adjacent to the former main camp in 1984, which generated fierce Jewish-Catholic and Jewish-Polish controversy in 1985–93; the establishment of a chapel and a church in the buildings by the former main and Birkenau camps; the planting of crosses in the Birkenau 'field of ashes' in the mid-1980s, and of the 'papal cross' by the convent building in 1989; and the controversy over these crosses that erupted in 1996, followed by the 'War of the Crosses' in 1998–99" (Kucia et al. 2013, 135–136). Those events were studied, for example, by Marek Kecia (2013, 2015, 2021), and Geneviève Zubrzycki (2006).

attacks have been made against the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and why they can be considered populist practices.

2. Populism

Since the rise of the so-called populist parties in the 1980s (Mudde 2004), we can observe the intensification of research on populism.[7]

According to Cas Mudde (2004), most of the findings available in the early 2000s depicted populism generally as a threat to liberal democracy (see also Goodwyn 1976). Currently, academics such as Ben Stanley (2008), Jan Kubik, and Marta Kotwas (2019) refer to populism following the "*ideational approach"* (e.g., Mudde 2004, 2007, 2010; Hawkins et al. 2019), characterised by perceiving populism as a set of ideas "that understands politics as a Manichean struggle between a reified will of the people and a conspiring elite" (Hawkins et al. 2019).

There is a general agreement among researchers that "all forms of populism include some sort of appeal to *the people* and a criticism of *the elite*" (Mudde and Kaltwasser 2017, 5). For the "*ideational approach*," the key question is how the central concept of populism —the people —is defined. Kotwas and Kubik point out that it is crucial to study the specific constructions of *the people* who figure in a given populist imaginary (Kotwas and Kubik 2019). Kotwas and Kubik enrich the *ideational approach* to populism with Benjamin Moffitt and Simon Tormey's remarks on the "*political style,"* which is defined as

> . . . the repertoires of performance that are used to create political relations. There are a wide range of political styles within the contemporary political landscape, including populist, technocratic, authoritarian and post representative styles, all of which have their own specific performative repertoires and tropes that create and affect political relations. (Moffitt and Tormey 2014, 387)

Moffitt and Tormey are not the first scholars to define populism as a political style (see Knight 1998; Taguieff 1995; Kazin 1998; Canovan 1999; de la Torre 2010; Filc 2011). However, Moffit and Tormey, unlike their predecessors, do not focus solely on the rhetorical characteristics of populists— they are interested in "how the performances of those involved influence the relationship between the populist leader and *the people*, and vice versa" (2014, 387). In this chapter, populism is not just understood as a performative political style, but rather, there is an attempt to understand how populism works (Herzfeld 2019) and impacts the everyday works of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. In other words, the objective is to explore the performative (e.g., Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Herzfeld 2019) populist practices aimed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum from an anthropological perspective (Mazzarella 2019; Pasieka 2017, 2019). Within the anthropological approach, Michael Herzfeld (2019) defined populism as a performative mode of political action.

Herzfeld also redirected the attention from the question "What is populism?" (Müller 2016) to "How does populism work?" (Herzfeld 2019). Following an anthropological and performative approach, the objective of this chapter is to present and study the repertoire of mnemonic populist practices aimed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. The next step is to analyse the practices of resisting mnemonic populism by the museum team. The reflections presented in this text are the result of ethnographic work, participant observations, informal conversations and a formal in-depth interview conducted at the

[7] Out of numerous approaches, I will highlight those that are relevant to my research. However it is worth mentioning that the discussion on mnemonic populism is closely related to the topic of national populism (Anastasiou 2019, 2020; Bonikowski et al. 2018; Brubaker 2020; Eatwell and Goodwin 2018).

Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.[8] Initiating the discussion on the functionality of counterstrategies to populism will further add to current academic debates in the fields of heritage studies, critical museology, and studies on memory cultures and populism.[9]

3. Mnemonic Populism

Kończal notices that by analysing the responses to the Polish Amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance (Act of 26 January 2018), we can observe "how popular images of the past resonate into political uses of history in contemporary Poland." Kończal further points out that this Act serves "as a case in point for mnemonic populism" (2020, 2).

However, this does not mean that mnemonic populism manifests itself only through certain developments in the legislative and political world. Mnemonic populism is a reaction to what is happening in politics, economy, culture, or social life. It is not limited to a political style; on the contrary, the concept coined by Kończal is connected to social practices associated with the shaping of collective memory. According to Kończal, the fundamental benchmark of mnemonic populism in the case of Poland is the need to defend the innocence of Poles by endorsing populist memory politics not as one of the many possible strategies, but as the only approved conviction about the past.

One can think that the mnemonic populism is about dividing society into two homogeneous groups: "us"—who, in the Polish case, are/would be defenders of the memory of Polish Holocaust victims and patriotic values, and "them"—defenders of the memory of all victims of the Holocaust, including those who do not fit the monolithic *mnemonic regime* (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 7–34). The concept of memory regimes refers

> … to a set of cultural and institutional practices that are designed to publicly commemorate and/or remember a single event, a relatively clearly delineated and interrelated set of events, or a distinguishable past process. We are particularly interested in official memory regimes, that is, memory regimes whose formulation and propagation involve the intensive participation of state institutions and/or political society (the authorities and major political actors such as parties, who are organized to hold and contest state power). (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 15–16)

The Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum as a state institution could be seen as a platform for the performance of a *memory regime* created by political actors. Representatives of the ruling party of Poland, who might be classified as *mnemonic warriors*[10] (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 12–13), have demonstrated that they can create (or take over) and run institutions (Gessen 2019; Cadier and Szulecki 2020; Radonić 2020; Perlson 2020a, 2020b; Holmes 2020) in the spirit of the claim that "the content of collective memory appears to warriors as largely non-negotiable; the only problem is how to make others accept their *true* vision of the past" (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 13). Nevertheless, in democratic Poland, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum was perceived as one of the institutions over which the authorities have

[8] Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum is a case study embedded in my broader scope of the research on Polish museums and populism within the project *CHAPTER Challenging Populist Truth-Making in Europe: The Role of Museums in a Digital "Post-Truth" European Society.*

[9] The impact of populism on museums has not yet been systematically analysed. Research in this area is being carried out by a research team, of which I am part, within the project CHAPTER *Challenging Populist Truth-Making in Europe: The Role of Museums in a Digital "Post-Truth" European Society*. https://www.carmah.berlin/chapter/.

[10] Mnemonic warriors "draw a sharp line between themselves (the proprietors of the 'true' vision of the past) and other actors who cultivate 'wrong' or 'false' versions of history" (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 13).

not yet exerted a particular influence in terms of conducting a single-line narrative determined by a particular mnemonic regime. As the director of the Museum, Piotr Cywiński, stated in 2018,

> I worked under the Ministers [Kazimierz Michał] Ujazdowski, [Bogdan] Zdrojewski, Minister [Małgorzata] Omilanowska, and now under the Minister [Piotr] Gliński. Each time, I met people who were absolutely aware that the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum is a very difficult place. Politicians generally believe that they should stay away from it. I think that they are also aware that the more peaceful situation here is, the more dignified it will be for the victims and the entire national image of Poland. (Piegza 2018) [quotation translated by the author]

However, in 2018, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki did not prolong the tenure of a Holocaust researcher, Barbara Engelking, as chairwoman of the International Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. The reason was supposed to be the lack of "Polish sensitivity."[11] Moreover, in 2021, the Minister of Culture, National Heritage, and Sport, Piotr Gliński, appointed Beata Szydło, the former Polish Prime Minister from 2015 to 2017, politically aligned with the Law and Justice party, to the Museum Council at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

4. Mnemonic Populist Practices aimed at Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum

Drawing on ethnographic research, participant observation, and interviews, I have identified several types of mnemonic populist strategies that relate to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. In this text, I aim to focus on two of them that I consider to be the most distinctive: fostering a sense of Polish national identity and personal threats made directly to the museum staff.

Expressions and manifestations associated with the increased interest of mnemonic populists in the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum may be differentiated into types regarding the degree of direct or indirect impact on the museum staff and on the site of the former concentration and extermination camp itself. All the forms of mnemonic populism that I have studied stemmed from the openly voiced opinions that there is a lack of attention to the martyrdom of the Polish nation. Those opinions are concerned with the dissatisfaction or even indignation at the alleged omission or at a supposedly inadequate presentation of the Polish victimhood.

4.1 Fostering a sense of Polish national identity

The first form of mnemonic populism I would like to discuss is related to the practices of fostering a sense of Polish national identity. As one of the museum's employees stresses in an interview,

> . . . you can see that the content is almost identical, . . . for example, that the museum presents an untrue vision of history, that we falsify the image, that we do not emphasise enough the tragedy of Polish political prisoners [during the Second World War]. It is also very popular to say, for example, that we do not allow Polish patriots to enter the museum area with Polish flags, and that we do not allow them to sing the national anthem.[12]

[11] It is to be connected with the book *Night without End: The Fate of Jews in Selected Counties of Occupied Poland*, edited by Barbara Engelking and Jan Grabowski. As the authors write themselves, "the studies provide evidence of a considerable and larger scale of Polish participation in the annihilation of their Jewish fellow citizens than has hitherto been believed" [the quotation translated by the Author] (Kuraś 2018).

[12] Excerpt from a statement made by a museum employee during an interview conducted on 9 December 2021. The interviewee remains anonymous. The quotation is translated by the author.

Referring to this statement, I will present examples of situations that have contributed to an intensification of polarization between Museum representatives and visitors whose actions and statements can be perceived as mnemonic populism. The most resonant event that has triggered an intensified discussion in social media and the press is the so-called flag scandal. It started with a disturbing incident during the 73rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz on 27 January 2018.

According to the Museum's statement, during the prayer at the memorial, the SPROOK (Association of Families of Polish Victims of Concentration Camps) delegation entered the sector reserved only for former prisoners of the camp and unfurled a Polish flag, blocking the view of the elderly sitting there.

The person who had asked them to step back was said to have been accused by a representative of the Association of not being "a real Pole." Polish former prisoners who had called upon SPROOK to behave properly, were to hear the same accusation.[13]

As a reaction to this incident, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum announced that the decision not to extend official invitations to future ceremonies to the members of the Association had been upheld.

At the same time, the Museum informed that the Association's delegation, like all other visitors, can participate in the commemoration of the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. As always, an open sector is available to all those who wish to commemorate the victims of the Nazi German concentration and extermination camp of Auschwitz on that day.[14] The Association stated on social media that they had received an official letter from the Auschwitz Museum informing them that "Families of Polish Victims are excluded from the anniversary celebrations on 27th January 2019."

According to a statement by the Association, the Museum had allegedly "*punished* the Association with this decision for a single red and white flag that was *so terribly disruptive* at last year's ceremony" (*Rodziny Ofiar* 2018).[15]

This situation and the polemic between the Association and the Museum set off a wave of hate speech. As Piotr Cywiński, the director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, states: "without a doubt, after 27 January [the day of the 73rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz . . .] I am living in a situation of the biggest and longest hate campaign ever since I took up the post of director of the Museum" (Piegza 2018).

[13] So far, the former prisoners have not received an apology from the Association. See "Museum statement regarding the scandalous behaviour of the delegation of the Association of Families of Polish Victims of German Concentration Camps at the commemoration of the 73rd liberation of the German Nazi concentration and extermination camp Auschwitz." Twitter, 1 February 2018. Accessed 8 January 2022. https://twitter.com/AuschwitzMuseum/status/958979441371369472. The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, referring to this situation, appealed not to escalate the emotions associated with the commemoration of the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Minister Piotr Gliński spoke on this matter, calling on people not to become provoked. The minister also asserted that there is no ban on carrying Polish flags on the grounds of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum.

[14] Letter dated 14 December 2018, available in article: *Kontrowersyjna decyzja Muzeum Auschwitz. Jedno ze stowarzyszeń wykluczone z obchodów rocznicowych*, wPolityce, 22 December 2018. Accessed 8 January 2022. https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/426790-kontrowersyjna-decyzja-muzeum-auschwitz.

[15] *Rodziny Ofiar odpowiadają na oświadczenie Muzeum Auschwitz: Dementujemy wszystkie oskarżenia*, wPolityce, 3 February 2018. Accessed 8 January 2022. https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/379767-rodziny-ofiar-odpowiadaja-na-oswiadczenie-muzeum-auschwitz-dementujemy-wszystkie-oskarzenia.

4.2 Personal threats made directly to the museum staff

The second type of mnemonic populist practice, personal threats, stems directly from the form of fostering a Polish national identity. In most cases, according to my interlocutors, these menaces qualify as criminal offences and are reported to the police—unfortunately without success in catching the responsible offenders:

> The second type is direct threats to the director of the museum, who has received many such threats in recent years, or to individual employees, well, threats related to the fact that here we are allegedly . . . falsifying history and very often these are actual threats, which qualify as criminal threats, death threats, well I don't want to exaggerate, . . . but actually, such threats were received, and well, the cases are reported to the police, usually, the perpetrators are not caught, of course.[16]

As can be seen in the above interview quote, particularly evident and intensified are the threats and slanders directed at Piotr Cywiński. His brother, Paweł Cywiński, in 2018 wrote on his social media:

> For the past 50 days, the nastiest denizens of the Polish right wing have unleashed an unusually powerful campaign against him [Piotr Cywiński]. It is based on at least a dozen false accusations. Repeatedly denied and repeatedly revived. Dozens of articles on shady little portals, hundreds of engaged tweet accounts, thousands of similar-sounding tweets, vulgarisms, memes, threats, slanders, and denunciations. (Cywiński, Paweł 2018) [quotation translated by the Author]

Exactly fifty days before Paweł Cywiński's entry, turmoil broke out in Polish–Israeli relations. It intensified when the Israeli ambassador, Anna Azari, during the celebration of the 73rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz, called for a change in the Amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance adopted by the Sejm. However, as Piotr Cywiński points out, Azari's speech itself was not the biggest issue. A campaign against the director of the museum had been going on for a long time in the right-wing media. There were even two petitions, the signatories of which demanded Cywiński to be dismissed from his position. As Piotr Rodzik, the author of the first petition, argues:

> Due to the consistent activity of the director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which is detrimental to Polish memory, we call on the authorities of the Republic of Poland to remove Dr Piotr M.A. Cywiński from the position of the director of the Auschwitz Museum. In addition, we demand that the Holy Mass and the national anthem at the Death Wall on the National Day of Remembrance of the Polish Victims of German Concentration Camps on 14 June 2018, be restored. (Rodzik 2018)

Will the term of Piotr Cywiński, whose contract expires at the end of 2022, be extended? If not, to whom will this job be entrusted? These endeavours are a continuation of an extensive conflict, in social media, press, politics, and in public discourse, concerning the way of commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. The accusations relate to the fact that the Museum supposedly falsifies history.

Of particular note is that one aspect of the threats experienced by Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum employees is death threats. Thinking about the scale and the scope of threats, including death threats, museum populism goes beyond the discussion regarding memory regimes (Bernhard and Kubik 2014). It no longer concerns a moderated discussion or even an argument about remembrance. The Holocaust heritage is used (Smith 2006) as a tool for populists in the dissemination of hatred, violence, and discrimination. In the face of such phenomena, the people targeted by populist attacks seem defenseless.

[16] Excerpt from a statement made by a museum employee during an interview conducted on 9 December 2021. The interviewee remains anonymous. The quotation is translated by the author.

There is a visible disappointment and a sense of helplessness in my interlocutor's statement: "[T]he cases are reported to the police, usually, the perpetrators are not caught, of course." Turning to the legal system appears ineffective. Clarifications, explanations, and polemics turn out to be futile—they even intensify the conflict. Educating and using in-depth historical knowledge is equated by populists with exaltation, with putting oneself in the position of "elite." It is a vicious circle. The museum staff often feel helpless, yet aware that the historical self-image selected by and embodied in the group's memory depends on what proves useful for the identity constructs (Lowenthal 2013). The importance of responding to populist claims that simplify history does not mean prohibiting or preventing from remembering in one way or another.

5. Resisting Mnemonic Populism in the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum: Unveiling the Dissonance

In the following section, I will present an example of a counterstrategy that might be a response to the populist initiatives aimed at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. The Museum defends the site of the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camp against mnemonic populism that strives for uniformity and unambiguity within the process of commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. Mnemonic populists avoid dissonance, while the museum staff aims to unveil it. Explaining the significance of the dissonant heritage, Tunbridge and Ashworth emphasise that "the concept of heritage is culturally constructed, thus there is an almost infinite variety of possible heritages, each shaped for requirements of specific consumer groups" (1996, 8).

> Dissonant heritage involves a discordance or a lack of agreement and consistency, which in turn immediately prompts the question," between what elements does dissonance occur? . . . Secondly, the implicit analogy with musical harmony and its classification of disharmonious combinations of sound can be extended by an analogy drawn from psychology, which makes use of the idea of cognitive dissonance, a state of psychic tension caused by the simultaneous holding of mutually inconsistent attitudes or the existence of a lack of consonance between attitudes and behaviour. (Sears et al. 1985, 150, quoted in Ashworth and Tunbridge 1996, 20)

Tunbridge and Ashworth point out that conflicting heritages are not simply coextensive, but that there are attempts to favour one at the cost of the others. Yet in populist practices, we are not just dealing with a desire to advocate one form of commemoration over another, with the assumption that the latter still functions even if marginalized. We are dealing with an attempt to silence and, in cases of death threats, to destroy opponents, thus creating a homogenous form of remembrance. Confronted with a dissonant heritage characterised above all by inconsistency, mnemonic populism strives for harmony and coherence. Through personal threats, especially death threats, populist practitioners attempt to intimidate and weaken their opponents, which often can result in the latter feeling exhaustion and a sense of helplessness. In 2019, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum responded to the most frequent allegations made against the Museum. An extensive entry entitled *Fake News also Appears in the Area of Remembrance* was published on their website. As the Museum explains:

> In recent months, a lot of fake news, false or manipulated information, and many lies have appeared in the public space. However, since they are spread (mainly on the Internet) not only by anonymous accounts but also by journalists and public figures, we provide an extensive explanation below. Disinformation and stoking emotions have nothing to do with a dignified commemoration which is our commitment to all the victims of Auschwitz (Fake newsy 2019).

The text published on the Museum website refers to the most widespread accusations concerning such issues as a ban on bringing Polish flags into the Museum area; a permission to bring only Israeli flags into the Museum; a claim that during the commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz the Polish flag was taken away from someone; an alleged ban on singing the Polish anthem and holding masses in the Museum. In the published statement, the Museum clearly and explicitly refutes all these accusations.

Furthermore, the Museum denies that the Polish side was marginalised during the commemoration of the 73rd Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz or that the fate of the Polish prisoners in the camp is inadequately presented. It is not true that the Museum's information boards do not mention Poles and only use the term "non-Jews." If we carefully study the text *Fake News also Appears in the Area of Remembrance*, we can observe that almost all the statements refer to the accusations of creating a narrative that discriminates or belittles the martyrdom of Polish prisoners.[17]

According to my conversations with the staff of the Museum, the primary role of this museum is to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust – all the victims, regardless of their national or ethnic origin. Extensive knowledge of the Auschwitz-Birkenau site's history and the Museum's collection enables them to provide comprehensive Holocaust education.

Unveiling dissonance does not imply a necessity or even a desire for harmony and unification. A lack of agreement and consistency is not necessarily something negative. Unveiling the dissonance, both in the material collection of the museum and in the narratives around the memorial site itself, might be characterised as a caring practice. This kind of practice is focused on objects, the remains of Holocaust victims and survivors, their memories, and testimonies. The museum professionals study the collection, preserve it, and contextualise it without avoiding dissonance. They help the testimonies of survivors resonate without disturbing them, merely providing a space for expression. Unveiling the dissonance would not involve a utopian vision of hearing *all* the voices testifying to the tragedy of the Holocaust. Rather, it aims to investigate the spaces of dissonance and respond to the attempts to impose a discrediting harmony based on the domination of one discourse over another.

Multiple historical remembrances, including the memories of Auschwitz, function side by side—sometimes they intermingle, and sometimes they exclude one another (Bartuś 2008, 45). Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum employees are aware of this. However, it would be oversimplistic to characterise Museum professionals as *mnemonic pluralists* and fit them into the typology of "Mnemonic Actors and Their Dominant Strategies"[18] proposed by Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik (2014, 15). According to Bernhard and Kubik, *mnemonic pluralists* "accept that, in addition to 'us' and our vision of history, there are 'them' with their own visions of the past" (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 13–14). It would be an oversimplification to say that the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum and its employees represent a single model of mnemonic strategy; rather, it is a set of permeating attitudes whose overarching goal is the

[17] The memory of Auschwitz for some Poles is the result of propaganda carried by the People's Republic of Poland (PRL). During the communist times, it was widely spread that four million people died in Auschwitz, and hardly any attempts were made to verify this estimate. Schools taught almost exclusively about the Polish victims, their suffering, and their patriotism. In democratic Poland, the experience of the communist regime began to be confronted with the knowledge of others, especially Jews. At the time, a kind of bidding war emerged in determining the number of victims and the extent of their suffering (Bartuś 2008, 46).

[18] Michael Bernhard and Jan Kubik determine four types of mnemonic actors: *mnemonic warriors*; *mnemonic pluralists*; *mnemonic abnegators*; *mnemonic prospectives*. "Mnemonic warriors tend to espouse a single, unidirectional, mythologized vision of time. […] Mnemonic abnegators avoid memory politics. They are either uninterested or see no advantage in engaging in them. […] Prospectives believe that they have solved the riddle of history and thus have the key to a better future. They assume that, on the basis of the correct understanding of what is wrong with both past and present, people led by them can transcend the woes of the world by building a desirable post-historical end-state" (Bernhard and Kubik 2014, 13–14).

preservation of the site of memory. It is therefore not tenable to see the museum side in this conflict as "them," to use populist language. This division needs to be abolished and reframed. As I believe, a key practice to overcome this impasse is to follow the strategy of unveiling and protecting the dissonance in the museum collection.

The museum will change in the near and distant future. One example is the opening of a new main exhibition at the former Auschwitz Concentration Camp. "The core of the narrative will be the policy of dehumanisation pursued by the SS garrison . . . This part of the exhibition will be largely based on the testimony of Survivors, camp objects, and photographs of inmates," explains Ewa Matlak, project manager of the New Core Exhibition. The new main display will replace the existing one, which has been open since 1955.[19] The idea of changing the exhibition has already received harsh criticism from the right-wing media (*PILNE* 2020). The debate on this topic will certainly develop.

6. Conclusions

In this chapter, I present the practices of mnemonic populism, such as fostering a sense of Polish national identity and making threats directed at the staff of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. I indicate 2018 as the moment of the intensification of these practices, the year in which the so-called Polish Holocaust Law was passed and in which the statement of the Israeli Ambassador, Anna Azari, condemning this law on behalf of Israel, took place. I explain how the Polish Holocaust Law and Azari's statement became an impulse for populists to use the heritage of the Holocaust to disseminate hatred, violence, and discrimination.

I notice that in the face of increased populist practices, especially death threats, museum employees seem exhausted and helpless. Engaging in an argument with populists tends to be counter-productive, as it is embedded in populist rhetoric based on the binary opposition in the conflict between the "people"—in this case, the Polish citizens who want to commemorate primarily the Polish victims of the Holocaust; and the "elites" the Museum staff allegedly corrupted by Israeli politics. In order to avoid an impasse, I suggest abandoning this populist framework and moving towards resisting populist pressure differently.

In this chapter, I have been searching for the ways of opposing the populist desire not only to dominate a particular form of remembrance but in some cases to remove the other voices in the mnemonic disputes altogether. I refer to Tunbridge and Ashworth's concept of dissonant heritage, and I argue that unveiling the dissonance in the museum's works might be a constructive strategy that paves the way to counter the influence of mnemonic populism on museums in Poland. I highlight the areas of museum activity that focus on caring for collections, giving space for survivors' testimonies to resonate, without interfering and without limiting commemorative and educational processes to few selected narratives. I also note that museum professionals are trying to study and discover which elements are most likely to generate dissonance and to react to the attempts to impose a harmony based on the domination of one discourse over another.

Until 2018, the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum was seen as a place so "difficult" that politicians ought to keep their distance from it. However, as I point out in this chapter, in 2018 this began to change. For

[19] The new exhibition will be divided into three parts: the first will present the camp as a state institution of Nazi Germany, the second will deal with the Holocaust of the Jews, and the third will focus on the fate of the concentration camp prisoners and the dehumanisation of people as planned by the Germans; *Podpisano umowę na wykonanie dokumentacji projektowej nowej wystawy polskiej w Miejscu Pamięci*, Państwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau, 3 January 2022. Accessed 8 January 2022. http://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/aktualnosci/podpisano-umowe-na-wykonanie-dokumentacji-projektowej-nowej-wystawy-polskiej-w-miejscu-pamieci,2268.html. The quotation is translated by the author.

ideological reasons, Barbara Engelking's term of office on the International Council of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum was not extended. Moreover, Beata Szydło, a former prime minister associated with the current ruling party, was appointed to the Museum Council. Such events prompt a difficult question: If the Museum becomes politically dominated by *mnemonic warriors*, will it still have the capacity for effectively unveiling the dissonance of heritage with the museum collection?

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3. Shifting Paradigms for Human Hair: Anthropology at Display

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Abstract

This chapter reflects upon the shifting protocols of the ethical display of human remains, with a specific focus on the Collection of Anthropology of the University of Bologna and its exhibition of human hair, and on the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, which displays the human remains and personal objects belonging to the Holocaust victims. It further examines the ways in which the unique ideological perspectives of the ethics of displaying what was once a person in the same manner one would display an object is ethical, and whether the peculiar and unique ideological perspective on which each of the two museal exhibitions of human remains is built upon could modulate, mitigate, or accentuate the dissonance that distinctive cultural heritage possess. It is generally recognised that museal human remains are endowed with a unique status. Their valorization may provide a distinct contribution to the public knowledge and cultural heritage as they reflect, besides the history of their scientific research use within specific ideological frameworks, also a personal, cultural, symbolic, spiritual, or religious significance to many.
Linking the two case studies rooted in interconnected, yet dissimilar (if not opposed) paradigms, this chapter interrogates and compares the modes of exhibiting human remains at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial—where individual lives and fates clearly transpire through the amassed objects and remains; and at the University of Bologna – where the "classification" of the museal collection obscures to a certain extent the identity of the individuals to whom the remains belonged; a problem resulting from the original collectors' desire to validate taxonomy of the human race—a concept that is now vigorously rejected in anthropology. Reflecting upon these matters will not only contribute to the valorization of such collections from an anthropological standpoint but will also offer new strategies of display and valorization of such heritage to a wider public.

Keywords

Human remains, Ethics, Museum studies

1. Introduction

This chapter reflects upon the shifting protocols of the ethical display of human remains, with a specific focus on the Collection of Anthropology of the University of Bologna and its exhibition of human hair, and on the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum, which displays the human remains and personal objects belonging to the Holocaust victims. The chapter addresses the theoretical framework upon which the two museal exhibitions of human remains have been built, as well as offers strategies to modulate, mitigate, and present the dissonance inherent in that distinctive cultural heritage. Potentially, the valorization of human remains at display provides a distinct contribution to the public knowledge and cultural heritage as they reflect, besides the history of their scientific research use within specific ideological frameworks, also a personal, cultural, symbolic, spiritual, or religious significance to many (Roberts 2018; Bonney et al. 2019; Belcastro and Mariotti 2021; Cardoso 2021).

2. Human Remains in Museums

Worldwide, science museums hold and preserve collections of skeletal remains, anatomical specimens, mummies, grave goods, and sacred objects, together with ethnographic materials and artefacts, as the result of more than two centuries of collecting and scientific study (Bonney et al. 2019; Biers 2019; Licata et al. 2017). These collections are of inestimable value in the reconstruction and interpretation of our biological, paleo-demographic, and cultural history (Ciliberti 2020; Belcastro and Mariotti 2021).

It is generally recognized that human remains in museum exhibits are endowed with a unique status. These collections pose many ethical challenges in their management and care, depending on the type of holding institution, nature of the collection and different legal frameworks, and are often associated with legacies of poor ethical standards, particularly in terms of early collecting practices. The highly delicate nature of such exhibitions has been acknowledged through their inclusion in the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Museums (ICOM 2017) as "culturally sensitive materials." The consequent imposition of special rules accentuates the high degree of responsibility associated with their possession, treatment, and management, particularly with regard to the feelings, beliefs, and customs of the community to which they belong.

Consequently, many countries introduced conciliatory practices regarding the treatment of human remains into their legislations on cultural heritage, with specific focus on minority communities. In 1990, the US government approved the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA 1990), which required any public-funded institution that holds human remains to allow their restitution to the relevant communities (White et al. 2012). Similarly, Australian authorities have pledged to protect and preserve Aboriginal heritage through the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act of 1984 (ATSIHP Act 1989), committing to the reconciliation with indigenous groups by conservating areas and objects of particular significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, including human remains, in accordance with Aboriginal tradition (White et al. 2012).

England, in turn, promoted the Human Tissue Act (HTA 2004), stating that all nine national museums have the faculty to concede restitution of human remains belonging to their collection, provided that the remains are less than one thousand years old. The Human Tissue Authority regulates the use and display of human remains that are less than one hundred years old and is in charge of the institutions that hold them. The Italian law twistedly fails to address the issue of conservation and display of human remains in museums – a glaring omission that, allowing for ambiguous interpretations, points to the urgent need

for a solid legal background in respect to such peculiar heritage. The Code of Cultural and Landscape Heritage (Art. 10) does not clearly define, or even mention, human remains, whose management is then solely regulated when they are registered as part of museum collections. The cemetery legislation (The National Police Mortuary Regulation, D.P.R. [Italian Presidential Decree] no.285/90, Articles 5, 41, 42, and 43) restricts the handling of human remains for collection and preservation, but does not refer to their research, valorization, or understanding and utilization in museum display, failing to recognize the crucial role of human remains in the public engagement (Belcastro and Mariotti 2021).

Therefore, the access to and management of anthropological collections in Italian museums are regulated by the law solely in terms of research and academic use, only when the remains are part of a museum inventory. However, their implementation in museal exhibits, their valorization and accessibility to the audience beyond scholarly communities is overlooked and often left in the hands of a single curator or institution. Importantly, such collections, in most cases, were originally formed following biased, outdated anthropological principles, often infused with colonialist views.

3. Anthropological Instruments at University of Bologna at Display

The University of Bologna holds several osteological collections, their core beginning with the human remains collected by Luigi Calori in 1860, spanning to the efforts of Fabio Frassetto (1876–1953) and Elsa Graffi Benassi (1901–2000), who assembled over one thousand complete skeletons that now constitute the Modern Human Identified Skeletal Collection of the Anthropology Museum of University of Bologna (from the nineteenth to the twentieth century). The skeletal remains, exhumed from different Italian cemeteries, including the main cemeterial venue of the city of Bologna—the Certosa Cemetery, belong to the individuals identified by age, sex, cause of death, and occupation, making the collection a unique biological archive that witnesses and documents the life and death of these populations by tracing their so-called "osteobiography" (Belcastro et al. 2017). Besides human skeletal remains, this Collection of Anthropology includes a large exhibition of anthropological instruments acquired between 1910 and 1950 (Calanchi 1991; 2008) and devised for the anthropometrical study of the human body, its physiology, and histology.

These anthropological instruments were partly designed by renown European manufacturers, and partly—by Professor Frassetto or his co-workers, who consulted directly with local Bolognese medical instruments creators. Among the anthropometric instruments adopted for osteometric studies, the collection contains calipers, tape-measurers, craniostats and orbitostats, Mollison's cyclometers and goniometers, Martin's orbitometers and palatometers, Frassetto's goniometers, Sergi-Frassetto's pelvic and mandibular goniometers, Broca's tropometer and osteometric board, as well as the instruments for cranial features characterization. Other instrumental equipment adopted for somatometric studies include compasses, thoracometes, anthropometers, such as the weighting scales endowed with a stool.

The collection also hosts a dedicated exhibition for the characterization of pigmentary features, such as the skin colour chart table by Felix von Luschan, the samples of skin colours by Arthur Hintze and Charles Davenport, the tables for eye colour samples by Rudolf Martin and Bruno Schultz, and the tables for hair colour by Eugen Fischer e di Carlo Stella (Calanchi 1991; 2008).

Both a part of a skeletal collection and the anthropological equipment are at display, included in an exhibition that was installed during the late 1990s. The human skeletal remains are presented with the aim of reporting, narrating, and teaching the anatomy, development, and evolution of the human body. The remains at display are included in tours designed for all scholastic levels, including university teaching. The ethics of presenting human remains is always mentioned and the remains themselves are

addressed and presented with care, respect, and dignity. All showcases clearly report all relevant scientific information, making it easily accessible to the viewer.

While all the anthropometric instruments are carefully labelled, information regarding the theoretical framework of their use in anthropology remains limited or appears insufficient. Unless the visitor participates in one of the regular, dedicated tours, they are often left to wonder about the theoretical purposes of the research requiring a particular anthropometric equipment.

On the contrary, alongside the anthropometric equipment, a variety of plaster, clay, or *papier-mâché* busts or masks of different populations are presented—a display that clearly speaks to the purpose of the classification of human races, with the anthropological instruments employed for this purpose operating within and perpetuating the unbalanced power dynamics of the Italian colonial past. If the visitors are not accompanied, little further information is provided, and ultimately, the exhibition fails to address the advancements of anthropological research that is now one of the major advocates for the abandonment of the concept of races.

Thanks to a combination of morphometrical and biomolecular approaches, contemporary anthropology not only refutes racial categorization of the humans, a unique species, but even refuses to identify further subspecific subdivisions among different populations.

4. Crania and Hair in Physical Anthropology: Classifications and Race

These large and complex sets of anthropological instruments and skeletal collections, housed in several scientific museums all over Europe, document the rise and spread of a heuristic approach to the study of humans—one that places the human metrics of the skeleton and the body, specifically the cranium, in the central position, ever since the milestone works of Georges-Luis Leclerc, count of Buffon, and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, published between the mid-eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century (Manzi 2013; Larsen 2011). While Leclerc theorized a classification of human races, he perceived them as fluid, changing entities rather than fixed categories. Blumenbach, in turn, envisioned a new anthropological science, widely based on the classification of human variability through the anthropometric features of the cranium among different populations. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, anthropologists determined human morphological and metric features of the cranium with a wide variety of measurements, angles, and indices of shapes and forms, employing technical anthropometric instruments that were specifically fabricated for this purpose. Measurements were taken based on a structured net of anthropometric points that together accounted for human size and shape variations among populations—all for the purpose of classifying individuals into human groups (Manzi 2013; Larsen 2011).

A standardized set of measurements was introduced to provide rigorous standardized tools among anthropologists, as documented by the works of the French anthropologist Paul Broca and the Swiss-German Rudolf Martin. Since the first edition of the *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie* (1914), the textbooks by Martin have been continuously used in anthropological studies, although the research questions and approaches have varied in time. Italy built its anthropological academic traditions upon the school of Prof. Giuseppe Sergi (1841–1936), who dedicated several studies to the classification of the variety of cranium shapes among human populations. His approach not only included forms and capacity of specific cranial features (lengths, breadths, angles, circumferences) but also took into account the three-dimensional overall appearance of the cranium in its complexity as a whole, and distinguished seven species of the geographical provenance on the basis of cranial shapes (for details, see Sergi's treaty *Specie e varietà umane: saggio di una sistematica antropologica* 1901). In addition, Sergi categorized the

variability within each human group, as determined by the cranium, by utilizing other phenotypic traits, such as the eye and hair color typology.

Fabio Frassetto, the first professor of anthropology in 1904 at the University of Bologna and the founder of the Institute of Anthropology in 1908, followed the teachings of Sergi in his own study of the human cranium, as evidenced by his works *Lezioni di Antropologia* and *I nuovi indirizzi e le promesse della odierna Antropologia* (1905). These treaties were primarily dedicated to the research on human morphology with an emphasis on the anatomical features and the ontogeny of the cranium. Frasetto focused on the classification systems of the human cranium and integrated this approach with specific attention paid to the somatology of the human body. His aim was to establish a relationship between morphological and physiological features across different human groups and individual body configurations, and their link to fundamental anthropometric features – a study intended to contribute to the formulation of the human "normality" system that could support and optimize clinical practices, army drafting, and more (Graffi Benassi 1953). Indeed, it is important to note that neither Sergi nor Frassetto intended to justify a moral differentiation among human populations, but rather to propose and support a human classificatory system, in an attempt to explain and categorize the complexity of human variability.

In fact, Frassetto wrote: "Il compito dell'antropologia dev'essere quello di considerare soltanto la parte fisica dell'uomo, lasciando all'etnografia e all'etnologia tutto ciò che ha rapporto coi prodotti dell'industria umana, coi caratteri morali ed intellettuali dei popoli e con lo sviluppo delle loro civiltà" (1918) [The duty of anthropology should be only to consider the physical part of humans, leaving to ethnography and ethnology all that is the product of human industry, along with moral and intellectual characters of populations and the development of their civilizations (author translation)]. American anthropologists such as German-born Franz Boas (1858–1942), on the other hand, questioned the notion of a geographic/genetic differentiation of humans based on the cranium, demonstrating that children born in the United States in immigrant families had shown a "significant" difference from their immigrant parents in the cephalic index, overturning the notion of genetic inheritability of cranial form and demonstrating the crucial role of environment in the expression of this trait (Manzi 2013; Larsen 2011).

Finally, it was the work of William H. Howells in the 1970s —and his multivariate statistical analysis of cranial forms, which had shown no differentiation among populations—that prompted anthropologists to effectively abandon the oversimplistic explanation of human variability with a classificatory approach based on single measurements framed in fixed categories (Manzi 2013; Larsen 2011).

The definition of human populations based on hair typologies held a privileged position in the quest for racial classification (Tarlo 2016; 2019). Since the early 1800s, hair was adopted for the classification of human groups, with a variety of proposed methods for the identification of hair among racial categories. Physician Franz Ignaz Pruner (Pruner-Bey, 1864) suggested that hair should be studied both macroscopically and microscopically (Trotter 1938) and identified three distinctive forms of hair: the circular, the oval, and the elliptical, linked to the racial categories of Mongoloid, Caucasoid, and Negroid. French anthropologist Paul Topinard (1879) proposed to the Society of Anthropology in Paris a classification based on externally observable characteristics (straight, wavy, curly, frizzy, or woolly hair). Naturalist Ernst Haeckel, in his *Natürliche Schopfungsgeschichte* (1875), provided a hair classification that included "woolly hair," and argued for the inferiority of humans with this characteristic since it could be found also in animals. Anthropologist Rudolf Martin, in *Lehrbuch der Anthropologie* (1914), proposed a classification of hair divided into three main categories: straight-line running hair, wavy hair, and kinky hair, with further sub-categories. Martin argued against the use of Haeckel's classification and pointed out the error in applying the term "wool-hair" to humans, finding the similarity between human kinky hair and the wool-hair of sheep superficial. Aleš Hrdlička's *Anthropometry* (1920) classified human hair

into straight, wavy (slightly or markedly), curly (slightly or markedly), frizzy, woolly, or peppercorn (*en rouleux*).

American anthropologist Mildred Trotter was herself an advocate of studying race through hair and commented critically and extensively on previous classifications in her works published by the American Journal of Physical Anthropology (1938; 1939). Trotter signalled the need for further studies to account for human hair variation, recognizing that racial classification of single hair features failed to fully appreciate the complexity of human variability. Classifying hair colour proved to be particularly challenging; as German scientist Rudolf Virchow pointed out, there were as many as 127 different tones under the category of brown (1880). Eugen Fischer (1874–1967), the creator of the *Haarfarbentafel*, the hair colour chart exhibited at the Anthropology collection of the University of Bologna, was using it in Namibia, studying populations of the mixed Dutch and Hottentot ancestry. Fischer promoted the eugenic idea of the superiority of the White race and of racial mixing as leading to its degeneration. In Germany, he went on to establish the Society for Racial Hygiene in Freiburg and argued for the sterilization of mixed-race children in the Rhineland. Increasingly, hair studies were to be used in eugenics (Tarlo 2016; 2019).

5. Hair in the Collection of Anthropology at the University of Bologna

There are, as we recall, two significant elements of the collection of human hair exhibited at the University of Bologna. The specimens are included in the anthropometric equipment utilised for the characterization of pigmentary features of the human hair. As already mentioned, these instruments consist of two tables with hair colour charts, respectively designed by Fischer and Stella. The first one, acquired in 1910 and manufactured in Freiburg by Frank Rosset, adopted a system for hair colour determination based on a direct empiric comparison of an individual's hair to the provided sample, which comprise thirty different hair hues organised in two series (grey-black and blonde; brown). While the hair samples are, in fact, made of cellulose, their texture was designed to accurately mimic human hair and its variation, and the chart includes both curly and frizzy hair samples, alongside those with smooth texture.

Real human hair is, in fact, included in the hair colour chart fabricated by Stella, which was purposely designed for the experiment that he was conducting for his final dissertation at the Institute of Anthropology in 1949, under the supervision of Professor Frassetto. This table includes fifty-six locks of natural human hair in different shades: blonde, light to dark brown, dark red, red, and brown-black within seven different series. This classification was established with the use of a spectrophotometer, which was employed to determine the spectrophotometric reflection curves of each hair sample, which were then converted into trichromatic classes and assigned to each series. This work was specifically undertaken to overcome the element of subjectivity potentially involved in the process of hair characterization based on Fischer's hair colour charts, which adopted an empiric method—in favour of a fully reproducible, objective, and standardised methodology relying on the physical property of the hair (Calanchi 1991; 2008).

6. Hair on Exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial

Hair belonging to the victims of the Holocaust is on exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial in Oświęcim, Poland. The former concentration and extermination camp began a memorial site in the aftermath of its liberation by the Red Army in January 1945. Between mid-1945 and 1947, plans for an

exhibition were developed thanks to the efforts of former prisoners, and the official opening of the Museum was held on 14 June 1947 (http://www.auschwitz.org/en/museum/history-of-the-memorial/). In May 1945, part of the hair retrieved in the camp after the liberation was tested, and the results, which revealed the traces of cyanide in the form of Zyklon, helped unveil the horrors of the extermination camps and condemn their Nazi officers (Ryback 1993). Since 1955, the display cabinets containing more than a ton of human hair have served as powerful reminders of Nazi atrocity, alongside other personal items of the victims of the extermination camp, including shoes, suitcases, protheses and orthopaedic braces, eyeglasses, hairbrushes, toothbrushes, striped uniforms, prayer shawls, pots, and pans found after the camp's liberation.

The hair on display, presented in an eerie, dull, and tangled mass in which individual braids, tight knots, and occasional elegant waves can be distinguished, was the subject of a vigorous debate among the members of the International Auschwitz Council of advisers, as some had suggested its burial. It was decided to exempt the hair from conservation interventions, which until the 1970s consisted of naphthalene treatments, so that it could turn to dust on its own in the showcase that hosts it (Donadio 2015). The decision whether to conserve and display the hair belonging to the victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp was also considered by the Holocaust Memorial Museum curators in Washington D.C., USA. The Content Committee, consisting of scholars, religious leaders, Holocaust survivors, and museum officials, chose not to exhibit such sensitive remains and to present instead a photographic mural of the Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial in Poland (Ryback 1993). One of the members of the Committee stated: "For all I know, my mother's hair might be in there. I don't want my mother's hair on display." Besides, museum curators in Washington D.C. feared that such a display may resemble a "house of horrors," inducing visitors to come for wrong, voyeuristic reasons (Ryback 1993).

7. Hair in Museums and Exhibitions Policy Examples

Since the late nineteenth century, objects made of human hair, displayed in showcases, appeared in museums, private collections and other institutions. Human hair was fashioned into decorative objects or personal items, such as jewellery, pictures, flower arrangements, and wreaths. On the other hand, real human hair was also presented as an anatomical feature of anatomical models, common, for instance, in anatomical waxes, or medical objects such as bezoars (Tarlo 2016; 2019). Decorative objects made of human hair were initially displayed as curiosities, designed to express sentiments of love and friendship, and/or to commemorate the dead (to whom the hair had often belonged), linking hair to mourning and affection for the loved one who passed (Rushton 2019). This connection was particularly distinct during the Victorian era: these kinds of artifacts are, for instance, a part of the collection of the Mütter Museum of the College of Physicians in Philadelphia, USA, which includes hair books (a collection of locks of hair kept for friendship's sake). Now arranged in the exhibit *Woven Strands* (2018) (https://muttermuseum.org/exhibitions/woven-strands), consisting of several private collections of hair art, human hair is used to form flower bouquets, wreaths, braided jewellery chains, weeping willows, and painted scenes of mourning. The collection includes, for example, a large, intricated wreath in the form of a bouquet made of human hair which belonged to the members of a family, who are depicted in the photographs surrounding the wreath's wooden frame.

Museums and public institutions all over the world hold hair collected from the 1860s to 1940s by scientists, anthropologists, doctors, teachers, army officers, travellers, auctioneers, grave diggers, police officers, and colonial administrators (Cheang 2008). Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography in St. Petersburg holds 2,200 samples of hair of people inhabiting various geographic

regions. The Natural History Museum in Vienna lists 4,049 samples in its hair catalogue, whilst its counterpart in London holds over five thousand. Similarly, the *Musée de l'Homme* in Paris holds extensive collections of hair samples (Tarlo 2016). Human hair is also often present in anthropological and ethnological collections in Italy, such as the ones of the University of Bologna and the University of Florence, included in hair colour charts, as well as in other European contexts, where it is often embedded within colonialist practices. The case of Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford, UK, is emblematic of such practices.

Within its collection, there are samples of hair belonging to the Native community of Ojibwe of Red Lake, Minnesota, collected by Beatrice Blackwood, who later became a staff member of the Pitt Rivers Museum during her fieldwork in North America from 1924 to 1927 (Peers 2003). The samples offered the opportunity to understand the colonial contexts in which hair was separated from their communities of origin and transferred to Western museums. The hair belonged to Native school children who were physically measured and tested for intelligence at local schools. Although Blackwood herself was refuting a direct link between race and intelligence, she still referred to race as a biological entity and interpreted her findings in light of a contrast between "modern" and "traditional." While the museum is still in possession of the hair, it has embraced decolonization practices by integrating the perspective of the Ojibwe community, which viewed the children to whom the hair samples belonged as potential relatives. When the Oxford curators visited the Ojibwe community to meet with the now-elderly children that met Blackwood in 1925 and to whom the hair samples belonged, they acknowledged that the sampling of hair by Blackwood for them was inevitably linked to the forced cutting of hair by schools official, evoking coercive White exertion of power (Peers 2003; Tarlo 2019).

It is striking to note that, by contrast, neither human hair alone nor human teeth and nails are considered human remains by institutions and organizations operating in the UK under the Human Tissue Act (2004), as these elements may shed naturally during the life of a person. The display of human hair is not regulated in the UK, unless they remain attached to the body or unless there is evidence to suggest that they were removed without the consent of the deceased. The latter seems to be the case not only of the Blackwood collection in Oxford, but also of the prisoners in the extermination camps, whose hair was forcibly cut upon their arrival—similarly, *mutatis mutandis*, to what the Ojibwe children were subjected to at schools. The legislation was then amended only in 2008 to include in the category of human remains hair and nails, if taken post-mortem. Indeed, hair in anthropological literature is endowed with a peculiar status, as it is considered as an extension of the person, enhancing the body and connecting the person to both the physical and the spiritual realms of existence (Peers 2003). Hair is personal: when Janek Nowakowski, in charge of the acquisitions at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, received the human hair belonging to the Shoah victims from Auschwitz in 1989 and faced the decision whether to display it, he acknowledged: "It is not only part of the human body; it is also a part of the human personality—part of one's identity. How you wear your hair tells a lot about you as a person. Hair is so simple—but it is so fundamental" (Ryback, 1993).

Directly interlacing the hair colour chart at display in the Collection of Anthropology at the University of Bologna and the hair exhibited at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, the collection of hair at the Natural History Museum in Vienna (Berner 2009) holds clips of hair from the heads of Jews imprisoned in the Vienna stadium in 1939, collected by Nazi-affiliated anthropologist Josef Wastel in order to study their racial characteristics, prior to the victims' deportation to Buchenwald (Tarlo 2016; 2019). Tarlo (2019) refers to the striking paradox of seeing the sample of hair that has lost all its distinguishable features, and that was originally collected with the exact opposite intention of proving, in its specific feature, the racial inferiority of Jews through measurements and hair types. Indeed, at the time, anthropologists working for the National Socialist Party in Germany and Austria adopted the Fischer-Saller standard hair scale (the very same typology that is present in the Collection of Anthropology at the

University of Bologna) for detecting and establishing Jewish traits in the population, and for assisting in the project of racial cleansing. Previous studies led by Virchow identified Jews as the "dark type." The large percentage of the "anomalous" blonde Jews (Zimmermann 1999) failed to inspire researchers to question such differentiation or to recognise environmental factors as the major contributors to the phenotype. Instead, it led Jewish anthropologist Maurice Fishberg to the conclusion that "the infusion of non-Jewish blood into the veins of modern Jews' caused such a phenomenon (1903: 106)" (Tarlo 2019).

8. Modern Anthropological Framework and a Proposal for Hair Exhibits

The connection between the hair colour chart at display in the Collection of Anthropology at University of Bologna and the hair exhibited at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial is eerie, but indeed existing. Modern-day physical anthropology is fully aware of its past and is strenuously advocating for writing a new chapter for its field (Barbujani 2018). Since Boas's work on cranial morphometrics in the early 1900s, more and more anthropologists kept their distance from racial classificatory efforts. Furthermore, since the publication of Frank Livingstone's *On the non-existence of human races* (1962), it has become clear that human variability is expressed by a complex interaction of traits, which make a myriad of classifications possible; therefore, race began to be considered a social construct rather than a biological entity. It is with the advent of modern genomics that molecular biology—with the work of R.C. Lewontin (1972) focusing on blood groups, serum proteins, and red blood cell enzymes variants—proved that human variation occurred across human populations regardless of racial categories, which only accounted for 5–10% of human variability, failing to support racial subdivision (Larsen 2011). Nowadays, anthropologists observe that human variability of specific biological traits is expressed through geographic clines. 3D geometric morphometrics, the analysis of shape with multivariate statistical tools, paired with analysis of phylogeny, help shed light on the evolution of the cranial shape of human ancestors (Mournier et al. 2019). In turn, forensic anthropology—where the determination of ancestry, understood as the geographic region or ancestral origin of an individual, constitute a key part for the compilation of biological profile of an individual in medicolegal instances – adopts classification statistics and experience-based methods of analysis, understanding better than ever the delicate balance between genetics, population history, skeletal form, and social constructs (Dunn et al. 2020). Hair typologies are scientifically analysed with complex statistical processing and in full appreciation of the diversity of human exterior traits, embracing the continuous geographic and historical pattern suggested for human genetic variation (de la Meittre et al. 2007).

As previously stated, the exhibition of the anthropological equipment of the Collection of Anthropology at the University of Bologna fails to offer comprehensive information as the visitor is often left to gaze upon the instruments without the support of a knowledgeable guide. Moreover, while each item on display is now presented with a legend and a brief explanation for its use, the context of anthropological studies at the time is not given. Due to the major shifts in the discipline regarding the existence of biological races—the concept that is now strongly refuted in anthropology but was well established at the time of the use of the hair colour charts—these charts need and ought to be well contextualised. The exhibit should acknowledge this, possibly not only with the support of the museum personnel in guided tours, which is now only partially implemented since most visitors do not book for one, but with a dedicated set of panels that clearly details the object's inherent conflicts and the advancements of anthropological theories regarding race. Schools would benefit from this visual improvement as it would stimulate multi-layered reflection among students and form a ground basis for topics such as evolution, social injustice, historical conflicts, and civil rights through the lens of science.

9. Conclusions

It is crucial to acknowledge the dissonant anthropological past of museal collections, in particular those displaying human remains such as human hair, through a clear presentation of the context of such items to the viewer. Such acknowledgement is (or, perhaps: would be) an essential step towards reconciling historical fractures brought about by racial tensions that are still present in the Western world. The 2019 definition of museum by ICOM states that the museums are "democratising, inclusive and polyphonic spaces for critical dialogue about the pasts and the futures." Acknowledging and addressing the conflicts and challenges of the present, they hold artefacts and specimens in trust for society, safeguard diverse memories for future generations, and guarantee equal rights and equal access to heritage for all people' (ICOM, 2019).

A strong reminder of the lesson learnt by physical anthropology, and the resultant rejection of the concept of racial categorization, would prevent (or at least reduce) the risk of our modern society falling yet again into this biological pitfall.

To conclude, within the last ten years, museum curators and researchers have faced major shifts in the ethical framing of exhibiting human remains (both hard and soft tissue), as evidenced by the growing body of academic literature and the scientific literature reflecting on ethical conducts in research, as well as by the increasing number of guidelines for museum communication and public engagement in the topic. All parts engaging in researching, curating, displaying, and viewing sensitive content now fully acknowledge the viewer's perspective on sensitive remains. A further collective effort by the academic and museum community is needed to guide the communication of such heritage in a way that does not cut it off from the previous theories but contextualizes it against their frame in order to present it to future generations.

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Part B

Designing the social sustainability of dissonant heritage

Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
edited by Patrizia Battilani, Maria Giovanna Belcastro, Krzysztof Kowalski and Teresa Nicolosi

4. Sustainable Discomfort

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Abstract

In this chapter, two Ph.D. researchers from the Una Europa "Dissonant Cultural Heritage" workshop reflect upon their group visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Before arriving, they were asked to think critically about the behaviour of tourists, including themselves. In this essay, they aim to illuminate their embodied and situated experiences in order to ask how dissonant heritage can be understood in socially sustainable ways. First, they discuss their immediate personal responses, which were overwhelmingly dominated by emotional intensities such as sadness or shame; and their embodied and physical reactions resulting in silence and a slowing down of movement. Bringing together social anthropological and art historical methodologies, they then examine the dramatically different responses that they witnessed at the site, including a desperation to talk, pose for photos, run, or check emails. In the most dramatic cases of disrespectful tourist behaviour, visitors have vandalised the sites. After analysing how museums and memorial sites regulate tourist behaviour in sites related to trauma, this chapter questions the sustainability of such regulation in sites that evoke dramatically different and highly personal emotional *responses.*

Keywords

Embodiment, Affect, Emotion, Auschwitz, Visitors

1. Introduction: How did Auschwitz feel for you?

In November 2021, Ph.D. researchers were invited to Kraków as part of a Ph.D. workshop organised by Una Europa. Titled "Dissonant Cultural Heritage," the workshop aimed to ask challenging questions about the preservation of history's most difficult monuments. Auschwitz, just one hour away from Kraków, provides perhaps the most pertinent case study, having become the most visited Holocaust site in the world, and the most visited tourist site in Poland (Cole, 2000, 1). Before developing the main argument, an autoethnographic vignette introduces the reader to the complex feelings that accompanied one of the researchers:

> After visiting the Auschwitz Museum, we took a fifteen-minute bus ride to visit the former death camps at Birkenau. Three of us walked along the tracks against the cold November wind towards the entrance building: a red brick building symmetrically built and elongated with a circular gateway in the centre.
> A Spanish colleague asked me how I felt, and I, Edda, answered that I felt shame, guilt. I felt strange when I said it, as if I had said something inappropriate. But I could not help it; I could not better express my unsettling discomfort. The images from the museum played in my mind: we had passed kilometres of barbed wire, mountains of shoes, suitcases with handwritten decorations, and piles of colourful dishes. As we had walked past these objects, witnesses to human life, I felt my shoulders hunch, tensed, and noticed that I was holding onto a pack of tissues in my jacket pocket. I do not know why I had to hold on to something; it was unconscious.
> For me, this tension culminated in the part of the exhibition that portrayed Jewish life before the Holocaust. We entered a room of moving images and background music. First, depicting scenes of everyday Jewish life in different European countries. Then, the images joined together to form a series of people that underhooked each other. We, visitors, stood in the centre of the circle as the people in the images danced, laughed, and sang around us. They danced a well-known folk dance in Southeast Europe called *kolo*. As they moved three steps to the left and two steps to the right, I noticed that my legs wanted to follow the sequence. My body remembered the familiar steps and wanted to dance along. But this was not possible, as I was visiting the very site where these people had been killed. As soon as this thought came to my mind, a shiver ran down my spine, tears streamed into my eyes, and I tried to calm down by slowly breathing in, breathing out. When I was asked how I felt, I could not verbalise what had overcome me, so I answered, "shame, guilt."
> As we walked closer toward the gate, we fell silent. We gathered with our guide and began the second part of the visit, entering through the gate, following the tracks, and stopping at a wagon about three hundred metres behind the entrance. The waggon was donated on behalf of a survivor, our guide told us. He drew our gaze to the left and right, to the women's barracks and those of the men. But we were distracted when a young couple approached from behind. The woman sat down on the tracks, straightened her hair, and smiled at the man. After he took her picture with his smartphone, they continued to walk to the wagon. They took turns posing in front of it, checking their smartphones, and then continued walking.
> I felt irritated, and I could tell that the people around me felt the same. I wondered what kind of audience would look at those pictures. Themselves, to remind them of a holiday? Family or friends? Followers on social networks? I noticed a judgemental tone in my questions and reminded myself that coming to Auschwitz, remembering the Holocaust, and confronting this site of trauma on a cold November day was what truly mattered.

This personal insight draws attention to an overwhelming feeling that clings to many visitors to Auschwitz: discomfort. In order to avoid generalization, this essay draws upon two voices, embracing an interdisciplinary dialogue. We, Edda (social anthropologist) and Mónica (art historian), autoethnographically explore our own personal experiences to ask fundamental questions about discomfort—a mode of being that got under our skin at the site. Discomfort simultaneously pushed us away, and drew us close—and stayed with us long after the visit.[1] This inspired us to consider Auschwitz

[1] This interdisciplinary essay is based on an autoethnographic approach. The autoethnographic method, according to social scientists Carol Rambo and Carolyn Ellis (2022), uses the lived experiences of the researcher—in this case, discomfort—as an entry point to systematically understand social phenomena. Thus, describing and analysing one's own thoughts, feelings, and

through the lens of *sustainable discomfort*. Conceptualizing sustainable discomfort through a reflexive and embodied approach aims to embrace difficult emotions in a gentle and encouraging manner. Designing socially sustainable dissonant heritage means taking emotional responses into account. That is why a close look at the feelings that may arise during a visit to sites of trauma allows us to see how these feelings are perceived, transformed, channelled, emplaced, or regulated during the experience. The overarching aim is to ask: what can we learn from discomfort?

By reflecting on our subjective experiences autoethnographically, in dialogue with each other, and in relation to current debates in art history and psychological anthropology, we explore how discomfort shapes the ways in which a person relates to sites of pain and shame. We then ask what regulations could be put in place to regulate this discomfort at Auschwitz, through a comparison with other museums. Finally, we discuss why it is impossible to connect the Auschwitz experience to other sites of trauma due to the struggle to feel "right" at this particular dissonant heritage site, and the subsequent emotional disengagement that ensues for some visitors. In our conclusion, we suggest that in order to cultivate sustainable discomfort at Auschwitz, it is necessary to encourage the visitor to understand their own emotional disengagement as part of the museum experience. Discomfort cannot and should not be removed from the experience of dissonant heritage. Instead, it must be recognised, analysed, and welcomed as part of one's visit.

2. Silence at Auschwitz?

It is compulsory to visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum with a tour guide—and I, Mónica, felt extremely grateful for this fact during my visit. I would not have wanted to be alone; in fact, I felt a strong desire to move as part of a group. Like Edda, this pull towards togetherness was quickly followed by a desperate desire for solitude. Like many others, I sat in silence on the bus for the hour-long trip home. Silence has a lot to tell us; it forms a "necessary part of all rhythms of life," as Robert Weller (2021, 481) suggests. From childhood, humans learn the situations in which it is appropriate or inappropriate to be silent. Silence stemming from grief feels different to silence that is enforced or regulated and, again, quite different to silence that comes from shame or guilt (Willamowski 2022, 37–38, 54–56). I found myself looking down at my hands during the visit, turning them over, shaking them out. I feared humanity at large, and the fear remained in my body long after we had left the site.

When I got off the bus, my need for solitude and silence evaporated. I did not want to be alone and sensed that my peers felt the same. We shuffled to have a drink together and I felt a wash of relief to be in the company of others. Soon after, my overwhelming feeling became guilt. No response seemed adequate: fear seemed selfish; tears seemed useless; anger too violent; solitude frightening. I wondered, "Is there such a thing as a 'right' response?" My mind jumped to the vandalism that I had seen on the walls of the Auschwitz barracks. There is certainly such a thing as a 'wrong' response. In the workshop discussions the next day, I asked, do we have to define a 'right' response in order to prevent those that are truly wrong? I wondered how other museums and memorials have tried to cultivate this 'right' response.

Regulations of tourist behaviour vary from museum to museum, but common themes can be identified. Some museums have tried to engage the viewer interactively, in order to prevent them from

experiences is as important as making one's own positionality visible to contextualise the experiences in focus within a broader social framework.

drifting (metaphorically or, in some cases, literally) from the site. Others have attempted to focus on individual stories, to break down inconceivable mass losses of life into something comprehensible. A few have tried to engage the viewers physically, to connect their bodies to the site in question.

Some of these engagement techniques are employed at Auschwitz. For example, in 2001, a new permanent exhibit opened in the so-called Central Sauna Building in Birkenau, where victims were registered, shaved, disinfected, and stripped of their clothes and belongings before being killed. After following the route taken by the victims, the viewer arrives in a room lined with photographs showing the victims' lives before the Holocaust. The goal is to humanise them in the very space where they were turned into numbers (Taschereau Mamers 2018, 41–59). Perhaps the most "interactive" installation at the museum is *The Book of Names* in the Block 27 "Shoah" exhibit, containing the names of more than four million Jewish people who were killed in the Holocaust.

The book is so large that it fills an entire room. The viewer has to push the pages apart with great effort to see the interminable list of victims. I found this to be one of the most affecting physical representations of the Holocaust in the museum, but I was disturbed by teenagers running and laughing as they ran their hands along the gigantic flipping pages of the book. This disrespectful intrusion is far from the worst to have been witnessed at Auschwitz. Neo-Nazi vandalism, the stealing of the *"Arbeit Macht Frei"* sign, theft, or urination are all problems that have been encountered at the site (BBC 2021; Guardian 2009). These events are exceptional both because of the infrequency with which they happen, and for the fearful level of disrespect that they show. The primary aim of the vandals is often to create a media spectacle, so the museum avoids it.

This article is not about these horrific moments of vandalism. It is about a lesser but more frequent form of visitor disrespect: disengagement. At Auschwitz, it is not uncommon to see people running, laughing, emailing, texting, or taking selfies. On 20 March 2019, the official Auschwitz Museum tweeted a selection of tourist selfies with the caption: "When you come to @AuschwitzMuseum remember you are at the site where over one million people were killed" (Independent 2019). The same point was made by Israeli artist Shahak Shapira, who photoshopped Holocaust photographs into the backgrounds of selfies taken at the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin (deMilked 2019). What can the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum do to prevent such disengagement? Guided tours are one way of making sure that the viewer is immersed in the history of the site. But many have pointed out that the tours vary depending on the tour guide, with some embracing an emotional focus, and others concentrating on the history and function of the site (Reynolds 2018).

Whatever the approach, the responsibility of regulating visitor behaviour cannot fall exclusively on the tour guide, who already shoulders an enormous emotional burden. With regard to other regulatory measures, what about enforced silence? "No running" signs? "No selfies"? On a personal level, I found myself desperate for silence, the sort of silence you find in a strictly supervised gallery space, or a dimly lit church, so I could better take in my surroundings. But I understand that these regulations seem somewhat jarring in a space connected to such a frightening authoritarian history. The following part of this article explores the techniques that other museums have used to regulate visitor behaviour in sites related to trauma and asks in what ways the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum differs.

3. "None of it feels right" at Auschwitz

Daniel Libeskind specifically designed The Berlin Jewish Museum to be *different* from Auschwitz, with no ruins, images of bodies, or human remains. Instead, he hoped to trigger emotional effects through his use of space and negative space (Ionescu 2017). He incorporated glimmers of hope among what has been labelled the "architecture of trauma." Even in the claustrophobic Holocaust Tower, a ray of light seeps

through. He was inspired by the story of a survivor named Elaine, recounted in Yaffa Eliach's *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (2017), who explains how the sight of a white line of sky glimpsed through the slats of a boxcar kept her alive during her two years in the Stutthof concentration camp (quoted in Ionescu 2017). Most Memorial Museums that deal with traumatic events—The Berlin Jewish Museum included—have the luxury of empty space, allowing them to shape the narrative more freely, and to better control the relationship between the viewer and the space. Oftentimes, the relevant site has been destroyed (as is the case with the National September 11 Memorial Museum in New York, or the *Museo Longarone Vajmont* in Italy). In these cases, museums can employ virtual reality, which has become a popular tool that transports the viewer to the original.

However, the situation is very different at Auschwitz, where the viewer is already standing in the original, which cannot be remodelled or reshaped.[2] Auschwitz is often called the most authentic concentration camp, because it was turned into a museum by its survivors in 1947, only two years after it had closed. I was confounded that the traumatic experiences of Holocaust survivors did not prevent them from fulfilling the "duty to remember." They did not destroy or remodel it but rather left it as it was, acting as the museum's first tour guides and staff members. Thus, museumgoers walk through the original barracks, entering the few that showcase permanent exhibits made up of the objects of the victims, which were left in piles by fleeing Nazis. The aim of the first part of the museum visit, which takes place in Auschwitz, is to provide visitors with critical historical context: maps, logistics, statistics, and photographs. Visitors then move on to Birkenau, the nearby death camp that was built two years after Auschwitz in 1942.

According to Amy Sodaro, the aim of Memorial Museums is "to work towards the creation of a more democratic, inclusive, and peaceful culture, and to put the violence of the past to use in creating a better future." However, she rightly calls these "utopian goals" that are reliant upon a comprehensible narrative, one that often moves from trauma to healing (2018, 6). The stories of memorial museums often balance suffering and resistance; the progress that has been made with the work still to be done. Scholars have to work hard to unearth such complex narratives of hope out of history's darkest moments, and even harder to make them accessible in a museum setting. But how could this be applied to Auschwitz, when one of the most important calls from Holocaust scholars (since the famous words of Theodor Adorno, "poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric") (Adorno [1949] 1967, 34) has been to stop trying to narrativise the horror?[3] In his 1983 article, "The Necessity and Impossibility of 'Making Sense' at and of Auschwitz," André L. Stein concludes,

> The only road left to "make sense" of Auschwitz is not travelled by asserting and theorizing on the strength of our assertions but by insistently and reflexively questioning what is it that the internee had to make sense of and how he or she did it. (1983, 323–336)

Stein suggests that visitors should not go to Auschwitz to learn about the history of humankind, but rather to question any assumptions about humanity. His call for questioning seems to go against the impulse of the museum to provide answers.

Curators and exhibition designers have spent decades searching for ways to engage visitors with a narrative, adding moving images and sound effects, changing everything from the colour of the walls to the size of the text, and making display rooms bigger, brighter and bolder, lest the attention of the viewer stray for a second. At the National September 11 Memorial Museum, viewers are invited to place flowers in the gaps created by the engraved names of the victims, forcing them to get closer, even touching the

[2] A law was passed in Poland in 1947 forbidding changes to the original site.
[3] Elie Wiesel similarly wrote that "Auschwitz, by definition, is beyond vocabulary" in his 1956 memoir.

victims' names. At the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC visitors are given a victim's "passport" at the entrance. At Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, visitors must walk up a steep hill deliberately designed to be a physical trial, in order to connect their body to the site in question. The new "Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration," located within a former slave warehouse, opened in Montgomery, Alabama, in 2018. Designed by Local Projects (one of the lead exhibition designers for the National September 11 Memorial Museum), the museum aims to "immerse visitors in the sights and sounds of the domestic slave trade, racial terrorism, and the Jim Crow South." It was created by the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), who were also responsible for the Memorial to Peace and Justice in Montgomery, the first national memorial to the more than four thousand victims of lynching in the American South. This was designed by MASS Design Group, which aims at "design that heals" (Sodaro 2018, 1).

When considering the above examples in the context of Auschwitz, one immediate response is that "none of it feels right." Designers who promise to "push the boundaries of emotional storytelling," boast "interactive and deeply experiential" activities, or claim "*curative* rather than curatorial" effects seem insensitively showy (Sodaro 2018, 1). Circumventing the more difficult emotional explanation, for the time being, the simple question of practicality has to be raised. The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum is enormous. Visitors will spend at least a whole afternoon, if not a whole day, moving across multiple buildings and sites. The exhibition designer thus faces the practical challenge of "making it worth visitors' effort to spend 30 more minutes with the display, after having toured the sites," as stated by Avner Shalev, the former director of the Yad Vashem Institute for Holocaust Research in Israel, tasked with curating the "Shoah" exhibition in Block 27, Auschwitz. This may be why he decided: "We are not going to compete with the artifacts" (The New York Times 2013). At Auschwitz, all the typical tools of museum engagement—sound effects, museum props, fancy architecture, and memorable, if not positive, messages—appear to distract from the site itself. Thus, the viewer cannot be strung along by a story, but must be left in a pool of unanswered questions and incomprehensible horrors. Yet, this overwhelming sense of meaninglessness may be precisely what turns visitors away. In what follows of this article, it will be suggested that behaviour that appears to be "disengagement" may actually be a form of emotional protection for some visitors. Thus, the question is, without the unfitting tools of traditional museum engagement, how can the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum help visitors connect with the site in an emotionally sustainable way?

4. Emotional Disengagement or Struggling to Feel Auschwitz

The question at hand—how visitors can be encouraged to connect emotionally to sites of pain and shame—requires a psychological anthropological perspective. How do humans develop their feelings, thoughts, and actions, and how does that influence the way in which they relate to others and to places? This section zooms in on the notion of "feeling right or wrong," as well as the question of discomfort. Discomfort describes a bodily felt intensity that hints at one's emotional state. That state is not fixed yet but rather in-between. Therefore, discomfort is thoroughly affective. Emotions shape central moments of our lives and guide human actions in meaningful ways. They describe the physical dimension of subjectively felt experiences that have been semanticised and habitualised according to sociocultural norms (Röttger-Rössler 2018). The same is true for emotional regulation, which is to be seen as a form of emotional labour (Hochschild [1983] 2012). The attempt to manage or regulate one's emotions can arise from the desire to intentionally suppress an emotional state, divert attention, show respect or protect oneself from harm. Hence, emotion regulation represents our ability to be aware of our feelings, to balance our behaviour and remain empowered to act in a challenging situation (Pascuzzi and Smorti

2017). If someone manages to decipher and use emotions correctly, they feel a sense of belonging to the community (von Poser et al. 2019).

In Auschwitz, visitors can fall back on themselves. Some feel that no comprehensible narrative orients them, while others find so many narrative strands that they cannot comprehend the whole, leaving them terrified by the weight of the past. This felt dissonance relates to the definition of an "affect." An affect is characterised by its spontaneous irrepressibility, which powerfully overcomes you, guides your thinking, acting, and feeling. Emotional anthropologist Birgitt Röttger-Rössler classifies an affect as a break with what already exists, an alternative social-relational "dimension of experience" (2018, 245). Like emotions, affects occur relationally. Thus, by reflecting on how, where, and when affects arise, it is possible to deconstruct and disempower their intensity. Auschwitz is affecting because it confronts the visitor with something that their human imagination refuses to imagine, something too difficult to grasp. If, as André L. Stein (1983) suggests, one should go to Auschwitz to question all assumptions about humanity, it becomes a challenge to relate to the site, to immerse oneself in the horror and trauma. I, Edda, felt this struggle in my tense shoulders. Similarly, Mónica repeatedly had to shake out her hands or slip into silence. We interpreted these signs as affective and subconscious reactions to our feeling of being overwhelmed. Yet, as we have already mentioned, we also witnessed very different reactions at the site: running, texting, emailing, or taking photographs. While we originally responded with irritation, we later reflected that humans rely upon different observed coping mechanisms and "emotion repertoires" (von Poser et al. 2019) depending on their socialisation, age, and experience. We found that dissecting our own complex emotional responses changed the way we evaluated the behaviour of other visitors.

In the opening vignette, I shared my first impression of feeling shame and guilt during my visit to Auschwitz and said that it felt odd to voice the sensation. Later that night, while we were sitting together in the group, I repeated my feelings. An Italian colleague looked at me and empathetically said that what happened in Auschwitz was not my fault, so I should not feel ashamed. But still, I did. First, I related my feelings to my German origin and the sheer unbelievability that my grandparents were part of a society that was capable of doing that. But the more I thought about it, the less this simple link to collective guilt seemed to fit my discomfort. This simplistic explanation even seemed like an apology to me, like an excuse not to dive deeper into my individual discomfort. At this point, I started to reflect on what shame exactly means to make sense out of my personal experience.

According to scholars of social studies, the function of shame and guilt is to motivate members of a society to behave in a role-appropriate manner. Thus, shame has a social-regulatory function. Especially in relational societies, shame is valued positively. It is an expression of the fact that norms have been internalised and reflected upon. Those who feel shame express that they are able to navigate according to a social fabric. Feeling shame relates to the fact that a violation of norms has taken place and has been acknowledged. This sounds simple and logical, but what accompanies the experience of shame, and what makes it hard to bear, is the feeling of not belonging, of being out of line, of having transgressed boundaries. Shame manifests in a perceived vulnerability that may be potentially dangerous to one's social standing, one's body, and one's place in the community. Hence, shame is experienced simultaneously on two levels: I feel shame because I am aware that I transgressed boundaries, and I immediately want to cover up the fact that this violation has occurred in order to save myself (Probyn 2004). Hiding shame is just one response, just one means of emotion regulation. However, there are many other coping mechanisms, such as practicing silence or emotional disengagement.

It is possible that younger visitors use running and laughter as a coping strategy aimed at emotionally disengaging. It is also possible that older visitors check their phones or take photos in spaces of incomprehensible pain for the same subconscious reason. These forms of disengagement may be aimed

at distancing oneself from an entrapping situation, if only for a few moments. Even the more subtle visitor responses hint at a need to dispel energy from the body: we observed that even our own behaviour indicated a troubled relation to the place we were in. Although I was physically there, I had to hold onto a packet of tissues, something grounding me in a material, temporal, social, and emotional way to my everyday lifeworld beyond Auschwitz. While we were on our way back, Mónica repeatedly had to shake out her hands as if to let go of something. Our crucial finding is that this intensity, this feeling that Auschwitz gets under one's skin, is precisely *the* museum experience of the place. Engaging with this past is difficult. Auschwitz requires the visitor to pay attention to their feelings, their body, and their responses. Such care and attention should be encouraged. One can feel selfish for considering one's own emotions, but it is possible that it would allow for a deeper connection with the site, and ultimately prevent negative forms of disengagement.

The Una Europa researchers visited Auschwitz with a heightened sensitivity for the place, and a heightened awareness of their responses, as this was what the workshop coordinators asked of them. Thanks to this, they were able to notice that their senses and movements synchronised; in other words, they developed a notable sensitivity for each other. On the bus, they sat next to each other in shared silence. When they arrived back in Kraków, they did not feel comfortable being alone, so they went for a drink. Through careful listening and self-reflection, they began to transform their felt intensities. By opening up about their shame, they transformed it into an important part of the experience. In other words, they transformed shame into a useful human signal that norms and boundaries had been violated. The trusting framework of a group visit provided the space in which the researchers could become vulnerable, allowing them to engage with their emotions rather than disengaging. It allowed the discomfort to become "sustainable." So how could this experience be transformed into a framework designed to cultivate sustainable discomfort for others? Or, better asked, what would it entail to embrace discomfort and make it sustainable?

5. Designing Sustainable Discomfort

When trying to contextualise our subjectively felt discomfort into a bigger picture we have come to the following conclusion: if we suppress our discomfort, we deprive ourselves of the chance to transform it, to engage with it, to accept it as part of the learning process in and about Auschwitz. According to feminist anthropologist April Petillo (2020), we deprive ourselves of the opportunity to learn through our lived experiences if we dismiss the discomfort before we understand it. One way to deal with emotional disengagement could be to reflect on exactly *why* we react to discomfort with aversion. Petillo encourages us to understand why it actually is right to feel wrong:

> [D]iscipline can operate as an organizing scholarly structure and a regulating mechanism subtly shaping all social actors – in this case, our perceptions of thought and behavior regardless of role. When something does not "fit" because it is tangled up in emotion, we are disoriented, and our affective response is shock – effectively a momentary disconnect from our ability to reflect. (2020, 15)

Petillo provides a significant impetus to regard museum regulatory measures from more than one perspective. If it is "right to feel wrong," regulations that attempt to delineate "right" and "wrong" too closely may fail. When we are regulated or self-regulate too soon, we lose the opportunity to learn from our bodily responses. Our felt intensities may give us valuable hints about how to navigate through situations of precarity. It is important not to be paralysed by them but to listen to them. More importantly, Petillo points out that "[o]therwise, those whose stories we refuse become faceless numbers in the conversation" (2020, 21) —and this is exactly what we want to prevent from happening again at Auschwitz.

One of the most difficult moments of the Auschwitz guided visit—reaching the ruins of the gas chambers at Birkenau, which were blown up by the Nazis moments before the camp was liberated—provides a place in which to put sustainable discomfort to the test. As visitors walk towards the central chamber, located at the end of the railway track, they see an enormous stone monument ahead, with the ruined gas chamber on the left. Known as the *International Monument to the Victims of Fascism*, the history of this commemorative object is fraught. A competition to design it was launched in 1957, but ten years later, no design had been selected, despite more than four hundred submissions. Many were deemed unsuitable on the grounds that they violated the 2 July 1947 law on the inadmissibility of changes to the concentration camp grounds (Aloszko 2012, 122). One designer even proposed to submerge the camp in water, turning it into a lake with dedicated spaces for remembrance. In the end, several different designs were combined to create the current monument, which was unveiled in 1967. Groups of stones carved into abstract shapes appear to tumble onto the ground. As the researchers stood in front of the monument, they overheard a visitor saying that "it distracted from the true monument: the gas chambers on the left." While this chapter is not a critical analysis of the monument—which has been an effective site of remembrance for many—the visitor's honest answer provides a reason to pause. Unsatisfying as it may be, one potential answer to the question of how to cultivate sustainable discomfort is to simply do nothing. Rather than distracting the visitor with museum engagement techniques that risk taking them closer to disengagement, it may be better to give them space – literally and metaphorically – to simply sit with their emotions. This requires acceptance on the part of the visitor, the tour guides, and the broader community that emotional responses will be complex and contradictory in such a difficult space.

Emotions cannot be controlled by rules and regulations. They evolve in relational encounters; they become situated at concrete sites and thus change as we move through different spaces. Affects arise in the same manner but are more intense and irrepressible. As such, it is important to encourage awareness of when and where such felt intensities evolve, in the hope that this will prevent disengagement – or at least help people understand that their behaviour has an explanation. Making discomfort sustainable entails being empathetic towards emotional disengagement of our own and others. We must see these not as a failure but as a human reaction to bodily felt pain and shame. Encouraging reflection on one's own and others' coping strategies, not in a judgemental or regulating way but by means of empathy, requires an understanding that particular embodied encounters are "too much to bear."

Emotional disengagement is a protection mechanism that can be transformed into sustainable discomfort through awareness. Working together on this will help better situate visitors on the site, helping them to better fulfil their duty of remembering in order to ensure that history is never repeated.

6. Conclusions

The architect of the Berlin Jewish Museum, Daniel Libeskind, described his ideal visitor as one who would continue to think about the museum long after the visit concluded. The Una Europa researchers posed a similar question to Tomasz Michaldo, who leads the "Guiding Methodology" for tour-guides at Auschwitz-Birkenau: "What message would you like the ideal visitor to take away from your tours?" Michaldo hopes that visitors will realise that Auschwitz did not represent the beginning or the end of the Holocaust, but rather a stepping stone on its murderous path—a path made up of decades of racist policies, public passivity, and propaganda, not to mention the hefty logistics, such as the building of railway tracks, the training of soldiers, the rounding up of whole communities.

A visitor must understand that the atrocity did not spring from nowhere if the museum is to fulfil its ultimate goal of preventing such a tragedy from ever darkening the history of humanity again. So, according to the principles of the museum, visitors must leave Auschwitz not only with historical

knowledge of the site, but also with an understanding of its continued contemporary relevance. It is perhaps this reality that shakes many visitors, rooting them so personally in Auschwitz's terrible history that they disengage. But the unimaginably traumatic experiences of Holocaust survivors did not prevent them from fulfilling the "duty to remember." The visitor must also fulfil this duty. The museum should not work to make Auschwitz easier for the visitor, but rather to make it sustainable in its necessary discomfort.

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
edited by Patrizia Battilani, Maria Giovanna Belcastro, Krzysztof Kowalski and Teresa Nicolosi

5. The Treatment of Dissonant Memories by Truth and Reconciliation Commissions: Four Case Studies

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Abstract

Our paper focuses on how Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) deal with dissonant memories in transitional justice processes. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions aim to shed light on a traumatic near past marked by murders, disappearances, torture, suffering, and structural discrimination, by bringing together perpetrators and victims simultaneously. The prominent place given to the words and memories of the victims, combined with the rhetoric of forgiveness used by most of the perpetrators, is supposed to contribute to the construction of pacified memories that will allow society to be rebuilt despite this dissonant heritage. However, while speaking out can certainly be a relief for victims at first, the reopening of the wound it causes can lead to more unrest in the long run. Moreover, one of the flaws of these commissions seems to be the gap between the expectations they raised and the concrete measures taken by governments afterwards.
From a methodological point of view, our article is situated at the intersection of law, anthropology, and history. We examine four different TRCs, followed by a comparative analysis of selected cases and an evaluation of outcomes. Our idea is to explore several geographic areas, so we have chosen the Togolese, the Chilean, the South African, and the German Commissions. These Commissions dealt with different dissonant memories and political regimes, yet they developed crosscutting concepts, processes, and practices. We consider the specificities and differences between the Commissions in order to see how they address these dissonant pasts.

Keywords

Transitional justice, Dissonant memories, Truth and Reconciliation, Victim and Perpetrator narratives, Comparative analysis

1. Introduction

The Truth and Reconciliation Commissions—hereafter TRCs—have proliferated as the main institutional mechanisms for dealing with and representing violent pasts as narratives in the recent decades.[1] As part of the international justice paradigm, in most cases, these TRCs have been implemented in various parts of the world since the 1980s in the context of political transitions following authoritarian regimes (Jara 2020). In memory studies and human rights, TRCs have been analysed as mechanisms for the production of truth in transitional contexts (Bernasconi Ramìrez et al. 2019). According to Richard Wilson, when defining a TRC in the South African context, but also universally, a transitional statutory body acting as a "a key mechanism to promote (the) new constitutionalist political order and the reformulation of justice in human rights talk as restorative justice" as well as "using human rights talk to construct a new national identity" (Wilson, 2001, 13). We understand TRCs as emergent objects oriented towards producing effects both in the past and the present, also acknowledging that memory involves "memories and forgettings, narratives and acts, silences and gestures" (Jelin 2002, 17), as well as images, experiences, meanings, and resignifications. Through the dynamics of creation and reiteration that subvert, surpass, and delimit, memory is nourished by meanings, symbols, and values (Augé 1998; Candau 2008), so the role of memory can be associated with the versions of the past that societies are willing to sustain as time goes by. Thus, the battle of memory is the battle between memories and counter-memories over what should be remembered and how (Jelin 2002).

While there has been a consensus on the TRCs importance in recognising victims of state violence, recently, doubts have been raised about their long-term impact and implications (Bakiner 2015). According to authors like Bronwyn Leebaw (2011), TRCs are structured around the positions of victims and perpetrators to depoliticise their investigations, which prevents them from considering the competing projects and interests at stake in these episodes. The memories produced by the TRCs were part of the contestation for a moral post-dictatorship space insofar as they were contested, appropriated, and selected by civil society (Jara 2020).

The Chilean case is paradigmatic for examining TRCs and the battles of memory, as it was the first nation to convene a Commission in order to confront the repressive practices of political imprisonment and torture (Bernasconi Ramìrez et al. 2019).

2. The Rettig Report, Chilean Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In March 1990, former president Patricio Aylwin became the first democratic president of Chile since the beginning of the Pinochet Military Dictatorship in 1973 (Aguilar 2002). A month after establishing the democratic government, newly elected president Aylwin called upon a group of experts to prepare a report on human rights abuses based on the testimonies of interested parties, including victims and their relatives (Aguiler 2002). On 25 April 1990, Supreme Decree No. 355 created the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose aim was "to contribute to the overall clarification of the Truth about the most serious human rights violations committed between September 11, 1973, and March 11, 1990."

[1] According to Amnesty International, from 1974 to 2007, there were over forty Truth and Reconciliation Commissions in over twenty-eight countries.

The Commission was presided by Raúl Rettig and was formed by eight members who were given four main tasks (Aguilar 2002): (1) to prepare a comprehensive picture of the extent of human rights violations, their details, and circumstances. (2) To collect information concerning individual victims, their fate and location. (3) To recommend just reparation and necessary retribution. (4) To recommend legal and administrative measures to prevent future serious violations of human rights in Chile.

Even though the South African Truth Commission focused on hearing the testimonies in an open, communal manner, Chile opted to use reports based on social and political analysis (Aguilar 2002). The reason behind this decision was that the Chilean Commission's main research topic had been the methods used to "annihilate subversion in all its facets," ranging from illegal detention, kidnapping, torture, and the disappearance of corpses, to official executions, missing persons, torture resulting in death and even detainees' suicides (Camacho Padilla 2004). Thus, they decided not to consider the cases of survivors.

After nine months of intense work, on 8 February 1991, the Commission handed over the Rettig Report of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It stated the receipt of 3,550 statements, of which 2,296 were considered qualified cases of human rights violation.

Following the Rettig Report, additional Commissions were established to further clarify the truth. In February 1992, the National Reparation and Reconciliation Corporation was entrusted with resolving the cases that the previous Commission had been unable to address satisfactorily or lacked sufficient background information. Afterward, the National Commission on Political Prison and Torture, created in September 2003, received the testimony of over 35,000 Chileans who had suffered political prison or torture during the Pinochet Regime. At last, in 2009, the Presidential Advisory Commission for the Qualification of Disappeared Detainees, Victims of Extrajudicial Executions, and Victims of Political Imprisonment and Torture was created to open a new period of recognition of victims who did not present themselves or were not recognised by the Rettig Commission, by the National Corporation for Reparation and Reconciliation, or by the Valech Commission. Between February and August 2010, it received 32,453 statements.

The publication and later dissemination of the Rettig Report had great national resonance. For the first time and only a year after the end of the dictatorship, the government officially acknowledged the human rights violations committed under the Pinochet Regime (González Morales and Ibarra Paredes 2015). Once the document was published, two trends emerged within the social movements: on the one hand, human rights organizations and the Catholic Church accepted the work of the Rettig Report by a large majority; on the other—the associations of relatives and victims of the repression maintained a more reticent and dissenting attitude (González Morales and Ibarra Paredes 2015). The latter called for the disclosure of the names of those responsible and for an end to the amnesty law. This follows claims from authors such as Barbara De Cock and Daniel Michaud Maturana, who conclude that 61.3% of the Report's propositions lack information about the agents responsible for the actions considered (quoted in González Morales and Ibarra Paredes 2015).

For authors like Marc Ensalaco (1994), the Report provided an official history of the terror by preventing the perpetrators from writing it, unlike in Germany during the Second World War, for example. In this way, it inaugurated a new politics of memory that, from then on, would gradually publicly acknowledge the state violence committed in the recent past, and that would eventually become institutionalised through a Museum of Memory in 2010. Indeed, the Commission reconstructed the history of repression after the military coup by describing the social polarization that characterised Chilean society during the 1960s (Jara 2020). This narrative echoes what in the Argentinean case was

called the "doctrine of the two devils" (Jara 2002) – the idea that the violence was provoked by the left- and right-wing extremism, and which depicted the general society as a passive bystander of a struggle between extremists and the military. By not acknowledging the agency behind the crimes, the Report conveys an ambiguous message regarding the perpetrators of state violence. As Jara argues, "despite describing in great detail the practices of terror, the forms of organisation and institutions involved, the individual perpetrators were treated with anonymity and caution" (2020, 254).

Authors such as González and Ibarra (2015) argue that even though the Rettig Report was not sufficient to achieve national reconciliation, it contributed to providing Chileans with an official and impartial document based on a shared memory which allowed them to form an opinion on what happened and to discuss how to prevent the occurrence of crimes against fundamental rights. The officialised/institutionalised memory of the Rettig Report had been influenced by the limits imposed on the narrative, which triggered the involvement of new actors in the battle of memory (Bernasconi Ramírez et al. 2019). With them, the human rights violations between 1973 and 1990 are no longer understood solely in terms of the logic of the victim-state dyad. These new actors are questioning the process of dictatorship by appealing to the search for truth and justice and emphasising the importance of the historical knowledge of the events.

3. Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Republic of South Africa

Like the Chilean TRC, the South African TRC, formed in 1996, aimed to establish a democratic government within the nation (Chapman 2006, 66–67) as part of the *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995*. However, whilst the terms of reference for the Chilean TRC were aimed at addressing human rights violations committed by the government against the Chilean population, the South African TRC had a broader purpose of investigating both human rights violations committed by the government and intra- and inter-community violence within South Africa (Chapman 2006, 66–67). The *Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995* explicitly stated that the South African TRC served a role mandated by the 1993 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, in which "the pursuit of national unity, the well-being of all South African citizens and peace require reconciliation between the people of South Africa and the reconstruction of society". As multiple perspectives from the different communities were included in terms of reference, along with that of the government of South Africa under Apartheid, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa was required to address dissonant memories in the spirit of forgiveness for national reconstruction.

In his article "The Contributions of Truth to Reconciliation – Lessons from South Africa," James Gibson assesses that the South African TRC successfully addressed the dissonant memories in South Africa through a "logic of rational hypocrisy," which he describes as a strict condemnation of the abuses of apartheid without excessive prosecution (2006, 428). In his research, Gibson finds a causal process through which, as a result of the TRC, the people of South Africa began to "reconceptualize the struggle over apartheid as something other than a clash between infinite good against unremitting evil" and "began to accept that at least some of the justifications for the opposing side were legitimate" (2006, 428). Thus, for Gibson, the TRC in South Africa was an effective medium for addressing the dissonant memories of the apartheid period by strictly condemning abuses in moral terms without retributive and compensatory measures, therefore allowing for a "preparing for the future" (2006, 428). The TRC's approach has been complemented, as Katherine Mack points out, by Desmond Tutu's foreword to the

TRC report. Tutu articulates that the purpose of the TRC is to provide closure on the apartheid era by exposing human rights abuses and asking for the perpetrators to take moral responsibility without penalty, in order to, as Tutu suggests, "shut the door on the past" (Mack 2011, 146).

In contrast, in her article "Truth Commissions and Intergroup Forgiveness," Audrey R. Chapman claims that the South African TRC was not successful in developing a model to promote intergroup forgiveness and reconciliation. Her findings provide evidence that the TRC focused too heavily on forgiving the perpetrators of human rights abuses at the expense of the victims (Chapman 2006, 66–67). Moreover, the readily offered forgiveness left the perpetrators with little incentive to accept responsibility for the human rights abuses. From a societal perspective, Chapman cites polling data which suggests that the TRC, in fact, complicated relationships between racial groups in South Africa and increased resentment (2006, 66–67). Therefore, from a perspective of dissonant heritage, it may be concluded that the TRC process in South Africa amplified the issue of dissonant perspectives on apartheid by lessening the pressure on the White population to accept responsibility for the human rights abuses.

Willie Henderson attempts to bridge these opposing evaluations of the TRC as either a success or a failure by stating that the TRC resulted in some individuals and groups justifying their human rights abuses in certain instances (Henderson 2000, 459). The TRC could not sanction these justifications; moreover, the Commission's activities resulted in a universal realization (Henderson 2000, 460–461). Thus, for Henderson, despite the dissonant memories between communities concerning condemnation or justification of human rights abuses perpetrated during apartheid, the TRC did nevertheless allow South African society to develop the norm of anti-racism as a norm of governance.

It remains a matter of debate whether or not the TRC in South Africa adequately addressed the human rights abuses committed during apartheid, and whether it allowed South Africa to prepare for the post-apartheid period. As racism is increasingly understood to be structural and moral, it may be argued that by not punishing the perpetrators, the TRC perpetuated the conditions of racism. Therefore, the question is, to what extent did the TRC lead to addressing the conditions that caused apartheid to occur, and how can the TRC ensure that such events are prevented in future. For prospective TRCs in other nations, the lesson of the South African TRC is the following: the ways in which the core moral crime of the human rights abuses is framed and addressed are crucial in determining whether or not a TRC may be considered a successful mechanism of achieving transitional justice in the context of dissonant memory.

4. Truth and Reconciliation Commission – Togolese Republic (Togo)

Established in Togo on 25 February 2009, the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) took root four years earlier after the death of General Gnassingbé Eyadema, after a thirty-eight-year authoritarian reign. On the day of Eyadema's death (5 February 2005), under pressure from the army, the Togolese parliament proceeded to a constitutional amendment, which aimed to install one of the General's sons – Faure Gnassingbé, who is still president today—as head of state. However, in the face of popular and, above all, international pressure, this constitutional "tampering" was postponed. A presidential election was organised on 24 April 2005, and won by Faure Gnassingbé under conditions contested by the opposition. This was followed by post-election violence and a period of instability that resulted in the death of at least 150 people and the departure into exile of more than forty thousand (Amnesty International 2005).

Following the publication of reports on the electoral violence by a national commission of enquiry (Special National Commission of Independent Inquiry)[2] and a United Nations mission[3], an "inter-Togolese political dialogue" was opened on 21 April 2006 and led to the signing of the *Accord de politique global* (APC) on 20 August 2006. In addition to "the establishment of a new National Assembly at the end of a transparent, fair and democratic electoral process", the agreement stipulated the creation of two commissions: "a commission responsible for shedding light on the acts of political violence committed during the period from 1958 to the present day, and for studying ways of pacifying the victims" (APC, 2006, 1); and a commission responsible for "proposing measures to promote forgiveness and national reconciliation" (Décret 2009-147/PR, 2009, 1). For budgetary and functional reasons, only one commission was created and placed under the chairmanship of the bishop of Atakpamé and future archbishop of Lomé, Nicodème Anani Barrigah-Benissan. Composed of eleven members designated by the government (Décret 2009-147/PR, 2009, 2) after consultation with so-called "living forces of the nation (political class, socio-professional organisations, civil society)" (TJRC, *Final Report* 2012, 61), this commission was to proceed, in addition to the elections, with the creation of a new commission. In addition to implementing the recommendations of the APC, the commission was to identify "the perpetrators of violence and human rights violations" and to "propose to the government measures to be taken for reparations and various forms of reparation for the harm suffered by the victims" (Décret 2009-147/PR, 2009, 2).

Like other "truth and reconciliation" commissions, the TJRC's ambition was to constitute a policy of cathartic memory, allowing the Togolese people to revisit their history in order to "rework the past in order to build the future" (Lefranc and Gensburger 2017, 88). As a demonstration of listening, the hearings should, in the words of Nicodème Anani Barrigah-Benissan, offer an opportunity to "free the victims' speech to restore their dignity and heal their wounds, which are essential conditions for any in-depth reconciliation. By organising them [the commissions], we secretly hope that the strength of conviction of the victims will succeed in creating a national catharsis and thus lead the entire people to engage in a movement of national reconciliation" (Barrigah-Benissan 2015, 386–388). The challenge here was to manage, by working on dissonant memories, to "resurrect dialogue" (Lefranc and Gensburger 2017, 45) between the different fringes of society in order to create a national memory that was appeased, if not unified; and thus, to "lay the foundations for a new social contract" (Andrieu 2012, 27). As Sandrine Lefranc rightly points out, we find here the fundamental idea of transitional justice according to which

> the public expression by individuals of suffering memories . . . must heal not only the victim-witness but the whole society, since so-called 'transitional justice,' and more generally the policies of memory, postulate an analogy between the individual and the collective. What happens in a few inner spaces would affect, through the force of emotion and exemplarity, all individuals, and then the entire nation. (Lefranc and Gensburger 2017, 95)

[2] A *Commission de réflexion pour la réhabilitation de l'histoire du Togo* was also created on 7 September 2005 in order to "identify and raise all the elements, factors of peace, unity and togetherness to promote a permanent and open dialogue" (TJRC, *Final Report* 2012, 58).

[3] *Mission d'établissement des faits du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme chargée de faire la lumière sur les violences et les allégations de violations des droits de l'homme survenues au Togo, avant, pendant et après, l'élection présidentielle du 24 avril 2005*.

This desire for "pacification through memory" (Lefranc and Gensburger 2017, 143) is clearly reflected in the CVJR's final report, which insists on "the importance of the Togolese as a whole agreeing on a common vision of their future as a nation," affirms that "the appeasement of the victims" requires, in particular, "the re-establishment of the historical truth, the rehabilitation of the great figures of national history," and recommends that the State "works to strengthen the sense of national belonging by making the history of the Togolese better known through cycles of conferences, debates, publications, documentaries, and films" (TJRC, *Final Report* 2012, 248, 259).

It is in order to preserve and perpetuate this work of pacifying dissonant memories by re-constructing a memory that is both pacified and shared. The CVJR believes they have laid the foundations for such a memory during the thirty-four months of their work—a process they have defined as "preserving the memory" (TJRC, *Final Report* 2012, 241), although it would be more accurate to describe it as memory-constructing. According to the CVJR, "the preservation of memory is necessary so that future generations know the history of their country and the difficult situations it has experienced, so that such events can be avoided in the future." Noting the "institutional weakness of the National Archives of Togo and the non-existence of a regulation on public archives," the CVJR calls for the creation of an institution responsible for monitoring and guarding its archives, and for promoting research on the themes of citizenship, peace, human rights, and memory (TJRC, *Final Report* 2012, 241).

Ten years after the publication of its final report, it remains difficult to predict the future of the CVJR's recommendations. Nevertheless, and without necessarily taking up the recurrent criticism of transitional justice commissions as mere "courts of tears" where the orchestration of individual memory catharsis "does not heal, by miraculous translation, all the other individuals forming the nation" (Lefranc 2013), a factual observation seems to contradict the vision of a successful transition from a "conflicting memory" to a "consensual memory" (Ahadzi-Nonou 2014, 98) that has allowed for national reconciliation. Indeed, not unlike those that had triggered the 2005 violence that gave rise to the CVJR, the constitutional manoeuvres aimed at allowing the outgoing president to remain in power until 2030 provoked a new period of socio-political tension during which opponents were arbitrarily arrested, and demonstrations were violently repressed. Despite the resistance, the constitutional revision was adopted on 9 May 2019 (Loi n° 2019-003, 2019), and President Faure Gnassingbé was re-elected for a fourth term in the first round on 22 February 2020 with 70% of the votes.

5. Reconciliating East and West: The German Truth Commission

The German Truth Commission was established in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy after the end of the communist regime in 1989. Following the reunification, formally acted on 3 October 1990, the German Federal Parliament established two successive commissions of inquiry from 1992 to 1998. By documenting practices of the SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) between 1949 and 1989 to establish a "complete record of dictatorship" (McAdams 2001, 88), both of these commissions sought to "contribute to reconciliation" and the "inner unity" of reunified Germany (Deutscher Bundestag 1995, vol.1, 188). According to the commission expert Ilko Sascha Kowalczuk, the commissions were to contribute to:

1. The promotion of an anti-totalitarian consensus in Germany
2. The memory of the victims and of all individuals that didn't succumb to the temptation of the dictatorship

3. The development of a historical narrative on East Germany, free from myths and trivialization of its crimes (Das Parlament 1998, 5)

The German post-communist transition is unique in that, unlike other East-European countries confronting their former oppressors, it was lived as "West Germany putting the East on trial" (Kritz 1995, 595–597). Issues of passive and active complicity, consent or collaboration (Horne 2017, 214), blurred the distinction between victims and perpetrators in post-Soviet societies, unlike in Latin America, where victims and victimizers were identified (Ciobanu 2009, 314–315). Hardly anticipated, multiple tensions arose between former eastern and western Germans (Welsh 2006, 148). The qualification of the SED regime as a dictatorship was itself far from consensual (Yoder 1999, 70).

In order to articulate these dissonances, underpinned by issues of forgiveness (Andrews 1999) and *Ostalgie*—the nostalgia of East Germany (Neller 2000, 580; McAdams 2001, 111), the Commission's proceedings had to address the tension between the need for a unifying collective memory based on democratic values and the danger underlying political uses of history in the public sphere. Act No. 12/2597, creating the 1992 Commission of Inquiry, asserts its goal to contribute "to the solidification of democratic consciousness and the further development of a common political culture." Seeking to establish a national memory, and thus a national identity (Andrews 2003, 53), the German goes beyond historical writing, involving governmentality dynamics (Foucault 2004, 111–112). Taking a stance opposite to that of authoritarian national master narratives, the final report from the second Commission states that "dialogue, or rather reconciliation between victims and perpetrators, cannot come from state coercion. On the contrary, it lies on individual actions" (Deutscher Bundestag 1999, vol. 1, 249).

Embracing these principles, the TC's singular approach to victimhood (Beattie 2009) carefully balances what Paul Ricoeur called historiographical and judiciary dynamics. Based on individual guilt, criminal judgments are necessarily binary because trials need definite conclusions; on the contrary, history, as an illimited process of perpetual reassessment, tries to consider a multifaceted reality (Ricoeur 2000, 420-426). As a non-judicial body (United Nations Security Council 2004, 17), the German TC acted as a counterpart to juridical incrimination because other transitional justice mechanisms dealt with criminal aspects. As such, it adopted a more discursive and symbolic undertaking (Beattie 2009, 238). In order to promote healing within East German society, individual guilt was not brought into focus (Deutscher Bundestag 1995, vol.1, 30). In this perspective, the first inquiry only presented a schematic list of "categories of victims" with no attempt at quantification (Deutscher Bundestag 1995, vol.1, 630).

Academic literature largely pointed out the German Commission's failure to handle these dissonances. According to Jennifer Yoder, it left eastern Germans "on the sidelines as their past was reconciled on their behalf" (1999, 72). It was also pointed out that the existence of the Commission was ignored mainly by German citizens (Kamali 2001, 135), as opposed to the South African case, where victims' stories were widely publicised; the impact on former East Germans was thus minimal (Sa'adah 1998, 185). In terms of methods, its productions were described as a "stereotypical assessment of the sources of stability and discord under the communist rule" (McAdams 2001, 38). Although the Commission's proceedings were "not free from ideological baggage" (Beattie 2009, 248), its interpretative and partisan nature was stressed in all investigations, from public hearings to reports' accounts of the Commission's processes or dissenting statements from opposition parties (Beattie 2009, 244). This way of dealing with dissonant memories by promoting polyvocal narratives and transparency in the process resonates with European memory policies, such as Markus J. Prutsch's call to establish a critical "European culture of remembering" grounded in values of humanism, tolerance and democracy, opposed to an imposed singular "remembrance culture" (Prutsch 2015, 6). Acknowledging that

remembering the past necessarily involves value judgements, this process renounces the notion of "historical truth" in order to take subjectivity into account.

6. Conclusions

The research conducted into the effect of TRCs on addressing dissonant heritage is undoubtedly complex. The major purpose of TRCs is to provide for a political process in which the human rights abuses perpetrated by previous regimes are considered to have been "managed" in order to allow for a consensus to develop. This, in turn, is to facilitate the government and the political system that have replaced the previous regime to achieve the establishment of a "post-oppressive regime" country. A consensus on "national memory" is established, condemning the past and allowing for previous conflicts to be considered "solved."

It is within this idea of how a previous conflict may be considered as "managed" that the differences in the cases discussed in this chapter are most distinct. The South African decision to have the proceedings based on open hearings for testimonies allowed for the tangible consequences of apartheid to be understood and, therefore, reduced the possibility for apartheid's defenders to rationalise and justify the system. In contrast, the Chilean Rettig Report's emphasis on social polarization as the major source of the conditions leading to the dictatorship provided an incentive for Chilean society to mitigate the rise of such political and social conditions, and for the subsequent government to commission a report demonstrating its commitment to addressing social polarization. In the case of the Togolese TJRC, the aim for "pacification through memory" underpinned the policy paradigm of the transitional justice hearings and proceedings as ending the conflict that had occurred. On the other hand, in the case of the East German TC, the proceedings of the hearings were grounded in the policy paradigm of the West legitimising its absorption of East Germany and denouncing the previous regime. Consequently, it was the "system" of East Germany rather than individual perpetrators that was placed on trial, treating East Germany as an entity to be condemned, rather than, as in the South African case, placing an emphasis on abuses committed by individual citizens. To conclude, the choice of the manner in which Truth and Reconciliation proceedings are carried out is dependent upon the "narrative" that a government wishes to construct regarding the abuses of the previous regime. This narrative serves as a legitimising force for the post-authoritarian government, contributing greatly to a sense of dissonant heritage regarding a country's past.

However, in allowing for amnesties so that a country may "move on," TRCs fail to provide the opportunity for victims to seek justice against perpetrators, which leads individuals to resent and oppose the "consensual national memory." This can potentially lead to the continual deconstruction of the "narrative" of consensual memory that has been developed, thus increasing dissonant heritage, particularly if it creates an impression that oppressors have never been punished or forced to take responsibility for their actions. In considering the continuous development of national narratives in consensual memory constructed through TRCs, it may, therefore, be concluded that TRCs are, in fact, a vector for the formation of dissonant memory and later, dissonant heritage in how the past is interpreted in the context of the perpetration of human rights abuses by previous regimes.

As time goes by, new global dynamics emerge, which provoke dissensus, new contestations, and memorial disputes, mainly the inclusion of new generations who have not lived through the conflicts (Reyes et al. 2014). There are essential transgenerational differences in how each generation relates to the memories of past conflicts. Those who lived the event bring their testimonies and experiences into

the conversation from their personal and individual life stories. However, when younger generations remember, they do so by specifying that "this is what was told to me;" furthermore, they bring their point of view about the past. Thus, they are actors who generate new discourses and practices where the memories of the past become referents for their actions in the present. In general, these new generations tend to be more critical of the actions of the past and the impunity that sometimes comes from how the democratic transitions were done, like in Chile. Even though a deep analysis of how each generation deals with the past is out of the scope of this paper, we should acknowledge the transgenerational dynamics in memory issues, especially as today's actors dealing with these topics belong to a second, and even third generation.

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
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6. (En)Countering Dissonance: The Semiotics of the Living Memorial Counter-Monument in Budapest

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Abstract

In recent years, several studies have shown an observable shift in the mainstream memory narratives about World War II and the Holocaust in Hungary, mainly – and sometimes exclusively – emphasizing the victimhood of the Hungarian nation during these historical events. In several cases, grassroots action has been taken to bring attention to the dissonance of these narratives. One of the most prominent instances of grassroots activism challenging the state's official memory narrative is the Living Memorial, installed as a counter-monument to the Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944 in Budapest's Liberty Square.
The aim of this study is to analyses the semiotics (imagery and symbolism) of the two memorials, as well as the public response given to their installation. The chapter illustrates how memory narratives and commemoration practices may become instrumentalized in right-wing populist discourses, in which the nation is seen as a central point of reference and a source of social cohesion and pride; therefore, any narratives that would bring ambiguity, shame, or guilt to the nation, are rejected or reframed. The chapter furthermore investigates how counter-commemorative practices may serve to design the social sustainability of dissonant or contested heritage. The notion of counter-monument is discussed as a strategy to challenge hegemonic memory discourses.

Keywords

Public memorial, Counter-monument, Memory discourse, Dissonant heritage, Hungary

1. Introduction

In recent years, several studies have shown an observable shift in the mainstream political discourse and memory narratives about World War II and the Holocaust in Hungary, mainly—and sometimes exclusively—emphasizing the victimhood of the Hungarian nation during these historical events (see e.g., Toomey 2018; Pető 2021a, 2021b). In the past decade, an increasing emphasis has been placed on the commemoration of Hungarian national traumas, such as the 1956 revolution, World War II, and the Holocaust, as well as the Treaty of Trianon (1920), according to which Hungary lost two-thirds of its former territory (Feischmidt 2020; Pető 2021a).

A new approach to the interpretation of Hungarian history can furthermore be observed by the establishment of several government-funded research institutes (such as the Veritas Historical Research Institute, the Committee of National Remembrance, and the Institute for Hungarian Studies), the rewriting of the National Core Curriculum in order to reflect "national values," and the reduction of the Hungarian history textbook market to state-approved textbooks (for details see Pető 2021a). The new narrative in the Hungarian memory discourse (depicting the Hungarian state and nation as a victim of the events of the twentieth century) and its commemorative practices have been criticized by scholars, various civil organizations, representatives of the Jewish community, as well as politicians and the media, for minimising the role and responsibility of the Hungarian state and the Hungarian perpetrators in various tragic historical events (Horváth 2015; Deim 2022).

In several cases, grassroots action has been taken to bring attention to the dissonance of these narratives (such as, for example, the vandalization of two statues of Miklós Horthy in Hungary).[1] One of the most prominent cases of grassroots activism challenging the state's official memory narrative is the *Living Memorial*, installed as a counter-monument to the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* in Budapest's Liberty Square.

This chapter investigates the ways in which counter-memorative practices—in particular, counter-monuments—may serve as a strategy aimed at designing the social sustainability of dissonant or contested heritage. It is based on the case study of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* erected in 2014, and its counter-monument, the *Living Memorial,* installed in the same year. The aim of the research is to analyze the semiotics (imagery and symbolism) of the two memorials, as well as the public response given to their installation. The timeframe of the research covers the years 2014–2021. The main questions of the research are the following:

1) What kind of narratives are represented by the selected memorials?
2) What is the function of a counter-monument in relation to a contested memorial?
3) Has the grassroot intervention succeeded in eliciting a governmental response or the reconsideration of the contested monument?

The theoretical framework of the chapter engages with the concepts of *victimization* and the *politics of memory* applied to the Hungarian context. Furthermore, the notion of *counter-monument* is discussed, as a strategy to challenge and counter hegemonic memory discourses.

[1] Miklós Horthy was a Hungarian admiral who served as the regent of the Kingdom of Hungary between the two World Wars and throughout most of World War II (from 1 March 1920 to 15 October 1944). Between 15 May and 9 July 1944, over 434 000 Jews were deported from Hungary, mostly to Auschwitz, where about 80 percent of them were murdered. Horthy's perception in Hungary remains highly ambiguous (see Toomey 2018; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung – Political Capital 2019).

2. Theoretical Framework

Studies on memory narratives and commemorative practices have diagnosed a shift in the memory discourses in Hungary since 2014—the so-called illiberal turn of the Fidesz government (Toomey 2018; Pető 2021a; Deim 2022). Narratives on collective memory, most often equated with *national* memory in right-wing populist discourses, have been increasingly instrumentalized for the reinforcement of desired historical interpretations and political narratives.

Andrea Pető, researcher of memory politics and Holocaust memorialization in Hungary, argues that a change in narrative could already be observed during the first Orbán government (1998–2002). This era marked the introduction of the "double occupation narrative" to Hungarian memory discourses, which equated the Nazi and the Soviet occupations, and depreciated the extent of Hungarian collaboration with these regimes (Pető 2021a). One of the main embodiments of this narrative was the opening of the *House of Terror Museum* in Budapest in 2002.

Pető (2021a) marks this event as the start of an increased salience of the concept of victimhood in Hungarian memory politics. Since then, this concept has grown to be the central theme of contemporary memory discourses in Hungary, especially regarding the Treaty of Trianon (Toomey 2018; Feischmidt 2020), which Hungarians perceive as the main failure in the nation's history (Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung – Political Capital 2019). Łucja Piekarska-Duraj, a scholar of memory studies and populism, argues that in contemporary populist discourses narrating the nation as a victim of external powers may serve several functions. Firstly, it may be used as a tool to create a homogenising narrative that aims to increase the internal cohesion of the [oppressed] nation: "Victimisation may be a part of the process of imagining communities (Anderson, 1983), where a solid construct of the nation (or other group) is constituted in order to create relevant frameworks for social cohesion based on shared collective definition" (Piekarska-Duraj 2020, 40). Furthermore, such narratives may serve to construct political legitimacy for leaders who present themselves as acting in the name and interest of a [homogenous] nation:

> Presenting a nation (or other group) as a collective victim supports the notion of homogenized 'people', who provide legitimacy to power" (Piekarska-Duraj 2020, 41). Moreover, the process of victimization often goes hand in hand, and is contrasted with heroism: "At the same time, victimization supports the strengthening of images of heroes and heroism, accurately invented and tailored to fit the needs of current communication processes: mythology provides effective framework for the promotion of values defended and popularized in populist ideologies. (Piekarska-Duraj 2020, 41)

In right-wing populist discourses, the nation is seen as a central point of reference and a source of social cohesion and pride; therefore, any narratives that would bring ambiguity, shame, or guilt to the nation, are rejected or reframed. Discourses operating with (self)victimization may become a tool in the repertoire of the populist construction of the politics of memory. Krzysztof Kowalski, a researcher of European memory and heritage, underlines that the objective of the *politics of memory* is to create a narrative that will make the past "comprehensible and socially shared, linked to the present, value-laden, and inscribed into the public space" (Kowalski 2020, 41, referring to Dicks 2003).

However, as Kowalski notes, "the constructed image of the past does not only unite groups but can lead as well to the fight for recognition of [one's] own interpretations of the past . . . and raises questions upon what, why, where and by whom it should be remembered" (2020, 42). He further emphasises that the politics of memory of the state should be separated from other types of memory politics, due to the asymmetry of power. The state often becomes the dominant actor in shaping the politics of memory, having both the resources for and the leverage over public commemoration rituals, constitution of

museums, memorials, and spaces for remembrance. On the other hand, as Rufer (2012) underlines, there are other social actors who "strive for the recognition and visibility of collective processes of underground remembrance, rarely perceived in the organic agenda of the state or the academy" (Rufer 2012; referenced by Kowalski 2020, 42).

Réka Deim (2022) has studied memory activism in Hungary, focusing on the conflicting dynamics of uni- and multidirectional memories. She argues that while Hungarian state institutions propagate a unidirectional memory narrative, other, multidirectional memory discourses are being formed by artists, activists, and civilians outside of the boundaries of the hegemonic state discourse. This chapter aims to contrast the state's (top-down) commemoration of World War II and the Holocaust with the grassroots (bottom-up) commemorative practices (particularly the installation of memorials). Such unofficial commemorative (counter)practices will be studied using the example of counter-monuments, namely the *Living Memorial* installation in Budapest.

The concept of counter-monument has been used inconsistently through academic literature, often interchangeably with terms such as "anti-monument, non-monument, negative-form, deconstructive, non-traditional, and counter-hegemonic monument" (Stevens et al. 2012, 952). Quentin Stevens, Karen A. Franck, and Ruth Fazakerley (2012) developed a typology based on which counter-monuments may be analyzed vis-á-vis traditional monuments. They argue that in recent decades, counter-monuments have emerged as a new, critical mode of commemorative practice, which—although defined in juxtaposition to traditional monumentality—have developed their own conventions (Stevens et al. 2012). Counter-monuments are most often constructed (and studied) in relation to war memorials, Holocaust memorials, or memorials referring to colonialist or totalitarian heritage (see e.g. Young 1992). Counter-commemorative practices have, therefore, been also conceptualized in conflict studies (Deim 2022). Stevens et al. define the main objective of counter-monuments quoting Young: "counter-monuments are those which reject and renegotiate 'the traditional forms and reasons for public memorial art', such as prominence and durability, figurative representation and the glorification of past deeds" (Young 1992, 272; quoted in Stevens et al. 2012, 952). They adopt the terms *anti-monumental* and *dialogic* to describe two distinct ways in which artists and scholars can identify a monument as "counter:"

> A monument may be contrary to conventional subjects and techniques of monumentality, adopting anti-monumental design approaches to express subjects and meanings not represented in traditional monuments. Or it may be a dialogic monument that critiques the purpose and the design of a specific, existing monument, in an explicit, contrary and proximate pairing. (Stevens et al. 2012, 952)

Based on their typology, counter-monuments differ from traditional commemorative works as modes of commemorative practice in at least one of the following five respects*: subject, form, site, visitor experience,* and *meaning* (Stevens et al. 2012, 955). This chapter follows these categories of analysis applied to the Hungarian case study.

3. The Paradigm Change in the Holocaust Memorialization in Hungary

The Hungarian government declared 2014 the Year of Holocaust Remembrance—a decision that was followed by several commemorative events, among others, the highly debated erection of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944*. Andrea Pető (2019; 2021b) advances a thesis of a paradigm change in recent years in the Holocaust memorialization practices in Hungary. Among other

factors, she names the following features of the new memory narrative, endorsed by the Fidesz government, and reflected in contemporary Hungarian memory politics related to World War II and the Holocaust:

1) ***Nationalization of the transnational Holocaust narrative.*** Pető argues that instead of the "multiple levels and the local, regional, national and transnational memories," the memory narrative on the Holocaust in Hungary (but also in other countries in Europe, such as Poland) shifted to a "nation-focused historiography," and to the "construction of national-only remembrance [that] supports illiberal nation-building and silences the voices that "do not fit" (2019, 2).
2) ***The de-Judaization of the Holocaust narrative.*** An emphasis on the new national paradigm and related commemorative processes "make Jewish victims invisible, because their experiences are presented as marginal, while the suffering of the nation as such is being stressed" (2019, 2–3).
3) ***Competing victimhood.*** Canonization of the narrative of "double occupation," which relegates all responsibility to the occupying German and Soviet forces (2019, 3; for the complete analysis, see Pető 2019).

This paradigm change was epitomized through the erection of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* on the Liberty Square, in the very center of Budapest. The monument was created to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Hungary's German occupation, which began on 19 March 1944. It soon proved to be one of the most controversial contemporary memorials in Hungary, sparking heated political, professional, and public debates long before its unveiling. The Hungarian government commissioned the piece in secret, without opening a competition, or consulting the city of Budapest or Jewish organizations (Horváth 2015). The plans for the monument were revealed by an opposition politician: a statue of an angel, stormed upon by a large eagle. The message of the memorial was clear: Hungary, represented by the Angel, was attacked by the Eagle representing imperial Germany. The revealed design immediately sparked harsh reactions.

On the one hand, artists and art historians criticized its artistic merits, stating that the statue is overly simplistic, lacking fantasy, and using cliché imagery, not fit for the commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust and World War II (Horváth 2015). Bigger concerns, however, pertained to its symbolism and the suggested interpretation: Hungary as an innocent Angel falling prey to oppressive Germany, with no reference made to the role and responsibility of the Hungarian state and the Hungarian perpetrators in the events of World War II, which witnessed the deportation of more than 430 000 Jews from Hungary within a few months in 1944. The Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (*Magyarországi Zsidó Hitközségek Szövetsége*, MAZSIHISZ) sent a letter to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, sharing their concerns about the message conveyed by the monument and asking for the reconsideration of the plans (Horváth 2015). The main problem pointed out by the Federation was the erasure of Hungary's accountability from the monument's symbolism and design.

Historians issued a statement in protest against the planned memorial, claiming that "the monument is based on a falsification of history, it cannot serve its [alleged] function. By presenting the victims of the Holocaust and the collaborators as a single victim, it insults the memory of the victims" (Statement of Historians; quoted in Horváth 2015, 3). The statement was also signed by historians and academics who were previously supportive of the government (Horváth 2015). Amid the 2014 election campaign (which coincided with the planned erection of the monument), Prime Minister Orbán suggested a dialogue on the plans, and many understood that the erection of the statue was to be postponed and reconsidered (Horváth 2015). However, the installation of the monument began right after the election, which the incumbent Fidesz had won confidently.

The process of the erection of the monument was no less controversial than its planning. It commenced in the middle of the night in spring 2014, on a fenced-off construction site. Protesters appeared within the next days, trying to stop the action by blocking the site. They brought personal items and family memorabilia related to World War II and the Holocaust, and placed them by the construction, aiming to create a counter-narrative. As the protests intensified (and people tried to vandalize the monument in progress), police officers were commissioned to protect the construction site by forming a human wall around it (Horváth 2015).

Personal items brought by the protestors were removed, the construction proceeded, and in a few months, the statue was completed. However, the monument never saw the large public unveiling it had been meant to have. Instead, it was unveiled in June 2014, hastily, half-in-secret, amid a group of protestors trying to throw eggs at it. The Memorial also evoked a negative response from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

According to Pető (2021a) the narrative represented by the monument falls under Holocaust distortion. She quotes Paul Salmons:

> Holocaust distortion does not deny that the Nazis and their collaborators sought to murder the Jews of Europe but, still, it significantly misrepresents the historical record. For example, the number of victims might be grossly under-estimated; the numbers of helpers and rescuers inflated; difficult parts of a country's own national history might be overlooked or omitted (for example, holding only Hitler and the leading Nazis responsible, downplaying the role of collaborators and the widespread complicity of many ordinary people in the genocide). (Bright and Salmons 2021 quoted in Pető 2021a, 246)

Image 1 – The Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of Hungary, Liberty Square, Budapest, 22 July 2014 (Source: Wikipedia Images, Photo by Szilas, Free Copyright)

4. The *Living Memorial* Counter-Monument

As soon as the installation works of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* started in the spring of 2014, a spontaneous counter-monument was formed, named the *Living Memorial – My History*. Initially, an *ad hoc* community action, later on coordinated by civic associations (such as the *Tolerancia csoport* and the *Humán Platform*), the counter-monument aims to create a counter-narrative to the official Holocaust memorialization.

By bringing in the subjective experiences of the victims and their relatives through exhibiting their personal items, the *Living Memorial* offers a space for reflection, in contrast to the faceless and generalizing official monument. The counter-memorial remained in place also after the contested monument of Nazi occupation had been opened to the public. In fact, it is in place even today, over eight years after its installation. The following section analyses the semiotics of the *Living Memorial* counter-monument vis-á-vis the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944*, based on the analytical framework developed by Stevens, Franck, and Fazakerley: subject, form, site, visitor experience, and meaning (Stevens et al. 2012, 955).

4. 1. Subject

According to Stevens et al., the defining characteristic that makes an installation a *counter*-monument is that it "is intentionally juxtaposed to another, pre-existing monument located nearby and that [it] critically questions the values the preexisting monument expresses" (Stevens et al. 2012, 962). Based on their typology, the *Living Memorial* can be characterized as both *anti-monumental* (breaking with the forms and traditions of conventional monuments) and *dialogic* (a dialogic coupling constructs new meanings through the interaction of a monument and its counterpart that transcends the message of the individually considered memorials) (Stevens et al. 2012, 962). Regarding their subject, Stevens et al. point out that traditional monuments are typically affirmative: glorifying an event or a person, or celebrating an ideology, and "whereas traditional monuments recognize famous figures or the heroism of unknown soldiers, a growing number of anti-monumental works recognize the suffering victims of conflict or persecution and admonish the perpetrators" (2012, 951).

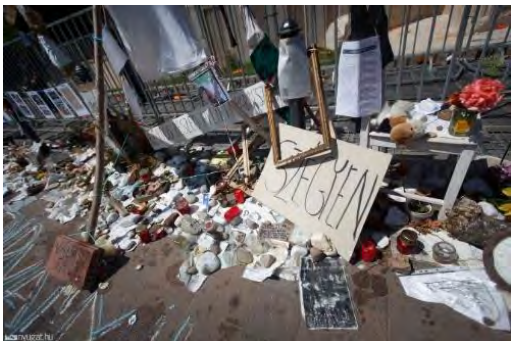

Image 2 – Extract from the Living Memorial, Liberty Square, Budapest, 20 July 2014 (Source: Nyugat.hu, Photo by András Unger, Copyright reserved by Nyugat Média and Világháló Egyesület)

This sentiment can be observed in the case of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* and the *Living Memorial.* The former monument depicts national suffering, that is generalised and homogenised (suffering of the nation as a whole) in the face of external threat. However, the symbolism of the Angel also evokes connotations of innocence and pureness, while its posture refers to strength and calm persistence in the face of danger.

On the other hand, the randomly placed personal objects of the *Living Memorial* bring in a plurality of highly subjective narratives and provide no clear directives for their interpretation, neither in their content nor form. The concept of a collective-national heroic victimhood suggested by the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* is hardly the first connotation when visitors look at the *Living Memorial.*

4. 2. Form

According to Stevens et al. (2012), perhaps the most notable and most common feature of anti-monumentality is its opposition to conventional monumental form and the employment of alternative, contrasting design techniques, materials, and duration.

They may include fundamental inversions such as voids instead of solids, absence instead of presence (Stevens et al. 2012), which can be observed here in the example of empty picture frames placed at the monument. The solid and monumental form of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation* is harshly contrasted with the fragile, non-permanent objects of the *Living Memorial,* which often operates with non-durable materials, such as paper (photographs, letters, drawings), rolls of film, and flowers.

Horváth describes the symbolism of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* accordingly:

> Two cultures are portrayed: one, which regards itself as stronger (and is definitely more aggressive), towers high (it does this with the architectural context, a tympanum), then lands on and strikes a blow to the other, meeker, more delicate figure, the figure of the archangel Gabriel, who in the history of culture and religion is a man of God, God's strength, Divine strength, and who here represents and embodies Hungary. (2015, 3)

On the other hand, the *Living Memorial* resembles a shattered family album of personal pictures and letters, placed rather chaotically on the ground. The flash mob call asked for the following objects to be displayed:

> Bring with you a memorial stone, a memorial candle, a small cross, or a personal object that expresses our emotions, our personal involvement. . . Let us raise a heavy pile of these many personal signs that express the need of the members of our nation to take joint and self-critical account of our losses. (Humán Platform, Call for the flash mob, 2014)

The *Living Memorial* furthermore features stones (based on the Jewish cemetery tradition) and a pair of chairs facing each other, a frequent symbol in Holocaust memorialization (representing both the absence of the victims, and the need for dialogue). In the middle of the square, a large mirror is placed, blocking the view of the contested monument of the occupation, and calling for self-reflection, placing the visitor among the victims.

Image 3 – The Living Memorial, Liberty Square, Budapest, 22 July 2014. Source: Wikipedia Images, Photo by Szilas, Free Copyright

4. 3. Site

Stevens et al. argue that while traditional monuments are "often prominent, highly visible, set apart from everyday space through natural topography, height, or enclosure. . . anti-monuments are to be encountered by chance during everyday travels through the city" (2012, 960). Indeed, the *Living Memorial* is often taking tourists by surprise, requiring a moment of pause and reflection. The *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation* is placed in Budapest's Liberty Square, a rather central location and daily crossing point for many locals and tourists alike. The monument is placed on an elevated fixture, which makes it visible from afar. The *Living Memorial*, constructed at the foot of the occupation monument, is not immediately obvious and must be observed from a close distance in order to uncover its many meanings.

4. 4. Visitor Experience

Connected to the point of *site,* distance plays a prominent role also in the visitor's experience. Stevens et al. note that "most traditional monuments engage primarily, if not exclusively, the sense of sight, and many are designed to be viewed from a distance. Anti-monumental strategies typically unsettle these conventions of reception by inviting close, bodily encounter by visitors" (2012, 960). While the figures of the *Monument of the Victims of the German Occupation of Hungary* are easily visible and understandable from afar, the personal pictures and letters of the victims can only be studied by leaning close or picking up the items. The essential feature of the *Living Memorial*, however, is the presence of people. Erőss (2018) underlines the importance of social acceptance of monuments in public spaces. Studying commemoration as a social practice, she contrasts the activities around the *Living Memorial* (such as discussions and open lectures, but also daily routines, such as placing new objects or watering the flowers) with the static "frozen monument" of the German occupation. Members of the civil associations,

activists, and survivors of the Holocaust and their family members organize discussions on a regular basis, that can be spontaneously joined by anyone. Downing and Carter (2021) call this practice a participatory, democratic culture of memory interpretation. This participatory practice makes the *Living Memorial* alive. Initially almost daily, now in less regular intervals (especially since the Covid-19 pandemic), civils protests have been organized for over eight years. They stand against what Pető (2021b) describes as a monument that, in its name, commemorates the victims of the German occupation but which, in fact, relativises and denies the Hungarian involvement in the Holocaust, thereby falsifying history.

4. 5. Meaning

In the study of monuments and commemorative practices, the analysis of the conveyed meanings is central to the scholarship. As Stevens et al. explain, "in the twentieth century monuments were often criticized for failing to remind, for failing to hold people's attention or for representing values that had become obsolete or objectionable" (2012, 951). Yet, as Toomey (2018) and others note, we can witness a significant resurgence of public commemorations in Hungary, primarily those intended to embed and reinforce desired political narratives (Toomey 2018; Feischmidt 2020; Pető 2021a). Horváth describes such tendencies, including the erection of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944*, as a "monumental vision of the past [rather] than an attempt to further an understanding of the past" (2015, 4). The *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation* "portrays the Hungarian people as a unified figure, an angel with no internal divisions, that has fallen victim to the German" (Horváth 2015, 8).

Anti-monumental approaches, such as the *Living Memorial*, however, do not offer unified interpretation; their inherent function is to disturb generalising and homogenising narratives. Andrea Pető describes the new paradigm of Holocaust memorialization in Hungary in relation to *continuity* versus *closure*. She quotes Tibor Navracsics, former Deputy Prime Minister, who in 2014 said that "after having processed. . . [and] having learned from the tragedy of the 20th century, we should move on to the 21st century" (Pető 2019, 3). Pető concludes that in the current Hungarian narrative, "memory is not a constant flux but something that should be closed down permanently" (ibid, 3). Such an approach creates a memory narrative that is "the diametric opposite of the memory continuity intrinsic to the 'Never Again' model, which was the foundation of the global Holocaust narrative, as well as of the European human rights paradigm," and results in a "dismissal of memories" and a "form of silencing" of the Holocaust survivors and the Jewish community (ibid, 3).

In June 2014, led by the internationally renowned conductor Ádám Fischer, a crowd estimated at one thousand people sang the European Union's anthem *Ode to Joy* at the contested monument, in protest against the nationalising and distorting narrative, and in support of the European values and commitments (Horváth 2015). Horváth underlines the significance of this act of protest in relation to other far-right Eurosceptic narratives, represented among others by Jobbik, a far-right and antisemitic party, which was rapidly gaining popularity in Hungary in the early 2010's (for further details, see Horváth 2015). Since its installment, the *Living Memorial* has been vandalised on several occasions by supposedly antisemitic perpetrators. The story of the two monuments and their afterlife received wide media attention and sparked both public and political discussions about the Hungarian memory narratives and commemorative practices. Deim (2022) concludes that the visual articulation of historical traumas and repressed (counter-)memories in the public space has helped to activate discourses that might have otherwise been neglected. "The clash between different versions of history also activated personal

recollections of the past alongside professional discussions, which underlines that memory is essentially a social practice" (Deim 2022, 72).

5. Conclusions

This chapter analyzed the semiotics of counter-monuments (as a form of counter-commemorative practice) in relation to contested memorials, using the example of the *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944* erected in 2014 in Budapest, Hungary, and its counter-monument, the *Living Memorial*. The objective of the study was to reflect on the tensions between the official (state) memory narrative and the unofficial (civic) forms of remembering difficult historical events, such as World War II or the Holocaust. The chapter illustrated how memory narratives and commemoration practices may become instrumentalized in right-wing populist discourses, in which the nation is seen as a central point of reference and a source of social cohesion and pride; therefore, any narratives that would bring ambiguity, shame, or guilt to the nation, are rejected or reframed.

The *Memorial of the Victims of the German Occupation of 1944,* erected amongst public protests, depicts the Hungarian nation as a collective victim of Nazi oppression, relativising the role and responsibility of the Hungarian state and perpetrators in the tragic events of the Holocaust. The *Living Memorial* counter-monument, installed by grassroots initiative, challenges this narrative by relocating the emphasis from the collective-national victim to the individual, and by sharing the very personal, diverse experiences of Holocaust victims. The message of this memorial is that no generalising interpretation is possible, and historical commemoration must include the element of critical self-reflection. Horváth quotes a Piarist friar, Jelenits, who commented on the erection of the monument: "in order to shape the historical consciousness of a nation, we need not statues, but well-written history books" (Jelenits, quoted in Horváth 2015, 5).

As history cannot be understood without a plurality of narratives, critical self-reflection, and taking responsibility when it is due, I would rephrase the statement: In order to shape the historical consciousness of a nation, we need not statues, but dialogues. In its dialogical function, the *Living Memorial,* as a counter-monument, forces visitors to reflect on the multiple meanings conveyed by the pair of monuments. Furthermore, it creates multidirectionality in the interpretations of one of the darkest times of Hungarian history by inviting the public to reconsider the official state narrative. As such, counter-monuments, like the *Living Memorial* in Budapest, contribute to the designing of the social sustainability of dissonant or contested heritage.

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
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7. Memorial Landscapes, Polemic Celebrations, and Protest Aesthetics: Visual Expressions of Dissonant Heritage

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Abstract

The chapter explores the examples of dissonant heritage produced by the overlap of arts, politics, and law. Using methods from different fields in the visual humanities, such as visual semiotics and memorial landscapes analysis, it focuses on images (photographs, signs, artifacts) read as messages. The chapter analyses the messages these images communicate and examines the cases of Stolpersteine in Spain, Aalst Carnival in Belgium, and symbols used in Belarusian protests after 2020.

Keywords

Dissonant heritage, Heritagization, Stolpersteine, Aalst Carnival, Aesthetics of protests

1. Introduction

This photo essay explores visual aspects of heritagisation and some controversies created by or associated with this process. Oftentimes, disagreements and debates over heritage involve legal language and are mediated by law. In this chapter, we discuss three examples of controversial, disagreeable heritage produced by the overlap of arts, politics, and law. We analyse these objects of study—memory stones, carnival processions, and protest symbols—not just as mere illustrations of the topic but rather as messages themselves.

The first case is *Stolpersteine* in Madrid. Recently relocated from Germany into a Spanish context, the Stolpersteine ("stumbling stones") are a form of public art that commemorates the victims of the Holocaust and Nazi crimes, including more than five hundred people from the city of Madrid who had been deported to concentration camps. Stolpersteine, as a decentralised memorial, aims to give visibility to a story that had been neglected by official policies for decades.

The second case focusses on the Aalst Carnival, which is an annual three-day event in the Belgian city of Aalst that embraces elements of humour and satire. Although this Carnival is an important element of the town's identity, it was removed from the UNESCO list of intangible cultural heritage in 2019. Messages communicated by some participants of the carnival parade were ambiguous—or perhaps misunderstood—and caused a lot of controversy. Some carnival groups had members who dressed up in SS-uniforms; others depicted Orthodox Jews in a way that could be construed as antisemitic. After numerous complaints, UNESCO removed the centuries-old festival from the list of intangible cultural heritage.

Thirdly, the chapter analyses the visual symbols used in Belarusian protests after 2020, focusing in particular on the white-red-white flag. The flag was created in 1917 to shortly serve as a state symbol for the newly announced Belarusian People's Republic in 1918 and several years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. During Soviet times for seven decades, the white-red-white flag was largely used by émigrés, dissidents and national revivalists therefore it was marginalised and associated with the so-called "old" Belarusian-speaking opposition. During the unprecedented mass protests of 2020, it made a remarkable comeback but became re-signified, acquiring new meanings. Instead of representing the "old opposition," today the white-red-white flag has come to convey new political messages and speaks for the Russian-speaking majority of Belarusians who struggle for free, democratic Belarus without Lukashenko.

In order to decode the messages communicated by the visuals in these three cases, we use the method of visual semiotics. In doing so, we follow Roland Bleiker (2018) and John Berger (2008) who note that visuals work differently from words and require their own analytical methods. The method of visual semiotics is applied where visuals are approached not as mere illustrations but as texts and messages, having their own meanings and connotations. Visual data from the three case studies offer notable examples of this approach. Stolpersteine serve as an everyday reminder of Holocaust; rich Aalst Carnival images use humour and satire to expose topical issues; the aesthetics of Belarusian protests communicates the need to reinterpret the past and change the present.

Guy Debord's (1994) concept of society as a spectacle resonates with our topic. Debord argues that social relations have become largely mediated through images and lost their authenticity. In his view, images substitute life, and authentic relations degrade from "being" into "appearing." In the cases analysed in this chapter, however, visuals have different functions; they are verbs, actions. All over Belarus, protest symbols express political statements in situations where people are silenced. In Aalst

(Belgium), carnival performances address uncomfortable social topics in nontrivial ways. In Madrid (Spain), images of stones remind passers-by of tragic historic events. Images are used not to "seem" or "appear" but to manifest, signal, provoke, challenge, remember, commemorate, educate.

The selected case studies demonstrate that memory and heritage-making is a dialogue, a discussion, sometimes even a heated debate. We employ the term *heritagisation* to stress the socially constructed and culturally mediated nature of heritage. We understand heritage as a process rather than a thing, as something that is produced rather than discovered.

Heritagisation can be defined as "processes of heritage-making, occurring when spaces, individuals, objects and so on are re-constructed, re-interpreted or, in general terms, affected . . . in order to fabricate heritage values" (Lois and Cairo 2015, 323). This approach allows us to trace some of the political uses of heritage (Van Geert and Roigé 2017) in each case study: heritage as a source of activism, memory politics, and conflicts over the interpretation of the past; heritage as public policy and the certifying agency of professionals, connoisseurship, institutions, and the role of the law; finally, heritage as counterhegemonic strategies when negotiating and contesting what a national heritage is, and what objects should represent it.

The chosen cases reveal the research potential of "dissonant heritage," the concept developed by Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996). According to these researchers, a certain degree of dissonance is implicit in the nature of heritage itself. This dissonance, however, becomes intensified during conflicts. Dominant histories can be contested by marginalised or underrepresented voices and visuals. "Authorized heritage discourse" (AHD) (Smith 2006) can be critically approached and contested by memory activists.

Heritagisation as a process is taking place in dialogue between different haeres. To use Victor Turner's terms (1969; 2018), we can say that some heritage users represent the "structure," that is, the social structure with its institutions and actors, its hierarchy, order, and authority. This is dominant culture with its practices of memorialisation. However, other haeres have separated from the familiar context and transited into liminal state. They joined the "communitas" of people who had withdrawn from normalised modes of social action. Communitas function in a transition, in a liminal period, thus forming what Turner calls anti-structure.

Turner points to different modalities of the social, claiming that social is not identical with the social-structural, but that there are other modalities of social relationship – for example, communitas (1969, 131). Communitas are relations beyond structure, which liberate its participants from conformity to general norms. Thus, Belarusian protestors, participants of the Aalst Carnival, or volunteers giving tours of Jewish memory places in Madrid could be called "threshold people" (Turner 1969, 95), functioning in liminal space.

2. *Stolpersteine* in Spain

The *Stolpersteine* (literally "stumbling stones," but commonly translated as "remembrance stones") project originated in Germany in 1990, created by artist Gunter Demnig. Its goal was to remember the individuals killed, deported, or persecuted under the National Socialist dictatorship and occupation regimes by placing stones covered in brass plate at the last location of their voluntary residence or work. Each stone bears the name of a victim preceded by the statement "here lived/worked/taught" and followed by their fate, whether it was emigration, torture, deportation, or murder. As a representative of the German antimonumentalist movement, Stolpersteine served as a critical intervention to remind German society of its legacy of mass atrocities, and, thus, worked as a part of the

Vergangenheitsbewältigung, the process of overcoming or dealing with the past through assessing the Holocaust and National Socialist crimes in contemporary Germany. Over time, *Stolpersteine* have become widely acclaimed and institutionally supported, and have expanded into more than twenty countries in Europe and Latin America.

A group of individuals only recently commemorated with *Stolpersteine* is that of Spaniards deported to Nazi concentration camps. Around ten thousand Spanish Republicans (Hernández 2015, 48) had been taken to such destinations. Their journey started with the end of the Spanish Civil War. After their defeat against the rebel troops of General Francisco Franco, hundreds of thousands of people who sympathised with the Republican side, or who did not entirely agree with the ideas of the newly established military dictatorship in Spain, were forced to flee the country.

Once in exile, thousands enrolled in the French army and later, in the French resistance, and fought against Nazi Germany. With the Franco-German armistice, the Spaniards held captive by the German army as POWs were considered dangerous to the Reich (*Rotspanier* or Red Spaniards) and consequently sent off to different concentration camps, primarily to Mauthausen and its sub-camp Gusen.

This operation was conducted in consultation with the Spanish authorities and with the personal approval of Franco. About five hundred men and women born within the current boundaries of Madrid were deported to the camps. At least two hundred of them met their death in those destinations. In 2019 twelve *Stolpersteine* were placed in six different districts of Spain's capital in order to commemorate their legacy. Nowadays, the number of stones amounts to more than thirty and is expected to exponentially grow in the next years.

Carried out by a coalition of grassroots memory activists and victims' relatives, the Spanish adaptation of this European-wide initiative has been intimately connected to the Spanish milieu of historical memory (*memoria histórica*) – a notion referring to the process of coming to terms with the past of mass violence and persecution during the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist dictatorship. In this section, we focus on the Stolpersteine of Madrid as a spatial textual resource (Dwyer and Alderman 2008, 166) in the struggle to denounce and remedy what is considered an oblivion of the past of state-sponsored repression and murder. That heritage and memory are deeply spatial phenomena is a well-established argument within the literature of memory and heritage studies (Alderman 1996, 59; Graham et al. 2000, 4; Till 2003, 291; Foote and Azaryahu 2007, 127; García 2009, 183).

Some theoretical interventions in the field of critical heritage studies have offered insight into the interrelations between heritage and the concept of scale taken from geography (Harvey 2015; Lois and Cairo 2015; Limón and González 2017; Lois 2019). Within this theoretical framework, heritage has been conceptualised as a fundamental means of scalar politics (Lois 2019, 81). For the purposes of this study, that means that geographical scales, upon which heritage storytelling can be displayed, are never a neutral perspective.

They are a socially constructed reality emanating from a specific context of power relations, of conflicts over distribution of recognition, or of processes of identity (re)shaping. Studying the heritage politics of Madrid's Stolpersteine, we argue that these remembrance stones serve as a difficult and dissonant heritage by means of a scaled narrative that produces a heritagisation of Holocaust memory.

The storytelling performed by Madrid's *Stolpersteine* works in three scales of narration that refer to the victims and the itineraries of deportation, to Spanish public institutions and society at large, and to the relatives and pedestrians in their commemorative rituals and everyday transit. They are, respectively, the global, national, and local scales across which the *Stolpersteine* effect their memory-work.

Image 1 – *Stolpersteine* dedicated to Andrés Astorga Sánchez, murdered in Neuengamme-Wattenstedt (Photo credit: Olmo Masa)

On a global and continental scale, the *Stolpersteine* in Madrid are a form of heritagisation of Holocaust memory. The memory of the Holocaust is thus affected as a form of collective and cultural memory as it is incorporated into Madrid's urban space by means of a decentralised memorial. The *Stolpersteine* dedicated to deportees from Madrid interestingly contain in their inscriptions two lines that are not usually found in other stones placed outside Spain.

Those lines refer to the time or date the person was forced to flee from Spain to France, as well as to the time that person was transported to a Stalag (a prisoners of war camp) after the French surrender to Nazi Germany (Image 1). This specific wording speaks to the intention of framing these victims within a transnational narrative that situates Spanish history within the larger European context.

The coming end of the Spanish Civil War and the fear of the repression that the Francoist armies were inflicting upon surrendering opponents have been deemed worthy of preserving in the stones for they pinpoint the nexus between a national internal conflict and an international conflagration. Thus, the Stolpersteine memorial in Madrid presents a particular story of the Holocaust that interrelates the spheres of European and Spanish history.

The *Stolpersteine* display a semantic politics that identifies the term Holocaust with the broader scope of crimes committed in Nazi-occupied Europe, and thus subsequently insert the experience of deported

Spanish Republicans into the category of the Holocaust in its popular understanding.[1] The *Stolpersteine* also confirm Madrid as a member city of a European-wide, now even bi-continental, memorial heritage project. The legitimacy this status confers upon the places of installation does not go unnoticed by its promoters in Madrid, who accordingly galvanise that cultural capital in order to foster their heritage politics.

Those politics are strongly imbricated within the national context of Spanish historical memory conflicts and of struggles to bring to the fore exiled and deported memories. The *Stolpersteine* are a widely acclaimed and institutionally supported (particularly in Germany but not only) medium of memory that is translated into a Spanish national political context where efforts to build processes of shared remembrance and canons of collective memory face staunch resistance. The legitimacy of the *Stolpersteine* is thus projected with a particular light towards the scale of Spain as a country and a state during and after the years of deportation.

The particularity of that light is the collective and political significance the stones acquire in the Spanish memory context as opposite to the more individual or pacified tone they display in other settings. Promoters of the initiative and relatives of the victims in Madrid agree that one main issue is to clarify and publicly announce the role played by the Spanish State in the deportation of thousands of Spanish citizens. This purpose is to be accomplished not only through the above-mentioned lines about exile engraved in the stones but also through the organization of walking tours and the installation ceremonies, which often include Spanish Republican flags and other symbols of the movement for the recovery of historical memory.

The local milieu of installation of the stones in Madrid produces a narrative at the personal level that has effects unlike those experienced in other countries. Germany's and Europe's *Stolpersteine* are also placed in the midst of memorial cultures and memory conflicts, and, like in Madrid, they are oftentimes used by the descendants of victims as a symbolic burial place. However, while in most of Europe *Stolpersteine* are primarily used to commemorate Jewish persons who, generally speaking, did not leave living relatives in their locations of residence, in Madrid, Spanish Republican deportees have strong connections with the present in terms of living offspring.

Furthermore, many of their descendants still own and even inhabit the places that were used as personal addresses by the victims of Nazi deportation. If, for the descendants of a Jewish victim, the journey to a European city to install a remembrance stone is typically experienced as a pilgrimage, the descendants of Spanish deportees pass their relatives' stones on daily basis while going back home from work, taking a walk, or meeting friends at a bar in their neighbourhood.

That intimacy on a local scale clashes with the aforementioned context of the perceived lack of recognition and reparation for the victims and their families. Consequently, the latter employ the Stolpersteine as a way of reminding the state of its obligations, framing their deceased relative's stone both under a local and personal scale of family mourning and victim individualisation, and under a national scale of recognition politics and restorative justice.

The experience of the *Stolpersteine* in the city of Madrid attests to the relevance of heritage politics in the shaping of collective memories and the role of symbolic-memorial and material-urban space thereto. Holocaust heritagisation serves in this context as a strategic use of a hegemonic heritage discourse in order to foster the political legitimacy and cultural status of a subaltern collective memory.

[1] This is not to say that Nazi crimes, a wide array of measures taken against all sorts of victim groups, can in historical terms be equated to the Holocaust – a state-designed program specifically targeting Jews for total extermination; it is only to acknowledge the subsumption of the former category into the latter term in collective memory and popular culture.

Paradoxically, a hegemonic heritage framework such as the *Stolpersteine* is used in a counter-hegemonic way that stresses dissonance and difficulty by means of unveiling historical and present connections between the State of Spain, the fate of Spanish deportees, and the larger picture of the Holocaust and crimes committed under National Socialism.

Finally, the remembrance stones in Madrid act as a political resource in a wider arena of conflicts over the narration and interpretation of the recent past. Thus, they reveal that, when discussing heritage, the issue might not be material objects or cultural practices themselves but heritagisation processes as expressions of political struggles in other realms of society.

3. A Street Carnival that Has Never Shied Away from Controversy

Another example of dissonant heritage in which certain messages are communicated is the Carnival of Aalst in Belgium. It is a unique three-day street festival based on a six-hundred-year-old tradition. It is the culmination of a year of preparation by the inhabitants of Aalst, a city in East Flanders in northern Belgium. Carefully prepared floats of official entrants parade through the streets and, in addition, informal groups join the festivities to offer mocking interpretations of local and world events of the past year (Nomination File No. 00402, November 2010).

The first mentions of Aalst Carnival date back to the fifteenth century and refer to public masquerades. These masquerades evolved into a popular festival where politics, culture, and religion are ridiculed with a wink. Drawing up to one hundred thousand spectators, the Carnival is a collective effort of all social classes and a symbol of the town's identity in the region. It forms an integral part of the city's intangible cultural heritage, which is characterised by mockery and satire with a slightly anarchic undertone (Nomination File No. 00402, November 2010).

As the historical, technical and practical knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation, and constantly recreated by communities and groups, Aalst Carnival clearly falls within the ambit of intangible cultural heritage and was recognised as such by Flanders in 2008. In 2010, after Belgian nomination, the Carnival was inscribed on the representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind of UNESCO (Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 5.COM 6.3, November 2010).

However, the secretariat of UNESCO received more than twenty complaints since its inscription. In 2013, for example, a complaint was filed about a float that resembled a Nazi railway carriage, with participants wearing Nazi officers' costumes and carrying Zyklon B canisters (poison gas). The carnivalists wanted to mock the right-wing government in their city and made all kinds of allusions to the Nazis in WWII. Through a communiqué, released afterward, UNESCO's then Director-General firmly emphasised that one cannot justify the use of antisemitic stereotypes by appealing to the spirit of the Aalst Carnival, which is characterised by freedom and satire. In 2019, international commotion was caused by a float, which included figures that portrayed Jews in a caricatural way.

These figures wore fur hats and pink suits, had grotesquely large noses and sat on gold coins and bags of money. Music was played in the background with rhyming words referring to Jewish stereotypes such as *kluis* (deposit box), *roze muis* (pink mouse) and *Joodse muis* (Jewish mouse). With this, the carnivalists wanted to emphasise their intention to "save money" during what they considered "a sabbatical year."

However, this carnival float proved to be the proverbial red line for UNESCO. On 6 March 2019, UNESCO published a communiqué in which they condemned some performances at the Carnival and described them as racist and anti-Semitic. Unia, the equal opportunities centre in Belgium, received

thirty-five reports about the Carnival in March 2019, mainly about the float which portrayed Jews in a caricatural way.

Therefore, the institute issued a report on the matter, pointing out the antisemitic stereotypes employed by the carnival group (Report Unia, 2023 October 2019). Nevertheless, the centre indicated that under Belgian law, such stereotypes are only punishable if they have the malicious intent to incite discrimination, segregation, hatred, or violence. According to Unia, this was not the case in the case of the controversial float:

> Seeing clichés and stereotypes outside their context causes misunderstanding. They can also hurt people. Carnival as in Aalst is all about biting mockery, self-mockery, satire as ways of social criticism. Stereotypes, clichés, exaggerations and generalisations are not avoided. On the other hand, stereotypes and generalisations are hurtful. (Report Unia, 23 October 2019) [Author translation]

On 8 November 2019, the Secretariat of UNESCO declared its intention to remove the Carnival of Aalst from the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage and put the removal on the agenda of the Committee meeting in Bogota. Faced with the commotion and many international reactions, the Mayor of Aalst himself decided on the removal. Consequently, at the Committee meeting of 13 December 2019, Belgium requested that Aalst Carnival be removed from the list, whereupon all the Member States unanimously agreed. The Committee stated that the repetition of racist and antisemitic representations was incompatible with the fundamental principles of UNESCO (Decision of the Intergovernmental Committee 14.COM 12, December 2019). The organisation was founded in 1945 in response to a World War marked by racist and antisemitic violence. According to the Preamble in the Constitution of UNESCO, the organisation's founding vision is marked by the realization that

> "suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world . . . have all too often broken into war" and that the causes of the war were rooted in the "denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect" and in the "propagation, in their place, through ignorance and prejudice, of the doctrine of inequality of men and races." (UNESCO Constitution, 1945)

The Committee indicates that some representations at Aalst Carnival clearly contradict these core values. As a consequence, the continued inclusion of such an event on the list could affect the credibility of the organisation as a whole. Moreover, according to the Committee, Aalst Carnival does not correspond to the definition of intangible cultural heritage as laid down in Article 2 of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage of 2003. The Article states that "only those aspects of intangible cultural heritage that are compatible with existing international human rights instruments and with the requirements of mutual respect between communities, groups and individuals shall be taken into account." According to the Committee, some of the messages, images and performances shown during Aalst Carnival encourage stereotypes within and outside the community and mock certain groups. Such expressions are offensive to the memory of painful historical experiences, including genocide, slavery and racial segregation. On that account, they contradict "the requirements of mutual respect between communities, groups and individuals," and therefore, they are not intangible heritage under Article 2. Nevertheless, the carnivalists of Aalst carried on with their activities, and the removal itself was subjected to mockery, as illustrated by the pictures underneath (Images 2-3).

Image 2 – Aalst Carnival in Belgium, February 2020 (Photo credit: Jorijn Neyrinck)

Image 3 - Aalst Carnival in Belgium, February 2020 (Photo credit: Jorijn Neyrinck)

4. Re-Coding of Dissonant Heritage: Symbols in Belarusian Protests of 2020

Belarus had rarely been the centre of Europe's attention until the presidential election of 2020 and the massive protests that followed. People expressed their discontent using colours, visuals, images and lights. They demonstrated their political views with white bracelets, which symbolised the nation's demand for fair election, and with white sheets of paper placed in their windows – a sign of solidarity among neighbours. During marches, particularly women's rallies, participants wore white clothes that symbolised peace. At a certain announced time of the day, people lit candles in the windows of their homes to remember those citizens who died or were killed during protests.

The most visible symbol of Belarusian protests in 2020 was the white-red-white flag. Designed in 1917, it served as the state flag of the Belarusian People's Republic in 1918. During the Soviet times that followed, the white-red-white flag was largely used by émigré, dissidents, and national revivalists. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the white-red-white flag was again approved as the state flag and, Pogonia ("Chase," depicting a horseback warrior) became a state emblem. It lasted for four years until, in 1994, Lukashenko was elected the President (he has been in power ever since).

As Aliaksei Kazharski reminds us, "in 1995, as part of a neo-Soviet revanche, Lukashenka replaced these historical state symbols with slightly altered Soviet ones (the red-green flag and the round coat of arms cleared of Communist symbols)" (2021, 71). Suppressed and marginalised for many years, the historical symbols—white-red-white flag and Pogonia—made a tremendous comeback during the protests of 2020.

Image 4 – People leave protest posters at the monument to Lenin in one of the central squares. Minsk at night. August 2020 (Photo credit: Ksenia Medvedeva)

In 2020, protestors performed collective, coordinated and systematic terror-art acts. They decorated yards with white and red ribbons, arranged goods in shops (clothes, boxes, etc.) according to the white-red-white pattern, wore white and red clothes, and even coordinated balcony lights to represent the white-red-white flag. They hung white-red-white clothes and towels to dry on the balcony, thus making it a political statement.

For doing so, hundreds of people received fines and were detained. This was a case with seventy-five-year-old Iraida Misko, whose photo with a white-red-white marshmallow appeared as evidence in court. According to the news report, the police captain explained at the trial: "Yes, this is how she expresses her protest. With a marshmallow" (Current time TV 2020). Misko's computer was seized, and she was fined 540 Belarusian rubles (approximately €180).

White-red-white flags met heavy resistance from the authorities: white-red-white paintings and stickers were removed, covered, coloured. Kazharski writes that "[m]embers of the communal services were systematically ordered to destroy white-red-white art or add the green colour to it to 'neutralize' its political message, while protestors would try to bring it back the next night" (2021, 75). The authorities increased the use of red-green decorations for streets, official buildings and state celebrations. Such

decorations are popularly known as "agrotrash," initially associated with the popularisation of agrotourism in the framework of the countryside revival program, and later – with the Belarusian official kitsch aesthetics. The usage of the white-red-white flag evoked heated public discussions and sparked off fierce controversy. In his article published in May 2021, Sergei Mudrov writes that

> . . . the protesters decided to choose symbols alien to many Belarusians – the white-red-white flag and "Pogonia" emblem, which have been associated with Belarusian nationalism and with Nazi collaborators during World War II. Indeed, a survey conducted at the end of September on the Internet (thus not reaching a more pro-Lukashenko audience, where the use of the Internet might not be that frequent), revealed that the white-red-white flag is "dearest" only to 38.2% of respondents, while 42.2% opted in favor of the official green-red flag. (Mudrov 2021, 5)

Mudrov rightly observes that in the summer of 2020 the white-red-white flag was indeed alien to many of the protest neophytes who did not remember or did not participate in earlier protests of 2010. Apart from that, state media started a huge campaign to denigrate the white-red-white flag calling it "fascist" (with reference to its inconvenient past) and identifying people who used it as "collaborators and traitors."

This situation changed drastically after August 2020 when white bracelets were replaced with white-red-white ones, and the white-red-white flag became the key visual image of the opposition. Today it is a dominant visual at demonstrations abroad, where thousands of Belarusians were forced to move and where they can express themselves freely, unlike in their country. Today, the meanings and emotions evoked by the flag evolve, change and strengthen, as do people's attitudes towards it. Mischa Gabowitsch notes that from a symbol of political opposition, the flag has become "an object of (collective) familiar attachment – a common-place, in the terminology of pragmatic sociology" (2021, 4-5). Today, this flag is used by the new political majority to identify themselves and serves as a clear signal to current authorities.

During the events of 2020, the white-red-white flag acquired new meanings. In previous years, it used to be "associated with national revivalism, the Belarusian Popular Front and its ethnocultural agenda, complemented by strong anti-colonial, anti-imperialist and anti-Moscow tendencies" (CurrenttimeTV 2020). Since 2020, it has become the flag of the Russian-speaking protesting majority, a symbol of discontent and dissatisfaction for thousands of people who chose it instead of the current state flag. Under the white-red-white flags, people demanded Lukashenko's resignation, release of political prisoners, and new fair elections.

As Nelly Bekus sums it up, "[b]ecoming a major symbol of the Belarusian protests in 2020, the white-red-white flag, however, did not signify the ideological victory of the old opposition. Instead, it has been reinvented as an emblem of struggle for Belarus without Lukashenka" (2021, 9). The white-red-white flag's meaning was re-coded after 2020. As Belarusian sociologist Korshunov says about the current state red-green and the alternative white-red-white flags, "[i]f previously the red-green flag was perceived by the majority neutrally, now it is becoming a symbol of violence, a flag of prison trucks." The white-red-white flag, he argues, is turning into a national one: "This flag was a sign of national revival, that is how it is now perceived" (Moroz 2021). The two flags represent people of different political views who mark themselves with different visuals.

5. Conclusions

This research contributes to the existing scholarship on dissonant heritage and visual studies. It analyses how visual arts and visual elements of historical and cultural heritage communicate social and political messages, interact with their urban surroundings, and help to conform a sense of place, re-vision the past, and envision the future.

Laurajane Smith (2012) described the authorised heritage discourse as one that "defines heritage as aesthetically pleasing material objects, sites, places and/or landscapes that are non-renewable. Their fragility requires that current generations must care for, protect, and venerate these things so that they may be inherited by the future". Smith demonstrates that power relations lie at the base of heritage discourse and the interpretation of the past, and the examples analysed here have approached different manifestations of that power. In any society, dominant groups (Turner's "structure") use their own view of the past, thus creating an authorised heritage discourse, which is the expression of hegemonic power. The excluded or liminal communities also create their own discourse in opposition to the dominant one.

This competition and confrontation between the dominant and the antagonist discourses over defining and interpreting historic past challenge the common understanding of heritage as illustrated by the three selected cases. According to Tunbridge and Ashworth (1996), the idea of dissonance has an implicit analogy with musical harmony which implies the possibility of a move towards consonance or some form of optimum balance. Have the discussed cases of Spanish, Belgian, and Belarusian dissonant heritage found such balance? Rather, it is an ongoing process. The debate over the past does not allow one group to monopolise the definition of heritage and historical memory, thus keeping the heritagisation process vigorous and dynamic. The dynamics of heritagisation process has been explained by Victor Turner, who claimed that social life and each individual's life involves successive experience of communitas and structure (1969, 97).

In this process, individuals and social groups go through the rite of passage in three steps: separation from structure, transition (liminal period), and reintegration with structure or developing their structure. The discussed cases are communitas in the transition period: they represent both anti-structure and *counter*-structure as the opposite of the structure. Whether Belarusian protestors, Aalst Carnival participants, and Spanish volunteers reach the final stage of symbolic rebirth and reincorporation into society as shaped by law and moral code remains to be seen. This study is the beginning of further research on the topic.

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Part C

Arts and dissonance:
how arts can help overcoming dissonance

Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
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8. Object and Memory: The Metamorphosis of Auratic Value in Liquid Modernity

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Abstract

"*RZECZOWE DOWODY ZBRODNI*, MATERIAL PROOFS OF CRIME" reads the entrance to Block 5 of the permanent exhibition of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. Inside there are countless items seized from the murdered Jews: shoes, clothing, spectacles, kitchen utensils, baskets, briefcases, and so on. Alongside these everyday items, there are also prostheses and even the victims' own shorn hair, which the visitors are not allowed to photograph. The guide stops in front of the display case, points to one of the briefcases, and tells the story of its owner and of their family. Each object evokes a life, if not several ones, becoming, in turn, a proof of the genocide. Installations incorporating personal belongings and even human remains of the victims are recurrent in exhibitions that relate to traumatic historical events, where the visual presentation strategies of the artist or curator are based on the auratic value of the images and of these objects to provoke affection and emotions. Immersed in the present era of digital hyper-reproducibility, where the work of art is disseminated and consumed in a mixed reality and where, therefore, as Walter Benjamin states, the auratic value of the work has been displaced to a mere exhibition value, this essay analyses the use of such objects "touched by war" and their relevance as the devices of activating and generating the contexts of reflection in which the social representations of those who witness them can become modified.

Keywords

Historical memory, Objects touched by war, Auratic value, Mixed reality, Art and Conflict

1. Introduction

We are currently at a moment in history where the demands of a dialectic and social art—one that seeks to respond to problems of various kinds, asks questions, and contests our reality—predominate. It is, therefore, that certain artists consider tackling a situation of such magnitude as the crude legacy derived from the repressive policies carried out during the war and the subsequent post-war period, with the aim of shaking society emotionally and dismantling the conspiracy of silence in which it is still immersed. These artistic practices can be fitted into that core to which curator Chus Martínez refers, which aspires to develop works and experiences from which it is possible to read the past with freedom (Martinez 2010).

Contrary to the silencing agents that try to keep a thick veil over certain issues, the role that art can play as an agent of memory is crucial. Artistic practices—in their various forms and since time immemorial—have addressed controversial issues and maintained a risky and provocative discourse on matters that are known to everyone but rarely raised in public (Winter 2010). The images derived from artistic practices are powerful and captivating; they transmit without the need for words and can reach a significant number of sectors in society, as proved by the work of Christian Boltanski, whose main focus is memory, and who transcends the artistic spheres to penetrate deeply into everyday society.

On the other hand, art has the capacity to create contexts of reflection where certain modifications of the social representations established by each individual can take place, allowing them to restructure, understand, assume and even transmit past events, turning the participant in the artistic work into another agent of memory.

2. Holocaust, Modernity, and Ethics

Among the different ways of approaching the Holocaust, there is one current that links the Holocaust with modernity. According to Imre Kertész (2002), we can define the Holocaust as the traumatic event par excellence of Western civilization, and not only as a private affair concerning only certain individuals, ethnicities, and religions. Jean-Francois Lyotard inscribes Auschwitz within the framework of the modern project since it highlights the failure of the latter modernity: "Auschwitz can be taken as a paradigmatic name for the tragic 'non-realization' of modernity" (1992, 30).

On the other hand, concentration and extinction, as structured in the concentration camp of Auschwitz, bear the unmistakable mark of modernity. As argued by Theodor Adorno, modern civilization not only failed to prevent the Holocaust but, in fact, contributed to its production. Consequently, it could even be affirmed that this event, rather than being a "radical break of modern civilization," represents an extreme case of it (Adorno 1971, 101). Similarly, Kertész points out that Auschwitz will be considered as "the beginning of a new era" (2002, 26), or, in Lyotard's words— "the crime that opens postmodernity" (Lyotard 1992, 31).

Likewise, Giorgio Agamben, following Primo Levi, describes Auschwitz as the failure of modern ethics, which he calls "the tragic conflict." Agamben advocates for the development of a new ethics as an essential requirement for society. He calls it "the ethics of testimony" which, as opposed to modern ethics, would be capable of assuming the unimaginable truth of Auschwitz—the truth that is "irreducible to the real elements that constitute it" and that "is, strictly speaking, the very aporia of historical knowledge: the non-coincidence between facts and truth, between verification and understanding" (Agamben 1999, 8–9).

Parallel to the rise of the concept of postmodernity in thought circles, whose etymological meaning denotes something that is subsequent to modernity, Zygmunt Bauman, nuancing the philosophical theories of his time, labels the period so far known as modern as "solid modernity," and the contemporary one as "liquid modernity," pointing out that "what was mistakenly called 'postmodernity' some time ago, and what I have chosen to call, more accurately, 'liquid modernity,' is the growing conviction that change is the only thing that remains, and uncertainty, the only certainty" (2013a, 8–9). For Bauman, these two types of modernity do not contradict each other, but rather present the two ways of modernity, both necessary for dialectics to take place:

> I did not think earlier and do not think now of the solidity versus liquidity conundrum as a dichotomy; I view those two conditions as a couple locked, inseparably, by a dialectical bond . . . If there is anything that permits a distinction between the "solid'' and "liquid" phases of modernity (that is, arranging them in an order of succession), it is the change in both the manifest and the latent purposes behind the effort. (2013a, 110–111)

If we are guided by Bauman's comparative study between solid modernity, a period he calls "Joshua Discourse," and liquid modernity, which he calls "Genesis Discourse," we denote that the former is characterised by order and rule as regulators of social life:

> "Order" . . . means monotony, regularity, repetitiveness and predictability . . . Everything in that world serves a purpose . . . That world has no room for useless or purposeless acts. . . It simply is, and cannot disappear: it is all we can or need to know about it. (Bauman 2013a, 61)

In solid modernity, the aim is to dominate the environment through the establishment of a social system with a 'head' guarantor of its proper functioning, social values, and a common life project that pushes to live at a single pace and to pursue a single goal, and in which the means that guarantee the arrival to the proposed futures present the greatest concern. Max Weber, for his part, points to the value of things *per se*, or "rational-value" far from any external vital experience, as another of the objectives of solid modernity. In contrast to the "Joshua Discourse," in the "Genesis Discourse," people orient their existence in a different way since there is no rule and order supposes the exception. Values per se, or rational values, cease to exist as absolute values today:

> So to speak, everything now falls back on the individual. It is up to him alone to discover what he is capable of doing, to expand that capacity to the maximum, and to choose the ends to which to apply that capacity. (Bauman 2013a, 68)

Likewise, the society of liquid modernity takes on the challenge of resolving the ethical questions of the present day. According to Bauman (2013a), after two world wars and several genocides, postmodern people understand the ethics of solid modernity as exhausted, since it failed to work as intended—it was not able to avert Auschwitz and the Holocaust, nor did it preclude other countless events of extreme suffering. In order to prevent events like Auschwitz from being repeated in today's society, Bauman offers —as an ethical structure—a new Levinasian ethics in which our surroundings are construed as an extension of the self, where the self-absorbs and takes possession of the surroundings.

Bauman calls this process "disenchantment" or "awakening," and defines it as a struggle in which we constantly vacillate between deception and disenchantment. Likewise, Bauman reveals morality as a juncture at which one can leave the self and meet the Other. He points out that it is in this "looking" towards the Other that my self becomes unique and irreplaceable, in such a way that "I am me to the extent that I am for the Other" (Bauman 1993, 78):

> "Being for the Other" means listening to the order of the Other; that Order unspoken—precisely because my responsibility is unlimited—but my 'being for' demands that I make it speak. (Bauman 1993, 93)

> Awakening to being for the Other is the awakening of the self, which is the *birth* of the self. There is no other awakening, no other way of finding out myself as the *unique* I, the one and only I, the I different from all others, the *irreplaceable* I, not a specimen of a category. (Bauman 1993, 77)

Similarly, Bauman points out that my responsibility towards the Other is determined by the state of that Other, and that we have the moral requirement to know what the Other needs since

> It is the Other who commands me, but it is I who must give voice to that command, make it audible to myself. The silence of the other commands me to 'speak-for,' and 'speaking-for-the-Other' means having knowledge of the Other. (Bauman 1993, 90)

It cannot be ignored, in any case, that this approach is in essence paradoxical; as Bauman himself points out, "'the Other for whom I am' is my own interpretation of that silent, provocative presence" (Bauman 1993, 91), so we will base this construct on our perception and intuition.

3. Memory and Postmemory

The importance of memory is highlighted by Jacques Le Goff when he underlines the eagerness of dominant groups to take possession of memory and impose their version on the dominated (Le Goff 1992, 54). For example, when—following the military uprising against the legally established republican government—Franco's regime had been installed in Spain, the defense of Madrid organized by the citizens loyal to the republic and advocating for a progressive country became re-written as an act of rebellion, and the defenders themselves – as anti-system rabble.

At the end of the war, the national side proclaimed a victory disguised as peace, and the war came to be narrated as a crusade necessary to safeguard peace and order in Spain. From then on, no expression was allowed other than the exaltation of the regime and the memory of those "fallen for God and for Spain."

In *Moral Blindness*, Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis ask where memory comes from, whether it is a cognitive process, a system of codes that connect us to one another and to a common past, whether it lives in us, or whether it comes from somewhere else—to finally conclude that memory comes to us externally and arises from the Other:

> Memory comes to us externally. It arises from the Other. It only seems to us that we preserve the memory of a certain place. In reality, it comes to us from somewhere else and protects us. We need a sensation that creates and establishes and tells the world about us but, in reality, it is others who give witness about us to the world. The memory saving us from non-being comes from somewhere else. Memory lives not here: it lives somewhere else.
>
> We comfort ourselves with tales about how it is ourselves, and not somebody else, who guard our country's history and memory. But the truth capable of shocking many is that memory comes into our existence from the outside, for it is basically just our cognitive and existential dialogue with the being-in-the-world of us, ourselves, and the whole community of our sensibility and sentiment. Others find in us what we lose ourselves; we perish when we forget, as Milan Kundera might say. (Bauman and Donskis 2013, 126)

Having posed this aporia about memory, Bauman and Donskis further argue that, in many respects, we are not a community of remembrance but of deliberate forgetting; however, our perception of meaning

after the wars, social catastrophes and other traumas of solid modernity, which tend to erase identity and eradicate memory, could be reborn and thus preserve our present and our past: "it shouldn't amaze us that sometimes we have to recover our memory and learn to be alive to our present and to our past" (Bauman and Donskis 2013, 127). It is, therefore, necessary to point out that forgetting is a strategy as powerful as memory since, after all, it is the substitution of one memory for another (Davis and Starn 1989)—as is the case of so-called national memories, created to generate and preserve a specific national identity.

This generates what could be called a conspiracy of silence, where the population, in a collective way, ignores a fact of which it is aware, motivated by fear, pain, or shame (Zerubavel 2010), as if it were an open secret, an uncomfortable truth about which it is better not to speak. The silence is then propagated, reinforcing itself, and the longer it is maintained, the more difficult it is to break (Zerubavel 2010). In the same way it is never discussed among the conspirators themselves, the taboo is not talked about: neither do they want to hear about the taboo itself, nor about the silence that surrounds it. In order to break these conspiracies of silence it is necessary to bring the issue to the forefront and open the eyes of society. However, in order to end them completely, no individual should intend to keep them alive. In this regard, the more people join the movement to break the silence, the more pressure will be exerted on those who intend to keep it.

In the case of the victims of repression, those who suffered in their own flesh and those whose relatives were killed in a concentration camp or buried in a mass grave, often consider these places what Pierre Nora called "*lieux de mémoire*" or places of memory, where identity processes take place (Nora 1983) and where they can, sometimes for the very first time, feel free to tell their story and that of their relatives. They find a space to break with the conspiracy of silence, which allows them to free themselves from the shame and oblivion imposed on them during the war and the extremely long postwar period. This liberation has a healing effect both on those who suffered and on the wider society, which can be nourished by their story and by bringing it to the forefront in order to achieve a global awareness of the suffering endured by the defeated (Ferrándiz 2009, 79–80). Therein lies the importance of these places of memory, through which the defeated begin to recover their past and can finally take ownership of their own memory.

On the other hand, dealing with memory implies re-presenting the past, that is, constructing what happened from the present point of view. Marianne Hirsch coined the term "postmemory" in the context of the Holocaust, to refer to these representations arising not from direct memory but from the tragic experiences narrated by another (Hirsch 1997, 22). Other authors, such as Isaac Rosa, inquire who has the right to talk about a certain topic (Winter 2016, 5). Faced with the question of the legitimacy of a person under thirty talking about the War and the postwar period (Rosa 2010), Hirsch argues that postmemory favours younger generations who, through certain distancing from the trauma, are better able to manifest and decipher it (Hirsch 2011, 12).

Roldán Jimeno emphasises the subjectivity with which situations of excessive violence resulting from a military conflict emerge in memory (Jimeno 1999, 20). Similarly, Hito Steyerl points out that practices that deal with problems such as the challenge of creating a new reality must always grapple with subjectivity (Steyerl 2010). This articulation of the hidden truth about the dark reality of society would define, according to Adorno, the epistemological character of the project, which seeks to bring to light memories linked to oppression (Adorno 1971), related to what Walter Benjamin called "the tradition of the oppressed" (Benjamin 1991).

4. Object and New Object in Art

"*RZECZOWE DOWODY ZBRODNI*, MATERIAL PROOFS OF CRIME" reads the entrance to Block 5 of the permanent exhibition of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and extermination camp. Inside we find countless items seized from the murdered Jews: shoes, clothing, eyeglasses, kitchen utensils, baskets, briefcases, and more. Along with these everyday items, there are also prostheses and even the victims' own shaved hair, which the visitors are not allowed to photograph. The guide stops in front of the showcase and, pointing to one of the briefcases, tells us the story of its owner and his family. Each object evokes a life, if not several, becoming, in turn, a proof of the genocide. In the travelling exhibition "Auschwitz. Not so long ago. Not far away" that I was able to visit in Madrid in December 2017, more than six hundred original objects from the Nazi extermination camp located in Poland could be seen on display, the vast majority of which had never been exposed to the public before. Among them stood out an original barrack and a wagon of the *Deutsche Reichsbahn* company, used for the transfer of prisoners. The use of objects, personal belongings, and even human remains is still frequent today in exhibitions focused on memory, where the visual presentation strategies of the artist or curator are based on the auratic value of the images and of these objects to arouse affections and emotions. In 2016, at the Prado Museum, the exhibition "Objects Speak" took place, curated by Fernando Pérez Suescun, with the aim of allowing the visitors to recognise themselves through certain objects that had accompanied them throughout the ages—thus, treating those objects as the repositories of memory, both individual and collective. According to Pérez Suescun, these objects inform us not only about customs and beliefs but also about the social and historical circumstances of the moment in which they were used. These objects, Pérez Suescun argues, suggest ideas, allow us to establish relationships between very different concepts, and awaken all kinds of feelings in those who contemplate them, inviting us to dream, to imagine, and to evoke other times or places. The objects speak, he postulates, but more importantly, they invite us to dialogue, which is the ultimate goal of the exhibition: to establish a dialogue between its visitors and the objects (Pérez 2016):

> Although our past has been lost forever, the objects give us back fragments of our identity, elements that allow us to accept the painful distance between our past and our memories, between what we are now and what we dreamed of being. (Saladini 2011, 25)

In order to endow an object with meaning, in principle, the contextual level is essential, since this memoristic relationship is a mental construct that takes place by associating the object with experiences or events that took place in the past; the more personal the object is for us, the more memories it will awaken. In the words of Alejandro Gándara (2012): "The more endowed with character and the more personal the object is, the more it stings that memory and imposes it." Gil Gijón, who creates dust sculptures as a metaphor for the passage of time, points out that when an object acquires the dimension of a fetish, it becomes detached from its use and turns into an artifact of contemplation. He further describes his sculptures as

> Old objects that belonged to someone specific in my family and that I identify as fetish objects. They lost the utility they had at the time and became objects charged with a special energy. They became containers of memory. (Gijón, in Camacho 2015)

On the other hand, Jean Baudrillard affirms that objectively substances are what they are but that people attribute to them connotations of being more true or false. He further argues that "the antique object is not simply a-functional or decorative but fulfills a very specific function: to signify time" (1969,

82–83). When confronted with an antique object, we are far from interacting with its original functionality; however, we do interact with the time contained in it; a time that is not real but constitutes a symbolic dimension that brings us closer to the culture of the moment in which the object was created and used—in short, it brings us closer to the past:

> Considering that each of these objects is a child of its time, the language of the objects, their exterior, their matter, allow us to speak of a specific moment, of a culture, and the meaning of these as children of their time. (Arroyave 2013, 71)

> Objects that give meaning to a place and an affective charge acquire another status from the symbolic order; they become autobiographies and signposts of places inhabited and of enunciation of memory; that is, objects end up being representations of personal and collective history and vehicles through which to see and travel through the territory yet again the territory again. They are the compass and the return guide to find the way back to what has already been inhabited. (Arroyave 2013, 107–108*)*

Referring to personal objects, Mauricio Arroyave notes that:

> By themselves, they may not have importance for the materiality that composes them, that is, for their three-dimensionality in themselves, but for their capacity to store stories in the memory of the one who owns them, for their ability to tell or recreate traces of identity and acquire meaning and sense by and for the bearer of the story. (2013, 107–108)

As Gabriela Paz further argues, "so that other can be part of it, identify with it and, why not, appropriate it" (Paz 2016, 61), since, as Arroyave concludes, "objects are not only containers of individual, fragmented and unitary memories, but also bring with them collective, social memories, recalling episodes of an entire population" (2013, 107–108).

There are numerous artists who have dealt with memory through objects. This is, for instance, the case with Paco Lara Barranco and his performance of 1964, "Que no te toque_ F.L.G.," in which he reflects on the pain caused by the death of his father; or with Chiharu Shiota, who recreates environments with everyday belongings—the objects of the past which he introduces in somber scenarios composed of black threads. Another artist who uses objects to compose his installations is Christian Boltanski, whose pieces refer to absence and death as he delicately recreates the scenes that evoke the horrors of World War II. In "No Man's Land" (2010), for example, he fills a space with thousands of used clothes, while the sound of a beating heart envelops the installation. Through his works, Boltanski seems to convey the impossibility of perpetually preserving memory since, as he states himself:

> In my work there is always the idea that each individual is unique because them are composed of small memories that distinguish him from others and allow him to know that he is someone. . .. When someone dies, all those things that make up the difference disappear instantly. My grandmother died a long time ago; she was a very intelligent woman, and now only my two brothers and I remember her a little bit; and when we die, not even her memory will remain. There is thus a curious relationship between the importance and the fragility of each individual one: the fact that everything disappears. (2000, 11)

In this way, Boltanski condemns existence to oblivion, although in his work there is also a yearning to remember the absent and to rescue the anonymous:

> What Boltanski's work proposes is precisely situated between the anonymous and the search for identity, in the passage between the personal and the collective, between the singular and the universal. (Capilla 2013)

In a certain way, Boltanski links this "reification" of identity and of the individual with death, pointing out:

> That transformation of someone into an object: of subject into object. To say something a little crude, because it is not true, all skulls look alike; anthropologists know that this is not so but, at first glance, all skulls are the same, while faces are all different. There is this sort of passage from the individual, from the subject, from someone who is unique, to something that looks like an object, that we can trample on. (2000, 12)

Until the 1950s, the objectual image was a fundamental reference of artistic production—a production that consisted of an effort to represent the image of the world through its objects, in order to preserve in this way the traces of the "Other of History" (Oliveros 2003). After the 1950s, the crisis of the avant-garde came, which, for Gilles Lipovetski:

> Institutes an art liberated from the past, it is a figure of the tendency towards the democratization of culture, although it is presented as an elitist phenomenon separated from the masses. An example is Kandinski's paintings, in which an inversion between the object and the painting is sought, and where the aspiration is pure composition. (1986, 87)

From 1915 onwards, with Malevitch's "Black square on a white background," a painting without reference to any object in the world, art has been aimed at dismantling representation. Around the same time, with the appearance of the ready-made and the entry of Duchamp's urinal into the museum, the object was presented in its materiality, surpassing the image as its support (Oliveros 2003). Alluding to the era of the discourse of science, Amanda Oliveros points out that

> The object is affected by the steps taken by science and is no longer sustained by a material referent; i, the image, is dislocated from a, the object, which implies that there is:
> a – matter without image
> i – image without matter
> […] In this separation of i from a, fracture of the imaginary to aspire to pass through the orifice of representation and adventure of the artist subject who works around the emptiness of the representation of the thing, I believe that the problem of the object in contemporaneity consists, as Gérard Wajcman points out, in the absence of the object in the 20th century (Wajcman, in Oliveros 2003), which fascinates and pushes the contemporary subject to approach the vertigo of the encounter with reality.
> The antinomy of postmodern reason, which sustains the much-discussed fall of the metanarratives, is that of palpating the difference between reality and the real. The postmodern task of showing in the work of art the difference between reality and the real implies, in itself, an object that separates itself from the support of the specular imaginary, of the likeness, and therefore entails a tearing of the imaginary sustained by the symbolic. (Oliveros 2003, 189–190)

In this line, Oliveros also points out that

> Contemporary art, leaving in the past the image of the world and its reflection, passes to the act of making see and transforming our gaze. It is an offer to read in practice the discontinuity between the ancient object and the contemporary object. . . It is about the passage from an object in more in representation, from the traces and the memory of the Other, consigned in museums, to an object in less of postmodernity, without the guarantee of memory and without museum, which is presented in the public space. The object in less refers to an art outside signification, which goes beyond analogy and no longer interrogates itself with the question "What does the work mean?" but rather with the question "What do I see?", which addresses the issue of the invisibility of the artistic object and which erects the work with a new function in relation to memory: it is not about the archeology of the traces of the object but about the erasure and the exclusion of the trace; it is invited to show what is not remembered, what is tried to be obliterated from memory. These invisible works have the function of exhibiting what the tendency of the new and diffuse Contemporary One does not want to see and wants to erase. (Oliveros 2003, 192)

The artist Jochen Gerz, the author of the "Monument against fascism"—a column twelve metres high and one metre wide, designed to sink gradually to completely disappear under the ground ten years later—creates works in which he deals with the invisibility of the object. According to Wajcman, invisibility is "the absolute term of the divorce with mimesis, the height of non-similarity, the culmination of imaginary tearing" (2001, 183). In a similar vein, Wajcman suggests that, after Auschwitz, there could be a change in the object, a fracture with the identity that affected every image "while the object will reach the peak of its dissolution by reducing the subject to the object nothing, biological being, pure recyclable matter that becomes the smoke coming out of the chimneys of the gas chambers" (Wajcman 2001). Wajcman, however, is far from prophesying the death of art, pointing out that "art reappears in its absolute necessity: as that which points out the impossible, the real" (Wajcman 2001). Wajcman understands Gerz's invisible monuments as the positivization of a lack of object throughout the twentieth century:

> They are the thing itself, the horror that one does not want to see in today's society of spectacle. These monuments take us out of the specular likeness and send us back to the absence, to the foreclosure, the program of the final solution: the Shoah, the object of the century. The essence of the Nazi plan was to make the Jews totally invisible. (Wajcman 2001)

5. The Aesthetic Experience in Liquid Modernity

In the postmodern era, the aesthetic experience has been altered by the traffic of information and the mediatization of art and its criticism, which has resulted in a loss of the mythical aura of art (Díaz 2008). For Walter Benjamin (2003), the aura of the work of art was a characteristic of the work of art anchored in the notions of originality and authenticity (with authenticity understood as the reference to the uniqueness of a now and a here). In the era of hyper-reproductivity, the concept of uniqueness of the artistic piece is diluted in the multiplicity of reproduction scenarios and instants, no longer having correlation with the subsequent work. The original and the copy are confused in the virtual space, and it is there where the work of art loses its authenticity, its implications in perception, its aura, and its time (Díaz 2008):

> The auratic value of the work is displaced to a mere exhibition value, this displacement of the significance of the artistic experience is mixed with the significance of the artistic experience as a political sphere. The work of art is disseminated and consumed in virtual reproduction, guaranteeing accessibility to everyone at all times. (Díaz 2008, 1)

Georges Didi-Huberman adds that:

> The auratic would be the object whose appearance unfolds beyond its own visibility, what we must call images, its images in constellations or in clouds, which impose themselves on us as so many other associated figures that emerge, approach and move away to poeticize, carve, open both its appearance and its significance, to make of it a work of the unconscious. (2010, 95)

Therefore, auratic images look at us and call us with their display of images; urging us to "raise our eyes" since, in the words of Benjamin, "to notice the aura of a thing means to endow it with the ability to look" (1991, 70).

6. Conclusion

The Holocaust took place in a modern society and at an advanced stage of civilization, therefore, it is a problem of our society and our civilization as a whole. According to Bauman's analysis, the Holocaust was the consequence of a combination of factors, such as the monopolization of violence and the lack of non-political bodies of social self-regulation, a problem that persists to this day. It is therefore not surprising that Bauman insists that the problematics of the Holocaust cannot be limited to historical research or philosophical contemplation (Villarejo 2017)—for if there was something in our social order that made the Holocaust possible in 1941, we cannot be certain that this factor no longer exists or is now harmless.

If we accept the hypothesis that art has reappeared after the paradigm shift brought about by the Holocaust as a force capable of unmasking the real and, given art's capacity to create contexts for reflection and generate experiences, we need to consider art as a powerful discipline that must not remain on the sidelines. Instead, it must tackle it from a postmodern stance which assimilates the imaginary tearing apart that has already taken place.

On the other hand, in this day and age in which it is increasingly difficult to distinguish the original from the copies and where the value of the object per se has ceased to exist, the artist must continue to ask themselves what perceptual experiences cause an artistic piece to go beyond what is inferred from its simple materiality. Likewise, it is up to thinkers and artists to explore and agree upon mechanisms that would make possible the conversion of what Didi-Huberman called *vestigium in gratia* (Didi-Huberman 2010).

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
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9. Approaching Dissonant Heritage in Third-Generation Graphic Narratives: The Case of Jérémie Dres's *Nous n'irons pas voir Auschwitz*

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Abstract

In the last two decades, memory studies have emerged as a field of research often concerned with the transgenerational impact of personal and collective trauma. This development raises important questions about the ways in which we manage heritage, and about the mechanisms of memory transmission across generations. Through the case study of Jérémie Dres's third-generation graphic memoir *Nous n'irons pas voir Auschwitz*, this chapter investigates the medium of comics in the twenty-first century as a site of individual and collective trauma and memory, focusing on the ongoing role of visual culture in framing testimony, and exploring the medium-specific features that make comics an effective vehicle for representing the memory of traumatic war experiences. Through the analysis of Dres's works, I demonstrate how the multimodal storytelling capabilities of graphic narratives (i.e., the overlapping of different temporal levels and the synesthetic contamination of different narrative languages) open up new avenues for exploring and portraying traumatic historical and personal events.

Keywords

Postmemory, Graphic novel, Trauma, Third generation, Jérémie Dres

1. Graphic Narratives and the Dissonant Holocaust Memory

In the last two decades, memory studies have emerged as a field of research often concerned with the transgenerational impact of personal and collective trauma. This development raises important questions about how we manage heritage and about the mechanisms of memory transmission across generations. As we move further away from the traumatic events of the Second World War and from its aftermaths, the ways in which we still bond to that past are changing considerably. Nonetheless, we are dealing with the "longest shadow" (Hartmann 1996) of a dissonant heritage[1] that continues to affect our present. In this scenario, post-Holocaust writing can be considered a way to stitch the fractured narratives of the past. In the framework of the European Ph.D. Workshop Una Europa "Dissonant heritage: concepts, critiques, cases", the research group was asked to respond to the question: "How can arts help overcome dissonant heritage?"

This chapter investigates the medium of comics in the twenty-first century as a site of individual and collective trauma and memory, focusing on the ongoing role of visual culture in framing testimony, and exploring the medium-specific features that make comics an effective vehicle for representing the memory of traumatic war experiences. The first two decades of the twenty-first century have seen an increase in nonfictional documentary comics dealing with the Holocaust's difficult memory.[2] Since the groundbreaking publication of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* in the mid-1980s, graphic narratives—previously marginalised in literary studies—have established themselves as a legitimate medium for history and trauma representation. Spiegelman has created a new way of witnessing and dealing with dissonant heritage on both a personal and collective level:

> [W]ith its animated temporal juxtapositions of past and present and its polyvocality and doubling of generational voices, *Maus* not only reimagines, in the sharp executions of image and text, the catastrophic rupture of the Holocaust, but extends the traumatic imprint of the Holocaust as it lays claim to the descendants of Holocaust victims and survivors. (Aarons 2020, 3)

There appears to be something in the open and multifaceted structure of graphic narratives, in the possibilities of the medium that "draws to tell" (Chute 2006, p.200), that "enable[s] not only recitation of past trauma but also a re-evaluation of what is at stake in the envisioning of history itself" (Cutter and Schlund-Vials 2018, 16). Regarding the question of the medium's specific properties, and particularly with respect to the question of the intersection of personal experience and collective memory, Hillary Chute's research can be used to offer an overview of such features.

Chute makes a strong argument for comics as a helpful medium for representing traumatic histories: "Against a valorisation of absence and aporia [in traumatic narratives], graphic narrative asserts the value of presence, however complex and contingent" (2010, 2). Chute argues that:

[1] The term "dissonance" has developed in music theory to describe two tones which do not harmonically integrate into one another, but instead create a certain tension. When different groups attribute different stories to the same event/object/landscape, the interpretation of heritage is considered dissonant. Writing about the Holocaust means negotiating with silence, lack of information and, sometimes, with family-transmitted memories which do not adhere to the official historical narrative. As Lukács states, "[e]very form is the resolution of a fundamental dissonance of existence" (1977, 62) that the artist attempts to exorcise through the creative act. In this chapter, the term "dissonant" is used as a synonym for "traumatic" or "unsettled" in order to highlight the effort to find a balance between personal memory and collective memory through artistic research.

[2] An interesting theory on the comics representation of genocide in a broader artistic context is the one offered by Laurike In't Veit (2018). For a comprehensive list of second- and third-generation graphic narratives, see Aarons 2016; Aarons and Berger 2017; Stańczyk 2020.

> [Graphic] narrative establishes… an expanded idiom of witness, a manner of testifying that sets a visual language in motion with and against the verbal in order to embody individual and collective experience, to put contingent selves and histories into form. (2010, 3)

The multimodal storytelling capabilities of graphic narratives (i.e., the overlapping of different temporal levels and the synesthetic contamination of different narrative languages) open up new avenues for exploring and portraying traumatic historical and personal events. One of the most intriguing aspects of graphic narratives is the so-called "closure" (McCloud 1993), which is the process by which the narrative actively engages with the reader in the phenomenon of "observing parts but receiving the whole" (McCloud 1993, 63). The author and the reader collaborate to create meaning through dialogic interplay. The blank spaces, or "gutters", have received special attention in this exchange. In comics, separate panels are the basic reading blocks, but the blank spaces between panels provide narrative sequencing to the whole. As Scott McCloud suggests, the imaginative process occurs in "the limbo of the gutter", where the narrative "transport[s] us across significant distances of time and space" (1993, 66). The interstices between panels, according to Victoria Aarons, allow for interpretive intervention:

> The play of presence and absence that arises with a focus on the individual panels in sequence freezes the frame of history and experience for moments of moral and ethical reckoning. This tension between the spoken and the unspoken, emerging in the spaces among the panels, mediates the representation of trauma. (Aarons 2019, 4)

Claire Gorrara, on the other hand, believes that there is a parallel between the cognitive act of connection demanded by comic book page layout and the psychological need to order memories:

> [T]he reading conventions of comics can work to highlight traumatic memory. Different drawing styles mixed together can show chaotic memory processing. Changing panel shapes and sizes, with enclosed or open borders, influences the pace and rhythm of reading and can be used to denote troubled mental states. The choice of colour palette, or the use of black and white only, equally inflects how the past is represented in the present. Sepia tones can stand for nostalgia and loss, whilst stark colours can symbolize vibrant recall. Via form, therefore, the comic book offers writers a powerful tool for drawing memory that opens a channel for emotive engagement with the past. In the case of the Holocaust, this is an engagement caught up in the dilemmas of memory transmission and representability, as well as the continuing presence of the Holocaust in everyday lives. (2019, 113)

The process of remembering is also aligned with certain fundamental properties of graphic narrative in Chute's theories on comics. She claims that "comics and the movement, or act, of memory share formal similarities" (2010, 4), invoking the construction of both through fragmented images and the interweaving of pauses and absences as fundamental elements of their respective narrative structures. In *Disaster Drawn* (2016), Chute moves toward the idea of comics as an important medium for the transmission of witnessing on a broader scale: collective memory.[3] In *Memory and Genocide in Graphic Novels* Joanne Pettitt makes a similar observation:

> Comics and graphic novels are ideally suited to articulate the complexities between global and local memories… because they are always engaged with the relationship between language (as a signifier for national identity) and image, which transcends local knowledge and allows for accessibility on a more universal level. Of course, this leaves

[3] In *Disaster Drawn*, Chute does not only consider the Holocaust as a case study, but uses a broad perspective of context-based case studies such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the war in Bosnia, and the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. For a similar perspective on ancient and modern conflicts and their graphic representation, see Prorokova and Tal 2018; Lassiter and Rossi 2021.

> us with questions about "how universal is an image", or how "national" is a language; but I would argue that similar issues arise when we look at memory: how global is a memory? (2018, 2)

Pettitt notices a parallel between collective memory and the process of conceptualisation in comics, for "meaning is created in graphic novels through the interaction of both forms: text and images; just as in the age of global memory identity is created through the interactions between the local and the global" (2018, 2). Summarising, thanks to their hybrid nature, comics can be "a form of witnessing" in which the past is made connected to the present on the page. According to Chute, the possibilities that this "visual-verbal" form of expression enables, extend the transgenerational reach of testimony and the inheritance of the memories of those who experienced the events first-hand (2016, 112). This viewpoint explains why an increasing number of authors of the second and third generations are attempting to shape the traumatic imprint of the Shoah and its haunting aftermath for generations extending beyond that history.

2. Inherited Shadows. An Intergenerational Connection

In the post-witness era, while the Holocaust moves from the realm of communicative memory to that of cultural memory, the third generation may be the last one to have a "special kind of kinship" with a difficult heritage "that is both personal/familial and world-historical" (Dreifus 2016, 2). This aspect is bound to have an impact on the narrative in both structural and thematic aspects. When discussing third-generation narratives, there are two major issues to consider: the first is ethical, and the second is 'practical.'

To begin with, third-generation writers frequently face an ethical quandary, which can be summed up by the question: "What type of poetics of rhetoric may allow third-generation writers to mourn over people and over a world they have never known and to come to terms with a loss which, to them has no concrete shape or face?" (Lévy 2016, 58) The answer is that a loss, no matter how distant or shapeless, is still a loss. As the third-generation French writer Henry Raczymow sardonically points out: "To ask, 'By what right could I speak,' implies the answer, 'I have no right to speak.' However, as any psychoanalyst will tell you, the time comes when you have to speak of what is troubling you" (1994, 102). Raczymow emphasises the danger of "appropriation" of memories.

Nonetheless, the tension between the need to witness and the fear of speaking is what Fortunati et al. recognise as the fundamental "task" to bridge past and present (2008, 18) in order to create a narrative connecting generations that often takes the shape of a "painful therapy" (Fortunati et al. 2008, 18). Coming to terms with dissonant heritage through a "painful therapy", namely postmemory work, has a broader function in this perspective: looking at the stories of the past as they take shape in the imaginations of generations after, becomes a means of measuring the legacy and the extent of an event.

The second issue faced by third generation, is that the shift to cultural memory means that the past is only available through objects, visual and written evidence, and historical sites of memory (Assman and Czaplicka 1995), which are not always available. As Aarons points out, in third-generation literature "absence is a recurring trope" (2016, 21). For the third generation, absence can mean the loss of grandparents, a gap in family's and historical transmission, a lack of knowledge about the past or a struggle to find coherent information. This is not to say that the recovery of the past is impossible:

> [B]ut for the third generation, the trope of absence exists alongside the trope of recovery, the struggle through the figures, textures, and imagined shapes and weight of language – albeit a wanting substitute for memory's acuity—to make coherent the fleeting events of the past. (Aarons 2016, 21)

The intergenerational transmission means that what happened in the past should be re-constructed and re-presented through narrative. In other words, imagination frequently serves as a substitute for memory. The two main issues raised in this section are only a few of the characteristics of a third-generation relationship with dissonant heritage. There is no fixed paradigm that defines an 'accurate' representation of Holocaust. Nonetheless, Aarons and Berger (2017) proposed a set of shared characteristics for third-generation narratives. One of these is often a return journey to the "sites of memory"[4] in Central and Eastern Europe:

> The third generation seeks to discover as much as they can about relatives victimized in the Shoah. They visit "sites of memory", including, and especially, death camps and sites of massacres, as well as grandparents' birthplaces. They also interview both Jews and non-Jews, relatives and strangers, and engage in archival research seeking to discover more about the Shoah and their own post-Auschwitz Jewish space. (Berger 2016, 74)

Jérémie Dres's *Nous n'irons pas Auschwitz* is an excellent example of this type of narrative, but, as we will see, the chapter questions and reframes the concept of the "rite of return" (Hirsch and Miller 2011).

3. Facing Dissonant Heritage as Third-Generation Artist

Published in 2011, *Nous n'irons pas voir Auschwitz* is an autobiographical graphic memoir written by Jérémie Dres, a French Jewish author. Recounting his and his brother's pilgrimage[5] to Poland, "Dres uses a quest narrative to explore cultural histories and intellectual debates that relate to his family history and cultural identity as a non-observant Jewish Frenchman" (Gorrara 2019, 116). The book is a "genre-bending work—memoir, sociological inquiry, history lesson, and political primer interspersed with humor" (Berger 2016, 74–75) and shares many features of third-generation narratives:

> [T]he creation of memory sites in words and pictures to fill voids in the family record; the journey back to family spaces and places of remembrance in Poland; a self-conscious excavation of the family's wartime past and the ethical urgency to listen to Holocaust survivors, witnesses and exiles before they pass away. (Gorrara 2019, 114).

The book developed as a project following the death of Dres's Polish-born grandmother in 2009. As many other third-generation authors, Dres starts his project with a felt sense of absence: the journey to Poland is planned "to find her again" (Dres 2011). This aspect is furtherly developed by Martin Dres, Jérémie's brother and journey companion who writes a touching afterword explaining why the book is dedicated to their grandmother:

> Her name was Téma, she was our grandmother. She was the reason for our trip to Poland. This trip reunited Jérémie and me. Long after our last family holiday, we were sharing a room and a bed again. In Poland. In Warsaw. She disappeared in September 2009. … Our grandmother was a link between several generations. A link between the war

[4] As Pierre Nora noticed, the need for a spatial experiencing of the traumatic past represents a postmodern transformation of history into memory (Nora 1996, 1–20).

[5] While describing "return" as a prominent feature of the third generation, Alan L. Berger defines Dres and his brother's trip to Poland as a "pilgrimage," describing it as: "a life-changing journey to a 'special or unusual place' that assumes aspects of ritual. A pilgrim's goal is to deepen, enhance, and otherwise alter his or her self-understanding and her or his relationship to a particular community. Consequently, return narratives comprise both historical and psychic components, affective and cognitive modes of learning" (2016, 74). Sharing this definition, I will often address Dres's journey as a "pilgrimage".

> and today; even though it was usual to keep quiet, she could not stop talking to us. … Our grandmother had told us about her childhood in Warsaw, so that, almost a hundred years later, we felt as if we had memories of it.[6]

Even though the book is openly dedicated to his grandmother and contains many emotional and personal aspects, Dres's return to his grandmother's country is more than just an exploration of her pre-war childhood in Poland; the trip also serves an intellectual purpose.

> There are two reasons that led me to carry out this project: the first is the death of my grandmother and the desire to rediscover her world, her culture of which she spoke to me so much, where she grew up; the second is an article by Olivier Guez that I read in *Le Monde Magazine* on the rebirth of the Jews of Poland. When I saw this article, I was very surprised, because my family had always told me that there were no more Jews in Poland, that everyone was dead or gone. It made me want to go there. (Dres 2011)

The article he read surprised him because his family had always told him that the Jewish community in Poland had vanished after the Holocaust. From the very first pages of the comic book, the author reflects upon the stereotypes about Poland conveyed by his family: "It might be surprising, but the subject of Poland has always been a family taboo since the tragedy" (Dres 2011). These taboos and stereotypes, however, do not stop Jérémie from embarking on his pilgrimage, as he wants to understand what it means to be Jewish and Polish today. Dres's narrative is entangled in questions of Holocaust tourism, in particular those about the nature and the meaning of Jewish tourism in Poland and Polish sites of Jewish history. These questions are fundamental to understanding Dres's desire to detach his experience from a touristic heritagisation of Holocaust, and to come to a more specific understanding of Polish-Jewish history and memory. The first pages of the comic book show the narrator on his journey of discovery. He has just arrived in Warsaw and is trying to locate his grandmother's childhood home, but the city has changed and no longer resembles the place from his grandmother's tales. Soon after, the narrator begins to focus on the many people whom he meets in Poland and who assist him in retracing his family's history. All the characters included in the comic, from rabbis to journalists, to Jewish association's militants, help him understand Jewish culture in contemporary society.

The brothers' journey is divided into three major stages: firstly, they attempt to retrace their grandmother's roots in Warsaw; second, they travel to the village of Żelechów, in search of their paternal grandfather. Finally, they reach Kraków during the European festival of Jewish culture. And what about Auschwitz? According to Gorrara, the "key to the spatial coordinates of memory in the comic is the absence of Auschwitz and Dres's decision to site Jewish wartime memory elsewhere in a 'Big Bang' dispersal of memory sites" (2019, 118). In the comic book, Auschwitz is only summarised in one statement: "Auschwitz: five years of annihilation for more than a thousand years of Jewish life and history. … Auschwitz, a trauma that is still so present that it makes you forget everything else. It is the rest that I went to look for in Poland" (Dres 2011). Before embarking on their journey, the two brothers decide not to visit the Holocaust memorial and death camps. In the preface of the book which sets the context for this third-generation journey, the historian Jean-Yves Potel offers a brief summary of the "paradox" at the heart of Dres and his brother's journey in search of their Polish-Jewish family origins:

> There is a paradox in this book. In these times when everyone is summoned to remember, to honour their dead, to share the memory of the great crimes of the last century, and to go, for example, to Auschwitz, here are two boys who do not go. Two young Parisians, Jews moreover, that is to say, grandchildren of a generation of which few

[6] From Martin Dres's afterword "*Elle s'appelait Téma*." The 2011-French edition of the book has no page numbering. In this case and in the following pages, reference will be made only to the year of publication. All translations from the French text are by the author.

> survived the Shoah. Worse, if they don't go to the camp, they are breaking a family taboo. They leave for the country considered hostile, even forbidden, reduced to a cemetery, the land of their ancestors taken over by others. (Potel 2011)

In Potel's words, it is a paradox that Dres and his brother should break this family taboo surrounding Poland only to engage in a search that does not seek to confront the Holocaust's 'mainstream' legacy—Auschwitz. The decision not to visit Auschwitz stems from a desire to reflect on the Holocaust, not as the tragical ending point of Jewish history; instead, the two brother's journey is an attempt to reconstruct and understand "life before and life after" (Dres 2012, 12)—that is the history of the Jewish community in Poland before and after the catastrophe—in order to understand the legacy of the past in post-Holocaust Jewish communities. In the interview for ActuaBD, Dres (2011) states:

> I didn't go there, because it's the most natural thing that a Jew, coming from there, would have done: go to Auschwitz. But I wanted to find life, life before the Shoah through its traces: synagogues, buildings, pieces of wall, family archives, graves... and at the same time see life today. Going to Auschwitz would have distorted our trip. I plan to go there one day, but if I do, perhaps it will be the only destination of my stay…

Dres's book problematises the issue of third-generation response to dissonant heritage by emphasizing a difference between the sorrow of the generation of witnesses and the second generation and the one experienced by the third generation. According to Dres (2011), the Shoah is still "a trauma so present", but the risk is that the Holocaust will "overshadow[s] all the rest". His task as a third-generation author is to "see the Holocaust as a singular but not the *only* marker of Jewish identity" (Aarons 2019, 142). For Dres, Poland is "a living laboratory", in which he retraces his roots by "pursuing … the deuteronomic call to choose life over death, seeking to uncover more fully the way of life of a vanished world" (Berger 2016, 74–75). From the title he chose for his book, Dres sets his objectives in a very clear way: "Dres does not want to 'see' Auschwitz, an indicator of his unease around the packaged *déjà-vu* of Holocaust tourism and the ritual of group visits to the concentration camps" (Gorrara 2019, 119). In the graphic novel, the decision to delocalise the memory of the Holocaust from Auschwitz gives shape to a recollection of the past that is not merely an official commemoration, but the will to know, the will to discover the past through the living rather than the dead.

What is the ultimate meaning of the brothers' pilgrimage? While travelling across Poland, the two brothers soon discover that their will to know is not only linked to their family's past but also to their present and their own identity. Alan Berger proposes that the search for the grandparent's past becomes a means of reconnecting with one's Jewish identity. He suggests that the *tikkun olam* (repair or restoration of the world) implied in all the attempts to reckon with dissonant heritage often become as a process of *tikkun atzmi* (repair or restoration of the self) (2016, 85). This idea is shared by Victoria Aarons, who states: "The act of return and carrying forth this memory, then, resolves the anxiety they feel over this foundational piece of their Jewish identity and ultimately grants them the cathartic release necessary to define their identity for themselves" (2017, 43). In this perspective, the last panel is particularly significant: the narrator imagines his grandmother's parents, his grandmother, and himself gathered at his grandmother's graveside in an act of intergenerational connection. In this intergenerational representation, the autobiographical narrator has his place as the third generation. After his journey back to Poland, the author is now prepared for his own future—"perhaps this story will help put things back in order", he writes at the end of his memoir.

4. Conclusion: How Can Graphic Narratives Help Overcome Dissonant Heritage?

From the very beginning of the story, the author appears to be fairly convinced of the true meaning of his pilgrimage. Dres (2011) explains that his "journey wouldn't just be a personal one. It would bear witness to the future of an entire people... to life before and after, over the course of my research into my family." As we have seen, Dres's journey of return to Poland is not only retrospective but also prospective: it bridges the gap between dissonant heritage and the present while emphasising the ethical component of drawing and narrating: transmission. Writing against the constraining influence of the past means wishing for a future that is defined by more than traumatising events. Dres's narrative—not unlike that of other third-generation artists—opens the possibility to consider the past not only as a catastrophe, but as a trace of our identity. This trace from the past cannot be entirely overcome but can make us participate in the work of memory with a sense of responsibility for the future.

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
edited by Patrizia Battilani, Maria Giovanna Belcastro, Krzysztof Kowalski and Teresa Nicolosi

10. Translating the Holocaust: Coping with Dissonance between Politics, Ethics, and Memory

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Abstract

Thanks to the practice of translation, literary texts produced in and conceived for given cultural systems can overcome linguistic barriers and become part of the cultural heritage of other cultural systems. Translation, though, is also a peculiarly political act: when translating texts, publishing houses and translators respond not only to a demand from the public of readers but also to instances from the cultural system for which the texts are to be translated. As stated by Davies (2018), the discourse about the Holocaust has always been accessible and structured thanks to and through translation, the language of the Holocaust being indeed a "translated" language. This chapter will thus attempt to understand the role played by the translation of texts about the Holocaust in the process of sharing and preserving the memory of this event without commodifying it and, at the same time, dealing with dissonant instances of divergent cultural-political groups. A particular focus will be placed on the translations of memories written by Holocaust survivors from a political, ethical, and cultural perspective.

Keywords

Holocaust, Literary translation, Dissonant heritage, Cultural memory, Testimony

1. Introduction

Despite the apparent lack of direct connection between heritage studies and translation, it is undoubtable that these fields have crucial relevance to each other, particularly in the domain of literary translation; and that translation has found its place in the discourse about cultural heritage. In effect, as the transposition of a text from one linguistic system to another, the practice of translation can also be interpreted as an attempt to construct a metaphorical bridge between two distinct cultural contexts for delivering knowledge from one to the other. Arguably, art, along with literature, can be considered among the most prominent aspects of heritage.

Literary translation, therefore, can be interpreted as an instrument employed for sharing the cultural content of a certain culture, characterised by a national language, with another culture that, in its turn, is characterised by another national language, so that the members of the latter can enjoy a cultural text or narrative without the knowledge of the language of its production. Therefore, through translation, a literary text produced in one language by an author expressing themselves in this very language can be enjoyed by the members of another culture that has the target language as its distinctive. In this way, translation contributes to creating a universal, or at least broader, shared cultural heritage.

Thanks to translation, foreign texts may even become part of the canonical literary heritage of the recipient culture. For instance, this is demonstrated by the fact that syllabi of courses on national literature in most Italian public schools increasingly include authors originally belonging to other linguistic-cultural contexts, or by the ever-growing presence of university courses on comparative literature. This intertwining of literary universes contributes to creating the joyous feeling of peaceful harmony between people with different identities, united by the spirit of art and literature, whose most elevated works supposedly represent all people in their shared identity as human beings, regardless of the languages in which they were originally produced.

Nevertheless, a cultural and literary heritage categorised as canonical may, at the same time, be perceived as controversial. Taking into consideration the above-mentioned cases of original foreign-language productions by foreign-language-speaking authors generally accepted into a national literary heritage, questions may arise as to the reasons why specific foreign authors are sometimes more studied and better known than some national authors, or, analogously, than authors representing specific marginalised groups, such as immigrants, or the LGBTQ+ community, and also than women authors, who have been long marginalised, or even non-existent on the lists of so-called canonical literature.

Hence, despite being celebrated as a force for unification and identification among people belonging (at least in theory) to the same group, for example a national or a linguistic one, heritage can, at the same time, produce a sense of division among and within these very groups or individuals. Indeed, regardless of the 'good intentions' inherent to its creation, it is hardly possible that a piece of art or, more extensively, of heritage, can represent all people equally without raising some dissonance. Rather, it is likely that it increases and enhances differences among various actors, whether they belong to the same or to different cultural contexts.

2. The Holocaust as Dissonant Heritage

Considering works generally defined as canonical, it is evident that, in inscribing a piece of heritage into a common shared memory of the past, the decision-makers of such inscription may be inadvertently or, perhaps, purposely reinforcing a difference deriving from an imbalance of power held by different groups with respect to cultural and national society as a whole. The heritage that—despite being

circumscribed to a precise place and time—is elevated by the most prominent group as a unifying legacy in which all members of the group can recognise themselves, makes differences among "dissonant" elements more evident and contributes to naturalising them in a way that they stop being questioned (Gramsci 1971). Nevertheless, as long as there are sub-groups that refuse to recognise the principles of the officially established heritage narratives, the order of such heritage will never become immutable, even if it constitutes the expression of the group that is hegemonic in terms of power.

In fact, heritage is always subjected, in the mindset of people belonging to the various sub-groups, to reinterpretations, challenging its dominant perception as a way to create connection, comfort, harmony, and consensus through a shared view of the past; as a matter of fact, the way in which heritage is interpreted, and the people who interpret it, create specific messages regarding the value and meaning of heritage and of the past it represents (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996).

The reaffirmation of one group's identity with respect to a piece of heritage that, despite its original intentions of universality, proves to be only partially shareable (as related, for example, to a past that is controversial), sometimes happens through disruptive interventions of the "dissonant" group. In particular cases, in order to restore its own 'dignity' over a controversial if not evidently negative past, the hegemonic group against which the dissonance of the heritage is measured makes attempts to commemorate this very same past through acts of reparation.

The symbols of such acts of reparation, as stated by Karl Figlio, can become ambiguous as they become "foci for different, conflicting groups . . ., enclaves of memories that differ from each other and depend on these differences"; as a result, sometimes reparation is based on the concern for the damage done to others and is driven by guilt (2014, 417).

In our time, collective rituals and commemorations of dissonant historical events, as much as their practical symbols and products, may indeed be employed by societies in order to create a "civil religion" that reassures and consoles (Fontana 2010). Gabriel Motzkin states that "[p]articipating in the rites of memory is a quasi-religion function [that] signifies acceptance of the truth of what is being remembered" (1996, 266), as memory is also believed to form a social identity that contributes to giving access to knowledge. Indeed, the concept of cultural memory, encompassing memory contained in and passed by forms of heritage such as literature and art, is based on the idea that a single memory can only become collective, and thus cultural, through a continuous process in which memories are shared "with the help of symbolic artefacts that mediate between individuals and, in the process, create communality across both space and time" (Erll and Rigney 2009, 1).

Reflections about attempts to preserve and, at the same time, repair a controversial past are extremely relevant for the Holocaust, at least in a European context. Indeed, the Holocaust can be defined as the most disruptive historical event experienced by European countries in the last few centuries. As the memory of this continental experience is made up by the sum of multiple, different individual experiences and histories of people coming from all over Europe, any fragment of it can be claimed by European citizens as part of their own historical heritage. Its resonance in the contemporary world is amplified by the fact that, unlike in the case of other historical events, most people have had the opportunity to hear, directly or indirectly, a live testimony of someone who personally experienced this event. Nevertheless, in the process of "acceleration of History" described by Pierre Nora, the brutal acquisition of fragments of the past is sufficient to break the homogeneity of the historical time, the simple and strong linearity which used to unite the present and the future to the past (2020, 233).

This happens in a quite paradoxical situation in which the present world "has apparently made remembering easier, while the events to be remembered seem to be so extreme that there is something scandalous about these memories" (Motzkin 1996, 265). Dissonance raised when confronting with the Holocaust in the present is then diachronic, and it derives from a deep contraposition between the brutal

world that this event represents and our current ethical position. Indeed, our contemporary vision sees the Holocaust as such a disruptive event that all heritage of it may entail a risk of leading to a unanimity of response, or at least to very polarised, opposing responses. As far as physical heritage is concerned, this may range from the sacralisation of the event in acritical commemorations deprived of intrinsic meaning, to Dark Tourism in musealised former concentration and extermination camps, museums about the Holocaust, and urban memorials. More specifically, this acritical approach to memorial sites undermines their ultimate purpose: rather than being sites for reflection, they risk becoming—if not passed unnoticed—ordinary touristic attractions.

This may be exemplified by the Memorial of the Shoah in the Italian city of Bologna, where groups of young people gather for skateboarding; or the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin, with its much-circulated images of tourists playing hide and seek or performing acrobatic tricks over the Memorial's columns.

3. The Translated Language of the Holocaust

The question of how to commemorate the Holocaust in a way that is respectful of the victims, profitable for future generations, and makes the right use of memory in order to deal with the dissonance that its heritage provokes, is also applicable to literature, a cultural field that has been continuously connected to the Holocaust memory for over four decades. At least since the late 1970s, many new texts relating to the experience of persecution and survival of Jews during the Nazi occupation of Europe have been published or re-published annually all over the European continent and beyond. These may be works of fiction, testimonies written by survivors, or hybrid texts in which it is possible to retrieve both traces of invention and reality.

Moreover, since the Holocaust affected most European countries, although to varying degrees, texts regarding this event are written in different European languages spoken by the survivors or, less frequently, by the perpetrators. Consequently, every year, an increasing number of texts about the experience of Jews during the Holocaust need to be translated or re-translated. This large-scale literary and translatory production may be interpreted, in the broader context of processes of reparation, as a way in which European societies, through their respective publishing houses, attempt to amend their common controversial past and to compensate, if not to atone, for their predecessors' more or less active involvement in the war.

Considering the translation of texts about the Holocaust from a specifically linguistic point of view, it can be stated that the discourse about this event is and has always been accessible and structured thanks and throughout translation. The language of the Holocaust is indeed a "translated" language (Davies 2018): most knowledge European countries have about this event comes from texts originally produced either in German or in other languages spoken by the persecuted national Jewish groups. Thus, in order for this textual memory to be truly shared and accessible regardless of the languages spoken by its intended recipients, one needs to translate the content of traumatised national and personal memories contained in these texts from one experiential and linguistic frame to another. More particularly, Peter Davies states that:

> Translation of testimonies and other kinds of texts and documents arising from the Holocaust happens constantly in all kinds of different contexts, and has done ever since the first eyewitness reports were obtained from refugees from the Third Reich and occupied Europe. Texts are translated for many different purposes and to fulfil the needs of many different target readerships and markets. (2014b, 207)

Davies further points out that without the work of translators, there would not be any discourse about the Holocaust "in the sense that we understand it, that is, no international, border-crossing, interdisciplinary concept that can be employed in historical, ethical, and philosophical arguments, and no common stock of literary reference points for discussion and re-use" (2014a, 162). In the same article, Davies underlines how

> [T]he activity of translators has, of course, not been limited to the interlingual translation of published prose texts. Once one begins to look, translators are involved in almost every context in which knowledge about, or memory of, the Holocaust is created, discussed, or passed on. Transactions within victim communities, for example between generations or groups with different cultural backgrounds, or between victim groups and their societies, are facilitated and shaped by translators; historical and other scholarship about the Holocaust frequently relies on translated evidence; oral testimony is given in many languages, and is subtitled or transcribed in translation; educational materials, texts for exhibitions and monuments, and tourist information are made available to international visitors; legal evidence is translated, whether by simultaneous interpreting or in written form, and is made available in contexts well beyond the original courtroom. (2014a, 168)

This last passage demonstrates how thinking of the Holocaust in terms of translation and thinking of translation in the discourse about the Holocaust is indeed pertinent to different domains such as heritage, with translations of information about exhibitions, of museum signs and panels, of documentaries, and more.

Even more so, in these sensitive domains, the practice of translation acquires relevance because it is an implicitly political act; indeed, "from the very act of selecting a text to interpret it in translation is a conscious deliberate process which cannot resist sociocultural and political forces" (Kumar Panda 2013, 1). As stated by Bella Brodzki, translation "is subject to and reflective of external conditions of reception and specific literary-historical contexts that are themselves always changing," and it is more than ever understood to be "a politics as well as a poetics, an ethics as well as an aesthetics" (2007, 2).

At the same time, according to Lina N. Insana, translation can also be seen as a performative textual speech act, that is, a speech act that, in its very enunciation in the form of a text, accomplishes an action that generates precise effects (2009, 5). The speech act that translation represents, then, is created for specific performative reasons. Indeed, the very selection of foreign-language texts for publication in a national market, and consequently – for translation into the language of that market, responds not only to a demand from the public but also to more recondite elements of the cultural and societal structure of the targeted country.

Therefore, it may be argued that such a large number of books about the Holocaust are written and published every year not only because of their popularity among readers but also because these books can, to a certain extent, satisfy the nations' need to pay tribute to and commemorate the victims of such tragedy, restoring their dignity as countries who have come to terms with this particularly controversial part of their history. This approach, on the one hand, may entail a risk of commodifying the Holocaust, turning it into both a tragic event to mourn and a source of entertainment. As previously observed in relation to physical dissonant heritage, this approach may further lead to a neutralisation of the critical potential of the Holocaust also in literature, locking it up in museums, or writing it down in the pages of books available in any type of library, or even used for apologetic interpretation of the current world order (Rossi-Doria 2007). In the words of French scholar Tiphaine Samoyault (2020), as far as literary works about the Holocaust are concerned,

> [T]he ethical turn in translation, which reveals a mutation of the general political discourse going in such direction (to achieve a pacified society, without conflicts, to live in a world without enemies...), is imposed at the price of a

> reduction of the difference between the one (or oneself) and the other, of an undoubtedly rather fallacious confidence in reciprocity and empathy. (2020, 11; translation by the author)

On the other hand, the large-scale commemoration of the Holocaust through mass-market productions may represent an opportunity for dissonant opponent groups to raise their voices. In effect, at some point, there could be the risk that, without a well-founded and reciprocally shared critical basis, these groups position themselves as ideological victims of a unified principle that would impose a certain way of commemorating an event, repressing dissonant voices for the sake of a hegemonic belief dictated by cultural societal authorities.

The assumption in which this argument is rooted is that when the need to commemorate a historical event is officially taken for granted, when a memory is inscribed 'from above' to create a collective heritage, dissonant, biased, and centrifugal voices, originally limited in numbers, may become increasingly widespread, allowing to challenge even the very need to commemorate the event at all. This process raises the question of whether literature and its translation can help contain such tendencies and contribute to overcoming dissonance produced by and relating to heritage. One possible reflection could be that the limits of representation of the Holocaust largely depend on cultural and socio-political contexts, as well as on the systems of values held by different communities: thus, "traumatic events are both experienced and remembered against the backdrop of these cultural expectations" (Glowacka 2012, 92). When the members of a cultural system are led to acritically interiorise and preserve a memory, their reactions may become highly polarised. Instead, heritage of the past and of other individuals and cultures is something that remains irreducible. Dealing with such heritage, therefore, provokes the need to respond to it in the contingent time, without being acted upon by this very past – in a process in which these "inheriting" agents select distinct aspects of it. As stated by Jacques Derrida,

> [H]eritage or inheritance is what I can't appropriate, it is that which accrues to me and for which I am responsible, which has fallen to me as my lot, but over which I have no absolute right. I inherit something that I must also transmit: shocking or not, there is no right of property over inheritance. That's the paradox. I am always the tenant of an inheritance. Its trustee, its witness, or its relay. (2002, 112)

When this approach is applied to literature, national languages become instrumental in this process and can be employed to shape these contexts and values. Through translation, different communities can consequently judge the moral relevance of what is being represented as a fact and determine the criteria for inclusion in the official historical narrative (Glowacka 2012, 92). Therefore, given that translators move between different linguistic and cultural contexts and communities, they "must take into account the moral consequences of the use of a particular language and consider the linguistic mechanisms of exclusion and repression practiced by a given community" (Glowacka 2012, 92).

Thus, like mass media information and all other forms of art, literature and its translation into foreign languages should contribute to shaping commemoration not into a precise and repetitive celebratory ritual, but rather into an attempt to transform memory into experience. Translated literature could allow readers to enter the text, to go with the flow of its temporality, and to undertake the task of reconfiguration that the text per se demands (Dana 1998). Rephrasing Giacoma Limentani (1997), it can be stated that whoever wants to write about the experience of the Holocaust, from direct survivors to authors of fiction, should undertake this task with absolute sincerity – not only with respect to what is being written but also to the way in which it is written. Here, sincerity is meant to be an ethical one, an approach in which the writer proceeds with writing about an event in a way that reflects the spontaneity of their experience.

The same reflection can also be made for translators of such texts, especially considering that most contemporary translation scholars have come to accept the idea of a translator as the author of a somewhat new text, rejecting the outdated concept of the translator's "invisibility." In the process of being transferred from one cultural and linguistic realm to another, the narrative contained in the source text is necessarily reconfigured; the translation results in the "inaccessible" original becoming a pretext with an identity that has been redefined, rather than remaining an original per se (Brodzki 2007, 4).

4. Conclusions

Translators of testimonies written by Holocaust survivors and of other texts relating to this event always "translate the untranslatable into one of the comprehensible languages and familiar expressions" (Glowacka 2012, 100). As the Holocaust was such an extreme experience, the burden placed on language as a tool for its definition and understanding is fundamental. Both writers and readers of texts related to this experience have an ethical role to fulfil: in the written text, the dead talk to the living, and their words must be interpreted. The survivor can understand the words of the dead and transcribe them in the present, although inevitably from a diachronic perspective. But only through these words that are heard and repeated by witnesses, both directly and indirectly, can the breach between the past and the future be bridged (Napoli 2011).

In this conception of the relationship between events and narration, the transfer from event to word, from language to language, from sign system to sign system, as in the case of translation, "becomes an integral part of understanding" (Insana 2009, 21–22). Moreover, Holocaust testimonials originate and spread a communicative imperative, and are structured as an address to another subject, demanding a response. As such, they always involve some forms of translation: their interlinguistic translation has, therefore, the power "to create communities of speakers [of the common language of the Holocaust] along different, multiple, and intersecting axes of belonging, communities of remembers yet-to-come" (Glowacka 2012, 101.). According to Samoyault, translation "is therefore engaged in the construction of a common world, between languages, in ever new divisions of space and time" (2020, 195; translation by the author). Translating texts about the Holocaust is, therefore, a way to write or speak about the Holocaust itself, through which to develop

> Connections and relationships between victims and others, and of contributing in an ethically meaningful way to knowledge about and remembrance of the Holocaust. . . . [T]ranslation is a means for translators to contribute to, intervene in, and comment on ideas about the Holocaust at the specific moment when an act of witnessing crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries. (Davies 2018, 210)

Ethicality and meaningfulness in the work of translators dealing with texts about the Holocaust undoubtedly, if only partially, shorten the distance between the textual content narrated (and translated) and the recipients of such texts. This way translators contribute to normalising the process of situating the memory of such event and of its legacy that takes place in readers. In accordance with Limentani, then, the dissonance originated from by the mnemonic heritage of the Holocaust could be reduced through translating texts in a way that would lead to the creation of a conscious readership in which such sincerely written (or translated) texts would provoke the rise of an *appel de mémoire* (Dana 1998).

Translation is an instrument that permits the overcoming of linguistic barriers, allowing different cultures to understand one another and to help create a more structured and broader set of values in order to interpret heritage and the past in a more critical way. Still, translation is also a mutable and evolving practice, which allows the reinterpretation of previously translated pieces of textual heritage

according to the current needs of mutable and evolving societies and cultures. This practice can therefore ensure that, when in need, readers of texts about the Holocaust can be provided with the instruments to access heritage in a way pertinent to their sensibilities, which consequently helps them resolve, or at least overcome, dissonance.

According to Brodzki's connection of the redemptive work of translation to the current "obsession with memory," "[t]hrough the act of translation remnants and fragments are inscribed – reclaimed and reconstituted as a narrative – and then recollected collectively; that is, altered and reinscribed into a history that also undergoes alteration, transformation, in the process" (2007, 6). The memorial impulse in translation can therefore articulate issues of positioning and interpreting the dissonant content of texts about the Holocaust in relation to one's own and to others' identities, and it can avert the risk of a crystallised, acritically canonical interpretation of the event, resolving the diachronic contraposition between the past and the present.

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
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11. Historiography of Hispanic American Colonial Music: A Dissonant Heritage through the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries?

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Abstract

Historiography of Hispanic American colonial music was developed during the twentieth century, reproducing some trends inherited from the voices of the chroniclers and conquerors. While these studies are commonly labelled as positivist, they constitute a heritage that often reflects the power of the dominant class. A review of some of these pioneering works—of undoubted value for their contribution to the rediscovery of music composed during the colonial period—allows us to understand the extent to which this historiography constitutes a dissonant heritage. On the other hand, research carried out by a group of musicologists since the 1990s has provided a new perspective on Hispanic American colonial music. Employing new approaches and methodologies, these studies propose creative ways to overcome this dissonance.

Keywords

Hispanic American colonial music, Musicology, Historiography, Eurocentrism, Artistic heritage

1. Introduction

The desire to reinforce the national identity of Hispanic American republics led researchers, in many cases, to neglect for some decades the artistic heritage of the pre-independence period. In the words of Teresa Gisbert, "The nineteenth century, which responded to the currents of the Enlightenment, left the entire viceregal past in shadow" (1993, ix).[1]

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, some studies began to draw attention to the musical production of the Hispanic American colonial past. In 1931, the Argentinian musicologist Carlos Vega popularised a codex written by the Franciscan Fray Gregorio de Zuola (1645? –1709) in Cuzco (Vega 1962). Rubén Vargas Ugarte presented a catalogue of a music archive in the San Antonio Abad Seminary, also in Cuzco (Vargas Ugarte 1953). Other researchers such as Lauro Ayestarán, Francisco Curt Lange, Guillermo Furlong, and Eugenio Pereira Salas completed the musical map of the archives with music from the colonial period.[2]The North American professor Robert Stevenson produced several important monographs with the aim of offering a more global vision (1959, 1970), which were followed by an anthology by the Chilean musicologist Samuel Claro Valdés (1974). Both gave an overview of the important presence of music composed during the colonial period and preserved in Hispanic American archives. These early approaches have often been considered to have a strong positivist character, as they emphasised the collection of information and the presentation of data. However, as Leonardo Waisman has recently underlined (2021), "once they move beyond positivist data collection," these narratives fall into an "idealist and nationalistic bias," characterised by "non-objective factors that condition the formulations."

In this chapter, I propose to go a step further to analyse how, in these pioneering works of undeniable historical value, the historiographical discourse constructed around Hispanic American colonial music often refers to this heritage—and, specifically, to the influences and contributions of people of Indigenous and African descent—in a dissonant way, conditioned by a nationalist and Western bias. I further examine how some musicologists, who have carried out their research from the end of the twentieth century to the present day, approach this cultural heritage from a more respectful, inclusive, and integrating point of view.

2. Dissonant Heritage: A Label for the Historiography of Colonial Music

Does Hispanic American colonial music constitute dissonant heritage? According to Laurajane Smith, "all heritage is uncomfortable to someone" because "heritage has a particular power to legitimize—or not—someone's sense of place and thus their social and cultural experiences and memories" (2006, 81). For Ashworth and Tunbridge, there are special cases in which dissonance is especially strong (1996, 21; quoted in Smith 2006, 80). An important part of colonial music is the sacred repertoire of Spanish culture that flourished in the cathedrals and churches of Hispanic American cities in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This is a heritage that involves a series of cultural practices through which the conquerors (the dominant class) attempted to export the structures of the Old World to the New World. As Waisman has pointed out, the music

[1] All the translations are done by the author.
[2] A valuable account of these early contributions can be found in Claro Valdés (1974).

> Reveals the need of the newcomers to have a symbolic practice similar to that of their homeland, but also illustrates the way in which the Spaniards demonstrated to the Indians the magnificence of their god, with whose help they had conquered them. (2019, 29)

While it appears quite obvious that Hispanic American colonial music constitutes dissonant heritage, the question remains whether the historiography of this music can also be seen as dissonant. In order to answer this question, I examine several examples of texts about music developed under the paradigm of the colonial system, focusing in particular on the ways in which they describe the role and influence of subaltern groups on the practice and composition of this repertoire.

For Zdzisław Mach (2021), answering the question "How do we label cultural heritage?" involves choosing a way of constructing identity and meaning. In order to reflect on how to label this heritage, I will first focus on certain expressions used by the chroniclers who recorded the musical contributions of Indigenous Peoples at the time of the colonisation of America, quoted in the twentieth- and twenty-first-century historiography. With regard to Indigenous music, Spaniards abound in expressions that reflect the superiority of European musical development. Vicente Gesualdo, in his *Historia de la música en la Argentina*, states that "the judgement of the Spaniards was adverse to the music of Indians, and they denied it artistic qualities" (1961, 16). In Alonso González de Nájera's *Reparo de las guerras de Chile* (1889, quoted in Gesualdo 1961, 16), this soldier who fought in the Arauco War says: "They generally sing in the same tone, more sad than happy, and they are not fond of instruments of pleasure but of warlike, loud and plaintive instruments, which resound like a painful and sad cry."Simplicity (same tone), sadness (versus joy), and bellicosity (against pleasure) are the themes the chronicler uses to talk about the Indigenous musical heritage. Gesualdo also mentions Diego de Torres, who referred to the Diaguita celebrating their victory by playing "*pingollos*, which made a horrible sound" (1961, 16).

Furthermore, in colonial-era accounts, racial differences influence the categorisation of the music. One example is *El Lazarillo de ciegos caminantes*, a well-known literary work that recounts the journey from Montevideo to Lima via Buenos Aires as a picturesque guide to the geography and customs of colonial life at the end of the seventeenth century. In a fragment quoted by Gesualdo, Concolorcorvo (the pseudonymous of Alonso Carrió de la Vandera) describes the amusements of persons of African descent as "barbaric and coarse," and their "singing as a howl." Describing the instruments used by Black musicians, he claims that they "make such annoying and unpleasant altos and trebles that they make the donkeys cover their ears or run away," as opposed to the "pleasant little drums of Indians" (Gesualdo 1961, 122). In these words, we can see how colonialism shapes racial hierarchies (Belcastro 2021).

If we turn to the discourses of the historiography of twentieth-century colonial music, differences are, of course, substantial. It cannot be denied that the first musicologists who dealt with the colonial period sought scientific rigour and methodological neatness in their approach to this heritage.

This first phase of musicological studies focusing on the colonial period has often been labelled as positivist. The valuable monographs by Robert Stevenson and Samuel Claro Valdés provided a wealth of data on the authors, and included, in a pioneering way, the transcription of many unpublished works. However, as Leonardo Waisman (2021) has pointed out, "positivism is a misnomer for the founding era of colonial musicology." For Waisman, "Stevenson falls into the negation of positivism by not respecting the distance between the researcher and the object." In *The Music of Peru*, Stevenson states, for example, that "colonial masters perforce wrote simpler music" due to "not having any considerable body of professionals to perform their music, and never the eunuchs that came into vogue in Spanish cathedrals" (1959, 96). This is certainly a judgement based on data: the availability of professional musicians. However, Stevenson is much more categorical in establishing a hierarchy between Spanish

and Italian musicians. He describes Roque Ceruti (1683–1760), the chapel master at Lima Cathedral from 1728 to 1760 and one of the most prominent composers of the Viceroyalty of Peru, as "parvenu," about whom he claims that

> Even if he performed the music of Durón and Torrejón, and even if he soon adjusted by changing the spelling of his own name to Cheruti and by marrying a resident, his rise eventually spelled the end of Spanish musical hegemony in colonial Peru (1959, 118).

Robert Stevenson's description of Roque Ceruti does not seem to lend legitimacy to his musical activity in a way the author appears to award exclusively to Spaniards. Another of the pioneering works that provided valuable information about musical practices in the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru is the study by Andrés Sas *La Música en la Catedral de Lima durante el Virreinato* (1971). Even today, this work is still a fundamental reference thanks to the information about the functioning of the musical chapel that it provides. At the beginning of the text, Sas states that he has avoided making "exclusive or excessively subjective judgements about the writings and events described in it, referring to essentially Peruvian musical events" (1971, 24). In the text about the functioning of the Cathedral Chapel, the author attempts to overturn the idea of any kind of racial discrimination practiced by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Sas transcribes an 1804 report by the chapel master Juan Beltrán (1766–1807) in which the latter argues that the admission of persons of Black and mixed heritage in the musical ensemble discourages noble families (1971, 85). The author goes on to argue that discrimination against the "legitimate advancement of *los hombres de color* was no longer tolerated" (1971, 86). Further on, Sas states categorically that

> Never, from the formation of the music chapel of the main church, before 1600, until its dissolution in the middle of the nineteenth century, did the Lords of the Chapter intervene in the appointment of musicians to posts and the allocation of the corresponding income, with the slightest prejudice of race. (1971, 120–121)

Throughout the text, the author emphasises "the invariable tolerance of the Metropolitan Chapter (and even of the archbishopric) in matters of race" (Sas 1971, 93). If we take into account that, as Giovanna Belcastro (2021) states, "racism is directly linked to the formation of the States," Sas's position appears to be an attempt to whitewash history, probably trying to link the colonial and republican stages of Peruvian music with a nationalist bias. However, the author falls back into the racial hierarchisation characteristic of the chroniclers' voices when talking about the musicians of the Cathedral Chapel: "While the Indians were skilled instrumentalists, it must be acknowledged that they were not (and are not now) generally so well endowed by nature in terms of beautiful vocal timbre" (1971, 115–116).

3. Towards a New Perspective: Overcoming Eurocentrism and Contributions from Other Disciplines

Since the 1990s, a new generation of musicologists, born in Latin America, United States and Spain, has been leading a significant change in the study of Hispanic American colonial music. These musicologists take a critical stance towards certain approaches assumed by the historiographical tradition of colonial studies in the twentieth century. Their writings revise and overcome the unidirectional centre–periphery axis between Europe and the colonies. They also question the vision of colonial America passively receiving European musical innovations, indebted to a hegemonic conception of Central Europe music composition.

Thus, in 1996, Bernardo Illari questioned "the fundamentally static idea of the work, inspired by the conception of a self-sufficient creation, with only aesthetic and transcendent (immutable, eternal) functions, current in the central tradition of Western European concert music" when dealing with the repertoire of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries preserved in the Cathedral of La Plata (Sucre 1996, 379–380).

The same author has also drawn attention to the limits of the traditional narratives of the history of music, as they place "an almost absolute emphasis on the creation of works, and not on the performance or circulation of repertoire" (2001a, 344). By studying the opera fragments preserved in the vast *Archivo y Biblioteca Nacionales de Bolivia* (Sucre), Illari goes beyond the traditional studies that considered these sources merely as a repertoire imported from Europe and limited themselves only to describing and cataloguing. The author links this music to social practices and, instead of creation, he highlights its circulation and performance (2001a, 373).

More recently, Alejandro Vera has pointed out that "historiography has begun to overcome the vision of colonial America as an isolated group of territories," underdeveloped in comparison to Europe, "to assume that the Old and the New World were closely linked to each other" (2020, 59). In his studies, the Chilean musicologist has also refuted the idea of a passive reception of European musical innovations in American colonies, drawing attention to "changes undergone by the repertory during its complex process of reception" (Vera 2015, 183). Through the study of a manuscript with music of Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) and Muzio Clementi (1752–1832), preserved in the Franciscan Convent of Lima, Vera has shown how the transformation of music imported from Europe was due not only to the musical instruments available but also to aesthetic preferences (2015, 194).

Some ongoing research aims to overcome the dissonance present in many twentieth-century discourses by employing methodologies borrowed from other fields. An example of this are the most recent studies on the circulation of music in the colonial period. Alejandro Vera, whose most recent studies shed light on the reception of European music in the Viceroyalty of Peru in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, uses concepts taken from history, Atlantic history and cultural history. Historians such as John Elliot, Serge Gruzinski, or Peter Burke are abundantly quoted in these works to provide them with a theoretical framework that transcends the limits of classical historiography on colonial music (see also Vera 2021). In addition, Lluís Bertran and Oriol Brugarolas (2020) have provided substantial information on the musical trade between Barcelona and the Viceroyalty of New Spain after the promulgation of the *Decree of Free Trade* (1778–1810) using the tools of economic history. In their research on the shipment of strings and musical instruments from Barcelona to Veracruz, these two researchers take as a reference the studies of Àlex Sánchez, Carlos Martínez Shaw, Josep Maria Delgado, Josep Fontana, Francesc Valls Junyent, and Walter Octavio Arias Estrada, among others.

The doctoral thesis on which I am currently working at the Department of Musicology of the Complutense University of Madrid aims to provide a new contribution along the same lines.[3]

In my research, I aspire to offer the first systematic study on the importation of musical objects between Spain and the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata (1776–1810). To this end, a methodological approach that is based on the economic history of the Viceroyalty of Río de la Plata is proving to be fundamental. Along with classic publications, such as those by Guillermo Céspedes del Castillo (1946), Ricardo Levene (1952), or Sergio Villalobos (1962), I take as a reference the studies developed in the twentieth and

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twenty-first century by Hernán Asdrúbal (1993) and José María Mariluz Urquijo (2003), as well as the recent research by Fernando Jumar (2019).

Although, as Alejandro Vera points out, "there is no research work that is merely descriptive" (2021, 570), economic history is a particularly useful approach for musicology. Insofar as it is focused on qualitative aspects, it allows us to overcome the dissonance inherent in the historiography of Hispanic American colonial music, which, as we have seen, is often troubled by subjective assessments.

Another particularly novel element of these approaches with respect to twentieth-century historiography is the use of documentary sources such as ship registers or custom notes, documentation that has traditionally received little attention in musicology (Gembero Ustárroz 2001). Working with these sources also allows us to enrich our understanding of musical practices by placing them in the context of trafficking not only of objects but also of social and cultural practices.

4. The Role of Subaltern Groups in the New Historiography of Hispanic American Colonial Music

Another key element in which the historiography of the last three decades has shown signs of substantial change is the treatment of the role of subaltern groups in musical practices of the colonial period. As noted above in the examples taken from twentieth-century historiography, when musicologists referred to these groups, they often reproduced—consciously or inadvertently—trends inherited from the chroniclers. The ease with which Indigenous groups had built instruments and imitated Western models went hand in hand with the undervaluing of their voices, another common tendency in these discourses (Waisman 1999).

These studies did not critically review the role of institutions in the social order in which these practices had taken place, and which must also have conditioned the perception and words of the chroniclers. When sides are taken, as in the case of Andrés Sas's study, it is often to justify the policies of colonial institutions. According to Stanisław Kistryn (2021), cultural heritage can be seen as a means to "formal symbolic celebration of a past full of elements not easy to take account of and not easy to forget." In this regard, the pioneering study by Bernardo Illari, *Polychoral Culture: Cathedral Music in La Plata (Bolivia), 1680-1730*, takes into account the social, political, and religious structures in which musical practices developed, and establishes a direct comparison between the configuration of colonial society and the music (2001b).

The polychoral repertoire—so characteristic of the musical production of chapel masters of the Cathedral of La Plata (Sucre, nowadays), such as Juan de Araujo (1649–1712), in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—is, for the author of this work, a direct reflection of society: different choruses facing one another, different social groups called upon to occupy different roles and not to mix with one another. Under this thesis, Illari proposes to replace the category *Barroco Mestizo*, developed in the twentieth-century historiography to represent a cultural exchange in horizontal terms, by the category *Barroco Criollo.* According to the author, the transition between the seventeenth and the eighteenth century was marked by the replacement of a Peninsular elite by a Creole one, but subaltern groups remained outside the spaces of power:

> Music, understood as a meaningful social practice, has as much to say about the principles of Spanish behavior in the Latin American cities as about the Bolivian construction of a Mestizo Baroque. The principles are absolutely evident in the cathedral music culture. It was mainly a "Spanish" one: *Españoles*, whether Peninsulars or Criollos, predominated throughout the colonial period. These *Españoles* were in control of everything that mattered, from

> the best-remunerated and highest-ranking positions in the chapel to the musico-poetic-discourse generated and maintained through composition and performance. There was no intercultural dialogue in equal conditions; rather, sharing power among the different cultural groups was openly unequal. (2001b, 105–106)

As these studies illustrate, there is a solid relationship between social groups in power, repertoires, and music trade.[4] However, these advances do not exempt us from establishing new discourses free from specific bias. A more global view that takes into account social, political and cultural processes must become more inclusive and, necessarily, less dissonant. The new approaches also involve reflection on the use of certain words to refer to concepts and human communities. If we return to the participation of subaltern groups in society and their role in the musical practice of colonial America, it is worth looking at terminological issues. Leonardo Waisman chooses to use the terms predominantly employed in the writings of that time:

> To sweeten it . . ., as is the tendency nowadays, is a kind of euphemism that only serves to wash the conscience of the writer and hide the racism and relations of domination that characterised our societies (and that, in many cases, are still in force). (2019, 12)

It is once again an effort to make a silenced reality visible (and present). One of the most recent academic approaches to this reality is the PhD thesis of Clarisa Eugenia Pedrotti (2017), published under the provocative title *Pobres, negros y esclavos: Música religiosa en Córdoba del Tucumán (1699-1840)*. Despite the fact that little musical sources have been preserved in this territory, Pedrotti has reconstructed the musical practices of these subaltern groups solely through documentary sources. It is an approach that provides information on the biographies and musical trajectories of specific people, with names and surnames, who were fundamental in the development of musical life in Hispanic America during the colonial period. Today, ongoing research continues to explore the echo and scope of these groups in musical life during the colonial period, delving deeper into their roots and the mobility of people linked to the slave trade. Thus, Claudio Ramírez Uribe, from the Complutense University of Madrid, is currently researching the *villancicos de negros*—a sub-genre of the *villancico* that aimed to represent the way of speaking of the African enslaved (Baker 2008)—from the city of Puebla (Viceroyalty of New Spain) in the seventeenth century. In these studies, Ramírez Uribe (2022) attempts, through transversal methodology, to investigate whether certain elements present in the works respond to a literary cliché or to a parody of reality. The social and political implications of this phenomenon are, in any case, difficult to avoid:

> [T]he reproduction of the stereotype of the black as a childish, playful, silly and devout individual, became in New Spain an instrument to keep at bay, through deculturation, and later reculturation and acculturation, an enslaved population that was a majority in relation to the "white" one and was also prone to rebellions. (Ramírez Uribe 2021, 92)

All these studies, developed over the last twenty-five years, offer discourses that incorporate the way in which the social, political, and ecclesiastical structures existing in colonial America conditioned musical practices. They also overcome the centre (Central Europe)–periphery (Latin America) paradigm in the narrative of musical development in the colonial period, typical of the twentieth-century historiography, and recognise with dignity and respect the historical role of subaltern groups.

[4] The most comprehensive study focused on the comercial dynamics of the music trade operating in Madrid from the end of the eighteenth century remains Bordas 2005. See also Marín and Leza 2014.

5. The Analysis of Performativity: A Historiography to Overcome Dissonance

This section focuses on another area of interest in the recent historiography of Hispanic American colonial music: the performativity of colonial music. According to Javier Marín, performativity goes beyond the "performance or sonic realisation of a work" and implies "the way in which that performance produces subjectivities and automatically becomes an action that transforms reality" (2016, 294 – 295).

A series of truisms that characterise the interpretation of the music usually called *Latin American Baroque*—a terminology that has also been debated by Waisman (2012)—are revealed through the comparative analysis of various recordings of the repertoire: the recurrent use of percussion, the use of techniques and timbres typical of popular music, combined with other characteristics of the early music tradition, and a general conception of this music permeated with cheerful and carefree notes.

For Marín López, this deployment responds to a quest for "Latin American difference," which implies a recourse to a "folklorising exoticism as a genuine symbol of essentialism and originality" (2016, 293). According to Waisman, to the extent that these interpretations are recorded, the records "contribute to the creation of canons that reveal values and attitudes that may operate subliminally as new forms of colonialism" (2000, 36). Geoff Baker has also reflected on the performance of *Latin American Baroque*, warning that "a historically correct performance would be a racist performance" (2008, 443). The musicologist draws attention to the responsibility of the audience in listening to this repertoire, but, above all, to the responsibility of the performers, who should assume a "post-colonial thinking" in order to "inform the performance of colonial repertoire" (2008, 443). This would imply not so much a change in performance style, but a more reflexive attitude.

Unlike Illari, Baker does not reject the term *Barroco Mestizo*, but rather categorises it as part of this "post-colonial thinking" insofar as, contrary to what happened in the colonial period, the category *mestizo* today has positive connotations. Ultimately, Baker argues for the recovery of the voices of subaltern groups, voices and histories that need to be brought back into the picture. In his opinion, it is the performers who have the capacity and the fundamental responsibility to do so.

What is remarkable about these studies is not only that they denounce the dissonance present in the performance of Latin American Baroque music, but that they create, from the verification of this dissonance, a new historiographical discourse aimed at overcoming it.

6. Conclusions

The historiography focused on the music created in Hispanic America during the period of colonial domination constitutes a heterogeneous corpus of texts that, from the first four decades of the twentieth century to the present day, has sought to recover of this musical past. The foundational texts of Hispanic American colonial musicology, despite their supposedly positivist orientation, constitute a dissonant heritage insofar as they reflect a "selection made by the dominant class in order to support its own power" (Battilani, 2021), by reproducing categories inherited from the discourses of the chroniclers and conquerors. Some of these categories are common in many musicological studies, especially those carried out during the twentieth century, such as the consideration of the colonies as territories that passively received European musical innovations.

On the other hand, these texts often refer to the musical abilities of subaltern groups by underlining certain manual skills while emphasising the ugliness or lack of purity of their vocal timbres. At the same

time, these discourses do not pay attention to the relations of social and political domination that determined the context in which these musical practices took place.

From the late 1990s to the present day, a new generation of musicologists has brought new perspectives that have contributed to overcoming this dissonant character. These new perspectives are characterised by looking past the centre–periphery paradigm, by drawing attention to active processes of reception of European music, in which the repertoire underwent important transformations not only for technical but also for aesthetic reasons. Moreover, the use of methodologies from other disciplines, such as history, economic history, or cultural history, helps to reinforce integrative and less biased views, giving greater emphasis on quantitative aspects as opposed to subjective evaluations.

These studies have also dealt with the role that subaltern groups occupied in colonial society and played in musical practices, placing them in a context of political, social, and cultural domination, often exercised violently. The visibilisation of these groups, without idealising a supposed encounter between equals with the conquistadors, also reinforces a respectful look at individuals, with names and personal histories, who played a fundamental role in the musical practices of colonial America.

Particularly prominent examples of the new historiographical currents of Hispanic American colonial music are those publications that focus on the study of the performativity of this repertoire. Through the analysis of parameters such as instrumentation or the use of certain resources and techniques typical of other repertoires (e.g., popular music), the search for an exotic character and the contradiction implied by the search for a historical performance of this repertory is made visible.

Far from merely highlighting this dissonance, these studies also propose thoughtful ways to delve into respectful, conscious, and inclusive perspectives in bringing this music to the stage.

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Dissonant Heritage: Concepts, Critiques, Cases
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12. Beyond Being: Dissident(ificatory) Responses towards a Heritage of Becoming

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Abstract

In this chapter, I explore the limits of dissonance when heritage is entangled in contemporary conflicts. I reflect on how the distance existing between people consuming heritage and those who have lived it becomes incoherent when it relates to spaces and places that are still being used and/or modified upon. I explore the epistemologies that open up when we embrace dissidence as a counter-move towards alternative ways to pose questions such as: to whom does heritage belong? When does something become heritage? Or, ultimately, who belongs to heritage? In order to respond to this, and to enlighten the latter question in particular, I work through a case study that functions with the tension existing between Thermì, a prehistoric site, and Moria, the largest refugee camp in EU ground before its burning down in September 2020, both on the island of Lesvos, distant only 7.1 km from each other.

Keywords

Hegemonies, Performativity, Fragmented narratives, Presentness, Diffracted temporalities, Entanglements

The flesh is nothing less than the ethereal social (after) life of bare existence
(Weheliye 2014, 53)

1. Introduction

Since this chapter speaks about heritage, I would like to begin with a memory. In no particular order, I remember waking up to the burning down of Moria, the largest refugee camp in Europe. Furthermore, I remember writing about space in ancient Greek polis and surfing through Google Maps to check the exact distance between Moria, which had that morning caught my attention, and Thermi, an archaeological site, both located on the Greek island of Lesbos. The 7.1 km distance from one to another did not come as a surprise. However, their proximity made me feel very uncomfortable. I realised that the dissonance resided in the contradiction between their cohabitation of the same space and their diametrically opposed significations as "historical" locations.

H[1]istory and its consequent cultural and heritage manifestation are framed by time and constructed within a chronological narrative. It is particularly important to take this point into consideration in relation to the case study examined in this chapter—the distances existing between Moria and Thermi that go far beyond the material ones—because of the discursive impossibility to which these two places are bound. For this case study, the impossibility is already assumed by the specific location from where this chapter departs—the space of research. The concept of discourse is pivotal for the theoretical framework of my analysis. I further give weight to the use of concepts as methodologies, as a medium to be used as

> More than mere passive agents helping us explain the world we are immersed in. The way we put concepts together does not only unpack them as methodologies but also gives them a space and a place for recognition, a point of departure for a new (con)figuration. (Harris 2021, 41)

Since a comprehensive theoretical genealogy of epistemological power would exceed the length limits of this chapter, I have decided to work through a particular leading text, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) by Michel Foucault. In this book, Foucault deals with a great number of notions that are all part of a collective critique and theoretical frame that focus on the process and generation of discourse, knowledge, and power. My main point in this chapter is to examine the ways in which dissonance resides in contemporary conflicts and their material culture and to explore how an analysis of these aspects can explode and expose the dissonance hidden in seemingly harmonious historic heritage. This dissonance may be unveiled by juxtaposing this heritage with the ways in which current discourses are active and generative of subjectivities and specific ideologies.

2. Context: The Fragments Involved

In order to contextualise my case study, I would like to begin by providing the readers with the necessary background information on the sites analysed in this chapter, both of which are located on the Greek island of Lesbos.

[1] I use capital italised initials history, archaeology and heritage studies intentionally so as to call attention to their importance and hegemonic position as disciplines.

Thermi is today famous because it is one of the most prominent and best-conserved prehistoric settlements not only on the island, but in Greece. It was founded *circa* 3000 BC and is one of the first examples of urbanisation in the whole Mediterranean. With the plain of Thermi being one of the most fertile territories on the island, it is not unanticipated that a large community flourished here throughout the early and middle Bronze Age. It is also relevant to mention the strategic position of Thermi in relation to the flux of cultural influence articulated by the Balkans and Troy to the North, Cyprus and its connection to the Egyptian world to the South, and a strong connection with the Cyclades and continental Greece surrounding its seas.[2] The other space touched upon in this chapter is the refugee camp of Moria, founded in 2013. As a bureaucratic and symbolic entrance to the European ethos, in 2015, Moria became a refugee and migrant hotspot, as well as a registration and control centre.

While far from concepts such as "cultural palimpsest" or "urbanisation" which are essential to the site of Thermi, Moria has gained a central position with respect to other life situations, accommodating a particularly large population. According to media reports, at the time of the tragic events of September 2020, twenty thousand people were dwelling in a camp that had been constructed with the capacity to host a maximum of 2800. The majority of its inhabitants were relocated after the fire, some to the camp of Kara Tepe, and most to other fragments of camps around the territory. Moria was a geopolitical explosion of contemporary conflict. It was a space in which to conceal European shame in the name of justice and reparation for the effects of wars created, as in dystopias, years before.

3. Theoretical Fragmentology

This chapter employs Foucault's *oeuvre* out of a need to situate and locate the limits of the epistemological constructions of my own research. Using *The Archaeology of Knowledge* as the main reference for my mapping of concepts, I understand discourse as a set of relations that exceeds the historical record it contains and has more to do with the analysis of how this content shapes meaning, produces knowledge and accumulates power. In this sense,

> Discourse is not the majestically unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing, speaking subject, but, on the contrary, a totality, in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. It is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed. (Foucault 1972, 55)

Discursive knowledges, then, as we can see in Foucault's work, are related to certain bodies and subjectivities, not only as elements bound to these particular identities but, more importantly, as elements that produce the circumstances of these identities. In other words, when something is stated, it amplifies and evinces a set of structures existing a priori and interdependent in an invisible web, a connection that does not depend upon continuity.

In this sense, when a historical object is created, it occurs through a set of practices and repetitions that are not just a question of describing an ontological fact, but the impossibility of escaping the epistemological construction to which they are attached. In the following sections, I will revisit this searching for its connections with the concept of *performativity* and will examine them through a queer

[2] The site was excavated during the early 1930s by Winifred Lamb. The fact that Lamb was both a woman archaeologist and British studying the Anatolian material history is interesting as it reflects the entangled and multifarious strands of this chapter. In this sense, it would be problematic to adopt a single position regarding the value of a woman doing academic research in 1929 since the epistemological reminiscence of British imperialism is also at work here. This critique is beyond the scope of this chapter; however, I do want to acknowledge this connection.

lens. I will further work with the concept of *fragmentology* as the theoretical accountability for the use of certain fragments that escape the notion of theory as a whole, as a unity. I choose to work with those pieces of Foucault's text, which can be used to study the case of Moria as an object of *H*eritage *St*udies and its relation to the embodied case of Thermi. In terms of discourse and signification, this relation works through tension and friction.

The limitations of these assumptions of theory as a unified whole are evident when we recognise how spaces and material experiences that are bound to a contemporary temporality are refused to be considered as historical remains and heritage. There are situations that entangle in ways that make their particularities and independent aspects dissolve in a general sense of their existence. In other words, the way we narrate, connect, and juxtapose situations and their surrounding elements, sometimes hide the individual pieces that conform to those experiences and that are parts that exist outside the need of becoming history. Following the essential role played by temporalities and chronology in the construction of the epistemologies we work through and with, I would like to refer to Foucault's clear-cut division between presentness and actuality.

This dichotomy may be construed as representing the signs performed in the discourses surrounding Thermi and Moria. On the one hand, even if Thermi is inscribed in a past distant from the present, it is also inscribed in the actuality of its cultural significance and, thus, constitutes an epistemological fact; on the other, Moria, even if placed in the presentness of current contemporary conflicts, is not a decisive factor for contemporary History.

Placing Karen Barad's work on diffraction (2007) in conversation with Foucault's concept of continuity, which is mentioned above, I would like to focus on their interesting connection as fundamental to these critiques since the fragmented narratives we are referring to are tied to this sense of diffracted temporalities. The notion of continuity,

> Is a paradoxical one: because it is both an instrument and an object of research; because it divides up the field of which it is the effect; because it enables the historian to individualize different domains but can be established only by comparing those domains. (Foucault 1972, 9)

(Dis)continuity is construed here not only as an object of study but, more importantly, as a tool, a lens, through which to dig into the past in relation to the present(ness). In this chapter, I employ (dis)continuity as a methodology of approximation to the analysed case study. (Dis)continuity is what resides between the present and *H*istory in the case of Moria and Thermi.

It also represents the consciousness of an impossibility, because of the very presentness, for Moria, of both being and imminently becoming history.

In this sense, it needs to be emphasised that this impossibility is not an inherent status of the situations that I examine in this chapter. Rather, the specific circumstances determining the construction of knowledge within fields such as *Hi*story, *A*rchaeology, or *He*ritage *S*tudies, evict the possibility of facing certain realities that exist but are difficult to deal with through traditional research methodologies, which ultimately function as genealogies of thought. Therefore, the impossibility also encloses and contains the potentiality of a critical opening up of these fields towards these contemporary sites of conflict and dissonance in order to prevent them from disappearing from any historical account.

My call for such opening is not a claim towards the aesthetics of ruins and conflict (a topic that should also be discussed), but a demand for justice in the face of indifference and an act of response-ability from our own privileged locations. It is a form of side-taking in the face of injustices that should not be silenced by the historical distractions that we perpetuate through constructing exclusive research. Discourse, therefore, is a genealogical practice, a machine of material generation.

Thus, when speaking about these two locations as pseudo-shares,[3] we observe that the discursive narrative about prehistoric Greece generates a reality that is tangible in contrast to the impossible narration that throws Moria into a non-place. Non-place is understood here in the sense of Marc Augé's (2008) theories about spaces that, because of their lack of signification, preclude an anthropological vision. The theoretical impossibility here is important because the constructed subject it produces also responds to that lack of location and is thrown into anonymity. Following the above-mentioned potentiality, the void that certain *topoi* represent, their discursive absence, already manifests a rule in order:

> The discursive formation is not, therefore, a developing totality, with its own dynamism or inertia, carrying with it, in an unformulated discourse, what it does not say, what it has not yet said, or what contradicts it at that moment; it is not a rich, difficult germination, it is a distribution of gaps, voids, absences, limits, divisions. (Foucault 1972,119)

This way, absences, just as accumulative presences, are constructed and produced. The amplification of these absences connects to another of Foucault's concepts, the *principle of rarification*—a rarity that has more to do with the criteria that allow atypical statements to enter the conversation than with what these statements enunciate.

As heritage is the field that is most directly affected by the arguments of this chapter, I will approach it as the dispositive that allows the formation of certain identities within chronotopes.[4] Heritage helps reify those identities through the claims of culture and *H*istory, maintaining the epistemological order of things and the authority of certain constructions of knowledge over others. I would like to use Laurajane Smith's idea of "Authorized Heritage Discourse" (2006) to speak about the assumptions and assimilations that the hegemonic understanding of heritage reproduces on a daily basis. The discourses in which authorised heritages are embedded use and assume that cultural remains are entangled in a time-framing of the past as the pivotal element to render it meaningful to a community or group of people assembled and connected through this past. Thus, the identification between the past and heritage is an assumption implied in historical discourses. This construction of the past and *H*istory is another example of how knowledge, meaning, significance and epistemologies merely constitute the perceived reality and demonstrates their potentialities and limitations.

Theories on power, hegemonies, and on how they are implemented through discourses in different fields of studies are many and diverse. I will not, therefore, stop at those parts of Smith's argumentation regarding who has the power of enunciation. Instead, I would like to highlight a specific aspect of this text which so far has been overlooked: the temporality construction that heritage has absorbed from its constitution.

As Smith re-evaluates through an analysis of John Urry's "How Societies Remember the Past"' (1996), out of many boundaries that we can find in the construction of this official discourse making, "[o]ne boundary disconnects the idea of heritage from the present and present-day values and aspirations so that it becomes something confined to 'the past'" (Smith 2006, 12). We need to rethink heritage along these lines as a continuum that reaches to the present.

[3] By pseudo-shares I mean that these two places merely share geographical space but do not partake of the same significance in terms of heritage.

[4] Chronotope is used here in the Bakhtinian sense, referring to a situation that is analysed through a time-space frame. To this I also attach relationality as a situational element that breaks the fixity of the ontological construction of time and space.

4. Entanglements: Race and Coloniality in Authorised Heritage Discourses

In this section of the chapter, I focus on the particularities of certain categories in the construction of the two analysed spaces, Moria and Thermi. I suggest that their relationality resides in the way they can be put together, and bonded with each other, as this chapter proposes. The ontological reasonings that we sometimes find intrinsic to certain experiences, situations, or examinations would not respond to the logic of a comparison between these two different spaces. What links them in entanglements is rather the performative action of looking at them as *chronotropically* similar locations, following Nigel Thrift's stance on how performativity unsettles our normative visions of materiality:

> Spaces can be stabilised in such a way that they act like political utterances, guiding subjects to particular conclusions. But, as a counterpoint, the fabric of space is so multifarious that there are always holes and tears in which new forms of expression can come into being. Space is, therefore, constitutive in the strongest possible sense and it is not a misuse of the term to call it performative, as its many components continually act back, drawing on a range of different aesthetics as they do so. (2003, 2022–2023)

According to this view of space as performative, we can distance ourselves more easily from the rigidity of the historical construction of places of significance. A detailed examination of the categories at work in each of these two cases demonstrates that *H*istory is not an activated element in Moria, nor does race play a role in the case of Thermi. The non-substantial significance of these categories in the analysed cases does not mean, however, that they do not have an impact on or are non-existent in each of these places. In other words, the fact that race and *H*istory are not made visible in the narratives about Thermi and Moria should not lead to the conclusion that there is no racialised construction of the justified body for *A*rchaeology, or that the void that Moria represents for contemporary historical records right now will not have historical consequences in the future. Even if, at present, these consequences appear as absences and are not marked as historical landmarks, they are there in the making.

The construction of race and otherness in the case of Moria and Thermi responds to a reflection on the existing discursive dynamics of exclusion-inclusion. Indeed, the element of race in the case of Thermi is active in invisible ways. This is so both because of the construction of inclusiveness that—in the identity that Thermi represents—is taken for granted, and because of the temporality it informs, a past that is consumed in the present. I am particularly intrigued by the way in which the construction of time, in general, and the past, in particular, functions as a dispositive that allows certain subjects to escape the visuality of their very representations. What appears to happen in Thermi, in opposition to Moria, is that the condition of the past constructed through the present allows the subjectivities related to it to neglect the necessary revision of their own construction. Instead, these subjectivities are already shaped beforehand, not through a material analysis of remains, but rather through the discarding of critical issues of our present, such as the construction of race. This is not to say that there is no translocation of present identities to the past, but rather that the construction and ways by which those identities are constituted are elements that exceed the temporality of the past. Thus, the ways in which prehistoric times are equalised through historical discourses to an idea of European ancestors—that of White, male, abled subjects—overlooks the way in which race is still active and helps the construction of an authorised past in our presentness. What I mean to emphasise here is, once again, the dichotomy between the activation of certain categories in the present and the form in which they are transformed and mitigated through their introduction as *H*istory, thus past.

The entanglements that exist between situations that, a priori, do not seem to have connections with other constructions and intersections of social categories, have an immediate effect on the way a body

and its identity construction are, at the same time, perceived and ignored. It is perceived in that it is recognisable even if viewed as external to normative patterns of identity. It is ignored since the different assembled elements that conform to that particular identity are not recognised, and this provokes the distancing between that body and its identity. I use the concept of assemblage in the sense formulated by Jasbir Puar to focus on how biopolitics enacts the differentiation between the historical corpse and the bare-life bodies. Borrowing Giorgio Agamben's concept of bare life, I place emphasis on the way in which bodies in Moria stand in opposition to the subjectivities related to Thermi through their meaning. What matters in Moria is the biological dimension of the bodies, while Thermi is based upon acts of signification attached to discursive practices. As conceptualised by Puar, "an assemblage is more attuned to interwoven forces that merge and dissipate time, space, and body against linearity, coherency, and permanency" (2007, 212).

In her critique of the conception of identities as stable and named, Puar proposes to work with an idea of identities as affected, enacted, and performed by circumstances that go beyond the monism of the body. An identity is hardly ever a fixed category that works outside of the world conditions in which it is inscribed. Instead, identities are in a continuous contamination in which the body functions as subject and object of that permeation, exceeding the human exceptionalism that anthropocentrism has inscribed in identity studies. Puar reworks the theories related to intersectionality, popularised through the work by Kimberlé Crenshaw, and proposes an intersection between assemblage and intersectionality. In her view, intersectionality has been important as a site of resistance to dismissed identities – a strategic focal point from where to fight back against their oppressive representation, but it has also reinforced the idea of identities as fixed categories through time-space. In Puar's own words,

> To dismiss assemblage in favour of retaining intersectional identitarian frameworks is to miss the ways in which societies of control apprehend and produce bodies as information, as matter that functions not or predominantly through signification, as modulation of capacities, as individuals in populations with any array of diverse switch points . . . and surveille bodies not on identity positions alone but through affective tendencies and statistical probabilities. (2013, 387)

Puar stresses the idea of affective identities and this proposal checkmates the image of identities linked to bodies as islands, perceived as isolated non-places.

Examining the two cases central to this chapter through the lens of assemblage, we can see, then, that the historical accounts and discursive elaborations of these two spaces are determined by affective circumstances that entangle and intertwine with the bodies connected to each of these locations. As I have stated at the beginning of this section, the ways in which these two spaces are assembled in one case study is a circumstantial decision that goes beyond their intrinsic relationality with each other. Following the idea of the instability of connections between the elements that conform with both the interiority and exteriority of these spaces, the assemblage also works as a cartographic methodology according to which categories, such as race and heritage, that are symbolically external to these two places, become attached to them through a specifically generated chronotope common to both. The racial architecture of the dominant identitarian genealogies in Thermi is revealed in this performed cartography. At the same time, the lack of genealogy in the dominant historical discourse in Moria is also evinced. Race and heritage become inseparable elements to confront and challenge.

These assemblages also highlight the dissonant temporalities of these two locations. Memory and genealogy work in different directions here, since the fact that Moria is not allowed a future does not mean it is erased from memory. Specifically in this case, the construction of Moria as a place outside temporality coexists with its potentiality as a space of memory. But not yet, not now. This potentiality is

established in its accountability as a historical fact, as a necropolis, as an archaeological site, once it becomes past.

5. Conclusions

As experienced throughout different current examples of dissonant heritage in post-conflicts, there is an urgent need to activate and vindicate realities that were silenced or erased from memory. This is recurrent in many of these examples. With this goal in mind, this chapter has examined the ways in which heritage, memory, and identity are constructed through a fixed idea of what the past means. These constructions and fixations are embedded within knowledge formation and therefore, they are linked to research practices and places of epistemological generation. In this sense, the responsibility we have as academics, researchers, and political subjects to act as advocates for situations of contemporary conflicts, dissonant histories, and heritages, is an important act of accountability. Through connecting two very different realities coexisting in a liminal place, the archaeological site of Thermi and the refugee camp of Moria, I have engaged in questions of how the binding of these two places together works in a performative manner, allowing categories that have not yet been activated to enact and become significant to *H*istorical genealogies and *H*eritage *S*tudies. The vindication of present dissonant spaces of conflict, such as Moria, opens up approaches to *H*istory that exceed the linear temporality in which it has traditionally been inscribed and disrupts the power structures to which *H*istory responds. This claim, ultimately, interpellates new considerations of memories and identities and provokes response-able reactions to unjust situations, which we often tend to ignore when looking at them from our privileged positions.

With the deconstruction of a normative understanding of time and temporality inside disciplines dealing with *H*istory and memory, this chapter has aimed at dislocating the present in order to anticipate significant silences. These currently created voids encapsulate potential dissonances in a (not so) distant future. In this sense, the way in which dissonance has been used in this contribution is inherently dissonant: it speaks about a heritage and a memory of the future. Or, in other words, it faces material injustice in the present to foresee cultural dissonance yet to come.

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13. Arts and Dissonance in Post-Francoist Spain: Poetry, Historical (Post)memory and Consensus in the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid

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Abstract

In the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid, where thousands of Republicans were executed both during and after the Spanish Civil War, the artistic memorial to commemorate the victims of Francoism caused great controversy. The monument included plaques containing verses of the Republican poet Miguel Hernández, the final words of one of the thirteen young female leftists murdered during the first years of the dictatorship, and the names of the three thousand people executed there. However, conservative and extreme right parties stood against the initiative, claiming that "the war had no winners or losers," and decided to substitute all of the plaques with a new one which did not meet the expectations of the civil rights associations participating in the project. This chapter analyses the role of the participatory strategies followed by Forlì's ATRIUM project at the memorial in Madrid in overcoming dissonance and establishing a new consensus to resignify Francoist heritage from a democratic, antifascist, and collective perspective.

Keywords

Miguel Hernández, Francoism, Dissonant heritage, Almudena Cemetery, Poetry

We poets are the wind of the people:
we are born to go blowing through their pores and to lead
their eyes and their feelings toward the most beautiful summits
(Miguel Hernández, quoted in Téllez 2018, 123)

1. Introduction

Madrid, 2020. Three empty plaques stand in the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid. They were intended to pay homage to the victims of the Francoist regime, following an arrangement between historical memory associations and the Municipality of Madrid, under Manuela Carmena's leftist government (2015–2019). As agreed, the project was to display the names of 2937 victims on three walls alongside three plaques whose texts not only revealed the horrors of Francoist repression but also served to deal with dissonant heritage and pay symbolic reparations to the victims of Francoism. The first one was a short extract from a farewell letter written by one of the "Thirteen Roses", a group of young women executed by the regime on 5 August 1939, whose story was echoed by literature and cinema (Fonseca 2010; Martínez-Lázaro 2007). The second consisted of a brief paragraph explaining how thousands of civilians had been murdered by the dictatorship during the post-war period. The last plaque quoted twelve verses of "*El herido"* ("The wounded man"), an ode to freedom by Miguel Hernández (1910–1942), which was written at the end of the war and popularised during the anti-Francoist resistance in the 1970s as a song, "*Para la libertad*" ("For freedom"), composed by Joan Manuel Serrat.

In May 2019, the conservative José Luis Martínez-Almeida, despite coming second in the municipal elections, was elected mayor thanks to the support of the controversial far-right party Vox. Even though the construction of the memorial was already in progress, Martínez-Almeida accused Manuela Carmena's project of "sectarianism" and of imposing a "hierarchy" of victims. In February 2020, he decided to substitute the plaques and the names with a "depoliticised" short text condemning the violence suffered by Madrilenians of all political, ideological, and religious backgrounds between 1936 and 1944, diminishing the memorial's original meaning (Gilmartin 2006). An act that may be unsettling for democrats abroad is hardly surprising in contemporary post-Francoist Spain. Behind the commemoration lies a complex issue concerning a discordant *lieu de mémoire* and a dissonant work of art within a context of confronted collective memories. This conflict is embodied in the third plaque that displayed the poem by Miguel Hernández, a communist writer and a martyr, whose figure as a poet has been resignified as a symbol of democratic values and antifascism.

If one is to undertake this study, a detailed and progressive structure is needed. First, I will examine the Spanish traumatic and warlike context in which "*El herido"* was composed in order to understand its significance in the divided Spanish post- and collective memories. Secondly, I will analyse the variations in both the poem and the poet's significance during the last years of the dictatorship despite the efforts of Franco's censorship regime. Lastly, I will examine the poem's relevance in contemporary Spanish collective memories and popular culture in order to explore to what extent this literary work and the rest of the designed memorial could be a proper artistic approach to achieve consensus and provide victims with appropriate symbolic reparations.

2. Poetry and Political Commitment in the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939)

During the war, the majority of Spanish intellectuals and their international peers supported the Republican government. The literary production on behalf of the loyalists was immense, particularly in the case of poetry.

The writers of the Generation of '27 and an outstanding number of anonymous authors proliferated in magazines and newspapers distributed both on the battlefront and the rear guard. Miguel Hernández (1910–1942) was one of the most prominent. Hernández was born into a humble peasant family working in agriculture and livestock rearing.

Therefore, his poetry reflected an intimate relationship with nature, workers, and peasants, which made his verses relatable to many. In 1937, Hernández joined the communist Fifth Regiment as a Cultural Commissar and devoted his literary production to encouraging soldiers to defend democracy and social justice.

His poems were read in the front lines and he rose to worldwide fame, becoming the leading figure of Republican literature and an international symbol of political compromise. His first book, written during the conflict, was a striking example of the "art as a weapon" literary paradigm of the 1930s. Influenced by Pablo Neruda, Miguel Hernández celebrated popular resistance and sang in the hope of victory against fascism (Hernández and Smith 2008, xii).

However, as the war raged onward and thousands of soldiers and civilians were killed, Hernández started to lose his early militant enthusiasm. *El hombre acecha* (*Man Is a Hunter*), his penultimate poetry book, was written between 1937 and 1938 but was not published until 1981 due to Francoist censorship. Despite including some "optimistic" war poems, it deployed a different tone which reflected the progressive loss of faith in the war. In this sense, Michael Smith highlights how Hernández "depicts the human suffering which a prolonged civil war inevitably entails" (Hernández and Smith 2008, xv). Among all the compositions of the book, the above-cited poem, "*El herido*" ("The Wounded Man"), excelled above others.

The fall of Barcelona in January 1939 was the final moral setback for the Republicans, who embarked on a horrific and tragic exile. Hundreds of thousands of civilians ended up in French concentration camps, where many perished in deplorable conditions.

Miguel Hernández could not flee Spain and was arrested and accused "both of having been a Communist commissar and of having written poems that were injurious to the Francoist cause" (Preston 2012, 510). Hernández wrote feverishly during imprisonment.

His war poetry, which had already shifted towards a more intimate tone, gave way to an even more desperate mood that reflected his miserable time in prison and the extreme poverty suffered by his wife and his infant son Manuel Ramón, who died of malnutrition on 19 October 1938. After contracting pneumonia and bronchitis, Hernández succumbed to typhus and tuberculosis in 1942 at the early age of 32. Pablo Neruda expressed his grief and rage in words that echo to the present day:

> We are called on now and always to remove him from his mortal jail, to illuminate him for his bravery and his martyrdom, to show him as an example of the purest heart! To give him light! To illuminate him through bursts of memories and through handfuls of clarity. He is the image of an archangel of a terrestrial glory that fell at night armed with the sword of light! (Téllez 2018, 13)

3. Miguel Hernández: From the Trenches to the Anti-Francoist Resistance (1939–1975)

The physical extermination of any form of resistance towards the dictatorship was accompanied by an intense campaign of censorship that prosecuted any political or cultural contestation. The censorship system crafted by the regime drew its inspiration from Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (Delgado Idarreta 2004, 224). Naturally, any literary work which contradicted the values of the national Catholic regime was banned.

Miguel Hernández's poetry, for instance, was deliberately censored because of his participation in the war and his communist ideology (Cano Ballesta 2010, 147). In spite of the strong repression, post-war Spain's priority was "returning to a state of normality and eliminating the hunger and misery caused by the conflict" (Aguilar Fernández 2002, 135).

Luis Martín Santos's novel, *Time of Silence* (2012), would be an accurate subtitle of a period defined by trauma and wretched living conditions. Twenty years later, during what is defined as the second or late Francoism (1959–1975), the situation changed drastically: Spain was ready to stand up against Franco. Although 4,343 songs were suppressed between 1960 and 1977, as stated by the Universidad de Alicante's project "*Devúelvame la voz*," musicians managed to surpass censorship.

For instance, independent radio stations such as the exiled-managed *Radio Independiente España*, popularly known as "*La Pirenaica*", had a major role in the construction of alternative free culture in the country. Carlos Palacio, exiled poet and musician, established a revealing parallelism between the popular resistance during 1936–1939 and the dictatorship: "In war, one fought with songs, in the great night of Franco—all of Spain, an immense cemetery of silence—continued fighting with the efficient weapon of the song" (Zaragoza Fernández 2008, loc. 6599).

Musicians were not the only ones who were able to elude restrictions. Academics fought strongly against the regime, trying to vindicate literature produced during the war and in exile. Juan Cano Ballesta, in Spain; Concha Zardoya, in New York; and Dario Puccini, in Milano, managed to revive the figure of Miguel Hernández and contributed to the national and international popularisation of his poetry.

The progressive rearmament of popular culture set the ideal context to go a step further in this direction. Following the parallelism established by Carlos Palacio and the "efficient weapon of the song," the Catalan songwriter Joan Manuel Serrat composed an entire album based on Hernández's poetry in 1972.

The selection of poems was far from being representative of Hernández's belligerent literature: "*Nanas de la cebolla*" ("Lullaby of the Onion") was sent to his wife and son when he found out they had nothing to eat but bread and onions, whereas "*El niño yuntero*" ("The Child of the Plough") depicts a poor peasant boy in Andalusia, an unfortunately characteristic sight in twentieth century Spain.

But the most iconic song is "*Para la libertad*" ("For Freedom"), based on the poem "*El herido*" ("The Wounded Man"), the one which was intended to be part of the homage at the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid.

According to José Luis Ferris, "*El herido*" is a splendid poem in which Hernández manages to "find the right tone of a popular poetry without renouncing tradition and the great contributions of the avant-guard" (2016, 171). "For Freedom" and the rest of the album were indeed banned due to the song's subversive character and for giving voice to a communist writer. However, as can be seen in the translated fragment selected for the plaque at the cemetery, the song did not express support for any side of the war, but was a mere reflection on hope and freedom in the context of a bloodbath:

Thinking of freedom I break loose in battle
from those who have rolled her statue through the mud.
And I break loose from my feet, from my arms,
from my house, from everything.

Because where some empty eye-pits dawn,
she will place two stones that see into the future,
and cause new arms and lew legs to grow
in the lopped flesh.
Bits of my body I lose in every wound
will sprout once more, sap-filled, autumnless wings.
Because I am like the lopped tree, and I sprout again:
because I still have my life. (Hernández et al. 2001, 237)

"For Freedom," the musical version of "*El herido,*" does not applaud any side of the Spanish conflict. On the contrary, it is the reflection of the demands and hopes for freedom of a society oppressed by a dictatorial regime.

4. "Spaniards…Franco has died": Democratic Transition and Spain's Open Wounds

On the morning of 20 November 1975, a haggard and deeply moved Carlos Arias Navarro, Spanish Prime Minister, announced the death of the dictator in a breaking voice: "Spaniards… Franco has died". The so-called democratic transition had started and, although a democratic Constitution was passed in 1978, the Civil War was still a taboo. According to José M. González García, the political 'transition' to democracy "was born under a sign of obscurity and a 'pact of silence' between the majority of political parties: speaking about the past was avoided in favour of achieving a new democratic consensus around the Constitution of 1978" (2009, 178). Other researchers assert that the memory of victims could be vindicated, but only if "it did not question the legal and moral authority of institutions like the Catholic Church or the impunity of the perpetrators who committed the crimes" (Mateo Leivas and de Kerangat 2020, 16). Therefore, it was almost impossible to provide symbolic reparations as the conflict could not be approached from a political perspective, even if it was the case of a fascist putsch and a repressive dictatorship.

As a result, postmemory, that is to say, "the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before in this period" was unfortunately "covered with a mantle of silence that prevented people from talking about them" (Hirsch 2008, 106–107; González García 2009, 178). Postmemory's connection to the past, as stated by Hirsch, is "mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and creation" (2008, 107). As elderly people were still traumatised by the horrors of the war, the next generation, who had not confronted it directly, inherited the experience of their parents and grandparents—the terror and hunger—and jumped onto the transition bandwagon, respecting the official silence. Serrat's version of Hernández's poem, whose lyrics emphasised pursuit of freedom in the face of adversity, provided a breath of fresh air to a society that needed to resignify their artistic heritage with hope and justice: death and pain could stop being the "identifications and repetitions" of postmemory to eventually "be turned into processes of recovery and working through" (Frosh 2019, 171). I use the term "postmemory" in its

plural form to highlight the presence of, at least, two different approaches to it during this period, which led to the existence of two opposing collective memories, as we will illustrate in the following section. Whereas war and dictatorship criminals, who could continue participating in politics during democracy, embraced the "pact of silence" in their own interests so as not to be judged, the children of the defeated started to deal timidly with postmemory through works of art like Serrat's. However, the pending work of memory and symbolic reparations was "postponed" to a more suitable context.

Miguel Hernández has been recognised by the new generations as one of the greatest Spanish writers and a symbol of freedom and democracy (Cano Ballesta 2010, 146). The popularity of Serrat's album, together with the outstanding work of scholars and civil society, crafted Hernández's myth and made it pivotal in the political sphere in the 1970s and the following decades. Besides, thanks to the democratic advances of the period, the names of those who fought against fascism in the 1930s started to appear in public space.

For instance, there are many streets, stations and schools named after Miguel Hernández all around Spain, and his poetry is studied from secondary school onwards. Nonetheless, it was not until 2000 that civil society started organising to make specific demands and actions for the memory of victims. This popular movement, whose prime representative is the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory, embarked on the recovery of the remains of people who had "disappeared" during the war and the regime, and aimed to fulfil the need for symbolic reparations, as they later attempted at the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid.

5. The Two Spains: Collective Memories and the (Im)Possible Consensus at the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid

> There is a Spaniard today, who wants to live and is starting to live,
> between one Spain dying and another Spain yawning.
> Little Spaniard just now coming into the world, may God keep you.
> One of those two Spains will freeze your heart.
> (Machado and Bly 1983, 112–113)

Even though Antonio Machado wrote this poem in 1910, the paradigm of "the two Spains" is still relevant today (Muñoz Soro and García Fernández 2010, 138). Its origin goes back to the nineteenth century; however, this chapter focuses on its contemporary version, whose essence resides in the coexistence of two confronted collective memories enrooted in the Spanish Civil War. Collective memory refers to the memory elaborated by different social groups and individuals in relation to a certain heritage, alluding to the presence of opposing narratives mediated by public and private institutions, the press, and the arts (Halbwachs 1992, 52). Jeffrey K. Olick establishes a dialogue with Halbwachs's concept and goes beyond, highlighting its importance for the construction of political identities: "[S]cholarly work on collective memory can be seen as part of the field of political culture research insofar as it is concerned with the cultural constitution of political identities and activities" (1999, 336–337).

Moreover, Olick affirms that collective memory is "based on individualistic principles: the aggregated individual memories of members of a group", emphasising the idea that citizens can forge their own particular collective identity based on their relationship with a past embodied in "shared symbols and deep structures" (1999, 336–337).

The "pact of silence", reached during the democratic transition, was inherited by the Spanish conservative and extreme right parties, whose version of the conflict, far from being antifascist, relies on

the so-called "war between siblings" myth, which refuses to admit any kind of political responsibilities even nowadays. On the other hand, the Historical Memory Law proclaimed by PM José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in 2004, alongside civil society movements, "played an important role in the recent public discussion about the necessity of recovering not only the corpses of the victims of the violence, but also their names to save them from forgetfulness" (González García 2009, 180). Furthermore, the role of the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory "has had an impact on the present situation in which, according to the surveys, almost 70% of the Spanish population agree with the investigation of the Civil War and of its victims" (González García 2009, 180).

Turning to the issue of symbolic reparations, these movements have made an impressive work on resignifying and contesting certain *lieux de mémoire* associated with this traumatic past. The Almudena Cemetery of Madrid, where around three thousand Republicans were murdered and buried in mass graves, is one of the most powerful and terrible examples of dissonant heritage in contemporary Spain. In this respect, the attempt to commemorate the memory of the victims by the Municipality of Madrid in 2019 can be read as a strategy of "counter-memory (in the Foucaultian sense), that is, as contestation of the dominant memory (and oblivion) imposed by the Francoist state and perpetuated in some respects in the transition to democracy" (Ramblado-Minero 2011, 30). In the light of the negative response of the conservative mayor Martínez-Almeida, who accused the former municipal government of imposing a "hierarchy" of victims, how should this dissonant *lieu de mémoire* be managed?

Forlì, in Italy, is an inspiring example. Patrizia Battilani et al. argue that, out of the three possible practices to manage dissonant heritage proposed by Tunbridge and Ashworth, that is, "close dialogue between all the communities . . . competing in the use of heritage, . . . minimalism and inclusivism," the first was not suitable for Italy. The reason Battilani et al. provide is simple and relies on human rights principles: "The political dimension of that heritage made it impossible to create a dialogue between people nostalgic for fascism and that part of the population who had fought for democracy" (2018, 1424). In line with this democratic approach to dissonant heritage, the chosen strategy was minimalism, developing "a narrative supporting democracy and peace" (Battilani et al. 2018, 1424).Nonetheless, the greatest contribution from Forlì is the passage to inclusivism. In 2009 and 2010, the municipality won a project within the Southeast Europe territorial cooperation programme, ATRIUM, "led by the city of Forlì and [which] counted 18 partners from 11 different south-eastern European countries [which] had experienced a totalitarian regime during the twentieth century and were currently managing a dissonant architectural heritage" (Battilani et al. 2018, 1424).

The project, "thanks to an inclusive approach based on participation" and "a set of activities (over 30 per year) organized by the route" has helped to resignify rationalist fascist architecture, and to make local citizens and tourists protagonists, with the prominent role of the younger generations (Battilani et al. 2018, 1426). In the case of Spain, the divided post- and collective memories hinder almost any possibility of providing appropriate and consensual symbolic reparations to the victims. The discourse of the theory of the two devils, which places the violence committed by both sides on the same plane, is the right wing's Trojan horse which destroys any attempt to do so. However, as González points out, the situation is asymmetrical:

> [W]hereas the authorities of the Franco regime recovered the corpses and the memory of those shot by the Republic, for the immense majority of those assassinated by the Franco regime it has been impossible to recover their names and to vindicate their memory. (González García 2009, 179)

Greeley et al. assert that a key strategy would be to initiate "dynamic processes generated through the unique experiences that art engenders,, which could also empower citizens to have a say and contribute (Greeley et al. 2020, 168). In that sense, the participation of civil society, combined with the use of symbolic works of art, such as Hernández's poem, meet all the requirements to become a suitable method to deal with dissonant heritage. In fact, Greeley et al. agree that an artistic approach to memorialisation is needed to fully make civil society take part in dissonant heritage, as has been done in Forlì. Unfortunately, the right and extreme right's response to any sort of symbolic reparation is far from positive. Even the mere presence of Republican politicians and intellectuals in the public space is strongly contested. For example, the statue of the socialist politician Largo Caballero in Madrid was vandalised in 2020 with the words "red murderer."

Furthermore, in 2022, Martínez-Almeida's council named a street after the "Cruiser Baleares," responsible for the assassination of thousands of civilians during the "*Desbandá*", a civilian attempt to escape Franco's troops as they entered Malaga, which led to a massacre. The memorial dedicated to the "Thirteen Roses" in Zaragoza, the young women executed by the regime during the first months of the dictatorship, part of the destroyed memorial in the Almudena Cemetery of Madrid, was shattered in 2021. In view of these facts and considerations, consensus appears to be an impossible goal. An artistic approach to dissonant heritage must be, as Battilani et al. defended, antifascist and symbolic reparations to the victims of a fascist dictatorship is a question of human rights. Following the successful example of Forlì, an inclusive artistic strategy that promotes the participation of locals and tourists, with an emphasis on young citizens, might be the only way to overcome the obstacles imposed by those who deny the mere existence of victims and their right to justice, truth, and reparations.

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14.“Nobody Expects the Spanish Inquisition”: Constant Disruption and Disturbing Continuities when Considering Heritage

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Abstract

Heritage is always dissonant. Earlier values are expressed in the artifacts we have inherited, which can later be rejected by failing to reflect our own values. Thus, history and its artistic representation are constantly revised and rethought. Some works, like Victor Arnautoff’s 1936 mural *Life of George Washington*, were created in a sense of critical dissonance, but are condemned today for other reasons: our own sense of dissonance.

Yet, while we sit in judgment over such works, we also bemoan earlier losses due to previous dissonant reactions. Religious, economic, and political situations, or simply changes of taste, have led to great artistic and cultural loss. Mediaeval castles and churches have given way to later edifices; interior decoration hardly lasts beyond a few decades. The waves of iconoclasm, the eighth-century iconoclasts, the sixteenth-century Protestant iconophobes in England, or the Taliban today have destroyed entire histories of artistic achievement. We invariably condemn such acts as barbaric.

The past is therefore extremely fragile as it is prone to erasure and reconfiguration to accord with contemporary taste. Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition, but many people react with hostility to a past that does not reflect their specific situations. Tensions between personal creativity, social acceptance and historical revaluation continually complicate our understanding of artistic heritage.

Keywords

George Washington, Victor Arnautoff, Racial tensions, Heritage, Destruction of artifacts

1. Introduction

The past is always construed in the light of contemporary understanding, which invariably differs from one era to the next. This can lead to anything from simple misreading to gross manipulation. At one end, we can misinterpret Mediaeval art simply by applying modern concepts of colour to earlier works, while forgetting that such ideas as primary versus secondary colours are meaningless in explaining a twelfth-century manuscript illumination or even a fifteenth-century painting.

On the other end, applying nationalist concepts to the study of ancient Gaul or Carolingian France (as if both were inevitable steps to the creation of the modern French Republic) is to completely misrepresent the political, social, and economic dynamics of those previous eras. It falls to the historian to "set the record straight," to coin a phrase. The problem, therefore, is not so much that history changes, as past events cannot be truly altered; what changes is the information we have about those past events, and how those events affect our understanding (historians themselves play a role in those variations). It is not so much the past itself as it is the *heritage* from the past that changes and that needs constant reinterpretation.

The term *heritage* denotes that which we have received from previous generations, be it physical objects or abstract information. The trove is then sifted to extract what is deemed of use, interest, or value, discarding what is considered worthless (or worse), and adding new inventions and discoveries. The new package is then sent on to the next generation. Thus, the trove continuously evolves according to each generation's needs and interests. History and its artistic representation are constantly revised and rethought as the works of previous generations express values that conflict with those of current times.

The evidence of such constant conflict points to the social nature of artistic practices. With that social nature come the dynamics of power involved in all social interaction. That dynamic is the basis of politics. The conversation between art and politics is often framed as a conversation about subject matter, thus, essentially, about how society is depicted. As such, it is seen as a binary conversation between artists and authority. This, of course, excludes other participants in the artistic debate, including the patrons and the intended audiences.

Moreover, the very recourse to plurals underscores that these categories can be diverse and populated. Even artists, for most of history, never worked alone in the execution of their work. Finally, these relationships can evolve over time. Michael Baxandall sums up the evolution of the relationship between artists and patrons by stating that

> The one general point to be insisted on is that in the fifteenth century painting was still too important to be left to the painters. The picture trade was quite a different thing from that in our late romantic condition, in which painters paint what they think best and then look round for a buyer. We buy pictures ready-made now; this need not be a matter of our having more respect for the artist's individual talent than fifteenth century people like Giovanni Ruccelai did, so much as of our living in a different sort of commercial society. The pattern of picture trade tends to assimilate itself to that of more substantial manufactures: post-romantic is also post-Industrial revolution, and most of us now buy our furniture ready-made too. (1988, 3)

It must be added that a few lines earlier, Baxandall had pointed to that other group, the intended audience, which was essentially perceived as Ruccelai, the patron's audience, rather than the specific artists' audience. Artists could command considerable sums according to the level of their skill; they remained, in one way or another, on their patrons' payroll. This must influence our understanding of the main issue, when the

conversation between art and politics is framed as a debate between those who arrogate expression and those who arrogate authority. But the question that remains is one of contemporary understanding even as these parties change with time and circumstances.

What is also essential when considering heritage is the fact that it is grounded in the past. Time measures the change of circumstances. Heritage is always dissonant: it is the distance between past conceptions and present perceptions. The contemplation of heritage is the work of the historian, and, as Daniel Arasse explains,

> The historian has always been anachronistic towards his object. . . . An artist or a philosopher has that right, it may even be their duty to extract the object out of the past, out of its time, to make it live according to today's questions. The historian, however, has the strange obligation, rather stimulating intellectually, to claim an attempt at avoiding what constitutes his relation to the object. (2004, 219; translation by the author).

While studying the past, be it cultural, social, or political, we must constantly remind ourselves that we do not perceive objects and events as they had been perceived previously. In 1500, the term *Gothic* as a term describing an architecture did not exist in France. At the time, what we would designate as *gothic* today was considered the "modern style," as opposed to the "ancient style," or, more precisely, the *à l'antique* style that had come from Italy, inspired by the rediscovery of the ancient Roman forms of architecture and design. These designs began to attract attention in France, where both were equally appreciated. Artists and patrons were quite aware of the possibilities of both styles.

"The same artists and workshops," notes Pierre-Yves Le Pogam, "could practice these different styles in succession and, more importantly, at the same time" (2010, 37; translation by the author). Choice of style was a matter of context or even subject matter, but there was no preference. The term '*gothic'* would appear later and gain its pejorative connotation in the early seventeenth century, before becoming adopted in the nineteenth century to designate the late Mediaeval artistic style (Mignon 2019).

Heritage, finally, is not simply the history of art, but the practice of giving form to the past. The essential problem is that expectations of and about the contemporary audience will not to be found in later audiences, as attitudes, opinions, and expectations change overtime. Past artifacts can be redesigned to serve a novel use. The Pantheon in Rome was easily repurposed from a pagan temple to a Christian church. Its very grandeur insured its subsequent survival. Many museums, such as the Louvre in Paris or the Uffizi in Florence are housed in old palaces or other buildings. Dissonance of heritage lies in the way perceptions of the past can be refocused to accommodate prevalent ideologies.

As a recent nation, the United States of America has a clearly described history, spanning approximately three centuries. That history, however, has already forged a number of historic heroes and situations. The construction of the nation pivots on two key events: the War of Independence (1775-1783) and the Civil War (1861-1865). A central character becomes none other than George Washington, who served in the French wars and, as the first president, has been dubbed the *Father of the Nation*. The significance of both these events and characters, however, has been far from simple: their meaning and importance have been redefined several times over the years. *Dissonance* is not a novel problem.

The issues that led the several states to take arms against one another, as well as the expansionism that followed that conflict would eventually generate other forms of dissonance which would affect even Washington's significance. The first president's image has raised a recent storm of controversy around the monumental mural painted during the Great Depression for a public High School in San Francisco (Images 2-3). Images in the mural have been considered unsettling and calls for the mural's removal are regularly

brought forth. In light of these conflicts in both the collective and individual response to the past, we might begin to appreciate the dynamic tensions that feed the network of ideas and practices that we call *a culture*. What are the dynamics behind such a desire to destroy a work that is itself a serious re-examination of national mythology?

2. The Continuity of Dissonance

How we retain history follows a pattern of remembering and repurposing historical events and characters. The idea that history exists to teach us lessons is as old as history itself. The question then becomes what are the lessons we wish to retain? The problem becomes even more difficult when we realise that the reality of history can be unwieldy and often refuses to follow a pattern of exemplary stances. Even seemingly simple events become increasingly complex under scrutiny.

The significance of the two pivotal moments in US history changes over time and space. Both wars in America have alternative names: the War of Independence can be referred to as the American Revolution; the Civil War as the War Between the States.[1]

A shift in name becomes a shift in focus. For many historians, there is more at stake during the War of Independence than a mere severance of colonial ties with the British Crown. Independence led people to reconsider the relationship binding a government and the people.[2] The bicentennial of the United States was celebrated in 1976 (the year of the Declaration of Independence), rather than 1983 (the end of the War of Independence) or 1989 (the signing of the Constitution).

Because of its symbolic significance, David McCullough (2005) explores the events of the year in his book *1776*, where he confronts the conflict with Great Britain on the one hand and the political shift instigated by the Declaration of Independence on the other, with the two matters continuously at odds. McCullough's book closes with the end of 1776. But the conflict with England would end in 1783, seven years later. And the political constructs that would flow from the Declaration of Independence could hardly have been imagined. It is the very sense of uncertainty that he chooses to instil. Just as in the year 1776, the outcome of the war was very much in doubt, the American Revolution left vital points unresolved. What would be the nature of the new nation? How is it to be organised?

The irony was probably not lost on Lincoln when, in the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, he stated during his famed *Gettysburg Address* that a new nation was founded "four score, seven years ago" (i.e., in 1776), for, as he explained, "[n]ow we are engaged in a great Civil War, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure." Lincoln framed the current conflict as the final chapter of the founding of the nation.

By the end of the century, that foundational vision was itself carefully reframed. The Civil War may have ended the conflicting issues that had lingered after the founding of the nation, but was it truly a satisfactory resolution, or rather one imposed by the winning side? By the end of the century, intellectuals and artists

[1] The political complexity of the American Civil War is illustrated by the fact that the French give it yet a third name, *La Guerre de Sécession*, or the *War of Secession*, which is technically an accurate description of the nature of the conflict, but which glosses over the majority of the political and social problems that the war addressed, such as the relationship between the states and the central federal government, or the practice of slavery.

[2] Benedict Anderson (1983) argues that the very concept of the nation-state is in fact an invention of the rebellious colonies in the New World; see in particular Chapter 4, "Creole Pioneers."

from the Southern states in the Union developed the vision of the Lost Cause. That some causes *should* be lost is beside the point: the War between the States ended the traditional Southern way of life.

The most striking examples of this revision are depicted in two films: D.W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* in 1916 and David O. Selznick's *Gone with the Wind* in 1939.[3] Of these two films, the first one is the most overtly political as it chronicles the destruction of the Southern way of life, which, in Griffith's view, was partly brought about by introducing a sense of false equality between races, and most notably, the possibility of miscegenation, which was his great fear.

In an earlier western, a group of settlers are attacked by marauding Indians, and one character holds a gun to the heroine's head to avoid her capture and ravishment.[4]

To explore Griffith today is to explore the turn of the century's profound cultural fear of miscegenation: the thought of a white woman being taken by savages to produce half-breed children was intolerable. In *Birth of a Nation*, the director constantly tells the audience that the real villains in the film are "the mulattoes."

It is, as Pierre Cormary points out, "the spectre of the stain that so agitates Griffith."[5] (Cormary, 2007) The ultimate solution to such a fear, Cormary argues, is a symbolic form of incest: while the same family cannot intermarry, the same caste can, thus keeping in abeyance all impurities. Griffith's derogatory term, as extended throughout the film's thematic, only fanned the era's racism. But even for that era, the film's racism, to Griffith's astonishment one might add, was inflammatory.

Birth of a Nation upon its release triggered protests by the NAACP at one end and revivals of the Ku Klux Klan at the other.[6] Yet Griffith attempted to bridge the impossible gap between Lincoln's concept and the Southern concept. For Griffith, Lincoln remains *the* Great President;[7] it was his death that allowed for the

[3] For film historians, these two films are polar opposites. Griffith produced, directed, and wrote his *magnum opus*, going so far as to create his own company to manage the production. Selznick was the producer of his film, but his own company was unable to handle such a production, and MGM co-produced the project, which went through countless writers (including Ben Hecht and Jo Swerling) and at least five directors (including George Cukor and Sam Wood); Bauer, 2017; Pfieiffer, 2010.

[4] When dealing with movies, especially very early movies as well as classic Hollywood, the expression "cowboys and indians" is the expression of choice, especially in the films depiciting conflicts, such as the case here. The character Kicking Bird (Graham Greene) in Kevin Costner's 1990 film *Dances with Wolves* is a Lakota-Sioux. The hoard of savages attacking the stagecoach in John Ford's 1939 film *Stagecoach* can only be called Indians: they are a fiction that has no social, cultural or political reality other than their depicition in the film. In this context, as in the Griffith short, to speak of "maurading Native-Americans" is preposterous. Much of John Ford's later career would be spent nuancing that initial simplicitic and derogatory depiction of Native-American cultures. The most haunting of these being *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) which recalls the "Trail of Tears", or the forced resettlement in the southwestern deserts of a number of indigenous nations during the ninteenth century.

[5] "*Car c'est bien un fantasme de souillure qui agite Griffith*." Pierre Cormary calls Griffith "cinema's original sin," in a that post explores the disquieting tensions between the film maker's obvious cinematic brilliance and his equally disconcerting political views. The most disturbing aspect being that these very tensions, such as the use of black and white as symbolic realities as well as cinematic fact, are what give the film its aesthetic thrust. This demands every audience's cautious reading as they watch his films.

[6] The film also allowed for the arrival of black filmmaker Oscar Micheaux, as well as an entire field of "colored films", or films that gave voice to the black community with black actors and subjects that concerned the community directly. See the Academy of Motion Pictures Museum exhibit in Los Angeles and its 2022 exhibition *Regeneration.*

[7] This is not quite so true for the Southern States as a whole. Lincoln had confirmed emancipation, as the concurrent constitutional amendment was passed by the Republican Party. For over a century, the Southern establishment refused to vote for Republicans, who maintained their progressive policies until the end of Theodore Roosevelt's administration. "Southern Democrats" greatly weakened the party's progressive evolution. The black population was explicitly barred from most New Deal benefits to ensure the southern vote.

carpetbaggers and the relentless destruction of Southern culture. By 1939, the idea that the South was morally superior was a foregone conclusion. The "apolitical" nature of Selznick's project underscores the success of Southern reframing.

Indeed, between those two films stands Buster Keaton's 1925 *The General*, which inverts the perspective of an original pro-Union narrative, which as Keaton instinctively knew, would not have been accepted by audiences in 1925 (Ivens, 2021).[8] Chivalry and courage could only be the province of the glorious South, so the train conductor with pluck and determination had to be a Southerner.

Image 1 – Emmanuel Leutze, *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, 1851. Oil on canvas, 378,5 x 647,7 cm. New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, N°97.34. (Image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art).
This is perhaps the most famously iconic painting of George Washington. Leutze applied the strategies of history painting to depict an event of the War of Independence – the unexpected attack against the British forces at Trenton in December 1776. He thus imbues the subject with all the moral values of epic exemplarity.

[8] Such a rejection would not have been limited to the South: the United States was a segregated country. The practice included such national institutions as Major League Baseball (which had no teams south of Washington DC) and the United States Army. Both were integrated in 1947.

Image 2 – Victor Arnautoff, *Life of George Washington*, 1937. Fresco, one of sixteen panels spanning 178m² (the dimension of individual panels are not indicated). San Francisco, George Washington High School. (Photo by Richard Evans, Creative Commons).
At the heart of the current controversy stands this image of armed men from the frontiers walking over the figure of a lifeless Native American. The image, however, is far more complex than this unsettling sight would suggest. For at the centre stands Washington indicating the way to America's Manifest Destiny.

Image 3 – Victor Arnautoff, *Life of George Washington*, 1937. Fresco, one of sixteen panels spanning 178m² (the dimension of individual panels are not indicated). San Francisco, George Washington High School. (Photo by Richard Evans, Creative Commons).
In this major fresco, the artist chose to push the titular subject to the side and centre the image on the group of slaves, who, after all, were at the heart of Washington's fortune.

3. The Ironies of George Washington

The conflation of the War of Independence and the Civil War finds its focus in the person of George Washington. As David McCullough states, "[w]ithout Washington's leadership and unrelenting perseverance, the revolution would almost certainly have failed" (2005, 294). This observation is most certainly true; yet, it is also incomplete in the characterisation of Washington. The iconography surrounding Washington takes on the resonance of classical history painting: exemplary illustrations of historical events. Washington's exploits are given epic and foundational status: the overarching theme of these images presents Washington as the Father of the Nation. The most iconic painting was the German artist Emmanuel Leutze's *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (Image 1); ironically, the original version of the work was destroyed by an Allied bombing raid in 1942 over Bremen, Germany (Hamon, 2014).[9]

This epic imagery tends to gloss over the fact that George Washington was a Southern gentleman, with a plantation in Mount Vernon, Virginia. As Arnautoff's mural points out, Washington's early military experience—and later political career—was gained during the French and Indian War (Image 2), the New World spill-over of the Seven Years' War in Europe.[10] The very name of that war is telling in its terminology. The American theatre of war between France was fought with alliances forged with the Native tribes. France had the support of the Wabanaki Confederacy, whereas the English (and colonial forces) were backed by the Iroquois confederation. The "Indians" are something of an afterthought: any cursory glance in an encyclopaedia or dictionary present the reasons for the war and its objectives as always seen from a European point of view. The indigenous nations' political agendas, their reasons for forging alliances with the colonial populations and, more importantly, for fighting one another, are never considered independently from the European conflict. The Wikipedia paragraph on the taxonomy of the war states that the colonials named the war after their opponents, without stopping to consider just how ominous such a designation is: it would shape American consciousness for the next two centuries. That there were native allies with the English or colonial forces had been conveniently forgotten: the opponents were the Indians, all Indians indiscriminately, and Washington's earliest *faits d'armes*, his fame and glory as a warrior were based on the killing of those Indians, that indiscriminate mass of savages that needed to be exterminated for the civilizing of the American continent to begin. What is now rightly see as a genocide has been depicted throughout most of American history as the epic taming of a wild continent. Washington is considered one of that epic's first heroes.

The outdated, imprecise and even offensive quality of this description illustrates the violence of various spectators' reactions to the murals today, but also the ambivalence the artist himself felt when dealing with the subject. In 1936, as a part of the New Deal Federal Arts Project, the muralist Victor Arnautoff received a commission to paint a fresco depicting George Washington's life for the San Francisco High School that bore the first president's name. At 1600 square-feet (148,6 m^2), Arnautoff's frescoes dominate the main hall of the high school. He greatly admired George Washington's achievements but remained highly disturbed by his military record and his fortune based on slave labor. Rather than expand on the epic, however, he chose to displace Washington and put ordinary people at the centre of the various episodes of Washington's life

[9] Hamon points to several historical inaccuracies, however that is the domain of history painting, where the dramatic impact and emotional lessons are far more important than the historical accuracy.

[10] Like many wars, its nomenclature changes along with its significance. But to link it with the Seven Years War is to give that war a global stature in history.

portrayed in the murals. These scenes are surprisingly accurate, especially when considering the artistic license used for such images as *Washington Crossing the Delaware*.

"As I see it," wrote Arnautoff in 1935, "the artist is a critic of society" (Bogart, 2019). Arnautoff immersed himself in the life of Washington to create the murals. While recognizing the importance of the historical figure, he highlighted the class and racial underpinnings of the American project. The images challenged the heroism that had been ascribed to Washington. By the time he received the commission to paint the murals, Arnautoff had already created a number of artworks depicting working-class life and situations. He had left Russia as a White Russian fleeing the Revolution, but his life in America changed his views; by 1937, he was a member of the Communist Party. The *Washington* series continued to develop these themes, which aimed to refocus American ideals.[11] As Richard Cherny (2019) argues, "Arnautoff was clearly using art to provide social criticism."

In his famous high school murals, Arnautoff chose to include a scene from Washington's life at Mount Vernon, in which the President's enslaved workers hold centre stage. This depiction is at the heart of a protracted controversy surrounding the murals starting in the 1960s (Kelly, 2019). Black students in the 1960s objected to the subservient vision of Black people in the murals (Image 3) and went so far as to commission a new set of murals by the young artist Dewey Crumpler. Crumpler came to admire Arnautoff's works so much that he designed his own murals to serve as an extension and response to the originals.

Arnautoff's links to the New Deal and to the Communist Party meant that he inevitably would have been closely scrutinised by the FBI and the House Un-American Activities Committee. Over the last few years, however, a new line of attack appeared as Arnautoff's work has been criticised not only for its depiction of Black people but also that of Native Americans. The figure of a lifeless American Indian being marched over by a group of spectral-looking settlers (conspicuously painted in grisaille; NCAS, 2019) sparked much controversy. Two First Nation parents stated that their children had suffered from "generational trauma" at the sight of the image (Image 2). "Adopting the hashtag #paintitdown," art historian Michelle Bogart (2019) notes, "the anti-mural groups insisted that the Board of Education accommodate its desire for a safe space by destroying them."

4. The Limits of Dissonance

The controversy surrounding the Arnautoff's murals underscores the question of reception and its evolution over time. Michelle Bogart's article notes how students in the 1960s demanded images of more proactively violent Black history, with, for instance, depictions of those who participated in the Revolutionary War. These student activists were not overly concerned about the depictions of violence: the lifeless Native American was never commented upon. The subsequent murals by Dewey Crumpler were commissioned by the Black Panthers. However, the continuous discussion between art and politics has always been centred on the question of what can be said and why. The issue at the core is who has the right to decide.[12]

[11] While half a century after the Red Scare it may seem paradoxical to think that Communists would defend American ideals, this view was actually prevalent in New Deal America. Sidney Buchmann, the scriptwriter for Frank Capra's *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939) was also a Communist.

[12] In a word, censorship (Morawski, 1972). The practice of censorship is not limited to those in power. Indeed, that most infamous document, the Hayes Code, was established by the Motion Picture Producers' Association in response to the demands of a specific "pressure group" known as the *Legion of Decency*. The Hayes office was never a government agency. The calls against the murals

Contemporary reactions to Arnautoff's murals prove that the expressive value of art is not limited to its own time. Later viewers of the work can criticise the images of Black people as slaves, but they may also encourage questions about our shared ancestry. One of the most controversial pictures in the series is the vast image with Washington on one side, White people (in colourful clothing) working on the other, and a powerful mass of enslaved Black workers in white clothing dominating the centre (with a secondary group working the fields in the background). Arnautoff's main ambition was to depict the work involved in building America. Historical narratives may glorify Washington, but it was the masses of anonymous workers who actually built the nation. That nation, in turn. was built on the dispossession of the indigenous nations, which is nothing to be proud of, as the phantomatic settlers appear to point out. These depictions clash surprisingly with the racist Westerns of the times,[13] and with the glorified South in *Gone with the Wind*.

Finally, the discussion must take into account those silent participants: the sitters. The anonymous characters in the murals are as historical as Washington himself, making the question doubly problematic. Can artists depict the plights of marginalised communities to which they do not belong with dignity and weight, or is that impossible? One High School parent, Amy Anderson of the Ahkaamaymowin group of Métis, thinks not. She felt that "*The Life of George Washington* automatically represented a colonialist perspective *because it was painted by a white man*; therefore, the frescoes validated white supremacy" (Bogart 2019). Such a consideration would preclude any history that is considered outside the existential purview of the historian or artist. It also denies basic empathy. Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980) would be immediately disqualified as Zinn himself was a well-educated scholar.

The problem of sitters, it would seem, can be circumvented only when they are invited to participate in the work. The consequences of such practice are explored in Frank Möller's article "Politics and Art" where he describes photographer JR's collaboration with sitters in defining their image. Such a project avoids the criticism of exploitation and subjugation inherent in representing the other. The question that is raised in a historically oriented work is "the relationship between memory and art and the political functions of artistic engagement with memory and identity" (Möller 2016, 27). What memory is being discussed and, more importantly, *whose* memory is being discussed?

As a matter of heritage, that question becomes how is that memory shared, or – in the light of the backlash and demands for the murals' removal—whether that that memory should be shared at all? We should be wary of such a backlash.[14] While we sit in judgment over such works, we also bemoan earlier losses due to previous dissonant reactions. Religious, economic, and political situations, or simply changes of taste, have led to great artistic and cultural loss.

to #paintitdown are calls from another private pressure group. The accusation of censorship regularly appears in the articles and editorials about the mural controversy.

[13] A display at the Academy of Motion Pictures Museum in Los Angeles notes how the impact of John Ford's 1939 film *Stagecoach* on the public perceptions of Native Americans was similar to the impact of public perception of black People in Griffith's *Birth of a Nation*. Ford's later filmography gradually erodes that initial impression, but the image of faceless, nationless and violent "Indians" remains a staple in Hollywood lore as it appears even in the Netflix 2018 production of the Coen Brothers' *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*.

[14] In a room full of people, Amy Anderson's son – who has been said to lower his head when faced with the mural - decided not to join his mother when she voiced her concerns publicly (Markowitz 2019). Young Mr. Anderson's reaction can, of course, be read many ways.

5. The Fragility of the Past

Can we voluntarily decide to destroy past artifacts? We cannot erase past events, but is it ever acceptable to suppress their memory? The waves of iconoclasm, be they the eighth-century iconoclasts, the sixteenth-century Protestant iconophobes in England, or the Taliban today, have destroyed entire histories of artistic achievement. We invariably condemn such acts as barbaric. Works of art and symbolic artifacts have been destroyed throughout history.

The condemnation is superficially balanced by the immediate symbolic value of the destroyed object. The general public does not mind the voluntary suppression of second-rate statues of Confederate generals; the symbolic weight of the destruction of the Nazi swastika at Nuremberg far outweighs any artistic or cultural validity it may have. Few are greatly dismayed when seeing the statue of a dictator being pulled down by an angry mob. Indeed, the very gesture marks the end of the regime.But as time wears on, it is the loss that becomes regrettable. The wars of religion took a heavy toll on the arts. The original Bodleian library at Oxford was founded in the 1320s and was greatly expanded with the arrival in 1447 of Humphrey, the first Duke of Gloucester's bequest of nearly three hundred manuscripts; yet we know nothing of that collection today. In 1550, under the impetus of Richard Cox, the library was purged of all "superstitious" writing and images. The library was effectively emptied of its entire collection. The empty building became the Faculty of Medicine (Bodleian 3).

We have forgotten about that book purge as the library has since replenished its collection; yet we watch in dismay images of book burnings in Nazi Germany. During the Puritan Revolution under Cromwell in the 1640's number of wood carvings in Westminster were beheaded. Stalls which once housed statues of saints are now empty. On one night in January 1794, a fanatic revolutionary took a sledgehammer and shattered all the religious imagery that was carved into the central door of Notre Dame in Dijon. What had been believed to be a forgotten and regrettable past occurrence suddenly came alive when we saw jihadists blow up the monumental statue of Buddha in 2001. The same fundamentalist thought would like to purge the manuscripts that are jealously guarded in Timbuktu.

That these practices—be they the destruction of artworks or the pressure on social practices and language—are subjected to political and social forces is largely overlooked. In George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion*, Henry Higgins understands the importance of "proper speech" to ensure social advancement. Neither he nor the play's author clearly realise the political underpinnings of such an attitude. Shaw was an Irishman, but seemed oblivious of the fact that he spoke and wrote the conqueror's language. A culture is not considered "a culture" until seen from afar, in space, or in time.

An early example of the awareness of cultural diversity is Montesquieu with his famous question, "How can one be Persian?" (Letter XXX). Montesquieu was, of course, less interested in exploring Persian culture than he was in satirising French mores. "The *Lettres Persannes*," notes Jacques Roger (1964, 14, my translation), "had its place in a solidly established French literary tradition which asked the insidious question: how can one be French?"

Even without wilful destruction, losses inevitably occur, primarily because when they occur, they are rarely seen as cultural losses. Most people who are sensitive to that change tend to express their feelings in nostalgic terms and are often dismissed as crusty reactionaries hearkening back to "the good old days." Loss of culture is not noticed until it is missed. The most astonishing aspect of culture is its ubiquitous invisibility. From the mundane to the sublime, artifacts and practices are taken for granted. Most students at George Washington High School tend to be somewhat apathetic when faced with the murals in the school; it is the

parents who become upset (Markowitz 2019). We go through our daily routine: how we organise our workspace is work; how we speak, how we dress, how and when we eat or sleep, how we furnish and decorate our homes is our lifestyle. It simply is.

For the most part, change occurs incrementally. A drafty and militarily oriented high-mediaeval castle is slowly but surely restructured and redesigned to become a leisure palace. One can see the entire process at work walking through the Louvre, which has retained the foundations of the original dungeon protecting Paris from the west, the Renaissance wings, the additions and reconfigurations commissioned by Louis XIV[15], and the north wing in the Second Empire. Today, we have I.M. Pei's modern-day pyramid at the entrance; there have been additions since then... We owe the continued presence of the Pantheon in Rome to its grandeur, but many churches, such as the Saint Denis Basilica to the north of Paris have been built over previous iterations.

The remains of these early versions can be visited today, but that is hardly the case for most other churches. Techniques and practices are discarded with new inventions. Obsolescence leads to the abandonment of technology. "You know, at one time, there must've been dozens of companies makin' buggy whips. And I'll bet the last company around was the one that made the best goddamn buggy whip you ever saw. Now how would you have liked to have been a stockholder in that company?" (Jewison 1991). This observation about the ultimate obsolescence of industrial pursuits, such as the making of buggy whips, can be made just as well for more intellectually oriented fields. As late as the 1950s, a *computer* designated a person who computed. Now it is a machine that multitasks. The same machine rendered stenography, shorthand, and dictation obsolete, revolutionising the role of a secretary.

There is perhaps a need for a certain amount of loss. Old clothes need to be discarded. Libraries, like gardens, need to be weeded. Buildings need to be torn down. But this need to replace old architecture and styles with new ones becomes too systematically complete to be tolerated: for every case of historical removal, there is a destruction too many. An inevitable backlash ensues. The Dissolution of the monasteries carried out under Henry VIII and the subsequent destruction of the abbey buildings was essentially a matter of loot, "a salvage operation to extract maximum value for the King and its owners" (Harrison 2013, 32). The speed and violence of the Dissolution created such a sense of disquiet that people began to seek out and treasure what remained of the past.

English antiquarianism was born, together with a sense of uncertainty when faced with Protestant ideology. Jeremy Paxman notes how it took John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, published in 1563, with its graphic images, to re-establish the credibility of the Protestant faith (1998, 81-91).

In France, the demolition of mediaeval architecture was slower, as it had begun in earnest only in the mid-eighteenth century and continued into the following century. By 1830, the centre of the Benedictine order, the magnificent Cluny church, and abbey was in the process of being dismantled (only a third of it remains standing today). Enough was enough: intellectuals and artists launched a campaign to stop the savagery. Victor Hugo published his article "*Guerre aux Démolisseurs*" in 1832, as a follow-up to his novel, *Notre Dame de Paris,* to save what remained of mediaeval architecture. In 1834, writer Prosper Mérimée was named *Inspecteur des Monuments Historiques* and commissioned to inventory and inspect the monuments of France, a task which he continued for the rest of his career. The backlash against destroying the Halles in Paris saved the train station that today houses the Musée d'Orsay. The fragility of architecture stems from the fact that it is essentially viewed as *useful*. This can explain partly the disturbing persistence of practice

[15] Louis the XIV surprisingly was quite a builder: he did not limit his building frenzy to Versailles.

that appears to be at odds both with the artists who created the works and with the contexts in which they were created. The concept of its cultural significance comes only when most of the exemplars of a particular style have disappeared. Even then, it should be noted that the interest in any architectural history begins with the contemporary era and runs parallel to the evolution of industrialisation. The old buildings stand as testimony to the tremendous cost of progress. Ruins themselves were considered majestic, as evidenced, for instance, by the works of the painter Hubert Robert (1733-1808). Conversely, architecture tends to escape political categorisation. The buildings in Forlì are considered fascist in design, as the city was very near Benito Mussolini's birthplace and became a showcase for the grandeur of fascist Italy.

The architecture at Forlì reflects a greater aesthetic sense—the Art Deco movement—which has seen expression in other political and social contexts. Buildings like the Chrysler Tower in New York or the Trocadero in Paris are also grandiose examples of Art Deco architecture, but neither were built in nations that were ruled by overtly fascist regimes. The movement was quite prolific in apartments and industrial design. While we remain aware of the fascist origins of the city's expansion, its participation in an overarching aesthetic movement may have helped in its transition from being a fascist showpiece to the modern democratic city it is today. Tensions between personal creativity, social acceptance, and historical re-evaluation continually complicate our understanding of artistic heritage.

All artistic modes of expression extend beyond political boundaries. The exhilarating montage often associated with Soviet filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein or Dziga Vertov evolved along similar lines in 1920's France, with films like Abel Gance's 1927 *Napoleon*. Mediaeval Eastern European icons influenced early Italian painters such as Duccio.

6. The Inquisition

What Victor Arnautoff did with his murals was to make the viewer see racial violence through a glorification of George Washington and with this apparent contradiction make us feel it. The recurring aspect in both major movements against Arnautoff's work is the need to change the subject. The issue of a painting's subject is as slippery as the subject of a novel. It is however the first central issue that must be addressed when looking at a work. The Black Panthers wanted to represent more proactively emancipatory Black people during the Revolutionary War; the #painitdown movement wants to delete the vision of the genocide of the Native Americans. But neither group is willing to address the significance of Black or Native American representation *within the framework of the imagery of George Washington*, imagery which is placed at the heart of an educational institution. Images are not the face-value realities detractors would like to believe, but ideas in their own right that need interpretation and that can be subtly equivocal. The very program of Arnautoff's work is a call to enter the school and look beyond the images of the past that we have been given and beyond the knowledge that we possess.

Once set in the past, a work can be quietly mothballed in a museum, where it can become carefully decontextualised or recontexualised to the point of meaninglessness. More troublesome works can be quietly removed from the rooms, or even from city streets.[16] Such a removal has political implications. It creates a sense of anachronism that should never be forgotten when studying such works. Even without the protective confines of a museum, contemporary spectators can see artworks in ways and conditions that the

[16] Although this also raises cultural questions of what and who should be commemorated, as statues of historical figures across the cities of America are being removed by public demand.

original artist never expected or, for that matter, even intended. Walk into a dark church in Italy or France and you see great paintings and frescoes shrouded in shadow. Drop a coin in a box and the work will be lit up. Daniel Arasse blithely remarks, "The pleasure will be such that you'll drop a second coin!" (2004, 257, my translation). "Overall," he notes, "I'd say that these works have moved closer to us." That proximity creates problems as the detail tends to overwhelm the overall painting. Exploring details is indeed stimulating for people who see the world in colour with all its shades, nuances, and hues. When one sees the world in absolute binary terms of good and bad, right and wrong, the subtleties, ironies, and ambiguities that are inherent in details become unsettling. The reactions to secondary questions come to obliterate the overarching work. While we like to believe that art is an intensely personal statement, it is also, in fact, a series of collective constructs: even at its most personal, a work of art is nonetheless the expression of an artist to an audience within a given social framework. What is perceived, therefore, as an absolute, a work of art for the ages, is the product of a continuous conversation.

The *George Washington* mural demonstrates how art is neither created nor received in a vacuum. Any work is made to fulfil a certain purpose. It is created under certain political, social, and economic conditions. To have commissioned such a work from an artist like Victor Arnautoff, with his artistic and political baggage, is to expect that the work would be framed in a certain way. To propose such a work for a high school is also to expect it to be received in a certain way. The public nature, the glaring visibility, and the monumental scale of Arnautoff's work make it all the more troublesome. This in itself is curious: most statues in public parks or squares, even by major artists such as Rodin or Carpeaux, are patently ignored by those who walk by them daily but then are rediscovered in museum rooms. Arnautoff's murals, as large-scaled frescoes prominently displayed in enclosed public places, such as the University of Oregon library, the Palo-Alto Hospital, or the entry hall to the George Washington High School, cannot be ignored. All these works have drawn fire for various reasons, both at the time of their creation and today. Calls for their destruction are regularly brought forth.

"Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition," as the 1970 Monty Python sketch reminds us, because nobody expects to take on the role of an inquisitor. The few who relish the task are invariably condemned as dangerous fanatics. The politics of Arnautoff's works cannot be dismissed, nor should they be; moreover, to remove or hide a work such as *Life of George Washington* would have the added advantage, for some, of papering over the unsavoury aspects of George Washington's image. We would be left with the simplistic heroic image of *Washington Crossing the Delaware*. One can only wonder at the forces behind such a destructive dissonant reaction. It is easy to forget that the inquisitor's stance is constant. Novel creations are subjected to various forms of censorship, scholarly study can be censured, and the art of previous generations silently set aside. It is invariably what happens when we see only with our own preconceptions.

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Conclusions

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Considering the topic of the workshop, in light of the critical approach to heritage comprehension, and thinking about its possible valorisation nowadays, this volume has encompassed and promoted the meaning of heritage (including natural heritage) that follows the research approach of Laurajane Smith (2006). Indeed, Smith has introduced the critical discourse analysis (CDA) to overcome the view imposed by socially and economically dominant groups (AHD - authorized heritage discourse) that marginalises the voices of non-hegemonic groups. Similarly, the Faro Convention (2005) proposes an innovative and revised concept of heritage, which thus far has been primarily constructed according to the rules and canons (historical/artistic/ landscape) established by institutions. The vision of the Faro Convention lies in recognising an active and responsible role of the community that has the right to create its own cultural heritage in which to identify itself. By following this thread, everything can become cultural heritage if its social value for that community is recognised, and everything can lose the meaning of common and shared heritage. This is particularly true for the non-Western people, who have suffered pressure, domination, and abuse of power by Western countries. Indeed, many historical processes (e.g., colonialism, totalitarian regimes) have left a legacy that still today divides the communities, and with which they must contend, often generating conflict and contention. Thus, the testimonies and the assets associated with those processes may take on a critical and dissonant meaning.

Therefore, the fieldworks we proposed in the workshop were aimed at encouraging and engaging in deep reflection on critical assets in order to participate and share the experiences, and to propose a new dialogue and narrative of research in the social sphere. The new discourse around cultural heritage may contribute to the improvement of the troubled relationship between institutions and communities in an attempt to overcome conflicts; it can further help determine the future prospects of those assets in order to better identify a place from which to draw new values.

The fourteen essays presented in this volume are clearly inspired by the fieldwork and the cross-cutting themes discussed in Bologna and Kraków during the workshop, such as the many

reflections on the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Museum. The case studies researched by the authors are primarily located in Europe; some touch also upon America. Most importantly, each and every essay brings in a new perspective on the issue of dissonant heritage.
This has been possible thanks to the highly diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise of the authors, and a plurality of voices coming from anthropologists, historians, art and literature historians, lawyers, musicians, and more. The essays in the first section, dedicated to the interpretation and management of dissonant heritage in the context of their musealisation, rely on the principles of both cultural and physical anthropology, with acute reflection upon their links with history, politics, and social issues, and further encompassing the personal, symbolic, spiritual and religious sphere. All the essays highlight the importance of contextualisation and connection between objects and documents, clearly exposing entanglements between them, in order to reconstruct proper narratives for that kind of difficult heritage.

The second section is dedicated to social sustainability and the related essays face this topic through highly diverse case studies, approached through the lens of law, social anthropology, and history. By giving tangible examples of dissonant heritage and its difficult management, they offer precious insight into present social conflicts and delicate disputes whose origins are rooted in a disconformable past. The essays of the third section analyse and interpret different connections between dissonant heritage and the arts, encompassing literature, poetry, music, graphics, and more. Along with the expansion of the definitions of both heritage and arts, the most profound results of the research included in this section are related to the potential of dissonant heritage as a stimulus for social change. The cases that are presented and discussed here prove that both arts and heritage continue to play major parts in the domain of collective identity formation. Thus, one of the main takeaway messages of this book is the conclusion that dissonant heritage can be a useful tool to strengthen and root the values on which our society is based, such as democracy and respect for human rights.

As evidenced by the essays published in this book, it is impossible to cancel the dissonance of our past, and sometimes also of our present. We can remove statues, abandon buildings, and forget paintings, but the past that hurts remains, and we must find a way to strengthen our values by working on difficult and painful memories. Undoubtedly, many risks need to be taken into account when we deal with dissonant heritage and memories. People tend to look for enjoyable experiences in their spare time, and most cultural events or exhibitions attempt to combine education and entertainment (*edutainment*). This approach needs to be carefully weighted, because enjoyable tourist experiences can generate positive feelings about the historical facts behind dissonant heritage. However, dissonant heritage needs a proper interpretation which includes the communication of the negative emotions experienced by the people who lived through the dissonance. The second risk involves the celebration of the past and its dissonance (in terms of totalitarianism and human rights violation). Furthermore, the narratives of dissonant heritage can be politically manipulated and may contribute to the proliferation of revisionist, negationist tendencies or to the propagation of exculpatory feelings for the violation of human rights. Also in this case, a proper interpretation needs to be provided. The contextualisation of historical facts through storytelling can contribute to the understanding of the dissonant past incorporated in monuments or works of art. The expansion of the historical period in storytelling, in order to include both the previous and the successive decades, is another way to communicate the painful in our past. Finally, interpretation can unveil the propaganda containing some typologies of dissonant heritage, in order to expose the ways in

which works of art have often been used as tools to create consensus and to strengthen ideologies incompatible with human rights and democracy.

In conclusion, dissonant heritage represents an important opportunity in our society to reflect on our values and to make people aware of the importance of promoting and defending them.

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