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INTRODUCTION: FROM CONCEPTUAL DEBATES TO PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

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Abstract: Bringing into focus the ways of how to approach trauma instead of defining the object of research is becoming increasingly important. This also indicates that the range of approaches to trauma that informs cultural inquiry is widening, and is moving away from one singular paradigm posited as universal. Trauma scholars have demonstrated, on the one hand, the importance of particular experiences, specific cases, individual features of experiencing, remembering, and narrating trauma. On the other hand, they have pointed out the impact of cultural "scripts" shaped by broader cultural understandings and social and cultural regulations and preferences that shape the possibilities of the representation of traumatic experience. This special issue seeks to recognize and negotiate the individual and collective dimensions of trauma as well as their interwovenness, with a focus on the (post)-Soviet and Eastern European experience. It does so by addressing the generalizing theoretical models as well as the practical, material, and experimental aspects of trauma. Thus, it seeks to disentangle and clarify the links between the collective and the individual, the theoretical and the practical, and finally, the universal and the specific, the global and the local.

Keywords: collective trauma, cultural trauma, Eastern Europe, individual trauma, post-Soviet, trauma studies

Originally referring to physical injury as psychological damage affecting self-perception and capacity for normal functioning on individual and collective

level, the concept of trauma has gained prominence in a wide variety of social and cultural practices, discursive constellations, and areas of expertise. In the most general sense, trauma refers to lasting psychological damage, manifesting itself importantly via a disruption of memory and identity and occurring as a result of (often) violent, life-threatening experience causing severe distress to individuals or communities (Davis & Meretoja 2020: 1; Luckhurst 2008: 79). To a large extent, trauma theory has been developed on the basis of the Holocaust. Other large-scale historical events considered within this framework from a variety of disciplinary perspectives include, for example, the Armenian, Rwandan, and Cambodian genocides, the Vietnam War, 9/11, the Gulag as well as mechanisms of structural violence relating to, for example, colonialism and racism. While the question of hierarchies and preferences of historical events included within the trauma paradigm has received quite a bit of critical attention (see, e.g., Bennett & Kennedy 2003: 4–11; Craps & Bond 2020: 104–112; Schaffer & Smith 2004: 20–22), it is also important to draw attention to those contexts of traumatic experience that relate to common everyday life, involving, for instance, domestic violence, sexual abuse and social marginalization, which are closely related to and depend on social and political regulations and cultural discourses.

In the field of cultural inquiry and cultural theory, the impact of the work of Cathy Caruth (1995a; 1995b; 1996) as well as that of Dori Laub and Shoshana Felman (1992) and Dominick LaCapra (2000), which has been informed by psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and deconstruction, has been seminal. The central defining feature of that paradigm is "pathology of … *the structure of* … *experience*" – the failure of the event or condition causing trauma to be integrated into memory (Caruth 1995a: 4). Trauma is believed to remain "largely inaccessible to conscious recall and control" and to manifest itself in the form of "often delayed, and uncontrolled repetitive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" that merits the status of reexperience rather than memory (Caruth 1995b: 151; 1995a: 11) and results in a collapse of the distinction between the past and the present. In the Western world, a psychoanalytically informed conceptualization of trauma understood as having a shattering effect on the self, has greatly influenced the ways in which trauma has been represented and interpreted with a longstanding contradiction relating to the possibility and necessity of verbal and narrative representation of trauma.

Poststructuralist influence on theorizing trauma that underlines the paradigm developed by Caruth (1995a, 1995b), as well as Felman and Laub (1992), posits trauma as something that, by its very essence, cannot be or should not be represented in language or narratively mediated. The influence of such perspective can be seen in stylistic and narrative preferences of modernist and

postmodernist (literary) trauma narratives or narratives that have been considered as such by trauma scholars because of the presence of certain stylistic features. These include, for instance, narrative fragmentation, inconsistencies, repetitions, disrupted temporalities, gaps, and silences (see Meretoja 2020: 26; also Whitehead 2004; Pederson 2018). As Hanna Meretoja has argued, the fundamental distrust of post-structurally oriented inquiries into trauma stems from a more general view of poststructuralism toward explanation and understanding as violent appropriation by its very essence (Meretoja 2020: 29). As the range of approaches to trauma that informs cultural inquiry is widening, importantly also including cognitive and neuroscientific research (see, e.g., Jensen 2019; Pederson 2020: 220–229), the dissociative model proposed by Caruth is no longer viewed as the only possible response to trauma. Although hugely influential, the exclusivity of such a paradigm has been challenged by innumerable renderings of traumatic experience in all kinds of narrative formats as well as the work of many trauma scholars who engage with different theoretical and critical paradigms, demonstrating the importance of narrative mediation of traumatic experience for a number of purposes, from coping and healing to bringing about changes in cultural perceptions and social and legal regulations (see, e.g., Balaev 2014; Jensen 2019; Douglas 2010). Approaching the possibilities of narrative representation of traumatic experience from a somewhat different angle, several trauma scholars have also demonstrated the impact of cultural "scripts" influenced by broader cultural understandings and social and cultural regulations and preferences that shape the possibilities of the representation of traumatic experience and can have both an empowering and limiting or even cancelling effect (Douglas 2010; Gilmore 2017: 85–117).

A genealogical approach to the conceptual frameworks of trauma (see in particular Luckhurst 2008; also Leys 2000; Sütterlin 2019; Kansteiner 2004) extends the trajectories of inquiry beyond a singular theoretical frame based on a few central limit events (most importantly the Holocaust) or developments (such as the inclusion of the posttraumatic stress disorder in the 1980 edition of the manual of the American Psychiatric Association) and a single paradigm based on a specific perspective of Freudian psychoanalysis. Nevertheless, the influence of Freud's ideas on the development of the conceptual framework of trauma is undebated though evaluation of his contribution and modes of engagement with it vary. In particular, his work focusing on the phenomenon of "shell-shock" – soldiers returning from World War I, who suffered from nervous disorders for which there was no direct physical cause – is considered to have partially laid the foundation of both the PTSD diagnosis and the most widely used therapy that seeks to integrate dissociated memory into a coherent, affectively engaged personal narrative (Herman 1992: 175). Trauma is viewed as

a characteristic feature of modernity, related to changes in the way of life and stability of self-identity brought about by the modernization and industrialization of the (Western) societies starting with the end of the eighteenth century, accompanied by increasing urbanization during the nineteenth century. As Nicole Sütterlin argues, "the conditions for the emergence of trauma as a cultural syndrome … [were generated] already in the late 1700s and early 1800s", featuring the emergence of a "modern subject that is inherently and necessarily vulnerable" (2020: 15). According to Roger Luckhurst, the contradictions of modernity are exemplified by ways of conceiving technological advances, simultaneously viewed as "the prosthetic extension of [the] will to mastery" and as "a violent assault on agency and self-determination" (2008: 20). More concretely, the emergence of the concept of trauma is related to the expansion of railroads in the second half of the nineteenth century and accompanying fatal railway accidents that soon became the subject of medical attention from the perspective of mental health as well as a legal subject of liability and eligibility for compensation (Luckhurst 2008: 21; Sütterlin 2020: 12–13). In *The Trauma Question*, Luckhurst outlines a genealogy of the concept or trauma that he envisions as an "exemplary conceptual knot" (an approach adopted from Bruno Latour) that seeks to "track the multi-disciplinary origin of trauma in the nineteenth century through industrialization and bureaucratization, law and psychology, military and government welfare policies …[to] our current conjuncture … knot[ing] these diverse and discontinuous elements together in the identity politics of the 1970s" (2008: 15).

As many scholars of trauma have argued, the centrality of trauma in the conceptualizations of culture and history does not rely primarily on its medical history (alone) but excessively in its status as "a category of social discourse of strongly moral significance" (Davis & Meretoja 2020: 3; also Fassin & Rechtman 2009: 284), foregrounding the responsibility of societies "toward their most vulnerable subjects" as well as the process of recollection and remembrance of historical events on national and international scale (Sütterlin 2020: 17). Though there is a relatively clear distinction, in particular on the theoretical level, between individual and collective (cultural) trauma, especially vis-à-vis the expanded scale of experience that can be viewed as traumatizing within a variety of contexts, neither the distinction nor the dynamics of its discursive authority may completely hold or could be conceived of by way of a "sliding scale" (Hodgkin & Radstone 2003: 100). As a central category in dealing with suffering and injustice of the past on the individual and collective level, trauma has also been viewed as a conceptual framework, a clear-cut division between victims and perpetrators, with the former constituting a position assumed by discourses of cultural criticism. More recently, the focus has expanded to include

the position of the perpetrator and to "attend critically and consciously both to issues of guilt and complicity" (Adams & Vice 2013: 1–2). It is also important to consider that the availability of the position of the victim requires systems of recognition and support may not be (or may not have been) available in different socio-historical contexts, nor may the position of the victim, in particular in definitive sense – a trauma victim is all that one is – be desirable or ultimately helpful for overcoming traumatic experience.

The extensive spread of areas of application of the concept of trauma, in particular those in the popular public realm, has created a "trauma boom" that has also brought about the trivialization of trauma, its utilization in relation to "inconsequential, ultimately harmless nibbles of our daily lives" (Davis & Meretoja 2020: 1). Trauma has also been discussed in terms of the domination of a "wound culture", which capitalizes, often via different modes of consumption, on the extensive public attention on and engagement with "suffering, states of injury and wound attachment" (Seltzer 1997: 4). The extensive circulation of trauma in contemporary (Western) culture attests to a vogue of consumption of trauma for pleasure as well as its circulation for profit, including academic one (Miller & Tougaw 2002: 2; Yaeger 2002: 29) and it has been discussed in terms of trauma industry, marketing, and consumption and trauma aesthetic, visible, for instance, in memorial architecture (Craps & Bond 2020: 3). Roger Luckhurst has also pointed out that traumatization, or as he formulates it, a perception of "woundedness", frequently emerges as the basis of collective identity on ethnic, national, and political level (2008: 2). Hence, according to him, "traumatic identity is commonly argued to be at the root of many national collective memories" (ibid.) to an extent that it is possible, as Andreas Huyssen has argued, to view the entire twentieth century within the context of historical trauma (2003: 8). Yet the "affective transmissibility of trauma" (Luckhurst 2008: 119), in particular the dynamics of the impact of an individual act of mediating traumatic experience on collective memory and identity, has also been viewed as contributing to community-building processes, believed to help to "repair the tears in the collective social fabric" (Miller & Tougaw 2002: 2–3). A failure of societies to facilitate the mediation of traumatic experience either by narration or by different formats of commemoration and testimony creates the risk of perpetuation of "mechanisms of … violence … inherited from the past" (Davis & Meretoja 2020: 1; see also Gilmore 2008: 367) and blocks out the possibility of healing from the wounds of the past which, if left unattended, can be transmitted from generation to generation, hindering normal healthy processes of identity construction on individual as well as communal level. Narratives of traumatic experience, often of self-representational nature, have contributed to "ways of coming to terms with and coping with traumatic

experience on individual and collective level … reassessment and revision of historical knowledge and cultural memory and the relationship between the private and the public and participating in social action concerning legislation and policymaking" (Kurvet-Käosaar 2020: 305).

While it would not be possible to make a comprehensive list of historical events that have been or are being viewed as traumatic, an extensive focus of the field on a limited number of "cataclysmic European and US historical events" (Traverso & Broderick 2010: 3; see also Bennett & Kennedy 2003: 1–15; Douglas & Whitlock & Stumm 2008: 1–8) as well as the Eurocentric nature of trauma theory itself (Craps & Bond 2020: 106) has been a distinctive feature of inquiries into trauma for a long time. Scholars of global memory and those specializing on sociopolitical, historical, and cultural regions on the borderlines or outside the Western or Eurocentric realms have underlined the need for the development of a new trauma theory that would abandon the universalizing claims of psychoanalytically informed conceptual framework of trauma and would be able to cater for cultural specificities of understanding, processing, and mediating traumatic experience as well as the processes of coping with it on a wider global scale (Schaffer & Smith 2004: 20–22; Bennett & Kennedy 2003: 4–11). And yet, as Jehanne M. Gheith states, with respect to historical memory concerning the twentieth century in general and trauma in particular, "the Gulag in which some 10–20 million people died and whose effects continue to be far-reaching ... barely inhabits ... the Western imagination" (2007: 159). This can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as, for example, lack of international dialogue on the subject, lack of public trials concerning the Gulag with a respective lack of public accountability, the extensive duration of the Gulag, and its being "of a substantially different order" from the Holocaust as the "real limit event" (Gheith 2007: 160; see also Tumarkin 2011: 1047). Such a view is supported by other scholars working on Stalinist repressions and the Gulag who, similarly to Gheith (2007: 159–175), emphasize the need for different discourses and methodologies that would cater for the specificity of traumatic experience in the case of Soviet totalitarianism (see, e.g., Merridale 2010: 379, 380–381; Tumarkin 2011: 1053–1055; Paperno 2009). The critical responses elaborated in these studies vary. Some scholars refrain from the use of the traditional conceptual frame of trauma (Paperno 2009: 2) and argue that posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a medical diagnosis is irrelevant in the Soviet case due to the cultural specificity of reactions to suffering (Merridale 2010: 379–380). Others propose alternative conceptualizations of trauma manifestation and of ways of dealing with traumatic experience. For example, Gheith (2007: 161) outlines the importance of "ways of working through a loss that do not involve verbal recovery or where verbal accounts are a secondary or tertiary

factor", and Maria Tumarkin (2011: 1053) argues for the need of inquiry into "the long-term affective states purposefully and masterfully engendered by totalitarianism in its particular historical forms".

PRAGMATICS OF TRAUMA NARRATIVES

The angle provided by the discipline of philosophy within trauma studies provides a macro-level picture that strives to lay down universal models and rules according to which a trauma is experienced in society. This in turn needs to be balanced out with an analysis of specific cases, the particular features of the micro-level analysis, which can be provided by cultural or literary studies. Reasoning on the psychological macro-level is useful when we realize that a near-death experience can also be felt on a social level, through all the "bodies" in which a person resides. Experiencing the reality of the death of a body that is included in the political or cultural space is a traumatic experience that requires different work strategies than that of the individual trauma.[1] Foucault's concern for the self as a concern for the Other is transformed here into a kind of experience of the reality of the death of the Other. The experience of the disintegration of the Other's body is experienced as one's own death, which is expressed in the loss of subjectivity, but not only psychological. And if hypertrophied subjectivity – expressed, for example, in the survivor's guilt and the desire to disappear – is a psychotherapeutic problem and a manifestation of an individual trauma, then the annihilation of subjectivity through shame is a manifestation of the political or cultural body and a problem that dovetails the field of ethics, culture, law, and politics. Thus, human rights, witness testimony, identification of the criminal – all these legal practices are directly related to the manifestation of the political body by the subject. This, in turn, tempts a look at the given norms and rules of trauma experience in society as something that can be tentatively called a "descriptive *bolvanka*" (from the word *bolvan* 'dummy').

Both individual and cultural traumas are embedded inside the canvas of everyday life by the narrative practices of "activating someone else's trauma" (Oushakine 2009). In both cases the first way of protecting the traumatized person is lapses in memory. This mechanism works automatically in individual trauma (Halligan & Clark & Ehlers 2002). PTSD therapy allows to overcome memory loss and to lead traumatic experiences on the level of narration. However, memory often offers activating someone else's trauma; talking about, describing, and overcoming someone else's experience (Jelinek et al. 2009). Perhaps

this is due to the fact that a localization scenario has been already formed in someone else's experience by their describing and ordering rhetorical clichés.

Similar mechanisms are relevant for a cultural trauma (Cwalina & Falkowski 2008): "Death is like a start and a beginning. Grief is like a unifying principle. Dates of death are like a variant of the calendar. Materialization of loss is like a way of patriotic education" (Oushakine 2009: 6). Here, "the formation of a therapeutic context – that is, the task of overcoming trauma – is replaced by attempts to relive (someone else's) loss again and again, to make it part of everyday life, to build a network of unifying rituals and practices around it" (ibid.: 7). In any case, the activation of someone else's trauma occurs due to a common narrative basis, which allows not only to pronounce the traumatic experience in the same way, but also to interpret it in the same way by using a common basic structure that sets the trajectory of thought along the main reference points fixed in linguistic, and therefore semantic, clichés. A certain set of these clichés, arranged in a certain order, gives the narrator the opportunity to describe the trauma in a certain way, using maximum emotional economy, but at the same time to express an attitude to the described experience, to embed it in a certain system of values. For example, people embed trauma narrative in a medical narrative 'pattern' by describing trauma as pain, in a legal (or ethical) 'pattern' by describing it as a crime, in an economic 'pattern' by describing it as a loss, etc. This 'pattern' could be called a descriptive *bolvanka*. We are not talking here about a structuralist search for a single basis, but in terms of borrowing, and not of transfer.[2]

The phenomenon of *bolvanka* originates from the Soviet period where it played an important role in Russian everyday life. The word derives from the Soviet bureaucratic practice and means a pre-prepared form of an official document (blank, template, form), where only specific data (e.g., personal information such as the name or time and place) can be changed. Etymologically, *bolvanka* comes from the Russian colloquial word *bolvan* ('dummy'), which originally meant 'idol, graven image', but received a negative connotation with a semantic emphasis on stupidity and passivity. From a positive side, *bolvanka* enables people to fulfil formal documents with the least emotional strain and loss of time and effort. However, its use is almost compulsory: not using the *bolvanka* template leads to an incorrectly filled document, which, as a result, will not be accepted.

In the case of a traumatic narrative, *bolvanka* seems to be an appropriate term for indicating a set of formal clichés, speech patterns, and narrative scenarios for constructing a story about trauma. Such a descriptive *bolvanka* is quite often used in traumatic discourse, allowing the speaker to talk about the trauma with the least emotional cost, changing only their personal information

or data about a specific time and place. The basis of the descriptive *bolvanka* is formed by rhetorical (or narrative)[3] patterns, i.e., operational clichés of syntactic constructions. Operational units (templates) are brought together in the format of a descriptive *bolvanka*. Both non-specialists and specialists alike use it for forming, reinforcing, and understanding trauma narratives. The economical descriptive *bolvanka* dominates in the discourse of cultural memory, whereas the normative (legal/ethical) one is the leading model in the discourse of cultural trauma. These two are seldom seen as two interwoven aspects of the same phenomenon, which they in fact are. They build and maintain their own descriptive models although both of them deal with key moments of the past.

Since traumatic discourse focuses on negative, painful, alienated experience, its form and content are censored not only by society, but also by the speaker. Thus, traumatic discourse usually deals with latent knowledge. The grammar of meanings/senses/significances, which is built up according to the syntax of rhetorical templates – the descriptive *bolvanka* – is quite strict in keeping information and emotions about the trauma hidden. It assumes not only what has already been said but dictates also what will be said. The expectations of the discourse set by this grammar of meanings/senses/significances act as an imperative for the speaker. Besides, the descriptive *bolvanka* is reproduced over and over again in the process of multiple repetition of patterns, which further reinforces its power. It allows the discourse not to identify and vocalize the latent content, but rather to carefully conceal the individual characteristics of a personal traumatic experience.

Such iterations of the descriptive *bolvanka* allow it to exist as a norm at the level of everyday consciousness. In this sense, it is akin to the functioning of folklore plots; it combines templates that exist within traditions. However, while folklore includes well-known and collectively adhered rules, it also displays individual creativity and variation, which makes up the strength of folklore. Therefore, folklore studies could provide a novel angle to describe and deconstruct the way in which traumatic descriptive *bolvankas* function, revealing the inherent structure of the set rules and templates. This special issue dedicated to the description of traumatic experience and, more broadly, cultural traumatology and its discursive practices, seeks to address the links between the collective and the individual, the theoretical and the material, and finally, the topographical aspects of trauma.

Folklore is transmitted from a person to a person; narratives of trauma spread and reproduce in a similar way. They are characterized by the total involvement of all members of a cultural community in the traumatic discourse. Such descriptive *bolvankas* also involve the stratification of society according to the participants in the trauma model: the (conditional) perpetrator (Arendt

1964) or (conditional) victim (Peraica 2009). In this act of stratification, state institutions function as subjects that are indistinguishable from individual subjects. The total involvement of cultural subjects in a trauma-related discourse implies a massive interest in concealing the traumatic experience, and if we take into account that the conditional perpetrator usually represents the numerical majority of subjects in society and includes collective subjects such as state institutions or the state, the interest in concealing trauma is indeed almost total (see an overview of the 1977 Moncloa Pacts in Spain in Encarnación 2014, of the conspiracy of silence in the post-war FRG in Di Napoli 1982, etc.). The practice of silencing the public consensus may seem like a way to transfer trauma to a state of sacrifice, or as brokers put it, find a way to "fix losses", but in fact it is just the opposite: its aim is to freeze guilt/resentment/responsibility, which in turn carries through one or several generations and causes an intergenerational gap, a cultural misunderstanding, a cold civil war (Encarnación 2014) or similar.

The total protection of one's "shameful" common past by culture is akin to the protection of one's criminal past by an individual criminal. The descriptive *bolvanka* allows everybody to highlight those features of the past that make the shameful elements invisible. It is based on the nostalgic tendencies of a culture (Boym 2002; Davis 1979; Wilson 2005; etc.), which form a system of values, and therefore a certain system of discursive expectations, rhetorical patterns, and a grammar of meanings/senses/significances. However, the nostalgic tendencies of selective memory actually look like the disintegration and degradation of memory in old age. The descriptive *bolvanka* and the grammar of meanings actually constructs the form of memory and interpretation about the not-yet-happened, i.e., about the future. At the same time, the descriptive *bolvanka* also forms a "memory" of the traumatic experience in victims experiencing post-traumatic disorders. Since it tends to conceal rather than disclose, it is possible to talk about the latent (alienated) past with the help of clichés and/or (physical, material) markers. We can thus ask: Is there a common (universal) language for speaking about trauma? Can we adequately speak in one language about the traumatic experiences of the Chechens, Tatars, Germans, Russians, Jews, Latvians, and Estonians? Is the discourse of guilt appropriate? Or should it be about recognition?

From the point of view of absolute truth, a person carries the fullness of truth, otherwise he/she is a liar. It is impossible to leave half the truth at home and flaunt the streets with a convenient one. However, from the individual, pragmatic aspect this is exactly what happens when using the descriptive *bolvanka*. In contrast to ethical concepts, the theory of post-truth focuses on pragmatics (Keyes 2004; d'Ancona 2017; McIntyre 2018). It is necessary to judge the state

and society from the point of view of absolute truth and people as members of these absolute institutions, rather than seeing a man as an individual, independent creature. In this sense, ethics presupposes that a person should act as if he is going to be judged from the point of view of absolute truth.

The laws of the state may be in conflict with the principles of absolute truth, and the legal institutions operating within the framework of state laws may also be untrue from the point of view of absolute truth. Classical political philosophy does not suggest such an option, but everyday practice shows a constant repetition of such a situation. What about those who deliberately separate laws from the absolute truth? How should responsibility be built in this case? Is the level of responsibility the same for all participants? Is the responsibility of Hitler and his supporting majority equal? Is the responsibility of the source of power equal to that of the instance of power inscribed in the collective pragmatic system of the exercise of untruth?

EMBRACING THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF TRAUMA STUDIES: INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTICLES

These and other questions were the focus of the international symposium under the heading "Between individual and collective cultural trauma", held at the Estonian Literary Museum on 12–13 March 2020. Some more prominent studies presented at this event are included in this special issue. The ten individual articles in this special issue address, firstly, the disciplinary transfer from a unified, universal approach to specific theories, cultural contexts, applications, and cases. Our aim is to maintain that the notion of trauma is diverse, and its diversity needs to be acknowledged and reflected also in the theory that explains and describes it. Secondly, the theoretical accounts are combined with practical, experimental, and materialized approaches to the phenomenon in many contributions to this issue. Thirdly, we felt that the topography of trauma needs far more attention than it has received until now, and this is what the authors of this special issue have kept in mind in their studies. In our view, the topography of trauma is tied tightly to the first point made here, namely that the generalized and universal ideas need to be seen as applicable to specific cases with their own material, topographical, and ideological aspects.

Drawing on the writings of Baudrillard and Derrida, **Sergey Troitskiy** seeks to identify the main features characterizing the functioning of trauma as a cultural mechanism within the framework of victim order and economy. He shows the transmission of an individual trauma into a collective one as a product of the construction of linguistic and cultural clichés (Oushakine 2009) or the

descriptive *bolvankas* described above. He argues that the current trauma concept was woven into the cultural fabric of society only in the twentieth century, endowed with a strong collective and topographic meaning. It is closely connected to other aspects of a society, such as politics and economy, and suggests a new term – victim economy – to apply for such present-day political-economic interpretation of loss. This term, as he contends, incorporates important focus points of understanding trauma – political economy, and Baudrillard's description of contemporary reality of the victim society.

Dilemmas of forgetting and remembering arise with traumatic experiences. Selective memory of the trauma is conditioned by the visibility of events, but also impacted by social norms, normalized violence, and perceptions of atrocity, as illustrated in the study by **Maya Camargo-Vemuri**. Presenting a case study of sexual violence during the genocide, the author stresses the necessity to remember atrocities in as detailed and accurate manner as possible. Certain elements of narratives that are silenced because they trigger emotions of discomfort, pain, fear, anxiety, and even shame or guilt can carry a decisive role in the healing process. Furthermore, concealing trauma leads to the creation of a false history, which omits variables which may be a key to understanding larger processes and phenomena.

Another article that aims at deconstructing central notions in trauma studies is the one by **Kseniya Kapelchuk.** It rides on the third wave of memory studies, more specifically, on the theory put forth by Aleida Assmann. The critique to Assmann's trauma theory follows two lines of discourse: the level of facts and the level of value, as Kapelchuk argues. Departing from and building on Assmann's theory, the author shows the benefits of viewing these two levels separately in order to dissect the phenomenon more effectively and get closer to understanding trauma. Moreover, she points at the circular argument hidden in Assmann's responses to the critique. On the one hand, Assmann suggests that the changing perception of the painful past is brought about by the fall of the modern time regime, but on the other, she claims that the very establishment of the new time regime is explained as an effect of these painful events. This kind of arguing shows the vulnerability of the theory. Kapelchuk seeks to find solutions for this problem and recommends that the fundamental discussion about trauma discourse should tease apart the ontological and ethical levels of reasoning, and also address the value of such notions as ethical turn, human rights, and biopolitics.

The article by **Tiiu Jaago** underlines the importance of contextual folkloric reading of the life story texts, the meaning and narrator's focus of which change from generation to generation. When the traumatic memories referred to by Camargo-Vemuri follow the theoretical (and more conventional) understand-

ing of how trauma is vocalized in a life story, the Estonian examples present a slightly different case. Here we can see how combining biographical analysis with the concept of trauma helps to understand the cultural connectivity of trauma expression. The article further elucidates the relationship between individual and cultural trauma, stating that these phenomena have a special relationship of parallel co-existence and occasional intertwinement (e.g., when the narrator links his or her story with some publicly mediated narrative; see also Jaago 2018). The cultural context in which the same (family) trauma is narrated changes over time, and so do the elements that are stressed and the interpretations of one's and other's actions, but this in turn offers new entry points into negotiating, defining, and understanding traumatic experiences of the past.

Authors in this issue address the material aspect of trauma. In her timely article, **Tuulikki Kurki** proposes an integrative approach to trauma narratives, which takes into account the narrative and non-narrative elements of trauma. Displaying data from border and mobility related interviews and artwork, Kurki formulates the notion of materialized trauma narrative. This novel, interdisciplinary approach aims to bring together the narrative and non-narrative knowledge of traumatic experiences that is embodied in a material object, for example, something carried along while crossing borders. These objects may hold a healing power, which lines this article up side by side with other practical, experience- and function-based contributions to trauma studies published in this special issue.

Humour and trauma often go hand in hand. Catastrophes, wars, and political upheavals bring along more or less tasteless jokes that aim to make sense of the situation (Laineste & Lääne 2015; Stokker 1991, 1997). Humour can also cause or escalate traumatic experiences, as humour scandals of the last twenty years have proved (Kuipers 2008). In some cases, humour as a way to protest and fight inequality has been recorded (Sørensen 2015; 't Hart 2007, 2016). In any case, as functional as humour may seem, its functionality is unpredictable and thus its relationship with trauma can be equally both beneficial and detrimental. **Alyona Ivanova** in her article for this issue addresses the many connections between humour and trauma in hospital clowning, using interview data from practitioners. The study explores how not only the trauma of the patient, but also that of the clown meet in the hospital settings and lead to healing of the two sides involved, but ideally also the modern society that sets its context. On a theoretical level, this offers a highly valuable insight into the two concepts that stand so close yet so far apart. The paper carries, however, a very practical implication in addition to that: namely, it shows the steps to the healing potential of humour in the case of varied, complex traumas.

Another practice-driven article about trauma is the one by **Liat Steir-Livny**, who analyses the ways of representing one trauma for two different audiences. The Zionist film *Adamah* (1948) and its remake, *Tomorrow Is a Wonderful Day* (1949), use the same footage to create two different narratives of the path of a Holocaust survivor in the Land of Israel. The author describes a recently recovered earliest version of the film, *Adamah*, which was initially dismissed on the basis of its too specific, "not fit for Hollywood" kind of approach to history and trauma. The second attempt was considered an international success. These two versions might mark the switch of narratives about the Holocaust and the building of the Israeli state. The original movie *Adamah* – the Eretz-Israeli version – stresses the importance of the community and the land, whereas the American edit of the same footage – *Tomorrow Is a Wonderful Day* – highlights the role of the individual who wants to realize his dream. It raises a question about the subjectivity-objectivity of the interpretations of trauma and points out that these are always conditioned by the needs of the subject, the needs of the audience, and the context of the times. This article offers another practical approach to understanding and analysing trauma narratives through bringing forth new, unique data.

The development of trauma theory has evidenced loud and detailed discussions of terminology and approaches; however, this has left the practical implications of research largely in the shadows. This is a lacuna that the current special issue seeks to address, in addition to presenting specific examples related to (post)-Soviet contexts (apart from the article by Steir-Livny, which falls outside of this area). The contribution by **Yulia V. Zevako** is a good example of how to tie trauma theory with practice. It offers a description of an experiment of re-experiencing and negotiating a trauma of the past. Talking about a trauma within a society means bringing it to the fore, becoming aware of its various aspects, the multiple narratives connected to it. Of course, not everything related to a trauma can or will be brought forth with equal strength or effect, which makes this particular project an exemplary one as it tries to narrate the side of the victim, the perpetrator, and the surrounding people and society all at once. The author describes the process of forming an individual affiliate memory of the era of political repression through an interactive exhibition of the complicated historical period meant for adolescents. This is a generation that has no direct connection or experience with that trauma; however, they are given an opportunity to relive the times and emotions of their grandparents when visiting and discussing the authentic space and artifacts of that era. Repeating history in a controlled setting results in the humanization of history, as adolescents take on emotional roles (as victims, relatives of victims, executioners, bystanders).

It helps to begin to rethink and get rid of the "narrative of redemption" which prevents the understanding of the catastrophic past.

During the discussion held at the colloquium "Between individual and collective trauma", we evidenced that the location of trauma matters: from the way it is experienced to the way it can be described. The Eastern European context provides a promising arena to point at the specifically post-socialist elements in trauma-related discussions in society. A case study of the importance of martyrdom in the context of the design of collective trauma leads us closer to understanding the elements that condition the reactions to a trauma. **Daniil Anikin**, in his article about (post)-Soviet martyrdom-related myths, stresses that in such a traumatized society, the ubiquitous myth transforms the protagonist into a victimized hero, a suffering martyr. Following a detailed analysis of political and social developments in the image of the martyr, the author concludes that martyrological thinking is a mechanism for maintaining historical memory and collective identity, and as such it functions as an important element of trauma-related discourse. This approach presents a region-specific picture of processing trauma, underlining one of the main aims of this special volume, namely, to bring into focus the Eastern European and former Soviet-bloc-related context to trauma studies. The status of the martyr, for example, which was transposed from the dynastic affiliation to the simple worker or peasant, is something that is relevant to other post-Soviet countries as well. Similarly, the problematic position of such narratives in the present-day (political) discourse makes their use in the symbolic policy of the state almost impossible not only in Russia but also elsewhere in the area.

Uldis Krēsliņš investigates a concrete, topographically specific case of publishing the card index of the Latvian Committee for State Security (KGB) of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (Latvian SSR) after this Baltic republic had regained independence. The publication of the card index files was hoped to foster openness and justice; however, the author contends in conclusion that the expected results have not been achieved, neither in terms of historical truth, nor public reconciliation. The reasons for that are manifold: the uncertainty of the position of the political authority, the fragmented society and historical memory, and the place of trauma discourse in the preceding and consequent discussions surrounding the card files. The author also argues that the trauma of this historical experience in society's collective memory is not yet fully conscious, and this suggests yet another reason why the publication of the files was met with national polemics and heated public discussions.

The study of trauma is clearly interdisciplinary, as is also reflected in the articles chosen for this special issue. Different accents can be placed on topics

inside trauma studies, for example, memory studies provide a disciplinary background for the articles by Kapelchuk, Zevako, and Steir-Livny; Ivanova's approach stems from the discipline of psychology; Anikin bases his article on theories of secular theology, while Troitskiy ventures into the study of cultural economy, and Kurki, herself a folklorist, lists research on material culture and multidisciplinary research into borders and mobility as her inspiration for writing this article.

The intersections of the three main focal points – universal/specific, theoretical/material and topographical – intertwine: for example, in her article, Zevako puts a strong impact on the topographical aspect of coming to terms with trauma. In her museum experiment, the subjects came into contact with the authentic space of the traumatic times and negotiated their understanding of it precisely through physical space. Troitskiy stresses the importance of the topographical aspect of trauma, underlining that traumatic toponyms – Katyn, Auschwitz, Majdanek – often carry more concreteness (and thus more meaning for society) than temporal markers. Such layered, insightful interpretations are made possible by the open-mindedness and interdisciplinary interest of our authors.

Contemporary humanitarian science is oriented at the object of research. This makes it possible to ignore the boundaries of scientific disciplines and borrow methodology and instruments. The consequent research results in cross-disciplinary restrictions and boundaries, allowing for powerful generalizations and novel insights. Interdisciplinary practices may blur or even erase the boundaries between memory, cultural, literary, and trauma studies; however, each of these approaches carries a unique focus that should not be overlooked but rather seen as a strength and contribution to the overall picture of understanding trauma.

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NOTES

[1] Ernst Kantorovicz (1957) showed these differences most accurately on the example of two bodies of the king, where the political body complements the physical one. The example of the royal body is most significant, since the king is removed from the system (Agamben 1998 [1995]: 57–62), although the political body was probably present in the subjects as well. When dealing with the reality of political death, psychotherapy is powerless (unlike physical death).

[2] Differences between borrowing and transfer were shown on the example of culture communication (Espagne 1999; Espagne & Werner 1988). It seems correct to use the term "transfer" in the case where the subject is not culture but a person.

[3] In this case, we can ignore the difference between "narrative" and "rhetorical", since we are talking about the operational side of the act itself.

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TRAUMA AND THE VICTIM ECONOMY

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Abstract: The history of the twentieth century is filled with examples of mass murder and destruction of entire nations. Survivors of those traumatic events have horrific memories, which cannot be compared to anything that may happen in the course of an ordinary quiet life. However, coping strategies for overcoming the consequences of such traumatic experience were also developed in the twentieth century. It was made possible by conceptualisation of trauma as a cultural and psychological phenomenon at the level of theory and practice in various sciences. Introduction of this concept into the flesh and blood of modern (popular) culture, or rather its inclusion in the fabric of everyday cultural practices, transformed the concept of trauma into a mechanism of culture. Trauma developed into a concept, as we know it, because it functioned as one of the cultural clichés of the era, according to which economics, politics, science, literature, etc., are built. Of course, mass exterminations of people took place even before the twentieth century; however, they were not interpreted as historical traumas as we interpret them now because, firstly, a sense of distance from the event was not developed, which is characteristic of traumatic interpretation, and, secondly, the narratives corresponded to other cultural clichés (typical of those epochs), which served as the basis for political mechanics, economic processes, etc. This article identifies the main features characterising the functioning of trauma as a cultural mechanism. This objective is achieved by appealing to political economy and Baudrillard's and Derrida's critique of the victim order. In this study the term "loss" is used as an umbrella term for various traumatic constructs, such as the victim and the trauma itself. They are characterised as objects of a credit relationship between subjects (both individual and collective), according to which the victim (trauma) construct could be described as a debt obligation that must be fulfilled by paying off a symbolic debt. The study identifies all the acting forces (parties) in the trauma construct, which give form to this construct. The author draws attention to the spatial (topographical) accent of the traumatic narrative, as well as to the necessity of toponymic localisation of the active forces in space.

Keywords: construct, cultural memory, forgiveness, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, localisation, political economy, referee, sacrifice, third party, topography, tormentor, trauma, victim, victim economy, victim order

We even evaluate death in terms of interest rates, in value-for-money terms. An economic calculation that is a poor man's calculation – poor men who no longer even have the courage to pay the price.
(Baudrillard 2003: 25)

INTRODUCTION

The study of cultural exclusion zones (Chertenko & Nikolaeva & Troitskiy 2018) in relation to traumatic experience faces the essential requirement to define the principal elements that make up that experience, i.e., to reveal the structure in which the memory of a trauma forgets (displaces) the experience itself and replaces it with a narrative model. At the same time, the trauma narrative is itself the product of a construction of linguistic and cultural clichés (Oushakine 2009), a "matrix text",[1] as a result of which its social (collective) nature becomes evident; therefore, any individual trauma narrative transforms easily into a narrative of collective trauma (Resende & Budryte 2014; Vignoles et al. 2006; Hirschberger 2018; etc.). However, collective trauma, as the constructed experience of a social group, which gathers the group together into a unified body as the subject of trauma and furnishes that group with a stable identity, can also dictate the relationship model for other social groups with the first group as the subject of trauma.

Manifestations of collective memory have precedence over the individual one, they are "especially important, more important than individual memory, because collective memory strictly censors individual one" (Niethammer 2014). Collective memory is constructed in the process of transindividual and transactive communication as a dominant idea and pattern of mental feelings and subjective behaviour. The content of collective memory is the object of (pseudo) remembering but not by the subject of memorial experience; that is why the content exists as a complex of stereotypical elements. According to Halbwachs, "in each epoch [memory] reconstruct[s] an image of the past which is in accord … with the predominant thoughts of the society" (Halbwachs 1992: 40). Subjects of the collective memory are separate persons who are often widely dispersed and not related to each other, like members of a nation or citizens of a state (Barash 2017; Olick & Vinitzky-Seroussi & Levy 2011), because "collective memory is inextricably connected with power relations and the notion of an 'identity politics'" (Tan 2020: 3). Some scholars find mechanisms of collective memory in a small group of the nearest and dearest, e.g., a family (Hirst & Echterhoff 2008; Stone et al. 2012). However, both large-scale and small-scale

groups are characterized by patternality, transpersonality, and constructivity (Arango-Muñoz & Michaelian 2020; Tan 2020).

This symbolic localization of trauma also defines the topographical (physical) localization of trauma in the person of the collective subject of that trauma. A great deal has been written about the individual experience of collective trauma from the standpoint of psychology, psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, beginning with the classic works by Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Jeffrey Alexander, and others (Caruth 1995; LaCapra 1994; Alexander et al. 2004). There are a significant number of reviews on trauma studies, one of the most recent ones is the review by Alexey Sidorov (Sidorov 2020; Kidron 2003). However, here we are less interested in this subjective aspect of cultural traumatology than in the mechanisms behind the transfer of individual traumatic memory experience into the political and social space by means of political economics.[2] What is the relationship model between a subject of collective trauma and the remaining groups in society? To what extent are the mechanisms of memory and economics linked? These questions will be the focus of this article. The impetus for these deliberations was provided by French philosophers Jacques Derrida (Derrida 2000; 2001) and Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1996; 2003), and in its own way this article develops their ideas further. During my work on this paper, I also came across the short story "Bronek" by Polish writer Magdalena Tulli, from her book *Włoskie szpilki* (Italian High Heels) (Tulli 2011), where the author depicts characters who have undergone a traumatic experience. Since her artistic intuition coincides with my own thinking, I will make references to this text as a supplementary source of concisely formulated propositions.

THE SPACE AND TIME OF TRAUMA

The mental reconstruction of trauma enables the researcher to elicit those elements which are inextricably linked by the subject in the actual experience of trauma, but which readily lend themselves to thorough and detailed examination during the investigative process. Investigative strategies enable a separate examination of the traumatic act, the traumatic experience in terms of its significance in the memory, the subject of the trauma, the associate subject to the trauma (the quasi-subject of the trauma), the quasi-memory of (someone else's) trauma, and many other functional elements. Such a delineation allows cultural traumatology to more effectively do its work, to unravel the tangle of contradictions between the actual event and the memory of it, between the subjective and objective levels of the trauma's existence, and so on.

As has been shown by the research of Sergei Oushakine and Elena Trubina (2009), a traumatic act (event) itself is not temporal in nature for the subject of the trauma. At the moment of its perpetration, a traumatic act is experienced as another of those physical sensations which make up daily life. Jean Baudrillard notices it when he describes Bosnians' reactions of compassion among the French (and generally, European) people in the period of the Bosnian War (Baudrillard 1996: 131–141). The actuality of the experience makes the reality of a traumatic subject and their own local world hyper-real, but the inclusion of the traumatic subject into this hyper-reality is not interpreted as traumatic. Even when considering the intensity and painfulness of this sensation or its numerous repetitions, the experience is granted its traumatic nature by the very memory processes by which the subject endeavours to return to it or to displace it. This mental activity in relation to traumatic experience makes it constantly real, switching it on into a regime of deferred action. Traumatic experience as an image of the traumatic act produced in the subject's memory does have temporal characteristics, which are set by the memory, or rather by the limitations of its workings. These limitations are principally narrative in nature, since the remembering (recollection) of the traumatic experience (traumatic act) is structured as a narrative account of it. "The narrator creates history anew by his narration; he models his past according to any political and cultural foundations, specificity of his own biography, mental attitude. It is also necessary to consider the changeability of his personal attitude to events" (Artemenko 2020: 62). Furthermore, speaking about personal trauma is only possible in retrospect and post factum. A literature example of a retrospective recollection of a traumatic event is the short story "Bronek" (Tulli 2011), in which an old woman, the narrator's mother, consistently returns to the moment of the most intense experience. She tries to get to the pre-traumatic stage of her personal history, i.e., before the beginning of the Second World War. It is not remembrance but imagining oneself in the real concrete time and events. The narration looks like a classical medical history of memory disintegration at the late age. However, the author can show mechanisms behind the retrospective existence of the image of trauma with its main markers, personalities, and topoi, because the character holds hidden and untold traumatic experience as the most emotional one in her life, and her memory returns into it at the expense of the present-day memory.

Another way of talking about trauma is talking about someone else's trauma because "those … at the very heart of war and distress, do not really believe in it" (Baudrillard 1996: 133). The exclusion of the subject from the activity, the reality, the event makes them unable to talk about the traumatic experience

as a (hi)story, to make it a plot of narration, because the listener is not able to understand a real history, "to share it" (Lekhtsier 2018: 122), i.e., to hear the story that the traumatised speaker tries to tell (Jackson 2007; Butler 1992; Mould 2011). The loss of narrative quality (fragmentation, pauses, repetitions, etc.) is caused by the need to convey all external and internal connections, accents, and meanings that make the story real and convey the specificity of the situation. The inability to "manage" the story and convey real experience forces the speaker to be "either stubbornly silent or disturbingly voluble" (Willsey 2015: 217). There are strategies for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) patients in the USA and other countries for managing the narrative and learning to talk about traumatic experience. This is construed as "as a panacea for national wounds" and is aimed at ensuring that the subject could make a certain "performance" of the story in every particular case, keeping in mind a specific audience and context (Willsey 2015). This approach allows transforming a remembered experience into a beam of stories (like a beam of light), where each of them is incomplete when taken separately and represents a limited image of a traumatic event using a complex of communicative and narrative clichés. The development of the subject's skills to tell the (hi)story of a personal trauma allows the subject to look at the trauma anew and fix its image(s). Therefore, it allows the subject to form an image of oneself (an identity), of someone who survived a traumatic experience, and it makes the memory of a trauma more operable and controlled because the traumatic experience has been deprived of a status of the "real" one and replaced with its image.

A typical narrative practice emerges from the coincidence of time and place in the chronotope of storytelling, but such a chronotope does not work with traumatic experience, and still less with a traumatic act. A traumatic act has no subjective duration, and nor does traumatic experience – memory can only repeat it. The excessive intensity of the traumatic act transforms time itself into a physical density (a dense physical substance) which can only be "spread out" through memory and narration. The act of narration (recollection) enables the time of the traumatic act (traumatic experience) to be put into sequence.

On the other hand, the ordeal intensity of the traumatic act, in assuming a material solidity, facilitates the identification of spatial elements in the trauma itself. The only irrefutable aspect of a traumatic experience (traumatic act) is in its committal, which secures the trauma as being factual. This committal may be reflected in physical marks or traces (Savchuk 2020: 120–121), which serve as markers of the experience for the subject, triggering the mechanism of forgetting/remembering. The spatial nature of the traumatic experience along with the significance of markers for it give a factological character to the toponyms of trauma.

In this sense, even at the objective level, traumatic toponyms are much more factographic than temporal markers: Katyn, Solovki, Babi Yar, Auschwitz, Majdanek – these are precise indicators of traumatic experience. Traumatic toponyms endow trauma with a concrete solidity, enabling the expansion from other traumatic experiences (and from the traumatic experiences of other subjects on the subjective level). For the subject of trauma, a toponymic marker makes their own traumatic experience into a way to self-identify and also allows them to translate this experience into a regime of comparison.

A literary example of the predominance of topography over chronology can be found in the short story "Bronek" (Tulli 2011) mentioned earlier. All traumatic experiences are distributed into concrete topoi, like a character's memory clusters, although the sequence of the traumatic events is not clear. The reader should guess it using the reverse chronological order of the return into the past that is unfolding throughout the story.

CONFIGURATIONS OF LOSS

The narrative nature of recollection compels traumatic experience to reveal itself through linguistic stamps and clichés. The palpable content of a traumatic act transforms into a narrative about the act as a result of the fact that a multitude of ways to talk about suffering have agglomerated in language, putting a name to it, and at the same time retrospectively constructing the traumatic experience itself.

With respect to the constructive character of experience, we can identify at a minimum of two modifications (two configurations) of it, which are embedded in the configuration of re-telling traumatic experience. For this reason, I have proposed elsewhere to define the construct of traumatic experience in its broadest aspect, using the term "loss", and the two differentiating configurations of loss using the term "sacrifice" and, indeed, "trauma" (Troitskiy 2017, 2019). Within this differentiation, sacrifice is the loss that is perceived by the subject to be final and irrevocable (Kapelchuk 2016: 148). In contrast to sacrifice, trauma implies redress for the loss (revenge, compensation, swapping to the opposite role, i.e., from the role of victim to the role of tormentor),[3] deferred in time. Aleida Assmann introduces similar subjects of traumatic experience. She offers a "clear distinction between passive sacrifice and heroic martyr victim". According to Assmann, the sense of passive sacrifice "consists in its absolute passivity, connoted with innocence and purity" (Assmann 2006: 80). The anti-fascist post-war Soviet discourse, for example, was based on the image of martyr

victim (subject of the loss-trauma). The word "fascists" was used as a name for the worst scoundrels and enemies with a connotation of atrocities against the victims. "The commemoration of children-martyrs who consciously sacrificed themselves to the enemy becomes crucial in the formation of the Great Patriotic War cult after 1945", Svetlana Maslinskaia writes in her research on the Soviet children's traumatic experience in the war literature of 1941–1945 (Maslinskaia 2019: 197). The martyr-victim image in literature and journalism was used to evoke necessary emotions in people, justifying aggression against the invader and legitimising war as a way of compensation for loss-trauma.

By way of example, we can take a situation familiar to us all. The act of extracting a tooth may well not turn into a traumatic experience or an element of trauma in the individual's memory complex. However, if the procedure of tooth extraction is being performed by a convicted sadist doctor, then the probability of the situation becoming traumatic is significantly increased. These two acts may not differ from one another intrinsically, but the subsequent memory construction, using stereotypes, political and juridical constructions, leads to the procedure performed in a comfortable dentist's surgery being radically different from the same procedure performed in a death camp. With this, I am slightly lumping the two situations together, but my intent is to show that the configuration of the construct of loss lies not in the traumatic experience (nor does it lie in the act of loss), but in the practice of recall. Even if the lost tooth is interpreted as a loss, then in the former case it is interpreted as a sacrifice, and in the latter as a trauma.

THE VICTIM ECONOMY

Both configurations of loss appear in the conceptual field of economics, or to be more precise, the field of political economics. The symbolic space of relationships based on goods and money is one of the ways in which a person thinks in terms of the subject-object relationship as a whole, along with the relationship between people and things, and people and people. For this reason, this form of interpretation of relationships also applies to subjective experience. The alienation of meaning in money applies also to traumatic experience and the experience of loss. By no means are we talking about the monetisation of trauma here, but merely about the means by which loss is imagined in culture, and more precisely, about how the constructs of trauma take on a transactional character. In this perspective, the victim becomes the transacted payment or loss (Giglioli 2014), and the trauma becomes the debt, deferred in time.[4] Only

then do the factuality and concreteness of the markers of traumatic experience grant precision to the deferred settlements for the debts of the trauma. The debt of the trauma is deferred in time.

In the short story "Bronek" (Tulli 2011), the author actualizes the idea of the conversion of traumatic experience in the field of political economy in a surprisingly precise and accurate way:

> *War, like the estate of a bankrupt, becomes the property of the generations that follow.*
>
> *Participation in great battles, for instance, is like an inheritance. It is not so easy for grandchildren to separate themselves from it. They received their share of the interest from the battle of Stalingrad, or Kursk, say, while someone else may end up with a few vignettes from the street-fighting in Berlin – disparate, indistinguishable fragments. By law they also inherit their eye-colour, surname, and language, alas along with all the other attendant consequences, the least troublesome of which are tales from the front, re-told over several generations in the quiet of their homes. Best not to remember the worst parts. It is difficult to say which is better – phobia or mania, or which of these two strategies is best to recommend to descendants. Those who have inherited a tiny share of some kind of battle may well think that they are the lucky ones. It could be worse. The humiliations brought home from war in place of watches, picturesque canvases and other trophies lie frozen in storage for decades, accruing miserly interest…* (Tulli 2011: 63–64)

I suggest calling such a political-economic interpretation of loss (trauma, sacrifice) the victim economy. This term incorporates both starting points – the political economy, and Baudrillard's description of contemporary reality as the victim society.

The debt obligations of trauma with deferred redress turn out to be an important basis for the construction of the collective body (Brodsky 2020). The overall debt, the overall loss with possible deferred redress enables the political manipulation of the wronged social whole through ideology, revisionist sentiments, and the idea of retribution (revenge). Within the collective body, the victim economy replaces moral law for its subjects, and on a subjective level provides unity and stability of the identity model. Stability and unity are formed from the homogeneity of the content of a trauma's quasi-memory (the traumatic quasi-experience), constructed with the aid of a system of narrative clichés, which are built up in compliance with the internal algorithm of the specific traumatic discourse.

The experience of world war, be it the first or the second, has allowed the victim economy to spread across the entire world. Traumatic experience has also been conferred by local wars, but it was precisely the world war that created the basis for the globalisation of traumatic experience. The general traumatic experience endured required no description, only markers, which became the basis for the conversion of local experiences and the transfer of meanings disclosed through traumatic discourse. This commonality of discourse has become the foundation for the composition of trauma studies.

The victim economy is enshrined in the language of the authority (political and legal discourse). Baudrillard described this as a 'rights-on' category: "the right to pure air substitutes for asphyxia, the right to freedom for the exercise of freedom, or right itself for desire in the form of the right to desire, and so on. Rights are what mobilize the energies of an enervated social body" (Baudrillard 1996: 138). A "right" in the victim economy is a registration of anything borrowed with deferred compensation.

CONFIGURATIONS OF THE SUBJECTS OF THE VICTIM ECONOMY AND THE CONFIGURATION OF TOPOLOGY

Insofar as there exists a subject (whether individual or collective), which awaits recompense for its loss through promissory traumatic circumstances, there is also assumed to be a subject who is the presumed debtor. In the discourse of trauma, the former is the victim, and the latter is the tormentor. Moreover, such a classification can only be constructed retrospectively (a session of psychoanalysis, or a diary), but in the situation "which exists as it is – the reality of an action and a destiny" (Baudrillard 1996: 133), in the situation of *Dasein* (here and now), the possibility to assign roles to the subjects of the traumatic experience may not be available.[5] However, alongside the "victimal" roles of the victim and the tormentor there is also a third party, acting in the role of a judge, which legitimises the other two. However, it may seem to us that in economics there is a debtor and a creditor, and it is clear who owes whom, and when it comes to the victim economy, both the victim and the tormentor act as opposite poles in relation to this third party, whose positive victim balance is maintained by the negative victim balance of the victim and the tormentor. The traumatic experience is the source of symbolic capital for this third party, and not for the victim. The moral subject can reveal itself as such only in relation to someone else (sympathy for the victim) or in comparison with something else (condemnation of the tormentor). What is more, the tormentor, as an

ethically negative subject, and the victim as the trauma creditor, the subject of loss, both appear in relation to the third party in the position of subjects with a negative victim balance, creating a possibility to receive dividends from the loss (trauma); i.e., to provide a positive victim balance to the third party, since a positive subject cannot exist without a negative counterpart (the economics maxim fixed in the well-known phrase "one man's loss is another man's gain"). Baudrillard notes that "[a]ll these 'corridors' we open up to send them our supplies and our 'culture' are, in reality, corridors of distress through which we import their force and the energy of their misfortune" (Baudrillard 1996: 134). In this regard, the construction of an external victim and tormentor is a good way to gain preference and pay off the debt. The victim's image is constructed by portraying the subject as a victim, by allocating compassion to the subject. "Only in the hollow form of the victim we today find a plausible image, even if reversed, of the fullness to which we aspire, a 'mythological machine' that, starting from the empty centre of a lack, incessantly generates a repertoire of figures capable of satisfying the need that has originated precisely from that emptiness" (Giglioli 2014: 9–10). Compassion invests the image with meanings, making the subject's reality – which has no constructs but experience only – seem to the third party like the reality of a victim. The same thing happens with the conviction of a tormentor. A tormentor's personal (everyday) reality is portrayed as specifically belonging to the tormentor.

On the other hand, the "theatre of forgiveness" (Jacques Derrida uses this term regarding the contemporary phenomenon of total repentances) became the way of self-constructing the image of a tormentor. The totality (globality) of this repentance strategy ensures a symbolic positive balance of the third party, giving it a role of a generous judge. Such a presumption about the third party raises its status, but it would be impossible without the geopolitics of repentance, realised in the "theatre of forgiveness" (Derrida 2000).[6]

Moreover, both the victim and the tormentor must be absolutely sterile, i.e., their negativity must not impinge upon the positivity of the subject, i.e., they must be spatially localized. Space is delineated into zones in which the positive subject is constructed, and into others in which the subject is negative; what is more, it is not important in what sense – the ethically bad (the tormentor) or the depleted (indebted) (the victim). In this way, a spatial segregation is created: the place of the trauma as one of negative victimal balance, the place of the victim as one of zero victimal balance, and the place of positive balance.

> *Those who do not exploit it directly and in their own name do so by proxy. There is no lack of middlemen, who take their financial or symbolic cut in the process. Deficit and misfortune, like the international debt, are traded*

> *and sold on in the speculative market – in this case the politico-intellectual market, which is quite the equal of the late, unlamented military-industrial complex.* (Baudrillard 1996: 135)

The victim is localized in a way that it is in any case evaluated as Other-weak (the opposite of Other-strong (Troitskiy 2011)), i.e., it cannot leave the space[7] of its coexistence with its tormentor, the space where the victim and the tormentor are forever bound together, representing a peculiar transformation of the dialectic of Slave and Master from Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel 2018), or Baudrillard's dialectic of Good and Evil.[8] In this sense the localisation of the victim differs little in terms of the means of spatial fixation from the Russian Empire's pale of settlement or the Jewish ghettoes created by the Nazis. Direct participation in such a localisation automatically puts the participant into the category of tormentor, providing a possibility for the exchange of roles in this dialectic union.[9] However, it is this very third party, not included in the victim-tormentor relationship, and not even considered by Hegel, which reaps the profit in the form of symbolic capital.[10] The third party reaps the absolute profit in the form of a public execution: the victim loses something and the executor pays by losing a symbolic (sacral) purity, while the third party kills the perpetrator with another person's hands, educating and evoking compassion. In a global world every subject must take one of the three parties. Admitting being a sacrifice and accepting their own victimhood allows the third party to take back part of the profit in the form of a humanitarian mission, compassion, help, etc. So, "the victims themselves … get the benefit of confessing their misery" (Baudrillard 1996: 138), although the benefit looks suspicious because, in fact, it is only a partial compensation for the symbolic capital. The world needs zones of debt (minus), zones of victimhood, because without them it is impossible to support a positive balance of sympathy, kindness, and morality. In compliance with the victim economy, political discourses are built around all current international conflicts (in Syria, the Donbass region, and others). The global world is interpreted as a unified space where the laws of humanism hold sway. However, for the victim economy humanism is more valuable than empathy, as it can bring dividends. As a result of the race for humanism, greater symbolic capital can be accrued by anyone who can distribute their price of humanism among most supporters and the largest quantity of subjects, even if they do that using bombers and ballistic missiles. When expressed in the terminology of the victim economy, the level of a positive balance is directly dependent upon the number of subjects which are included in that price group. Even the decision to abolish the death penalty, or to impose a moratorium upon it, is argued over, using the same victimal logic and terminology: the state refuses to

take on the role of the executor so as not to make another tormentor its victim, and so that the state can become separate from the dialectical relationship of victim and tormentor.

Due to the victim economy, topographical segregation into regions with a positive balance and regions with a negative balance is registered in the cultural reputation of these regions. Thus, a topographical hierarchy (a hierarchy of the preferences of topoi) is created (Troitskiy 2019). One of the prerequisites for this preference is a positive victimal balance. This also explains the choice of destinations for emigration. It explains why migration flows are directed towards certain regions and not towards some others. Moreover, for the contemporary distribution of functions within the victim economy there exists the presumption of the impenetrability of the borders between regions with a positive balance whereas those with a negative balance are impenetrable. In this regard, there is genuine surprise in both political discourse and at the level of ordinary consciousness at the fact that victims (subjects with a negative balance) can penetrate into space where the victimal balance is positive.

However, it appears that the victim order can be destroyed if the victim rejects the sacrifice status, suggesting compensation for damages. Then a conditional "sacrifice" takes the character of a trauma, and the subject of the trauma looks for a contribution. Class struggle and revolution (Kapelchuk 2016), terror/terrorism (Baudrillard 2003: 1–34) and partisan movement become ways to compensate for damages. The subject of a trauma has a negative balance and repays their debts not with the usual payment instrument in the victim economy – i.e., force (because they are weak) – but by discrediting a certain debtor's local payment instrument, discrediting a certain subject who has a debt (the police is powerless against terrorists, the army is powerless against partisans, the gendarmerie is powerless against underground fighters, etc.). However, while trying to discredit the instrumentality of force, the subject can use the same payment instrument (force) and, therefore, become the tormentor. By that the subject inverses roles inside the victim-tormentor pair; thus, the whole payment system becomes discredited because there is "no possible distinction between the 'crime' and the crackdown" (Baudrillard 2003: 31). In this sense, the roles are liquid inside the pair (Bauman & Donskis 2016) and easily transform into one another. Here a trauma is understood as unaccepted loss. It is logical that the loci of economic life are the most preferable objects for discrediting the force. Then the concept of safety as a marker of the force's omnipotence in those loci is subject to devaluation and inflation. As a result, "in many urban commercial spaces, capitalism and terrorism as the most powerful discursive forces of contemporary culture – the most mainstream and the most extreme – meet in increasingly militarized urban space" (Mirgani 2017: 10).

This circulation of the symbolic victim capital stimulates itself: the more traumas there are, the more contributions (i.e., traumas for other subjects) are made. More and more subjects get involved in the circulation, spreading like a virus. (Baudrillard (2003) calls it "the spirit of terrorism", making a reference to Max Weber's "spirit of capitalism"). This self-stimulating victim economy conforms to the Keynesian economics model where individual profligacy together with consumer and market activity are the main driving forces of the economy in general. The circulation also stimulates an increase in the price (in the case of the victim economy it is the price of trauma) not because of the increase in the uniqueness of goods but because of the inflation of values. It is contrary to the monetarist model where the subject's thrift influences the object's value. Cultural stereotypes of a traditional society resulted in the monetarist economics model. It is characteristic of the early-stage capitalism although it is realised normally as one of the subject's economical behaviour strategies; in the victim economy it is based on the latency of the subject's traumatic experience and sacrifice enforced by Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam).

CONCLUSION

This paper provided a general description of the victim economy. Contrary to traumatic experience, the trauma construct is a result of meaning interpretation, comprehension, and accents. The victim economy uses techniques of constructing cultural phenomena (i.e., thinking or speaking). The concept and the construct of loss contain all characteristics and principles of conceptualisation and construction typical of other key cultural mechanisms. Constructs of loss, victim, and trauma constitute elements of the victim economy. The victim economy as the basis for the victim order is built on the principle of debt between the subjects. It corresponds to the contemporary economics model based on consumers' activity. Causing a trauma is interpreted as causing damage, so the term "loss" seems to be the most appropriate way to describe it. A starting point for building relationships is a presumption that a victim accepts becoming a victim and agrees to incur symbolic damage in the form of traumatic experience. The construct implies two acting parties: the first one is a victim and the second one is a party which is not usually taken into account because it is this party who actually considers the situation. A tormentor who caused damage is not considered an acting party; it exists as a sublated (*Aufheben*) non-acting subject. However, in case the role of a victim is unaccepted and the loss is final, loss-victim transforms into loss-trauma and the victim of this loss starts looking for an opportunity to repair the damage. Then the tormentor becomes an acting

party who is an object of a symbolic lawsuit where the third party assumes the functions of a judge. It is very important that all the parties construct trauma in their own way; therefore, the roles and accents in those constructs depend on the party. As a result, there is a possibility that roles might switch in the course of a symbolic lawsuit.

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NOTES

[1] Natalia Artemenko believes that "matrix texts" pose a problem for researchers (Artemenko 2020). Alexander Filyushkin in his book *Metodicheskie ukazaniia po provedeniiu issledovanii po ustnoi istorii* [Guidelines for conducting research on oral history] notes, "The problem of so-called 'matrix texts' [is] when a respondent passes a standard, almost official text known by the respondent for a personal opinion, feeling or experience, mistaking it for his/her own. … A part of memoirs written about the Russian Revolution and the Civil War were, in fact, based on later films about these events (for example, *Chapaev*, *Lenin in October*). Moreover, replacement of personal memories with a foreign and unreliable 'matrix text' in the consciousness happened so long ago that the respondent is not always able to understand that he/she is simply broadcasting a point of view that was once imposed on the respondent from the outside" (Filyushkin 2004: 6).

[2] For example, dark tourism (Kidron 2012; 2013), commemorative practices (Hutton 1993), *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1989), souvenirs as portative *lieux de mémoire* (Kidron 2012).

[3] This mechanism was analysed and described by Alexander Brodsky (Brodsky 2015a, 2015b).

[4] In this sense it is not surprising how easily traumatic discourse can be commercialised.

[5] The tormentor (executor) exists inside personal everyday life when they cause a trauma to someone (Harrington 2013).

[6] According to Derrida, the "theatre of forgiveness" makes possible a discourse of the "crime against humanity", where humanity indicts humanity, i.e., itself. It reduces the importance and value of the crime because the criminal's (former executor's and tormentor's) guilt – as well as the guilt of everybody who aids or abets them by tacit connivance – is nullified by the referee's generosity. In this discourse the executor, the referee, the victim, and the criminal (former tormentor and executor) become the same collective subject, leading to a symbolic fraud which is self-forgiveness. In his other work, Derrida develops this thought, claiming that "forgiveness forgives only the unforgivable", it forgives the worst crimes, people, and absolute evil without any extenuating circumstances (Derrida 2001: 32).

[7] There is no difference whether the space is physical or symbolic, virtual or real.

[8] "No one seems to have understood that Good and Evil advance together, as part of the same movement. The triumph of the one does not eclipse the other – far from it. In metaphysical terms, Evil is regarded as an accidental mishap, but this axiom, from which all the Manichaean forms of the struggle of Good against Evil derive, is illusory. Good does not conquer Evil, nor indeed does the reverse happen: they arc at once both irreducible to each other and inextricably interrelated. Ultimately, Good could thwart Evil only by ceasing to be Good since, by seizing for itself a global monopoly of power, it gives rise, by that very act, to a blowback of a proportionate violence" (Baudrillard 2003: 13–14).

[9] For example, Stockholm syndrome. See also Artemenko 2018.

[10] However, Baudrillard, who clearly grasped the essence of the victim dialectic, suggests taking place of a third party and looking "beyond Good and Evil". It was a way to remove the blinders and to refuse the absolutisation of ethics for Nietzsche, but in fact, it legalised nonparticipant observation, viewer-researcher's point of view that is allegedly non-included, and the position of a referee and a guru. So, Baudrillard, who has given in to the temptations of the third party, explains the totality of Evil through the ontological pair of Good and Evil. At the same time, he either attributes unity to this pair (the first one grows if the second one does too) or remembers about the energy conservation law (if the first one loses, the second one receives).

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TRAUMATIZATION OF THE PAST AND MARTYROLOGICAL THINKING IN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

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Abstract: The purpose of the article is to analyze the mechanisms of the transformation of martyrological thinking in the Soviet Union and in post-Soviet Russia. The methodological basis of the study is constituted by the works written by the representatives of functionalism (E. Durkheim, M. Halbwachs, P. Bourdieu, J.C. Alexander), who raise the issue of the important role of religious rituals and forms of thinking in social space. Martyrological thinking creates martyrdom cults, performing an ambivalent function. On the one hand, this thinking is a way to maintain a collective identity, and on the other, a way to damage and destroy it. The author concludes that in Soviet society two main stages that formed martyrdom cults can be distinguished: the periods of the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War. In both cases, martyrological thinking was an important factor in the consolidation of the society. In post-Soviet society, martyrological thinking becomes a factor that causes the deconstruction of the symbolic space and a hidden factor in the destabilization of the political organization. The perception of the conservative part of the Russian society is expressed in the formation of the cult of the last Russian emperor, Nicholas II, which, on the one hand, allows to mitigate the historical responsibility, and on the other becomes a moral justification for criticizing the continuity of modern Russian power in relation to the Soviet Union.

Keywords: civil religion, identity, martyrological thinking, martyrs, memory studies, post-Soviet space, sacralization, Soviet Union, traumatization

INTRODUCTION

On July 3, 2020, a Russian monk called Sergius (Romanov), who had gained wide public fame in the past months, was deprived of his rank, which was primarily due to his criticism of sanitary measures aimed to prevent the

COVID-19 pandemic. The criticism of church hierarchs who agreed to close churches in order to reduce the risk of the spread of the disease coincided with the dissatisfaction of a significant part of the faithful, which gave his statement a distinct political meaning. But long before that, Sergius had become one of the leaders of the Tsar-as-God movement, proclaiming that the martyrdom of Emperor Nicholas II is a kind of atonement for Russia for all the sins of its population. A certain ambiguity of this position was also expressed by the secular surname Sergius (Romanov), which coincided with the most common version of the surname of the Russian imperial family.

From a canonical point of view, this ideological position does not withstand any criticism; nevertheless, it has become quite popular among ordinary parishioners and the political and cultural establishment. The popularity of this position raises the question of the role martyrdom plays in the Soviet and post-Soviet mass consciousness, and the reason why such attention is paid to the very phenomenon of martyrdom and also the importance of martyrdom in the context of the design of a collective trauma.

The tragic twentieth century became a difficult test for the entire former Russian Empire, and then for the Soviet Union, awakened several trends in the public consciousness of the Russian society, which demonstrated a kind of distortion of cultural stereotypes in the new social and political conditions. The reluctance to accept a collapse of values related to the prospects for the state development and its place in these processes has led to the emergence of moral resentment.

This phenomenon clearly manifested itself in the emergence and cultivation of the image of the enemy that gave rise to a real persecution mania in both Soviet and post-Soviet societies. The difference was only in the kind of image the enemy took on a case-by-case basis in order to inflict an unexpected blow. In various time periods, it assumed the image of a foreign interventionist or a wealthy peasant hiding grain and condemning the fellow citizens to starvation, or of a fascist who had bitten on the Russian soil. In the post-Soviet period, especially in the 2000s, new figures of liberals were added to the bizarre echoes of the images remaining in historical memory, seeking to subjugate the Russian civilization to the West not by violence, but by discrediting and humiliating its values. However, where the image of the enemy arises, there is also the opposite image, which is usually the hero. But in the case of a traumatized society, painfully experiencing its disadvantage and inferiority, the hero appears in a kind of hypostasis of the victim, a martyr who is not able to defeat himself, but who is able to take a blow with his tragic death and, thereby, ensure the overcoming of catastrophic circumstances.

Collective trauma is thus expressed as an individual victim who takes a specific position. On the one hand, such a sacrifice should be a part of the community, and on the other hand, it should have individual features that allow us to create a background to the sacrificial feat, to demonstrate that the divine choice was arbitrary rather than random. According to R. Girard, the general logic of a sacrifice is that the obligatory elements are not only the victim and the one who makes the sacrifice, but also the community that is not ready to fully identify with this victim (Girard 1977: 11). The martyr must be close enough to the community for the latter to be able to consolidate around their memory, but they must also be removed far enough from it not to create constant fear that each representative of the community could also become a victim. The phenomenon of martyrdom is based not on the very fact of excruciating death, but on the readiness of public consciousness for its religious perception, and as a result – for the sacralization of the dead as martyrs. In this sense, the study of martyrs is not as much a subject of history or religion but as of sociology and political science, because the key question is not to establish the true causes of death, but to identify the subsequent social effect.

It should be stated in advance that the prospect of such a question is a comprehensive study of the relationship between the images of martyrs and collective injuries in Eastern Europe in the context of the concept of two occupations. However, the format of the journal article forces me to turn to the analysis of a specific aspect, namely, the cultural origins of martyrological thinking in Russia, its special manifestation in the Soviet Union and in the post-Soviet space.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The tasks dictate access to a wide range of sources, since the identified problem is located at the intersection of several areas of humanitarian knowledge. Firstly, there is an essential appeal to the functionalist approach, represented by E. Durkheim, M. Halbwachs, P. Bourdieu, and J. Alexander. E. Durkheim in his work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* first actualized the question of the inextricable connection of religious cults and social needs, in particular the desire to form and maintain the collective identity (Durkheim 1995 [1912]: 5–7). M. Halbwachs became the founder of memory studies, outlining the leading role of collective memories in ensuring the identity of individual communities, as well as paying special attention to the specifics of religious communities as subjects of memory policy. In his later book, *La Topographie légendaire des Évangiles en Terre Sainte; étude de mémoire collective*, he analyzed the process

of constructing the collective memory about Christian shrines (Halbwachs 1941). His important conclusion was the explanation of the important role of religious collective memory due to its appealing to the transcendental order, while historical facts became only representations of timeless divine reality.

P. Bourdieu synthesized functionalist and phenomenological approaches and formulated the principle of the double structuring of reality. According to this principle, it was utopian to represent a society as a system of collective ideas or a combination of social and political institutions. In fact, there was an inextricable relationship between the subjective and objective aspects of the formation of social structures, between which there was a constant symbolic exchange. The concept of the symbolic exchange, which allowed us to include the achievements of anthropologists in the discourse of social sciences, indicated the key role of the symbolic capital of a social institution in the process of maintaining or transforming social reality (Bourdieu 1986). Symbolic capital did not have any material characteristics, but this did not prevent it from 'flowing' from one social subject to another, having the logic of accumulation and waste.

To understand the connection of symbolic capital and trauma, the work of J. Alexander is of great importance. His theoretical position is related to the methodological renewal of the functionalist approach, which allows us to overcome the remnants of positivism and propose a new program for the analysis of social phenomena (Alexander 2004a: 527–573). In particular, the specifics of collective injuries are considered by J. Alexander not in terms of strengthening their quantitative indicators (the number of people who consider themselves injured), but in the framework of changing cultural codes that create more effective mechanisms of a collective trauma. On the example of the Holocaust, he shows how the concept of collective trauma depends on the process of medialization, and the role of victims is determined not by the very nature of the crimes committed but by the emerging cultural effect (Alexander 2004b: 1–30).

Over the past few years, a number of publications have appeared that draw attention to the individualization of collective trauma in the images of specific victims – real or invented. The psychological aspect of this problem is shown in the work of J. Bélanger (2014). Important comments about the social aspects of the martyrdom phenomenon, as well as about the ratio of martyrs, heroes, and victims have been made by O. Gölz (2019: 27–38).

In a special issue of the *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* in 2015, a number of articles were published which analyzed the use of the image of martyrs as a means of legitimizing or destroying the political order. A particular emphasis was placed on the study of Eastern Europe in the context of overcoming the consequences of socialist regimes, memory borrowing, and the Holocaust. Particular attention should be paid to an article by U. Blacker,

in which he demonstrates how the creation of the image of a martyr becomes a performative act that can destroy the symbolic order and trigger a reaction of debunking the legitimacy of the political elite (Blacker 2015: 257–260). In a recent book, U. Blacker addresses in more detail the methods of forming martyrological thinking in Eastern Europe, turning victims into martyrs in the context of overcoming the communist heritage and strengthening national identity (Blacker 2019).

MARTYRDOM AS A HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL PHENOMENON

To begin with, it is necessary to understand the concept of martyrdom in its early Christian meaning, as well as in the medieval culture of Western and Eastern Europe. The first martyrdom of Christians was recorded in the 1st century, only a few years after the events described in the Gospel. But the question is, when these deaths started to be regarded as the martyrdom. It is necessary to distinguish the very fact of martyrdom and its perception as martyrdom. In other words, it is not immediately clear in the early Christian communities that the death of martyrs was an evidence of their faith, and therefore the memory of them was a decisive element in the preservation and maintenance of the collective identity of these communities. S. Price believes that in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, the formation of a kind of martyrological thinking was facilitated by the existence of numerous pagan cults associated with compulsory sacrifices (Price 1984: 118).

The high symbolic status of martyrs led to some competition between Christian communities for the discovery and appropriation of early Christian martyrs, and the need for appropriate argumentation caused the emergence of a new genre of religious literature – *Acts of the Martyrs*. These are biographies of saints, which were periodically added for convincing apocryphal protocols of interrogations, which were supposed to demonstrate perseverance in faith (Frend 2008 [1965]). Martyrdom had a certain mimetic meaning, since it likened the martyr to Jesus himself, but still death was more important as an act of evidence of the truth of the Christian tradition.

It can be stated that for Christian consciousness the metaphysical significance of what happened is not the very fact of martyrdom. Martyr in its original meaning is not so much a victim but rather a witness. Martyrdom gives evidence of the strength of the human spirit and Christian faith over negative circumstances, and in this case it marks the victory of Christ over his opponents.

For ordinary consciousness, the differences between victims and martyrs are insignificant, but in fact their only important property is the lack of guilt.

In other words, victims and martyrs are equally not guilty and get the punishment. However, there are still more significant differences. Victims acquire their status only when they are executed, while martyrs choose their life position that implies indifference to earthly existence for the sake of the Christian faith and the posthumous existence of the soul. Another significant difference that stems from this circumstance is the activity of martyrs and the passivity of victims. Activity is shown not in the desire to get ahead of a criminal act or, even more so, to commit a similar crime, but in the conscious desire to defend one's own position, regardless of how this desire is appreciated by others.

It is worth mentioning that martyrdom in itself is considered as a social phenomenon, which is the product of a certain symbolic representation. Therefore, characteristics such as activity or passivity indicate not the actual actions of the historical character, but the perception of their behavior by the community, which marks symbolic space, highlighting those figures that are most clearly able to express collective expectations.

No less important is the degree of personalization. Victims are the embodiment of quantitative losses, so they are not usually called by name (it is enough to recall the famous inscription at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow, "Your name is unknown, your deed is immortal", which is attributed to the author of the Soviet anthem, Sergey Mikhalkov). More precisely, it is the countless names of the victims that give them the necessary anonymity, each victim is no different from all the others, which gives a universal character to the very phenomenon of sacrifice. Unlike countless victims, every martyr is unique, they must have a biography that not only describes the very fact of martyrdom, but also explains why they can be considered as a witness to faith. These differences can be summarized in the following table:

Criterion	**Martyr**	**Victim**
Foundation of status	Life	Death
Basic quality	Activity	Passivity
Degree of personalization	Individuality	Anonymity

In addition, from a canonical point of view, martyrs and passion bearers should be distinguished. The difference between them is that martyrs are injured for their faith, and passion bearers for the fulfillment of divine commandments (Olivola & Shafir 2013: 91–92). But these differences, essential from the point of view of church law, are easily overcome in the minds of those social groups for which specific historical figures have become martyrs not only because of theological definitions, but because of the significance of their tragic demise for the consolidation of a certain community. Martyrdom in European history

quickly becomes a massive phenomenon, and the discrepancy between the official procedures for identifying saints and the local cults of martyrs becomes quite significant. As a rule, this state of affairs caused dissatisfaction with the church authorities, but it was far from possible to always cope with the peculiarities of mass consciousness. Therefore, a significant part of the martyr cults was eventually recognized by the church and included in the official practice of remembrance.

In this sense, the whole Russian history, permeated by the religious perception of time, is closely connected with the aggravated attention to martyrs – not only for faith, but also for the truth. The first Russian saints (passion bearers) are brothers Boris and Gleb, who died, according to the annals, at the hands of their own brother. But their martyrdom not only demonstrates the individual feat of preserving the Christian faith, but also becomes a justification for the civilizational choice between Orthodoxy and paganism. The figures of the dead brothers turned into a symbol of Christian sacrifice, but also gave rise to the cult of their veneration as the founders of a new cultural community. It is very important that, as a rule, in the Russian Orthodox tradition representatives of the royal family became passion bearers, which was an additional factor in combining dynastic and religious ties. This led to a kind of symbolic competition between the most noble clans in medieval Russia for identifying their ancestors as saints, or for linking their origin with the already famous passion bearers.

The imperial period of Russian history was the time of subordination of the Orthodox Church to the power of a secular ruler. A logical consequence of the decrease in the symbolic significance of religious memory was a certain preservation of the number of martyrs (from a canonical point of view – passion bearers), the maintenance of existing cults, but an unspoken ban on the appearance of new ones. It is significant that the resulting symbolic lacuna began to be filled with political opponents of the government. In the environment of Old Belief there is the cult of the archpriest Avvakum, who was burned by royal servants in 1682, and in the nineteenth century in the environment of the oppositional intellectuals the idea of participants of the Decembrist revolt of 1825 as martyrs (Mazour 1937: 11–14).

SOVIET MARTYRS: BELIEF IN A COMMUNIST FUTURE INSTEAD OF CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY

The collapse of the imperial system meant not only the liberation of the church from state oppression (for a short period of time it regained autonomy from secular authorities), but also the formation of a new symbolic system. The

creation of this system was delayed by the prolonged establishment of Soviet power in the territory of the former empire for several years, but it was these years of the Civil War that led to a new surge in martyrological thinking. From a social point of view, the creation of civil cults of martyrs was necessary to legitimize and justify the new political order, which experienced an acute shortage of not only economic but also symbolic resources. As J. Alexander shows, it is the creation of a collective trauma, personified in the images of victims, that becomes an act of establishing a new collective identity (Alexander 2004b: 12–13). An equally important factor is a gap between the community that constructs the injury and the community that results from the injury. In other words, the martyr should be perceived as part of the community, but they should have some features that allow them to focus on their personal fate.

Summing up the Civil War meant both the creation of a periodically replenished or modified list of heroes, and the establishment of cults of martyrs. A large role in distinguishing these categories of symbolically significant characters was played, as expected, by martyrdom during the Civil War or an imminent departure from life, which could be attributed to the consequences of military injuries. As it soon turned out, in the Soviet Union it was better to be a martyr than a hero. At least the period of mass repression of the 30s of the twentieth century significantly reduced the list of heroes, while the cults of the dead participants in the Civil War were able to maintain their significance until the end of the existence of the Soviet state, even despite another wave of designation as martyrs in the Great Patriotic War.

Of course, the ideological content of martyrdom is changing. The moral and metaphysical justification for the tragic death is not Christian faith, but faith in the establishment of communism, and the authors of the new *Acts of the Martyrs* emphasize the conscious nature of this faith, as well as the willingness to meet death for it. The new martyrs include participants in the Civil War (S. Lazo, V. Bonivur) as well as victims of terrorist acts (M.S. Uritsky, V. Volodarsky). Periodically, foreign allies of the USSR were also included in the pantheon of revolutionary martyrs; for example, the memory of the Italian anarchists F. Sacco and B. Vanzetti, who were shot in 1927, was quickly immortalized in the names of the streets and in the corresponding literature.

The beginning of World War II, catastrophic for the Soviet Union, made it possible and even necessary to mold new martyrdom cults again. The characters of the Civil War had already noticeably faded in the mass consciousness; in addition, an important turn took place in symbolic politics – from the idea of a world revolution, the leadership of the USSR turned to the idea of national history, so the defense of the motherland became the new ideological content of martyrological thinking. The pantheon of martyrs formed in the war years

remained almost unchanged until the end of the existence of the Soviet Union, which was facilitated by the active consolidation of their images in fiction: B. Polevoi's novel titled *A Story About a Real Man*, in which the prototype of the hero was pilot A.P. Maresyev; L. Kassil's novel titled *The Street of the Younger Son*, which described the fate of a young partisan, Volodia Dubinin, etc.

For Soviet martyrs, a deliberate 'reversal' of their social status turned out to be significant. While in the dynastic period the martyr necessarily had to confirm the dominant status of the ruling dynasty, in Soviet society the worker or peasant origin became a mandatory attribute of the martyr. Not a single native of the former classes could claim such an honorary status, and if there were embarrassing circumstances, they were deleted from the official biography. The example of partisan Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, one of the most prominent representatives of the Soviet pantheon, is indicative of the fact. Despite the characteristic surname, which indicated its origin from the church environment, official documents and fiction consistently emphasized her origin from the lower social strata as well as the low material wealth of the family during her childhood.

"NEW MARTYRS": BETWEEN A POLITICAL ORDER AND MORAL RESENTMENT

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked a dramatic transformation of not only political but also symbolic space. In other post-Soviet republics, the Soviet list of martyrs was being replaced by a nationally colored pantheon, which was accompanied by symbolic recoding of the past – the same historical characters who had previously been in the status of criminals became martyrs. In Russia, such a radical option, meaning a complete rejection of the Soviet heritage, was impossible both for political and socio-cultural reasons, as a result of which a certain symbolic vacuum arose. The state almost completely distanced itself from symbolic politics, so a competition between various political and cultural actors unfolded to get vacant positions in the symbolic space. We can agree with J. Alexander, who states that the scale of social disasters does not yet create collective trauma. Trauma occurs when the situation of anomia (in the terminology of E. Durkheim) makes it impossible to maintain the former collective identity, forcing us to wonder about the conditions for the construction of a new community (Alexander 2004a: 527–528).

Interestingly, during the August Coup of 1991, three people who were killed were posthumously awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union, but no official martyrdom was established. The monuments erected at the Vagankovo

Cemetery became a manifestation of private, but not collective memory. In this we can see a certain parallel with the events on the Maidan in 2014, when the cult of the Heavenly Hundred, which U. Blacker analyzes in his article, arose immediately after the events and was quickly fixed at the state level (Blacker 2015: 278–279). The Russian authorities did not seize the chance to create a cult of martyrs, obviously because martyrs should consolidate in the public consciousness an important idea or key event that underlies a new identity. But for the authorities, the issue of a sharp break with Soviet identity remained problematic for political and legal reasons (membership in the United Nations Security Council).

Despite the democratic changes in the country, conservative trends are beginning to grow in the mass consciousness. One of the directions is the desire for a complete deconstruction of the Soviet past and its replacement in an idealized way with imperial Russia, which would automatically mean a complete rejection of the entire Soviet pantheon. In parallel with this, nostalgia for political and social stability gives rise to an increase in the popularity of I.V. Stalin, who begins to be perceived as a defender of the integrity of the country (Koposov 2017). These moral attitudes, despite being seemingly opposite, resonate with a large proportion of the population most affected by social and economic reforms.

The Russian Orthodox Church is trying to fill the empty symbolic niche, which in the late 1980s began to actively advocate for the rehabilitation of repressed priests. This trend is reflected in the emergence of the term "neomartyrs". Although historically this term was applied to those martyrs who were identified as saints after the fall of Constantinople (1453), in post-Soviet conditions it quickly took on a narrower meaning, marking those priests who died during the revolution or became victims of political repressions of the 1920s–1930s.

It is worth noting that for the first time representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad spoke about neomartyrs in the 1940s, and their information was based on rumors and unverified data about the circumstances of the life and martyrdom of the injured priests. In the last years of the Soviet Union, these materials were also available to the Russian Orthodox Church, which in 1989 created the Synod Commission for the Canonization of Saints, which prepared materials for the canonization of new martyrs. At the Council of Bishops in 2000, 1097 people were immediately counted among the saints. However, in most cases such a mass canonization did not rely on existing local cults and related narratives about the life path of the new martyrs, so it did not fulfill its social function. The very mass nature of the act of canonization contradicted one of the most important conditions for the effectiveness of

martyrological thinking, namely the individuality of the fate of martyrs. That is why, as V.A. Orlovskiy notes, already in 2011 it was decided to shift the emphasis from increasing the number of martyrs to popularizing their lives among Russians (Orlovskiy 2018: 147–148).

At the same time, a large distribution – first in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, and then in the Russian Orthodox Church – was acquired by the Tsar-as-God movement, which advocated the designation of Saint Nicholas II as a martyr. The ideological content of the doctrine is the idea that the martyrdom of the last Russian emperor became a metaphysical payment for the future restoration of Russia, and Nicholas II himself is comparable in the size of the sacrifice made to Christ. It is clear that from the point of view of the canons such a doctrine cannot be considered Orthodox, but it was in the 1990s that it became widespread not only among ordinary Russians, but also among a significant part of the priests. In the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, Nicholas II was officially recognized as a martyr, and the public outcry led to the fact that in 2000 the Russian Orthodox Church was forced to identify him not as a saint, but as a passion bearer. Although, as already mentioned above, such canonical differences do not affect the character of the folk cult.

For the Russian Orthodox Church, the official recognition of the martyrdom of Nicholas II was, in many respects, a compromise for the reunion procedure with the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. At the same time, even in the church itself, the attitude towards the cult of the last Russian emperor was far more ambiguous, as evidenced by the long procedure for recognizing his remains as genuine (Leeper 2001).

M. Laruelle believes that the active spread of the cult of Nicholas II should be associated with the years 2013–2014. In 2013, the anniversary of the accession to the throne of the Romanov dynasty was celebrated, and in 2014, rebels in the Donbass turned to the images of the last Russian emperor, which was caused by the personal sympathies of their leader Igor Strelkov (Laruelle 2019). In my opinion, these events rather expanded the potential for using the image of Nicholas II, but the main actors were no longer church communities, but a wider range of conservative public organizations. The church was, in a sense, hostage to the decision, which significantly limited the boundaries of the use of the image of Nicholas II, making the Russian Orthodox Church automatically responsible for observing the canonical image.

What made the last Russian emperor a convenient object for martyrological thinking? On the one hand, the relative distance in time of life from the modern Russian society, and on the other, positive associations with the Russian Empire. Nicholas II as a historical character does not cause polar emotions; in addition,

the use of his image allows him to fulfill an important moral function – removing personal responsibility from modern Russians and shifting it to the direct culprits of the emperor's murder.

One of the most prominent representatives of the Tsar-as-God doctrine is monk Sergius (Romanov), who actively advocates the expanding of the cult of Nicholas II, and in his interpretation the martyrdom of Nicholas II acquires the features of a moral imperative addressed to the modern Russian government. In particular, we are talking about public repentance for the crimes of the Soviet period and the refusal of continuity with the Soviet Union. Thus, the cult of Nicholas II, which, it would seem, does not contradict the official state ideology, becomes a catalyst for public dissatisfaction with the conservative layers of the Russian society that could not overcome the collective trauma of the collapse of the Soviet empire.

But no less important aspect of the use of the martyrdom image of Nicholas II is the dynamics of intra-church conflicts and divisions. In the modern Russian Orthodox Church, two wings are clearly distinguished – conservative and liberal, each of which not only fights for the drift of the church in one direction or another, but also actively participates in the distribution of posts and power. It is important to understand that the policy of Patriarch Kirill, aimed at achieving the synthesis of the church and the state (despite the forced nature of such aspirations), is criticized from liberal and conservative positions. But while the liberal part of the church contrasts the church with the idea of sobriety and complicity, then in the hands of conservatives the image of martyr Nicholas II becomes a symbol of 'real' power (as opposed to the Soviet origin of the modern Russian elite).

The inability to build a collective identity without the Soviet past makes today's Russian authorities not expand the set of historical images, but again turn to the symbolic resource of World War II. Also, we are talking about the re-revival of the Soviet martyrdom cult.

U. Blacker believes that the emergence of a new martyrological thinking should not be considered in the context of addressing the past, but as related to the memory wars that unfolded in Eastern Europe in connection with the rethinking of the results of World War II (Blacker 2015: 258–260). The collapse of the communist camp led to the emergence of the concept of double occupation, as most countries in Eastern Europe began to interpret their history of recent decades as a consistent struggle first against Nazism, and then against communism. In this context, the consolidation of conservative trends in post-Soviet Russia should be considered not only as a phenomenon of historical nostalgia, but also as an important element of political struggle. The emphasized attention to the figures of martyrs of the Soviet era becomes a way to oppose

Eastern European revisionism, not just the 'true' memory of the war, and also to legitimize the right to possess this memory.

In the early 1990s, a general trend was the debunking of the cults themselves, or the voicing of those historical details that were classified in the Soviet period. For example, the materials of the verification by the public prosecutor's office of journalistic reports about the feat of the Panfilov Division's Twenty-Eight Guardsmen were published, as a result of which, firstly, the artificial nature of the list of dead participants in the battle was clarified, and secondly, the presence of the still living participants in the official martyrology. An important circumstance was the fact that one of the participants in the canonical list, Ivan Dobrobabin, not only remained alive in the famous battle, but was captured, began to cooperate with German troops and became a policeman. After the war, the circumstances of his betrayal became known to state security bodies, which led to the deprivation of his title of Hero of the Soviet Union, but his name was not removed from the monument. In the post-Soviet years all attempts made by Dobrobabin himself to achieve rehabilitation and to get back the awards were unsuccessful.

Although in the 1990s discussions regarding the assessment of the authenticity of the Soviet 'martyrs' were still allowed, with the strengthening of conservative trends the very question of reassessing the past began to seem unacceptable. When in 2016 Sergey Mironenko, the director of the State Archive of the Russian Federation, called the feat of the Panfilovtsy a myth, the public reaction of the Minister of Culture, Vladimir Medinsky, turned out to be very tough. Mironenko was dismissed from the post of director of the archive, retaining, however, the position of scientific director of this organization. A symbolic response to the attempts of researchers to revise some of the stamps that developed during the war and were refuted even by the Soviet prosecutor was the film *Panfilov's 28 Men*, released in the same year, in which the legendary plot was completely reproduced.

An important feature affecting the formation and support by the state of martyrdom cults is the risk of a situation in which the state itself is one of the culprits of trauma. Related to this is the cautious and even negative attitude of the Russian authorities towards those unofficial cults of martyrs that are developing already in the post-Soviet era and are associated with the recent past.

This statement can be illustrated by various strategies for preserving the memory of events in Beslan. In September 2004, Chechen terrorists seized a school and held it for three days. During the assault on the school, a large number of hostages, including children, died. Almost immediately after the tragic events, alternative versions of what had happened arose. The official version claimed that the cause of the deaths of the hostages was the bombing

of terrorists, so the operation is the embodiment of the heroism of the special services. The unofficial version voiced by the public organization Mothers of Beslan was that most of the hostages died during the assault from artillery shells, so the dead children are victims not only of the actions of terrorists, but also of the incompetence of the armed forces. The Russian authorities quickly tried to neutralize negative connotations by establishing a Day of Solidarity against Terrorism in 2005, as well as erecting a number of monuments memorializing not only the dead hostages, but also the fighters of the special services who died during the assault. The emphasized heroization of their actions was designed to publicly dispel doubts about possible guilt, and the very name of the memorable date was to unite all the participants in the tragic events in Beslan.

At the same time, the public organization Mothers of Beslan, having developed a ritual of preserving the memory of them, emphasized not heroism, but the martyrdom of the dead children. Every year on September 1, children's toys are brought to the school and candles are lit in memory of the dead, and the transfer of emphasis from heroism to martyrdom becomes the basis for a reaction from the authorities. For example, in 2016, several representatives of this organization were detained for trying to organize an unauthorized memory action. It can be noted that the spontaneous martyrdom cult is considered as potentially dangerous to the symbolic appearance of the state, which forces the shift of the emphasis from the specific images of the dead to the abstract fight against terrorism.

In conclusion, martyrological thinking is a mechanism for maintaining historical memory and collective identity. Because of their religious nature, such thinking has a certain ambivalence, often acting as a mechanism for the occurrence of collective injuries. In the context of the secularization of the society and the formation of civil religion, the phenomenon of martyrdom becomes an important element of socialist or nationalist ideologies. In the Soviet Union period, two stages of the creation of martyrdom cults can be distinguished – the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War. Compared to the previous tradition, the ideological content of cults changed (faith in communism and the defense of the motherland instead of the Christian faith), as did the social status of martyrs (working or peasant origin instead of dynastic affiliation).

While in Soviet society martyrdom cults were combined with heroic discourse, acting as an additional moral justification, then in post-Soviet society they become a mechanism of traumatization. On the one hand, there is an artificial preservation of those martyrdom cults that were inscribed in the history of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet period, and the actualization of these cults is superimposed on the strengthening of foreign policy isolation. On the other

hand, the spontaneous folding of the martyrdom of Nicholas II or the children killed in the terrorist act in Beslan creates grounds for legitimizing protest sentiments, so their use in the symbolic policy of the state is almost impossible.

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HISTORICAL TRAUMA BETWEEN EVENT AND ETHICS: ALEIDA ASSMANN'S THEORY IN THE CONTEXT OF TRAUMA STUDIES

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Abstract: The paper focuses on the way the notion of trauma functions and is justified in the contemporary discourse on history. The author refers to the works of Aleida Assmann and examines the critique brought forward against memorial culture. Deconstructing Assmann's argument, the author concludes that there are two levels of discourse that support and justify each other: the level of fact and the level of value. The first one deals with the problem of traumatic events and expanding memory about them, which is explained as a change of time regime. The second one deals with the ethical turn that made the change of the time regime possible. To analyse historical trauma, the article suggests breaking the connection between these two levels and examining their foundations separately.

Keywords: ethical turn, historical trauma, human rights, memory studies, philosophy of history, time, trauma studies

The basic questions that often arise in the context of a discussion about historical trauma and cultural memory are the following: is it really legitimate to use these constructs in historical studies and comprehension of the past on the one hand, and is it something useful for the present life on the other (Assmann 2013)? Despite the growing popularity of trauma and memory studies and their wide engagement in the social sphere, they still have to prove to the opponents their legitimacy and productivity in both the academic and cultural contexts. This tendency is distinctive for the so-called third wave of memory studies, which is identified as a reaction to the methodological critique of its basic notions and research strategies (Feindt et al. 2014; Safronova 2018). The situation with trauma studies is even more complex and problematic (Kansteiner & Weilnböck 2008).

In this paper I will examine answers to this critique given by Aleida Assmann, one of the most influential researchers of cultural memory and representatives of memory studies, and analyse the structure of the argument for the discourse of trauma. The discussion around it is multi-layered and the task I am going to perform is to bring out and deconstruct its theoretical foundations. In the first part I will consider Assmann's answer to the question of possibility and necessity of discourse about collective memory, or how we can talk about historical trauma. The second part concerns the question of the way we can describe this trauma. Here we can see that the way Assmann suggests justifying trauma discourse suffers from a tricky ambiguity: on the one hand, she explains the change of the perception of painful events of the past as the effect of the fall of the modern time regime, but on the other, the very establishment of the new time regime is explained as an effect of these painful events. Untying this knot, one can notice that the analysis of the nature of trauma as an event (as well as the justification of the discourse on historical trauma, as I show it in the first part of the paper) is based on some presuppositions of ethical nature. But as we can see in the third part of the paper, the ethical turn is not something unconditionally valuable itself. Thus, to see the whole construction of trauma in the context of the modern memorial culture as Assmann describes it, we should break the connection between ontological and ethical levels of description and examine their foundations separately.

DISCONTENT AND CONTENTMENT WITH MEMORIAL CULTURE: THE POSSIBILITY OF HISTORICAL TRAUMA

A thorough answer to the critique of the concept of collective memory and memorial culture was given by Aleida Assmann (2013) in her book *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur: Eine Intervention*. One of the crucial arguments against the concept of collective memory concerns the metaphorical character of the notion of memory when it refers to a community. The discussion about this issue took place between Maurice Halbwachs and Marc Bloch already in the 1920s, yet it is still on the agenda today. As Jeffrey K. Olick writes: "It is perhaps somewhat disappointing, then, that we all still feel compelled to establish the social dimensions of memory again and again, which should really be old news by now" (Olick 2009). Assmann in her book answers to the argument of Reinhart Koselleck (2004b) and Jan Philipp Reemtsma (2010), who insist on an individual character of memory and who are extremely suspicious of memorial culture, seeing it as a sign of either collectivization and totalitarianism, or domination of a minority defending its interests (Assmann 2013: 24–27).[1]

Assmann refers to Koselleck's motto, "the task of the historian is not to form an identity, but to destroy it" (2004b: 28), which means that historical truth lies beyond the frame and normativity of memory, which is always contaminated with some interest. But to deny the social frameworks of individual memory and the role of symbolic function of culture because of its political consequences is to acknowledge that it somehow still exists.[2] After all, it does not matter if commemoration is an individual act or a collective one, since it is an act of representation that functions according to certain rules.

> *It is never the past itself that acts upon a present society, but representations of past events that are created, circulated and received within a specific cultural frame and political constellation. Personal memories are purely virtual until they are couched in words or images in order to be communicated. Collective memories are produced through mediated representations of the past that involve selecting, rearranging, re-describing and simplifying, as well as the deliberate, but also perhaps unintentional, inclusion and exclusion of information. … Disseminated by the mass media as interpretations or official definitions of historical events, representations are a powerful element in the construction, contestation and reconstruction of individual and collective memories.* (Assmann & Shortt 2012: 3–4)

The collective memory in Assmann's terms is not something abstract or fictional. It is one of the levels of human memory along with the individual or biological level as well as the social one. The point is that the collective memory is not something additional to the individual memory, but something indispensable for the latter's functioning.

> *The neural network is invariably linked to both dimensions: the social network and the cultural field. The latter includes material embodiment in the form of texts, visual images, as well as symbolic practices in the form of holidays and rituals. Biological memory is formed and developed through interaction with other people, just as it is formed and developed through interaction with cultural artifacts and acts*. (Assmann 2006: 32)

What Assmann is trying to show to the critics of memory studies is that history should not be replaced by memory but supplemented by it. For Assmann the selective and hierarchical character of memory is compensated by a pluralistic approach to this subject in democratic states. Thus, such constructs as collective identity and collective memory are fully justified in the current cultural and political situation:

> *Any memory is characterized by a particular perspective; memory is not biased and is determined by what is selected and what is excluded. In democratic countries the memorial community is never homogeneous … In Germany there are many different 'we' with their collective memories: Germans as criminals responsible for the Holocaust; German Jews as victims of the Holocaust; Germans as victims of national socialism and World War II; Germans as victims of forced escape and deportations; Germans as victims of political persecution in the GDR; and finally, Germans from the families of former emigrants. And they all have different life stories. However, this does not exclude the presence of social memory frames, within which each of the listed groups places its own memory.* (Assmann 2013: 28–29)

Another argument against the existing memory culture is based on the question of its value. Assmann's approach concerns the German situation and recognising their guilt but it can be extended to a broader context. The discontent that Aleida Assmann describes and comments on is twofold. On the one hand, it is discontent with the adherence to the past that replaces striving for the future (is the capacity to forget not less valuable than the capacity to remember?) and, on the other hand, the discontent with the subject and the form of commemoration. The past that returns is not some indifferent past; it is a set of traumatic events that have to be seen from the point of view of a victim. But if commemoration becomes a form of identification with the victim, it can be and often is interpreted as self-delusion. Moreover, the very expression of sympathy for victims is perceived as hypocrisy when it is performed in the form of a political ritual. In this context Assmann describes the situation in which the protest and the critical position of the leftist intellectuals became the source of German memorial culture as in the slogan "The victory is a defeat!" (Assmann 2013: 68). So memorial culture is questioned from at least three positions: Is it necessary to focus on the past instead of passing it? Is it necessary to construct collective identity from the negative moments of history? And is it justifiable to make a political performance out of suffering because in this case "memory is oblivion" (Assmann 2013: 70)?

In Assmann's commentary this knot finally turned out to be cut by the reference to the ethical turn and values of the politics of recognition. According to Assmann, there is no opposition between adherence to the past and facing the future; nor is there one between negative constitutive events and positive values: "the negative burden of history can be transformed into progressive values. … The value of human dignity was born out of the ultimate humiliation of human dignity, so the positive meaning of this value remains linked to its negative genesis" (Assmann 2013: 74). The novelty is not excluded by the

establishing of memorial culture; on the contrary, the very ethical requirement to include negative memory in the national identity is described by Assmann as an absolute historical innovation. Moreover, as she believes, "memory forges a new powerful link between past atrocities and a peaceful future" (Assmann & Shortt 2012: 1). The problem of ritualization of the commemoration in this regard is seen as some serious but inevitable and foreseeable challenge. The alienation of memory seems total only if we look at the top of the 'memorial pyramid' with its politics and institutions, but the basis of the pyramid is society in all its diversity and variety. What really matters is the change within the moral framework:

> *With the recognition of the value of human rights, the political worldview itself has changed, focusing less on heroic warriors and more on civilian victims. At the centre of the political worldview there are no longer ideological utopias that rely on the 'new man', but the very vulnerability of human flesh, which has become the target of political, racist or sexist violence*. (Assmann 2013: 95)

Thus the discourse of historical trauma has two levels that support each other: the level of fact and the level of value. To justify the first one, we need to appeal to the second one, and vice versa. But on what ground is the whole construction based? To address this problem, one should examine how the notion of trauma functions and through which theoretical procedures it sets in.

EVENT AND REPRESENTATION: THE TIME OF TRAUMA

What is substantial for the notion of trauma is its multi-valued nature. As Natalia Artemenko puts it, "different meanings [of trauma] do not share any common elements which would allow us to articulate what trauma really is, but they form a structure which Ludwig Wittgenstein calls a family resemblance" (Artemenko 2020: 5). Indeed, there are many definitions and interpretations of trauma that can be contradictory and controversial. Nevertheless, it does not dismiss the question about the basis of the discourse on trauma. What are the conditions – theoretical and political – that make a historical event marked as trauma? Something is happening with the time itself – it is 'out of joint'. This famous line from Shakespeare's Hamlet is used by Aleida Assmann in the title of her book *Is Time out of Joint? On the Rise and Fall of the Modern Time Regime* (2020). In this book Assmann gives a detailed analysis of the so-called tectonic shift in the contemporary sense of historicity, in our manner of dealing with time, the shift of the dominant temporal order. She refers to historian François

Hartog, sociologist John Torpey, and philosopher Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht to describe the gap between the two time regimes, the gap which emerged in the 1980s and has determined our present-day experience of time, history, and identity (Assmann 2020: 175–200).

This new time regime marks the end of modernity, which conceived itself as the project directed to the future. For Assmann the transformation of the time regime is something self-evident, but at the same time enigmatic. "The future was the standard orientation; no one talked about the past. Just as we can no longer imagine people smoking in hospitals, it is now difficult for us to imagine how disinterested people were in the past" (Assmann 2020: vii). But what we have at our disposal for now is our past, which returns and refuses to go away. The basic intuition connects the phenomenon of trauma with a disturbance in the very texture of time. Aleida Assmann tries to demonstrate that historical trauma can be seen as an effect of the structural shift in the time regime. Some terrible historical events have become visible as a result of the structural transformation, which Assmann calls the fall of the modern time regime.

To clarify the meaning of the modern time regime we need to clarify the relation of the time regime to history. As a rule, history is described as a sequence of events, their mutual influences and connections, but our way to perceive history turns out to be historically conditioned. The very time has its history, and it becomes noticeable when a change in temporal frame occurs. What Assmann is trying to work with is the new experience of time we are facing today. Assmann uses the term 'time regime' or 'temporal regime' to describe a certain formation of historical experience or a certain way to configure the past, present, and future. Here she refers to the French historian François Hartog and his concept of 'regime of historicity' (Hartog 2015). For Hartog the regime of historicity "is a heuristic tool which can help us reach a better understanding not of time itself – of all times or the whole of time – but principally of moments of crisis of time, as they have arisen whenever the way in which past, present, and future are articulated no longer seems self-evident" (Hartog 2015: 16).

Assmann focuses on the crisis of the 1980s. She refers to the phenomenon of the so-called memory boom. The past suddenly fills the entire horizon of the conceivable. And this past is not really neutral or indifferent. The past returns to us as voices of victims, of those who suffered and demand recognition. The past returns to us as a trauma.

This time regime that became dominant from the 1980s onwards is opposed to the modern time regime, which expels the past as something inactual and outdated. The idea that the past is something that is separate from the present and can be left in the past belongs to modernity, which was invented in the Age of Enlightenment. In this regard Assmann partly follows Koselleck's theory: at

the end of the eighteenth century history was singularized (Koselleck 2004a). This means that instead of premodern histories a history arose; "clear, engaging, concrete, exemplary, and often instructive histories were always histories of something; they were replaced in the course of singularization with an abstract and nonsensuous history" (Assmann 2020: 36). And this new concept of history produced a new understanding of time – an empty time that functions as a framework for events. Moreover, time "became the main engine driving historical change, emphasizing the new and disintegrating the old" (Assmann 2020: 37). According to Koselleck, the caesura took place around 1770 and initiated the development of modernization, but Assmann herself consolidates with those scholars who prefer to consider this process as discrete phases of modernization (Assmann 2020: 64–74). One of the last of these preceded the 1980s and took place in the 1960s–70s. To characterize it, Assmann quotes the novel *Waterland* by Graham Swift: "Once upon a time, in the bright sixties, there was plenty of future on offer" (Assmann 2020: 1). And then she adds: "At the time Swift was writing the novel, just two decades after the 'bright sixties', the future had lost its sheen; it had already turned into a 'past future'" (ibid.). So, we could say that the transition from the modern time regime to the contemporary time regime is the basic meaning of the phrase "the time is out of joint".

But the modern time regime was not invented from scratch either, because before there was another form of experience of time: the time of tradition, the time when it was the past that made the present and future comprehensible. The experience of time in the modern time regime presumes a hiatus between the past and the future, which is described by Koselleck as the division between a 'space of experience' and 'horizon of expectation'. The modern time regime is constituted by the separation and emancipation of the 'horizon of expectation' which makes the future independent and also valuable while the past becomes distant and depreciated. So, it is the modern time regime that produced "the collapse and reconfiguration of the past-present-future temporal structure" (Assmann 2020: vii). That is why the contemporary time regime can be interpreted by Assmann as the normalization of time: we are restoring the connection to our past, but in a new manner.

These ideas are beautifully combined in one theory and work as a credible way to explain the phenomenon of historical trauma, but this description suffers from a fundamental duality. On the one hand, Assmann speaks about a formal procedure, that is, a change in the manner we perceive the connection of the past, present, and future, the 'continental shift' in the structure of our time. But then she adds that "the burden of the violent histories of the twentieth century weighs heavily on the present, demanding attention and recognition and forcing us to take responsibility and to develop new forms of remembrance

and commemoration" (Assmann 2020: 4). As one can see in the second step of the argument, Assmann gives an explanation of the 'continental shift' between time regimes, referring to the events that took place in the past. But is this step really legitimate? The thing is, originally we were talking about a time regime that performs a constitutive function in relation to a particular content of experience. But now we are following the reverse logic, assigning a constitutive role to events. That is, we are already moving within the perspective that has yet to be justified, and do not notice the difference between the fact and its meaning.

Furthermore, if the excess of violence in the history of the twentieth century determines the growing attention to the past, why did this attention and sensitivity to trauma come to us with a considerable delay? As we remember, "in the bright sixties, there was plenty of future". It turns out that a catastrophic event as such does not automatically entail the memorial boom.[3]

Another way to explain the change of the time regime Assmann resorts to is the following: "The future itself has lost the power to shed light on the present" (Assmann 2020: 3). But her explanation concerning the future preserves the same ambiguity as the first one discussed above.

> *Why have the stakes of the future fallen so drastically in value? Some obvious answers immediately come to mind: The resources of the future have been eroded by a number of complex challenges, such as the depletion of natural resources, the ongoing ecological degradation that accompanies technologically advanced societies, climate change, and water crises. These challenges, along with demographic problems such as overpopulation and aging societies, have fundamentally altered our image of the future. Under these conditions, the future no longer serves as the Eldorado of our hopes and dreams, while at the same time any heady talk about progress has begun to sound more and more hollow.* (Assmann 2020: 3)

In other words, having declared a certain decline of the future as such, that is, a decline of a future-oriented time regime, Assmann immediately justifies it with the content of our anticipations of the future.

Such explanations justify each other, creating a vicious circle: the decay of the modern time regime allows us to conceive the past as traumatic, and at the same time it receives a justification as a consequence of traumatic events.

The critique of the confusion between the event and the manner of its representation was introduced by Jeffrey Alexander. He calls such a confusion a naturalistic fallacy and labels the theories that commit this fallacy 'lay trauma theories'. According to "lay theory, traumas are naturally occurring events that shatter an individual or collective actor's sense of well-being. In other words, the power to shatter – the 'trauma' – is thought to emerge from events themselves"

(Alexander 2004: 2). According to Alexander's classification, we can talk about two types of lay trauma theories: enlightenment and psychoanalytic versions. The enlightenment version of a lay trauma theory understands trauma as an event located in the past, as a painful experience, with the consequences of which society is trying to cope in one way or another. Assmann's argument that "the burden of the violent histories of the twentieth century weighs heavily on the present, demanding attention and recognition" (Assmann 2020: 4) generally corresponds to this 'enlightenment' position. But Alexander's argument against such an approach is the following:

> *Events do not, in and of themselves, create collective trauma. Events are not inherently traumatic. Trauma is socially mediated attribution. The attribution may be made in real time, as an event unfolds; it may also be made before the event occurs, as an adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction. Sometimes, in fact, events that are deeply traumatizing may not actually have occurred at all; such imagined events, however, can be as traumatizing as events that have actually occurred*. (Alexander 2004: 8)

So, we should call the trauma not an event in itself, but rather its representation, whereas the lay trauma theory commits a naturalistic fallacy, that is, ascribes some external reasons to the social process of trauma. Alexander's own understanding of trauma can be described as 'cultural-sociological' because he defines trauma not as an event but as a social process.

Thus, the analysis of trauma theories proposed by Alexander allows us to identify the internal conflict of the interpretations of trauma. There is an overlapping of two perspectives: the first one explaining the event through the theory of time regimes, and the second one explaining the establishment of a time regime as an effect of the event. Alexander himself chooses a constructivist position, excluding the event from the discussion of trauma as something external to the 'process of trauma' and focusing on the conditions in which the trauma arises. But don't we commit a naturalistic fallacy of a different kind in this case? According to Alexander, "trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity" (Alexander 2004: 10). Pain is replaced here by discomfort caused by the threat to identity, and this allows the replacement of the victim's figure by the collective actor who decides that such a threat exists. Instead of a single community experiencing an event, Alexander speaks of a 'group of carriers' whose goal is to represent the trauma claim convincingly to the audience-public. Thus, the history of trauma is reinterpreted by Alexander as a story of 'illocutionary success' when "members of this originating

collectivity become convinced that they have been traumatized by a singular event" (Alexander 2004: 12). It turns out that the process of trauma, as in the lay trauma theory, is conditioned by some circumstances that are external to this process – in this case, by the discomfort, whose analysis remains principally beyond the consideration of the theory of trauma as representation.

Thus, having refused to explain the change in the temporal regime by a reference to an event, we still have not clarified the source of this very change. And here we can return to Assmann's work since it still provides one more alternative explanation for the expansion of the past. Assmann mentions that one of the conditions under which a historical event is transformed into a historical trauma is the fact that these events "were simply not approachable for the longest time, because no adequate cultural narratives were available" (Assmann 2020: 212). In Alexander's classification a similar formula belongs to the psychoanalytical trauma theory, which places trauma neither on the level of the event itself nor on the level of representation of this event, but between them. Cathy Caruth (1996), a representative of this approach, describes trauma as an 'unclaimed experience', referring to Freud's understanding of trauma:

> *Freud made a strange assumption that trauma consists of two stages. At an early stage (in childhood), trauma is characterized by a sexual content in the absence of sexual meaning for the child. The later stage (in adolescence) has no sexual content but acquires sexual significance. According to Freud, the relation between these two events creates the trauma: the event becomes a trauma retroactively.* (Caruth 2009: 571)

As Caruth describes the trauma, belated recognition of trauma as trauma is the essence of the paradoxical figure of the 'unlocalizable event' (Caruth 2009: 572). While Alexander reduces the discussion about trauma to the discussion about the representation of trauma, then from Caruth's point of view trauma is neither an event nor a representation, but a failure of representation. And in this perspective it is already impossible to describe a trauma in terms of illocutionary success. In one of the interviews explaining the ambiguous nature of trauma, Cathy Caruth draws a line between the experience of trauma and the experience of a witness, saying: "the witness creates the addressee, the trauma erases it" (Suverina 2015). At the level of the witness, according to Caruth, we are surely dealing with various kinds of representations. Witness is associated with memory; memory defines the space of the historical. And in this sense, trauma and history are fundamentally different:

> *… traumatic repetition produces events that may look like historical events, but in the classical sense history is always associated with memory. That*

> *is, we need witnesses, and the descriptions that need to be read, and also it is necessary for us that witnesses realize that this is the past. Traumatic repetition is a death drive; it cannot be a historical event. It turns out that I want to go back and remember this event, but instead I just have to repeat it over and over again*. (Suverina 2015)

It turns out that trauma operates at some fundamentally unspoken level which represents the basis for the witness, but it is important for Caruth to maintain this dual structure.

The fundamental difference between Caruth's and Assmann's positions in this context is that the latter connects the moment of the latent period, during which the trauma does not manifest itself as such, with a specific historical reason – the domination of the modern time regime. According to Assmann, it prevents the identification of trauma and working it through, forcibly keeping the past in the past. Assmann writes: "As long as the focus was exclusively on the future and on modernisation, the suffering and trauma of those who had to bear a significant share of the costs of this story of progress were systematically shielded from view" (Assmann 2020: 212). Thus, repression of the traumatic events, or 'historical wounds', as Dipesh Chakrabarty, to whom Aleida Assmann also refers, calls it, turns out to be historicized and explained in terms of ethics. The belatedness of trauma is interpreted here not as some structural moment of historical experience but as a consequence of the hegemony of the modern time regime values: "the future-oriented modern time regime silently passed over the victims of history" (Assmann 2020: 216). There is no place left for the differentiation between trauma and witness in this scheme. And in this moment one can see in what way an ontological level of analysis is based on the ethical ground. The radical change of the time regime, as Assmann recognizes, became possible due to the politics of recognition and the ethics of human rights. Thus, references to the ethical turn and politics of recognition act as an ultimate justification of trauma discourse in both cases: while examining why we can talk about collective memory and historical trauma, and also while analysing what historical trauma is. But what is the basis of this ethical turn?

THE VICTIM AND HUMAN RIGHTS: ON THE CRITIQUE OF AN ETHICAL TURN

In her works Assmann often responds to the criticism of the memorial culture and new time regime in terms of new ethics. For example, she debates one of the popular theses that the more victims of the repressive past are spoken of,

the more the consensus between people with different backgrounds is likely to collapse. In this context Assmann suggests the conception of dialogical memory that not just divides people and nations, but also has potential to unite them due to transcending national borders through a transnational perspective, because "within the framework of memorial culture one of the fundamental human rights of individuals, social groups and national cultures is recognized – the right to their own vision of the world, experience and identity" (Assmann 2013: 205).

At the same time the answer to the critics of the axioms of such ethics is limited to the very short answer to Alain Badiou. In her *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur: Eine Intervention* Assmann writes:

> *While continuing to praise the violence of 'heroic communism', Badiou looks with distaste at our modernity, where the values of family happiness and human rights dominate; he denounces this modernity as effeminate (feminine), politically exhausted and unviable. In contrast, the morality of those who see themselves as living in a post-ideological era is based on the value of individual human life, regardless of a person's national, cultural, or religious affiliation. The new memorial culture has entered into an alliance with a politics that protects human rights which have become a valuable foundation and guide for the future*. (Assmann 2013: 96)

Thus, Assmann keeps in mind some critique of the values that she proposes, but from her point of view everything this critique is based on is some old violent ideology.[4]

Here we should look closer at the alternative interpretations of the 'ethical turn' that has led to the re-evaluation of the past and traumatic experience. While Assmann looks at the bright side of this event, such thinkers as Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, and Giorgio Agamben are deeply concerned about its implications even if taking different positions on many issues. As Assmann notices, an ethical turn puts in the forefront "vulnerability of human flesh, which has become the target of political, racist or sexist violence" (Assmann 2013: 95). To be recognized as a subject, this flesh should claim its identity, and after the ethical turn can thus count on protection. The latent axioms of this position are the following: 1) human being is defined as a body that suffers, enjoys, dies, and is also capable of engaging in a dialogue and reaching some consensus; 2) the ethics of human rights should somehow consider interests of those people whose rights are (or were) violated and who cannot fight for themselves.

The first idea totally corresponds to the so-called democratic materialism described by Badiou. According to democratic materialism, "there are only bodies and languages" (Badiou 2005: 20). But there is something lacking in the situation when "the law protects all the bodies, arranged under all the compatible

languages" (Badiou 2005: 22), and according to Badiou it is the truths. What must be opposed to democratic materialism is a materialist dialectic that states that "there are only bodies and languages, except that there are truths" (Badiou 2005: 22). One of the purposes of Badiou's essay on ethics is to suggest some alternative to the ethics based on human rights and eventually define man as "the being who is capable of recognizing himself as a victim" (Badiou 2001: 10). The ethics that put forward such a description of man, according to Badiou, eventually reduce the human being to less than man, that is, to a suffering beast and dying body, whereas everything that really matters even in an extreme and traumatic situation is this "almost incomprehensible resistance on the part of that which, in them, does not coincide with the identity of victim" (Badiou 2001: 11). The fact that man thinks and "is a tissue of truths" endows them with a kind of immortality and requires another ethic – an ethic of truths. Without this element all we have is the ethics of a finite creature that can derive the Good only from the Evil, because "'human rights' are rights to non-Evil: rights not to be offended or mistreated with respect to one's life (the horrors of murder and execution), one's body (the horrors of torture, cruelty and famine), or one's cultural identity (the horrors of the humiliation of women, of minorities, etc.)" (Badiou 2001: 9).

Such ethics for Badiou just legitimates the "conservatism with a good conscience": the ethics of consensus "is inconsistent, and … reality of the situation is characterized in fact by the unrestrained pursuit of self-interest, the disappearance or extreme fragility of emancipatory politics, the multiplication of 'ethnic' conflicts, and the universality of unbridled competition" (Badiou 2001: 10).

Besides, one of the consequences of such ethics is the transformation of the right "of the living being to remain a desolate individual aspiring to enjoyment" to the "right to intervention" (Badiou 2005: 20–21). This right inevitably arises from the absolute right of the victim that is also analysed by Rancière. Thus, the new legal situation is not the empowerment of victims and increasing attention to their rights, but "disappearance of right itself" (Rancière 2006: 7). Structurally it is based on the indistinction between fact and right, which is doubled by the indistinction of political 'people' and population. When it comes to trauma and victims, ethics appeals to the human rights, but they become "the specific rights of those who were unable to exercise those rights. As a result, the following alternative presented itself: either these human rights no longer meant anything, or they became the absolute rights of those without rights, that is to say rights demanding a response which was itself absolute, beyond all formal, juridical norms" (Rancière 2006: 7–8).

This directly corresponds with the second axiom of the ethical turn mentioned above, but in the case of Rancière this statement does not look so optimistic. Its

reverse side is endless humanitarian war "that is not a war, but a mechanism of infinite protection, a way of dealing with a trauma elevated to the status of a civilizational phenomenon" (Rancière 2006: 8).

The problem is that for human rights to be realized they should be supported and guaranteed by some social structure, the state. That is why a human, in order to have rights, must be also "something other than a 'human'", that is – a citizen (Rancière 2006: 9). The radical change that happened along with the ethical turn is the change in this inhuman surplus that is now "that part of ourselves that we do not control, a part that takes on several figures and several names: the dependence of the child, the law of the unconscious, the relationship of obedience towards an absolute Other. The 'inhuman' is that radical dependence of the human towards an absolutely other whom he cannot master. The 'right of the other' then is the right to witness this subjection to the law of the other" (Rancière 2006: 9).

Thus, a human reduced to a body, cleared from ideologies and appealing to have human rights, invokes a sovereign.

A thorough analysis of the connection of a bare life and a sovereign was given by Giorgio Agamben in his famous Homo Sacer project. In the first book of this series, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Agamben 1998), he traces how two senses of 'life', distinguished in Greek as "zoē, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and bios, which indicated the form or way of living proper to an individual or a group" (Agamben 1998: 9), were unfolding and intertwining in European history and politics that finally turned into biopolitics. The emancipation of a body and a concern about its pleasures and suffering being placed in the centre of political life represents nothing but the production of a biopolitical body, which is the original act of sovereign power. The biopolitical body can be described as *homo sacer*, who is totally excluded from both human and divine law, who may be killed and yet not sacrificed. When it comes to the protection of the population (one of the main functions of biopolitics), everyone eventually tends to be the one as the state of emergency becomes the rule.

That is why Agamben also criticizes modern democracy and the ethics of human rights.

> *If anything characterizes modern democracy as opposed to classical democracy, then, it is that modern democracy presents itself from the beginning as a vindication and liberation of zoē, and that it is constantly trying to transform its own bare life into a way of life and to find, so to speak, the bios of zoē. Hence, too, modern democracy's specific aporia: it wants to put the freedom and happiness of men into play in the very place – 'bare life' – that marked their subjection*. (Agamben 1998: 13)

The struggle for the victims who are treated in terms of suffering of the human flesh paradoxically brings the opposite effect.

CONCLUSION

The critique of the ethical foundation of the contemporary time regime as Assmann describes it puts into question the evaluation of the social processes connected to this issue. Yet, it does not decrease its significance and, on the contrary, exposes its enigmatic character. Our way to deal with time has changed, but what does it say about us? The explanation in terms of time regime, ethical turn, and humanization is undoubtedly useful and insightful in particular contexts, but in general it represents a rationalization of the situation. And one of the insistent motifs that is stressed in the framework of such a rationalization concerns the idea that traumas are returning from the past as memories about them. However, if we abandon the enlightenment theory of trauma in Alexander's terms, it will be clear that we should not look for the answer in the past. The very impossibility to leave the present besieged by the past can be seen as a symptom of the trauma that was not really reflected because we are constantly confusing the trauma and the witnessing. If the latter is compelled to remember, the former is condemned to the "endless inherent necessity of repetition" (Caruth 1996: 63). Such a repetition manifests itself not by the commemoration, but by the "cry 'May that never happen again!' when it is clear that 'that' is, by now, everywhere" (Agamben 1999: 20).

The notion of historical trauma is indeed influential nowadays. At the same time the widespread criticism it gets is justified but, as a rule, is of restrictive character. It can be easily crushed by mutually supportive historical and ethical arguments as pointed out above in the case of Assmann's rhetoric. Moreover, this rhetoric also contains another circular reasoning that concerns the theory of time regimes which explains the way of an event's representation as traumatic and at the same time is explained by these events. This makes the whole construction vulnerable. Exposing the fact that the ontological level of the argument is based on the ethical ground, I have demonstrated that the fundamental discussion about trauma discourse should concern the value of the notions of ethical turn, human rights, and biopolitics. This kind of critique not only touches the core of the theory of historical trauma but also provides an opportunity for a deeper reflection of the current situation and our focus on the experience of the victim.

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NOTES

[1] The critique of the memorial culture by Reemtsma, presented in the paper *Wozu Gedenkstätten?* (Why memorials?), concerns a broader context than Assmann describes here, but Assmann touches upon the specific aspects of the discussion. Reemtsma's attention is focused on the "dilemma of 'memory'": we are searching for the meaning and foundation, "trying to learn from history who we are and what we can hope for", but at the same time this demand addresses historiography that is not able to fulfil the task and answer such questions. Reemtsma's core argument against the requirement not to forget is the following: one demands from history more than it can accomplish – to create meaning (Reemtsma 2010). It is peculiar that Assmann quotes the passage in Reemtsma's paper about the desire to learn from history who we are and what we can hope for, but only in a positive sense and not a controversial one, while for Reemtsma, as he claims at the very beginning of the article, "[i]t is not about memory, it is about consciousness and shame" (Reemtsma 2010).

[2] In this context Koselleck prefers to speak not about 'collective memory', but about 'collective conditions' of memories (2004b: 28).

[3] Assmann explains this situation in *New Discontent with Memorial Culture: Intervention* as a conflict between generations. Here she refers to the German experience of World War II: the invocation to remember was a reaction of the generation of 1968 to the silence of those who directly participated in the event and chose to forget to move on.

> *The war generation got rid of its past by drawing a final line, and the second generation marked this past with a moral dividing line. The pragmatic final line meant getting rid of the past by silence; the corresponding psychological attitude was: 'Don't say a word about it!' On the contrary, the moral dividing line meant distancing from the past; in this case, the attitude proclaimed: 'We are different, so we must talk about the past!'* (Assmann 2013: 49)

On the one hand, this explanation can be read as a denial of the assumption that the reason for a change of the time regime is rooted in certain catastrophic events. On the other, even here Assmann adds that "the politics of silence and drawing the final line, which justified itself after the symmetrical violence of civil wars, did not work in the case of a radical asymmetry in the use of extreme violence" (Assmann 2013: 200). That is the reason why turning to the past is still considered to be a traumatic event. So, the position of the author remains ambiguous.

[4] Badiou in his turn would not agree to such a profile. In *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* he ardently engages in the polemics with the ethics of human rights:

> *When those who uphold the contemporary ideology of 'ethics' tell us that the return to Man and his rights has delivered us from the 'fatal abstractions' inspired by 'the ideologies' of the past, they have some nerve. I would be delighted to see today so*

> *constant an attention paid to concrete situations, so sustained and so patient a concern for the real [le réel], so much time devoted to an activist inquiry into the situation of the most varied kinds of people – often the furthest removed, it might seem, from the normal environment of intellectuals – as that we witnessed in the years between 1965 and 1980. In reality, there is no lack of proof for the fact that the thematics of the 'death of man' are compatible with rebellion, a radical dissatisfaction with the established order, and a fully committed engagement in the real of situations [dans le réel des situations], while by contrast, the theme of ethics and of human rights is compatible with the self-satisfied egoism of the affluent West, with advertising, and with service rendered to the powers that be.* (Badiou 2001: 7)

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MATERIALIZED TRAUMA NARRATIVES OF BORDER CROSSINGS

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to discuss the applicability of the concept of materialized narrative in the analysis of border and mobility related experiences. In this article, the concept and its analytical potential are discussed in three examples that address difficult, even traumatic experiences related to various kinds of border crossings in Finnish and Estonian contexts. The concept of materialized narrative allows the conceptualization of border and mobility related traumas in supplementary and alternative ways. The materialized narrative is defined as a form of narrative and non-narrative knowledge that is linked with objects that people carry with them across various borders and their difficult experiences. The aim of the concept is to bring together the narrative and non-narrative knowledge of traumatic experiences that is embodied in a material object. The research thesis of the article is to examine how a materialized narrative can function as a trauma narrative. The article argues that materialized narratives can function as instruments for processing traumatic experiences related to border crossings, similarly to autobiographical trauma narratives that are regarded to be among the most central narrative forms analyzed in multidisciplinary trauma research. The research material includes interviews and artwork accomplished in the project "A Lost Mitten and Other Stories: Experiences of Borders, Mobilities, and New Neighbor Relations" (funded by the Kone Foundation).

Keywords: border, material culture, mobility, narrative, trauma

INTRODUCTION

Crossing the border between Finland and Estonia was very easy,
but the change it required was always horribly difficult.
(Interview, February 15, 2019)

The purpose of this article is to discuss the applicability of the concept of materialized narrative (Kurki 2020a) in the analysis of border and mobility related

experiences. The concept and its analytical potential are discussed in three examples that address difficult, even traumatic experiences related to various kinds of border crossings in Finnish and Estonian contexts. The article asks how materialized narrative can function as a form of trauma narrative in the context of geographical, cultural, and social border crossings.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In this article, materialized narrative is defined as an entanglement of verbal or visual narration and non-narrative knowledge, which is linked with objects (things, artefacts, macro artefacts) and various experiences related to border crossings. By default, a material object contains narrative and non-narrative information that can be, for example, verbal, visual, tactile, or performative, or some other kind of information that is mediated through the object's materiality and design, or through performance and interaction with the object (Kurki 2020a; Schiffer 1999). The non-narrative knowledge can also manifest itself in tacit or embodied knowledge of objects of the everyday environment, and in repetitive everyday routines with various objects (Kidron 2009: 6). Therefore, this article argues that the concept of materialized narrative has potential to bring together narrative and non-narrative information about difficult experiences related to border crossings. In addition to geographical and political border crossings, this article pays attention to cultural and social border crossings, such as those between health and sickness and the individual's integrity. Furthermore, the concept has potential to open multidimensional perspectives on understanding these experiences.

In the following, the article introduces the relevant discussions taking place at the intersections of the recent multidisciplinary trauma research, research on material culture, and multidisciplinary border studies, as well as the methodological framework. The analysis section examines two interviews and an artwork (a triptych installation) as examples of materialized narratives that address difficult experiences related to geographical, cultural, and social border crossings. These experiences include, for example, encountering aggressive behavior, feelings of exclusion and loss, and the violation of the borders of one's own bodily integrity. The analysis focuses on those strategies that the narrator applies when addressing the difficult experiences through the shape, materiality, texture, design, or color of the object, through interaction with the object (Schiffer 1999: 26), or through the collectively shared tacit meaning of the object. In addition, the analysis applies Michael Rothberg's (2009) concept of multidirectional memory in a situation where the analyzed objects are

placed in a public exhibition. In the space of a public exhibition and in relation to each other, the objects make visible and audible different narratives of the border and mobility related experiences. The concluding chapter assesses the significance of the information about border and mobility related difficult and traumatic experiences that the materialized narrative can reveal. In addition, the potential that the concept of materialized narrative can have in multidisciplinary trauma research is also analyzed.

Theoretically, the article is placed at the intersection of multidisciplinary trauma research, research on material culture, and multidisciplinary research of borders and mobilities. The intersection forms a layered lens through which difficult experiences related to border crossings are addressed. The first theoretical lens is based on multidisciplinary trauma research. Trauma research became a prominent research trend in the humanities in the 1980s and 1990s. The early stages applied classical trauma models and theories formulated initially in early twentieth-century European psychology which stressed the difficulty or even sheer impossibility of verbalizing and communicating trauma, and the idea that the core of the trauma was unknown to the human consciousness (Caruth 2016 [1996]). Following this idea, Caruth (ibid.) argues that the representation or expression of trauma is always linked not only to what is known but also to what remains hidden in our actions and in our language. The idea of difficulty of expressing and verbalizing trauma has been widely covered in trauma research in the humanities (Stroinska & Cecchetto & Szymanski 2014).

Today, the theoretical models in trauma research in the humanities have widened from trauma psychology to the social and political aspects of trauma (Kaplan 2005: 25). These models have also questioned the universality of the definition of trauma, as early definitions were largely based on the experiences of white middle-class Europeans. Michelle Balaev (2014) argues that contemporary trauma research applies several trauma models simultaneously, instead of the single classical, psychological model. To describe the various and simultaneous contemporary theoretical approaches, Balaev (2014: 3–4) introduced the concept of a pluralistic trauma model. According to Balaev, the pluralistic trauma model can combine different trauma theories, and therefore offer different analytical lenses through which to study trauma. In addition, Balaev argues that the pluralistic trauma model shifts the focus away from the impossibility of representing trauma to the uniqueness of trauma. This article also combines several theoretical underpinnings originating from different research areas to provide alternative analytical lenses on border and mobility related difficult and traumatic experiences.

Yet, another growing dimension in trauma research, especially in Holocaust studies, is that of memory studies (Hirsch 2008: 105). Some of the trends in the

memory studies stress the relationality and negotiability of different memories. For example, the concept of multidirectional memory introduced by Michael Rothberg (2009) stresses the simultaneity, relationality, and negotiability of different memories in the public space. Questions of the politics of memory and memory activism have also become a prominent theme in memory studies (Roseman 2016). The purpose of memory activism is to express traumatic histories of formerly oppressed and silenced groups, or histories that have only partially been presented before (ibid.). Utilizing the idea of memory activism, this article attempts to highlight such difficult experiences related to border crossings that may remain largely hidden and invisible as they take place in seemingly ordinary everyday situations.

The second theoretical lens of the article is based on material culture research. The so-called material turn occurred in the humanities in the 1990s, and made (again) everyday material culture a prominent research object with an aim of formulating the relationship between material and non-material culture in novel ways (Dolphijn & Tuin 2012: 85–86). Typically, modernist thought examined material and non-material culture as separate spheres. The material turn and the so-called new materialism aimed at examining them as intertwined "in their entanglement" (Dolphijn & Tuin 2012: 91). Following this idea, this article examines the material objects and experiences related to border crossings through their entangled narrative and non-narrative articulations.

Utilizing material culture in trauma research is not new. Research has been done on private everyday material objects, as well as public memorials, memorial sites, and statues (Parkin 1999). For example, Kidron (2009) examines a spoon that originates from a German concentration camp in the 1940s. The spoon has accompanied a Holocaust survivor throughout the survivor's life. Kidron (ibid.) examines the spoon as an embodiment of the survivor's family's non-verbal, collective, and traumatic memory. The human body has also been examined as an embodiment of traumas, and as an instrument for processing traumatic experiences (Formenti & West & Horsdal 2014). For example, jewelry and tattoos attached to the human body, which have historically had negative cultural connotations (Ruotsalainen 2015), have been examined as instruments for processing trauma and healing, after difficult and traumatic experiences have strongly affected the identity narrative of an individual (Alter-Muri 2019; Maxwell & Thomas & Thomas 2020).

Some research has been implemented on traumatic experiences in relation to material objects and various borders, border crossings, and mobility (Nguyen 2016; De León 2013; Povrzanović Frykman & Humbracht 2013; Woodward 2001; Drechsel 2010; Dudley 2010). This article builds on the theoretical formulations brought forward by De León (2013) and Dudley (2010; 2011). De León examines

the material objects illegal border crossers from Mexico to the United States leave behind in the border area. Through these objects, De León analyzes the complex processes of migration, and the larger economic structures that affect migration. In addition, De León analyzes the material objects as material fingerprints, and as signs of affliction resulting from the suffering that the illegal border crossers experience in the border zone. Dudley (2010; 2011) takes a different approach and examines the role of material culture, the production and consumption of food, textiles, and their contribution to feeling at home among displaced people in exile.

Building on these theoretical underpinnings, this article aims at examining the possibility of a materialized narrative functioning as a trauma narrative. A significant part of trauma research in literature studies and the humanities (for example, in folklore studies) has focused on autobiographical narratives (Jensen 2019). An essential element of processing trauma is the person's ability to re-form and re-narrate their life narrative after the traumatic experience. The autobiographical narrative provides questions that can be used as a means of processing the trauma, and so rebuilds one's life narrative (Jensen 2019). For this reason, the life narrative has remained one of the central objects of research in trauma research. However, Jensen (ibid.) argues that other narrative forms, such as various textual, visual, and performative narratives, or memorials and statues, similar to an autobiographical narrative, can also address key questions and apply rhetorical devices for processing trauma. Therefore, according to Jensen (ibid.), other narrative forms and genres can form important research objects in trauma research in the humanities. For example, the other narrative forms may examine the changing relationship between the narrator and past events, and so redefine the narrator's sense of self. Jensen (ibid.) argues that a performance or a statue, for example, can form a public space where such trauma related narratives can be made audible and visible, and can be shared. Through a performance, a history of a certain group can be articulated and made visible, although this would involve rhetorically distanced witnessing (ibid.). According to Jensen, the processing of trauma compares to a narrative negotiation about past occurrences and their significance.

In this article, trauma refers to two different situations. First, it refers to a so-called trauma event; that is, a single, sudden, large-scale, and traumatizing event, such as experiencing or witnessing violence or an industrial or natural catastrophe. The experience of trauma is often belated and uncontrolled (Caruth 2016 [1996]), while the trauma event itself is usually highly visible and recognized by large groups of people. In addition to trauma events, in this article trauma also refers to rather ordinary everyday encounters that may be harmful and traumatizing to certain groups of people. In these cases, the person

may face, for example, micro-aggressive behavior, invalidation, and exclusion, which cause severe feelings of anxiety, depression, and non-belonging (Tanttu & Kurki forthcoming; Facemire 2018; Sue et al. 2007). The traumatic nature of these seemingly ordinary everyday encounters may remain invisible and hidden from the society at large. These types of traumatic experiences have been called insidious trauma (Brown 1991: 128) and are seen as a second type of trauma (see Traumaterapiakeskus), resembling the concept of minority stress (Meyer 1995). When continuing for an extended period, insidious trauma may cause similar symptoms as seen with a singular, large scale trauma event (Facemire 2018: 10). In this article, insidious trauma refers to the crossing of various cultural and social borders in everyday encounters; however, the consequences of these border crossings are potentially harmful. These cumulatively traumatizing border crossings may occur consistently without even being noticed. Therefore, it is important to become aware of the potential for seemingly everyday situations to be traumatizing.

When analyzing the examples in this article, the methodological guideline is based on the idea of a physical trace as defined in archeology. In archeological inference, a physical trace is understood as evidence from past occurrences that is no longer visible or accessible directly (Schiffer 1999: 52–55). The idea of a trace (or a clue) has been applied widely as a methodological metaphor in the interpretation of both texts and visual materials (Ricoeur 1988: 119–120; Ginzburg 1992: 96–103; Jones 2007: 19–21). Thus, a trace can first appear as a seemingly irrelevant detail in a text or image, but through interpretation it is thought to provide access to information about the past that has remained previously unarticulated. In this article, a material object is seen as a trace of non-narrative knowledge about border related experiences that may be challenging to verbalize, or that may remain unnoticed in society at large.

RESEARCH MATERIAL AND METHOD

To discuss the analytical potentiality of the concept of materialized narrative, the article analyzes three examples of the research material gathered and prepared within the research project "A Lost Mitten and Other Stories" in 2018–2020. The project was implemented at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland. The four main research interest areas in the project are borders, mobile identities, dialogue, and new neighbor relations, which were examined using traditional ethnographic interview methods as well as through artistic and applied arts-based research methods (McNiff 1998; Leavy 2015).[1] The traditional ethnographic research methods and artistic working methods

were applied dialogically throughout the project: starting from gathering the research material, through the analysis, and finally publishing research findings to wider audiences outside academia.

The interviews focused on objects that accompany people across various (for example, geographical, cultural, linguistic, or social) borders, or such borders that people regarded as important in their lives. This focus was formulated as the main theme in the call for interviewees. The interviews (54 in total) were conducted by four researchers working within the project during 2018–2020 (see the list of references for more details). The interviews followed a thematized list of questions that were arranged according to the main four research interests of the project. The aim was not to address each question of the list in each interview, but rather to allow each narrator to focus on those themes and questions they regarded as most relevant. The two interviews and the artwork selected for this article highlight aptly the different types of difficult experiences related to mobility and border crossings in the Finnish and Estonian contexts.

In addition to the interviews, creative workshops were arranged to gather visual research material addressing the four theme areas. Creative and artistic methods provided additional instruments for processing and analyzing research material, and later in publishing the research results in unconventional forms. In addition to the artist working in the project, researchers addressed the research themes through artistic and creative working, such as handicrafts, animations, and cartoons (Tanttu 2020; Kurki 2020b; Korolainen 2020). Furthermore, in co-operation with the North Karelian Museum Hilma in Joensuu (Finland), the project implemented an interactive exhibition about the research themes, border crossing objects, and the narratives linked to these objects. The exhibition also included artistic and creative outputs by the project group which addressed the central themes of the project in their works. The exhibition was also launched in an open-access, interactive 360 panorama form.[2]

In the following text, two specific interviews are analyzed, one about a camera, and the other about a crocheted pincushion. In addition, a triptych artwork entitled "Pistoksissa" (Injected), which was prepared by artist Päivi Saarelma and based on an informant's story, is analyzed. The interviewees and the informant were between 28 and 88 years of age, and were residing in eastern Finland where the project territorially focused. The selected examples of the camera, pincushion, and artwork highlight the wide range of border crossing experiences contained in the research material. The artwork differs in its form from everyday objects; however, it is prepared using medical objects that are significant to the informant and reflect the informant's difficult experiences at societal and cultural border crossings. The artwork further functions as an example of a situation where everyday speech and everyday forms of communication are

not able to address the traumatic experience, and the trauma must thus be addressed through artistic expression. Similar to the camera and the pincushion, the artwork functions as a materialized narrative that allows the border related difficult experience to become visible, tangible, and audible through abstraction.

EVERYDAY OBJECTS: UNCANNY INSTRUMENTS FOR PROCESSING DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES

This section analyzes three examples of situations in which an object functions as an instrument for processing difficult experiences related to border crossings. The negotiation takes place through the object's visuality, materiality, or through interaction with the object.

Camera and negotiation of difficult border crossing

In the first narrative, a camera performs as an instrument for examining and negotiating border crossing and the difficult experiences that are related to it. The narrator was a young girl, under 10 years old, when she and her Ingrian Finnish[3] grandmother moved from Estonia to Finland after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. The narrator's parents remained in Estonia and therefore her family was split across the Estonian-Finnish national border. As a result, in her childhood and adolescence, the narrator traveled regularly to Estonia to see her family there.

Crossing the Estonian-Finnish national border was easy during these trips, however there were very difficult personal experiences related to the border crossings. Each time, when traveling back to Finland after visiting Estonia, the narrator experienced Finland as a strange country, where she could not fit in. Crossing the national border between Estonia and Finland caused the narrator's identity to be questioned, as well as the ways how she should behave in each country. In Estonia, the narrator felt she could freely be herself, while in Finland, the narrator thought that she was seen primarily and one-dimensionally as a migrant, which hid her true identity. In the role of a migrant, her belonging to Finland was frequently questioned and she felt like being somehow wrong and an outsider. Moving to Finland also meant facing an invisible border that separated 'we' from the 'other' in Finnish society, and facing that border was challenging and even traumatizing for the narrator. She became a victim of vicious bullying at school because of her different background. The narrator thought that because of the bullying, she had to hide the Estonian side of her

identity from others, and her difference was not supposed to be allowed to show. Thus, as a consequence of the bullying, it took a long time for the narrator to accept her Estonian background (Interview, February 15, 2019).

Her grandmother gave the narrator a Minolta 35 mm film camera to take photographs (Fig. 1), which became a crucial instrument with which she could document and process the border crossings between Estonia and Finland. During the several years when the narrator travelled regularly between Estonia and Finland, she avidly photographed her former home and its material surroundings in Estonia, where she could no longer live but only visit for short periods of time. She also documented the gradual and rapid changes that occurred there. Later in Finland, she started to photograph her new living environment and its features, such as a kiosk nearby her home. But only rarely did she photograph people.

Figure 1. *The Minolta 35 mm camera that the narrator used for photographing places in Estonia and Finland. Photograph by Tuulikki Kurki, February 15, 2019.*

The act of photographing can be understood as a form of processing and negotiating border crossings and the difficult experiences that are related to the crossings. In the act of photographing, the narrator/photographer looks at the object through the viewfinder, frames the scene, and takes the photograph. The negotiation takes place through her changing presence in the photographed

locations, and through her changing perspective on the photographed objects that she regards as meaningful. Furthermore, looking at the photographs repeatedly over time can be understood as a form of negotiation, because the viewer's interpretation of the photographed objects changes. In both these negotiations of photographing and viewing, the narrator's relationship to the past and present, to her former home country of Estonia and her new home country of Finland, and her relationship to places, people, languages, and cultures is re-created.

> *I have photographed the village or things like that, to see whether they have changed or remained the same. For example, I took pictures of a ditch, and a couple of years later I went back to take photos again. So, I can see if the ditch has deepened, if the water level is higher or lower, or if it has changed at all.* (Interview, February 15, 2019)[4]

In the example, the narrator explains how she has photographed her former homestead, home village and its surroundings in Estonia. To observe subtle changes in the material environment, the narrator took photographs of specific targets over several years. In this way, she followed the growth of trees, the deepening or shallowing of water in ditches, and the changes that people had made to the environment. The changes in the material environment she observed through photographing reflect the flow of time for her, and also her changing relationship to the environment. Her perspective becomes gradually more distanced as she spends less and less time in Estonia. Furthermore, her connection to her former home is maintained mainly through the selected material objects that are documented in the photographs. Some of the more radical changes in the environment were stressful to her, because they deeply threatened her sense of belonging in Estonia and destroyed the material embodiments of her dear memories of life there. One of these changes was the cutting down of a spruce tree that her mother had planted in the home yard decades ago.

> *I became so angry because my mother's spruce had been cut down. For me it was my mother's spruce, and you were not supposed to cut it down. My mother said that it had grown askew because of the lack of sunlight, and the lower branches were already decaying, and things like that. But for me it was still my mother's spruce and you were not supposed to cut it down. When the tree had been cut down and it was not there anymore when I arrived there, I was bitter for three days at least.* (Interview, February 15, 2019)

For the narrator, the tree had always been 'her mother's spruce', and therefore untouchable, although her mother herself had spoken about the necessity of

cutting it down. Cutting down the spruce threatened the narrator's memory of her mother and their family's shared time in Estonia, which was materialized in the tree. The narrator refused to accept the erasure of the material embodiment of a dear memory of her mother and her childhood, as well as her connection to the place. Another stressful change in the material environment was the renovation of her grandfather's traditional homestead that had been also the narrator's home in her childhood in Estonia.

> *My grandfather's house, I loved it. … Nowadays, my uncle lives in grandfather's house. … When my uncle settled in the house, he demolished the other side of the house and turned it into a motorcycle garage. … I felt so sad about it. Grandfather would have never accepted the demolition*. (Interview, February 15, 2019)

The narrator felt that the renovation destroyed the grandfather's house that she had loved so much, and thus the renovation threatened her dear memory of that place and her grandfather. Furthermore, the narrator felt that renovating grandfather's house in such a radical way was an act that went against her grandfather's will, and also against herself because her relationship with her grandfather had been close and she felt that she was the only one alive who really understood the grandfather. Through photographing the changing environment, buildings and locations, the narrator addresses the irreversible changes and loss of home and the significant people in her life. In addition, the act of photographing addresses her own distancing from her Estonian roots. When narrating the material changes that have taken place, the narrator feels frustrated and angry. However, at the same time, change and loss become parts of her life story and her identity narrative.

Through photographing, the materialized narrative about border crossing experiences became linked with clearly defined material objects in Estonia, such as bushes, trees, houses, ditches, and other details of significant places. The camera also functions as an instrument of narration. The narrator's point of view and her bodily relationship to place and time (cf. Jensen 2019), to her past life and former home region, and also its materiality have changed over the years. The difficult experiences of loss and irreversible change are attached to materialized details in the surroundings that the narrator attempts to document as extensively as possible. In 2019, when the interview was conducted, the narrator explained how she tried to incorporate aesthetic qualities in the photographs, instead of focusing only on documenting details as much as possible. This provides a clue that the narrator's view of their former home place and the events has changed. She processes her relationship with her former home region

by adopting a distancing view, like any aestheticization as an artistic means of expression serves to distance the photographing subject from the object.

Although her Minolta 35 mm film camera no longer works, the narrator still carries it with her. It is now a keepsake from her grandmother and an uncanny reminder of her past life when, as a child, she grew up between the two countries, their cultures and languages. The memories of a past life, experiences of border crossing, and processing these difficult experiences are also linked with the materiality of the outdated and broken camera that is no longer part of the functioning present. However, the narrator continues to photograph her present life with her new digital camera. Purchasing her own camera reflects the independent life that she has established in Finland, but it also signals a break in the materialized narrative linked to her childhood and her constant border crossings.

A crocheted narrative of war and loss

An object can also function as an instrument for processing a person's or family's lost history. In the research material of the project "A Lost Mitten and Other Stories", a bust statue of Beethoven from the 1980s, the robbed and lost silver and gold treasures of a family in the 1980s, and a self-made pincushion from the 1930s are examples of objects that function in this way (interviews on December 20, 2018; April 27, 2019; June 19, 2019). The following example analyzes a self-made pincushion (Fig. 2) as a materialized narrative. Here crochet with its materials and colors functions as an instrument for processing difficult experiences of war and the loss of a home and family members.

When the so-called Winter War broke out between Finland and the Soviet Union on November 30, 1939, the narrator was nine years old. She lived in eastern Finland, close to the border of the Soviet Union. When the war broke out, her family as well as other evacuees had to quickly flee from their homes. Everyone was allowed to take only a few items with them because there was not much space in the horse-drawn sleighs and trains that took the evacuees away from the border area. The narrator remembers that it was very difficult to decide what to take with her and what to leave behind. Everyone knew that what was left behind would probably never be retrieved. The narrator decided to quickly crochet a small, light pincushion and stuff it with small cloth patches that she found in her home. She then packed the pincushion in her small rucksack. Now, 80 years after the evacuation, the narrator still has the pincushion with her, and it has traveled with her throughout her life.

Figure 2. *The pincushion that the narrator crocheted at the dawn of the war. Photograph by Rami Saarikorpi, July 23, 2020.*

The evacuation was a terrifying event. The family had to leave their home quickly at night. It was dark outside, and the temperature was freezing. The family planned to ride in a horse-drawn sleigh to a civil guard house where evacuees were gathered before sending them inland by train. However, the bridge across the river leading to the civil guard house had been exploded, and the family had to change their plans rapidly. They managed to drive their sleigh to another village in the middle of the night, and they were able to recover there for a few hours before continuing their journey the following morning. On the escape route, their sleigh fell over several times because of the icy condition of the road. Each time, the Finnish soldiers who were marching to the frontline turned the sleigh back on its runners so that they could continue their escape. Being suddenly drawn into the middle of the war and a hurried evacuation was an overwhelming experience for a child. The narrator describes the situation as being chaotic and horrible. When the narrator was able to get onto the evacuation train, she felt as if another life began for her. In the crowded train car, she watched all the different people coming from different places and listened to all

the frantic noises. She said she thought that she was in a theater, and obviously she felt distanced from the very disturbing events (interview, June 19, 2019).

Later in her life, the remaining pincushion became an embodiment of the evacuation and the war, as well as their tragic consequences.

> *This* [pincushion] *is like a threshold to the past life. These colors remind me of that time we lived in. I do not understand what attracts me here… however, it is shocking, here around everything is yellow and bright, in the middle there is red, like it would be a heart, and around it is a black circle. Well, this describes our … well I did not think about it then, but the life story just appeared here spontaneously. There have been sorrow and joy and sunny days, but they all are there in the bottom of the heart*. (Interview, June 19, 2019)

When crocheting the pincushion as a child, the narrator created a material embodiment of the painful and traumatizing event of war. In the example, the narrator's past experiences are materialized in the colors of the pincushion. The crocheted wool threads of red, black, yellow, and orange remind her of the time of the evacuation, and furthermore, of her entire life since that time. However, the narrator does not explain choosing the colors of the threads purposefully as a child. To make the pincushion, she had quickly collected some materials that she found in her home. Now, as an elderly person, she has found personal significance in each color in the pincushion. She explains that the red center of the cushion reminds her of the heart that holds all her important memories and her life itself. The black circling around the heart reminds her of extremely difficult times and the sorrows in her life: leaving and losing the childhood home, constant homesickness, war, and losing her father and two brothers in the war. The yellow and orange colors forming the outer edge of the cushion remind the narrator of the happier times in her childhood before the war, and also after establishing her life again after the war. Looking at and interacting with the pincushion in the research interview in 2019 activated her memories of the past life. Although the pincushion has not been an object of active remembrance in the narrator's everyday life, it has traveled with her and still continues to fascinate her.

In 2019, on the eve of the research interview, the narrator and her daughter decided to open the pincushion to see what it was stuffed with. They found patches of cloths inside, and the narrator recognized patches of her own velvet dress that she had been wearing as a child.

> *This is the best of all patches, a patch of memories, and here* [inside of the pincushion] *was a piece of my first velvet dress. I remember it vividly*

> *when I got it; it was a Christmas celebration in the school, and I wanted – because I was spoiled a little, I was acting up – the dress to be made of velvet. And I got it, it was reddish, and yes, it was here. … it was the best, the memory of the velvet dress patch*. (Interview, June 19, 2019)

By opening the pincushion, the narrator and her daughter were undoing the crocheted embodiment of the past events and dismantling the materialized memories. They found out that the pincushion included randomly selected small patches of clothes from the narrator's childhood home. One of the pieces was from the narrator's own velvet dress that she had worn as a child in elementary school. The piece reminded her of herself as a child who liked pretty things, and of the happier times before the war. By dismantling the pincushion, the narrator was peeking at the heart of her memories, herself, and her expected life-narrative that was interrupted by the war. These had been hidden from view for decades but were now revealed in the form of colorful patches. Together with her daughter, it became possible for her to reassess the significance of the materialized embodiment of her difficult memories. In their eyes, the value of the pincushion increased, after they had had a chance to share together the narratives of the past.

The triptych "Injected"

The triptych "Injected" by the artist Päivi Saarelma, working in the project "A Lost Mitten and Other Stories", is an example of a different kind of, but nevertheless potentially traumatizing border crossing. The triptych shows the invisible, exclusionary borders in the Finnish society that demarcate and exclude those who do not fit with the ideas of the majority. As a result, the excluded individuals and groups may encounter an insidious trauma, when their experiences of exclusion and rejection are persistent.

The triptych includes three visual elements: a dress installation, an ampoule installation, and a syringe installation (Fig. 3). As a fourth element, it includes an audio narrative. The materials of the triptych belong to an informant who has to self-administer medicine through injections and infusions regularly, in order to be able to live her daily life and maintain her daily functionality. The dress installation is comprised of used butterfly needles with thin plastic tubes and the plastic cover bags of syringes. The needles and tubes form the bodice of the dress, and the plastic cover bags form its skirt. The ampoule installation includes 450 used 20 ml glass ampoules. The ampoules are arranged in a white wooden square-shaped frame, and a small led light is installed inside each ampoule. The syringe installation includes 120 used plastic syringes placed

in a row and attached to a wall. The plunger of each syringe is adjusted in a way that the plungers form a shape of an arrowhead on the wall. The audio narrative that is also part of the installation allows the listener to hear the informant's account of her experiences of injecting the medicine and being the object of various medical treatments.

> *This dress is made of butterfly needles and the plastic covers of syringes. I have used these needles and syringes to measure medicine for myself that is needed in the treatment of an illness. I have injected all the needles through my own skin.*
>
> *The pain does not show outwards.*
>
> *Many illnesses, and the suffering that comes along with them, do not show outwards although they swallow your strength and sometimes even your zest for life.*
>
> *The insides of my elbows are scarred, and they can give a clue as to how many blood samples have been taken from me. A thousand, even more.*
>
> *When you are ill, you cannot protect your body or control the boundaries around it. You are forced to allow various people to interfere with you, without asking permission.*
>
> *I have learned to protect myself by singing when it hurts terribly badly. Or humming. Purring like a cat. These needles, syringes, and ampoules make the pain visible.*
>
> (Triptych "Pistoksissa" ("Injected"))

Figure 3. *The triptych "Injected" by Päivi Saarelma. Photograph by Tuulikki Kurki, July 16, 2020.*

The triptych addresses the question of crossing the social and cultural borders between 'health' and 'sickness', as well as 'majority' and 'minority'. It also addresses the question of crossing a person's personal bodily borders and interfering with their privacy and agency, and the person's struggle to protect their borders, which turns out to be impossible when ill. The insidious trauma that is related to these border crossings concerns the micro-aggressive attitudes that the majority may direct towards people with chronic illnesses and disabilities. These microaggressions become visible in everyday discourses, for example in the media that stresses healthy, capable, and strong bodies, as well as performance-oriented values which are seen as the norm. The narrator describes her condition as invisible to others, and therefore she does not experience being part of the norm. Material signs of this difference are the acts of self-administering medicine with infusions and injection needles, and the scars in the insides of her elbows that somewhat compare to jewelry and tattoos as embodiments of identity, memory, and experience.

The triptych and the narrator's account can also be understood as a commentary on the terms that the functioning society is built on, as they assume that its members are healthy and fully functioning citizens. The narrator describes how the illness and suffering swallow her strength and zest for life and leave her with the experience of not fulfilling the duties of a fully functioning citizen. Because of this, the narrator feels that people with chronic illnesses and disabilities are automatically excluded from the "we" represented and constructed in mainstream discourses. The physical symptoms, pain and treatment remind the narrator of these exclusionary practices on a daily basis. This leads to experiences of being rejected, marginalized, and ignored, as well as of becoming invisible in the mainstream society. When these experiences continue a longer period of time, they may lead to experiences of prolonged stress and the development of insidious trauma. The materialized narrative embedded in the installation makes these difficult experiences visible and audible.

One of the key elements in the triptych is the question of pain that is not easily seen by others. The pain simultaneously signifies the distinction between the social and cultural categories of health and sickness. The pain that the informant has carried with her throughout her life is highlighted with the uncanny combination of materials used in the installation. From a distance, the dress appears to be glamorous and chic, and a shimmering design garment due to its transparent, plastic materials. The glass ampoules and plastic syringes also raise immediate curiosity, and expectations of beauty and attractiveness due to their shiny character. Thus, the triptych plays with the cultural signs of beauty, elegance, and glamour. However, a closer look at the triptych reveals a combination of beauty and pain, as well as delicateness and ruthlessness that

is denoted by the fragile plastic materials of the dress, and the sharp needles piercing the body of the mannequin mimicking the violent act of injection. The materials of the triptych make the pain and suffering evident, but also make the repetitive inference of bodily borders visible. As an artwork, the triptych brings the individual painful experience to a more general level, so as to represent the experiences of people that are excluded and rejected due to their difference from the majority.

Museum exhibition as a space of multidirectional memory

The project "A Lost Mitten and Other Stories" created an interactive exhibition in co-operation with the North-Karelian Museum Hilma in Joensuu (Finland) in the spring and summer of 2020. The exhibition was built around approximately 80 objects that had accompanied the interviewed people and the informants across various geographical, cultural, social, and linguistic borders, and their personal narratives were attached to these objects. In the space of the museum exhibition, narratives relating to different geographical, cultural, and social contexts, and time eras, as well as various personal experiences were set in relation to each other, and thus became audible and visible in relation to each other. The exhibition also allowed the visitor to see the connections between individual, separate, and often difficult experiences related to border crossings.

Gaining more complete knowledge and understanding about the experiences related to border crossings requires merging the narrative and non-narrative information embodied in the exhibited objects. In an exhibition, interaction with objects and a close reading of art (such as installations and drawings) allows one to immerse oneself in other people's narratives and non-narrative expressions – in other words, materialized narratives may allow understanding to rise by way of empathy and experience-based understanding (see Bonansinga 2014) as well as through multi-sensory levels (De León 2013: 330). In the exhibition, the visitor could empathize, for example, with the experience of leaving home suddenly but permanently, negotiating one's belonging to a new home country, with feelings of exclusion, and living between two countries and cultures. In one of the interactive tasks, the visitor found a letter in an old rucksack. The letter described an evacuation story of a little girl and prompted the visitor to create a list of items that they would pack in a small rucksack with them in the case of evacuation. The visitor could also empathize with the experience of losing something dear by imagining the lost objects in an empty showcase, and simultaneously reading the narrative about the stolen and inevitably lost family treasures and what the lost objects meant for the narrator. In these

examples, the object also functions as a trace of the past events and the narrator's personal experiences of those events. The interactive realization of the exhibition can be further supported by Arnold-de Simine's (2013: 10) argument that material objects in a museum exhibition "function as anchors and proofs of historical events", because they "draw visitors into an imaginative encounter with the past". Furthermore, Arnold-de Simine argues (ibid.) that the objects help visitors "to gain access to a time they have not experienced themselves by identifying with individuals and their personal stories", and this often takes place through reliving the past "through the eyes of individuals and their personal memories", and by "stepping into the shoes" of other people (ibid.).

The materialized narratives have also the potential to reveal and make tangible such experiences related to border crossings that would otherwise remain unnoticed by the majority. Materialized narratives may also help in making difficult experiences tangible, visible or audible in cases when narrating these experiences is challenging (see Jäntti & Loisa 2018). However, representing traumatic experiences in an exhibition has an ethical dimension and imperative to remember (Arnold-de Simine 2013: 3). Arnold-de Simine argues (ibid.) that "mere knowledge about the past does not suffice to prevent the perpetuation of violent and traumatic histories. The ethical imperative to remember is taken to its literal extreme: visitors are asked to identify with other people's pain, adopt their memories, empathize with their suffering, reenact and work through their traumas." Therefore, empathizing and identifying with other people's difficult experiences to gain a more thorough understanding was also one of the goals of the exhibition "A Lost Mitten and Other Stories".

CONCLUSIONS

The analyzed examples show three different materialized narratives that address and negotiate the relationship between the narrator and their difficult experiences relating to various kinds of border crossings. Based on the analyzed examples, this article argues that the concept of materialized narrative has potential in the field of multidisciplinary trauma research and could function as a form of trauma narrative on individual and collective levels. Furthermore, it has potential as a research instrument in trauma research.

On an individual level, the potentiality of the concept of materialized narrative is highlighted by the fact that it is often challenging to verbalize or communicate difficult and traumatic experiences (Caruth 2016 [1996]). This article argues that materialized narrative could provide an alternative instrument for processing and negotiating border and mobility related difficult and

traumatic experiences through the individual's interaction with the object, by doing, touching, and viewing. Interacting with the object may help the individual to address such questions that are elementary in re-establishing and re-narrating an individual's life story after a difficult and traumatic experience (cf. Jensen 2019). Examples of re-narrating the life-story through interaction with an object were especially well shown in the examples of a camera and a crocheted pincushion.

On the societal level, the potentiality of the concept of materialized narrative is highlighted when examining so-called insidious traumas, where difficult and traumatic experiences take place in everyday contexts across various kinds of visible and invisible borders. However, the traumatizing character of these seemingly ordinary border crossings may remain invisible in a society and culture at large because they are not based on a single, large-scale catastrophic event that is recognized by large groups of people. Through materialized narratives, these otherwise invisible traumas can become visible and be addressed individually or by larger audiences. This was shown especially in the examples of the camera and the triptych "Injected". When an object and the materialized trauma narrative are brought into a public space in an exhibition, artwork, or installation, the past occurrences become objects of public and multi-voiced discussion. In public exhibitions, materialized trauma narratives also have the potential to become parts of the acknowledged collective memory.

It may be possible to bring difficult experiences into the public space and process them through material forms and in various non-verbal forms. For example, an artwork or a publicly displayed everyday object can function as an instrument for asking "disturbing questions" and raising "unexpected claims" (Oliveri 2016: 160), and in this way enable understanding to develop beyond stereotyped expectations and self-evident assumptions. By asking disturbing questions, the objects may also increase awareness about various cultural and societal borders that may be partially invisible, but nevertheless harmful and traumatizing for many.

From a research point of view, a materialized narrative could form a valuable methodological instrument for conducting interviews and gaining information about difficult experiences. In the context of an interview, interviewees may approach difficult themes more easily through narratives about an object than through directly addressing their own personal experiences and feelings. Also, the creative working methods and artworks realized, for example, in cooperation between an informant and an artist may allow narrative and non-narrative articulations of difficult experiences to emerge and be expressed in new ways.

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NOTES

[1] In addition to interviews, the research material included written texts, questionnaires, and works realized through various visual creative methods in creative workshops in 2018–2019. These materials are significantly fewer in number than the interviews because the majority of the informants wished to participate as interviewees.

[2] The exhibition *Kadonnut kinnas ja muita tarinoita* (A Lost Mitten and Other Stories) was open from February 6 to March 17, 2020, and again from June 1 to August 2, 2020. The exhibition was closed from March 18 to May 31 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the exhibition, the project launched a virtual 360° exhibition that is available at https://360panorama.fi/360KadonnutKinnas/.

[3] Ingrian Finns received the right to return to Finland in the early 1990s. The return migration meant that Finns and people with Finnish roots (like Ingrian Finns), who lived abroad, could move to Finland. The return migration was implemented from the beginning of the 1990s until 2011. During this time, approximately 30,000 people, mainly from Russia and Estonia, moved to Finland. After 2011, return migration has still been possible, e.g., for Ingrian Finns (Ministry of Interior 2018: 15).

[4] All interviews and narratives have been translated by Tuulikki Kurki.

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AFTER THE WAR AND REPRESSIONS: MEDIATING OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES IN ESTONIAN LIFE STORIES

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Abstract: This article looks at how contemporary life stories reflect the historical-political events that took place in the 1940s, and their impact on the development of family relationships. The focus is on the expression of traumatic experiences caused by these events. Observable events, such as the Second World War, living under a foreign power, political repressions, escape to the West, etc., and their impact on Estonian society have been analysed by Estonian sociologists using the concept of cultural trauma. Literary researchers have studied this subject from the perspective of literary trauma theory. This article provides an analysis of Estonian life stories, which is based on the tools of folkloristic narrative research and the trauma conception. Although the narrators do not use the word 'trauma', it can be assumed that they express their traumatic experiences in some special way. It appears, for instance, that these first-person narratives provide a laconic description of the situation, relatively free of the emotion that possessed the narrator in the situation being described. The narrative style is determined by the distance between the narrator and the event that traumatizes them. This distance can be created by the narrator through using urban legends and rumours to characterize the general attitudes of the period being described. When the events of the twentieth century were discussed in the stories told in the 1990s, the dynamics of family relationships between two or three generations came to the fore in the stories told in the present time. The changing focus of the stories, shifting from events to the subject of intimacy, directs researchers to observe the transmission and transformation of trauma in a new context.

Keywords: family relationships, life story, rumours, traumatic experience

This article looks at how events relating to the Second World War and the establishment of the Soviet regime in Estonia, and their effects, are conveyed in life stories narrated at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries. The source material for the analysis comes from the

Estonian Life Stories Collection (EKLA 350). Interview materials received from life story narrators and their descendants are also used (MK).

Thematic focal points in life story narrations have shifted during the decades under study. Stories narrated during the 1990s mostly describe how the upheaval caused by the historical-political events of the 1940s changed people's lives. Thereafter, narrators began to concern themselves more with describing close relations. In this article the focus is laid mainly on one aspect of the observed life stories: how the narrators mediate their traumatic experiences. The main question is: how is the traumatic experience of those caught up in the historical-political events of the 1940s transforming and emerging before us in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries? Although the narrators do not use the central concepts of trauma theory, such as being a victim of violence, moral responsibility, or asking for and granting forgiveness (see, e.g., Meek 2015: 6), one cannot claim that they have no traumatic experience. Hence it is important to ask how narrators in their life stories, as a kind of a particular genre, report their traumatic experiences.

To consider the above more closely, a general background of narrations used for the source data, as well as the researcher's starting position in delineating trauma in a life story, are introduced in the first part of this article. The second part of the article offers an analysis of life stories.

SOURCE MATERIAL: THE LIFE STORIES

In the 1990s, cultural researchers asked the people of Estonia to write down their life stories and send them to the Estonian Literary Museum. The impetus needed to tell these stories was provided through collection campaigns that had what could be called rather vague titles, such as "Do you remember your life history?" (1989) and "Women speak" (1995). Especially popular were topics that encouraged the narration of events in the recent past, such as "My destiny and the destiny of those close to me in the labyrinth of history" (1996–1997), and "My life and the life of my family in the Estonian SSR and the Estonian Republic" (2000). Whereas the former collection campaigns received 50 to 60 contributions, the latter, historically-minded collection campaigns collected 262 and 330 life stories respectively (Hinrikus & Kõresaar 2004: 21–25). This collection work has continued up to the present and has now grown into the Estonian Life Stories Collection, containing upwards of 3,500 original handwritten life story narrations (EKLA 350).

One reason for the life story collection initiative was the conflict between Estonian and Soviet approaches to history; namely, there were several topics that were not brought up in Soviet approaches. This concerned, first and foremost, Estonia's national independence (1918–1940), the mass repressions of 1941 and 1949, and the mobilization of Estonian youth into the occupying army, or fleeing the Red Army and joining the Finnish army, for example.[1] It is obvious that the changes and human losses resulting from these events were such that they could not have remained unnoticed in society (see, e.g., Rahi-Tamm 2005: 29, 41; 2007: 33). At the same time, this was not a subject of public discussion in the post-World War Soviet Estonia. At the end of the 1980s, there were increasing attempts to find opportunities to talk openly about topics that were silenced in the recent history of Estonian society. One of these opportunities was also associated with the life stories collection campaign (Hinrikus & Kõresaar 2004: 21–23).

During the first decade of the twenty-first century, the consideration of historical themes in life stories was reduced. There were narrators who managed to compress this material into just a short paragraph, as in the following example, taken from the life story of a woman born in 1939:

> *War. Occupation. Arrests. Battles between the Germans and the Russians on Estonian soil. Communist victory. Executions and mass deportations. The blue-black-white flag replaced by the red hammer-and-sickle flag.* (EKLA 350:1:2413)

Topics concerning family matters and close relations became increasingly frequent. A question arose, among others, regarding what kind of relationships had developed between victims of repression or survivors of traumatic events and their descendants. Alongside stories of coping with close relations, there are also examples describing hitherto insurmountable conflicts. In the following excerpt, a woman born in 1986 explains how her grandmother's stories affected her:

> *She had many stories about Siberia and wartime to recount. She often cried when talking about these issues. I was listening to her and thinking: but my life is also sad, I would like to tell her about my life too.* (EKLA 350:1:2778)

It is clear that, in addition to the thematic focal points of life stories, narrator generations had also changed. At the same time, it is possible to feel how the experiences relating to traumatic events of the time (war, repressions) created grounds for the rise of different kinds of traumatic experiences – these relate

to the self-development of the personality, the changing notions of home, and intergenerational relations.[2]

Estonian memoirs and auto-biographical texts are traditionally considered in the framework of the historical genre.[3] Thus, the life stories observed here fell within the context of historical narration twice: first, due to the genre, and second, due to the need for the narrators to speak on the topics silenced in the official history.

The preference of life story narrators to speak about the tragic events of the 1940s led researchers to address these stories as "trauma life stories" (Anepaio 2001; Hinrikus 2003: 191–198). However, in these approaches, the described historical events, rather than the manner in which they were depicted, were taken as the basis of definition. When life story researchers began to study the same texts following the approach of trauma theory, they reached the conclusion that these life stories did not use the trauma language familiar in North American literature and trauma culture (Kirss 2002; 2006; Kurvet-Käosaar 2008; Laanes 2017).

Trauma theory was based on portrayals of the Holocaust, and later also on other political conflicts and natural disasters, in which contemporary values play an important role in the interpretation of these events (Leydesdorff et al. 2014 [1999]; LaCapra 2014 [2001]: xxix–xxx, 83–92; Rothe 2011; Meek 2015). Values originating from the time of narration are in the foreground in the stories observed here too, although the highlighted events are of the past. At the same time, one must agree with the above-mentioned observation of life story researchers that the trauma caused by historical events and their after-effects remain hidden here. Furthermore, the narrators do not use a wording that indicates trauma.

Literature scholar Tiina Kirss has, in the context of the foregoing, directed attention to methodological aspects of researching life stories. She points out that story-mediated personal trauma does not dovetail with an understanding of traumatic experience derived from trauma theory. Trauma theory rather offers an interpretive template that can become a 'controlling interpretation'. For this reason, Kirss directs life-story researchers to take a critical look at the concept of trauma (Kirss 2006: 617). The kind of life-story research in which the study begins with the reading of stories is well-suited to the folkloric approach. Taking what is read as a departure point, new avenues of appropriate interpretation (including those from the researcher's point of view) can be chosen. One direction in trauma theory is associated with the study of general, cross-cultural suffering. For example, Eneken Laanes has applied this approach in the treatment of Estonian biographies (2017). In the folkloric study of life histories, it is more

fruitful to apply principles that consider the framework of the time and place of the narrative as well as the cultural conventions. Each presentation (text) can be considered as one version of the same story, which is subordinate to the so-called mental text, i.e., depending on the narrator's knowledge and skills of storytelling (Honko 1998: 92–99). Thus, each presentation (text) contains cultural schemas of storytelling (cf., e.g., Neklyudov 1998). Incorporating the concept of trauma into biographical analysis helps to understand the cultural connectivity of trauma expression as well as the transformations of trauma (cf. Balaev 2018).

What then will aid the researcher in delineating the traumatic experience and its presentation in a life story narrative? The notion of cultural trauma, originating from sociology, has proven to be productive in analysing life stories by shaping the material into individual-centred narrative analysis. In defining cultural trauma, essential aspects include both the events causing the upheaval in the society (perceived as negative) and the debates concerning these changes. To access the trauma, researchers look at changes in collective identity (see, e.g., Aarelaid-Tart 2006: 41–48; Debs 2013: 480; Meek 2015: 4–5.) Historian Dominick LaCapra also highlights the shattering of self-image as a characteristic of the trauma experience. At the same time, he stresses the intensity of the impact of such trauma, which makes it difficult to keep under control and nearly impossible to overcome completely (LaCapra 2014 [2001]: 41). Sociologists stress, however, that the case of culturally shared trauma is a social construct that cannot be approached in the same way as the concreteness of individual trauma. This is the same aspect that Kirss pointed out, as was discussed above. The notion of cultural trauma thus suits the life story analysis methodologically: it is possible to start from upheavals that change the narrator's self-image, and the discussion originating from these experiences. One may ask to what extent the cultural trauma embedded in society's collective identity (which is, as sociologists claim, a construct) overlaps with the traumatic experience of the life story narrator and its presentation in the life story. It is obvious that although the life story narrator represents a community carrying a certain collective identity, individual and collective identities overlap only partially. These – the individual trauma and the trauma discussed in society – are mostly connected in the life story narration by a certain relation; for instance, the narrator links his or her story with a certain publicly mediated narrative (Jaago 2018). Therefore, the individual narrative – the life story – is not a miniature image or illustration in relation to society's culture trauma. Collective cultural trauma and individual trauma experience are intertwined but still independent phenomena in life stories.

LIFE STORY ANALYSIS

The following analysis of stories first introduces the ways of expressing traumatic experience through the eyes of the event participant. The question raised here is as follows: to what extent and in what way do narrators portray their fears and the feelings of danger they experienced in the past, in the 1940s. Other examples are drawn from narrators who are the offspring of the eyewitnesses. In these stories, the after-effects of the events of the 1940s are revealed through family relations. The analysis of these stories considers how the narrators interpret the issues occurring in close personal relationships, considering what happened to their parents or grandparents during these revolutionary historical periods. From this analysis, a correlation between the manner of narration and the presence or distance of the first-person narrator in relation to the depiction becomes visible. From the development of traumatic experiences and the manner of coping with them, the meaning of home and the presence of the loved ones also emerge.

The war: Events, experiences, rumours

A woman born in 1912 describes the Second World War, when the frontlines were in their back garden:

> *During the turmoil of war, the children, together with my paralysed mother, were trapped on the frontline between Russian and German troops at Kabina, alongside the Emajõgi River. My elder daughter Silvi was 6, and Sirje was 2.* ***People said*** [emphasis added] *that local people had been killed and children impaled.*[4] *Domestic animals and poultry had fallen prey to the troops; even dogs were given no mercy.* (EKLA 350:1:2414)

This episode is important in describing her fear for the family. However, it is a rumour that contains extreme feelings and strong emotions. It is noteworthy that when a person is describing extreme situations that they have just experienced, the narrative is laconic and emotionless. For instance, a woman born in 1924 into an Estonian family in Leningrad writes about everyday life in her hometown during the first winter of the Second World War. She uses simple sentences that contain only factual information and reveal nothing about her mood or feelings.

> *We brought water from the Neva River. The river was frozen over. But the hole in the ice to get the water was always open. Sailors took care to*

> *keep the hole open. … There were also human corpses around the hole. A corpse was pulled aside and the next person took water. There were quite a number of dead bodies. People went to take water, some with a bucket, but most with kettles or pots.* (EKLA 350:1:1857)

In situations where people have suspicions or fear of something terrible or horrifying, horror stories and rumours emerge. An example of rumours that spread in the mid-1940s, after the war, in particular in connection with Tartu, are the so-called 'sausage factory' stories. These stories describe sausage factories that were established in the ruins and were said to have used human flesh to make sausages. These stories, their spread and social background, are analysed by folklorist Eda Kalmre (2013) in her monograph *The Human Sausage Factory. A Study of Post-War Rumour in Tartu*. It should be noted, however, that only a few references to this topic can be found in the life stories. One storyteller, for instance, asks whether such stories could really have had any connections with reality. Working as a police officer during the Soviet period, he had access to documents in which he looked for records of cases where the flesh of people that had disappeared had been used as food. He did not find any records of such cases (EKLA 350:1:1077). In general, drastic situations are related to the stories of others, not themselves. For example, according to one narrator, during the famine resulting from the Leningrad blockade everything was eaten; oiled engine belts, wallpaper, and dandelions were mentioned, but not dogs or cats (EKLA 350:1:1857). When another narrator describes the famine of refugees from Leningrad, she talks about how the refugee family ate a cat (EKLA 350:1:1807). While the narrators of both biographical stories imply to their reader that they were witnesses to the situation described, it may be noted that usually the narrator does not claim personal involvement in particularly drastic things, but they may claim the involvement of others when they narrate someone else's story. When depicting drastic occurrences, a life-story narrator can easily veer into gossip and urban legends. These help to characterize the circumstances and mindset of the epoch being described in an impersonal way. However, rumours and urban legends in biographical narratives are viewed with caution by researchers, as they are not authoritative texts in the context of studying history in the Estonian cultural space.

The horror rumours appear in stories that actually start with the words "It is said that...", or now, retrospectively, "It was said that...". The stories are related to the function of situational assessment or warning the community. Thus, such horror stories allow the study of situations that caused stress in society (e.g., in the 1940s, fear for children, disappearance of people, lack of food and related concerns). However, the function of the rumours changes quickly

(in this case, for example, horror stories change over time into stories describing the atmosphere during and after the war, or into amusing stories or just falsehoods that cause misunderstanding). The dynamic function of rumours is one of the reasons why the connection of rumours with traumatic experience may not be noticed by the life story researchers.

Parents and children

Analysis of the Estonian Life Stories Collection has revealed that in the stories of people born before the 1950s, parent-child relations are depicted as being predominantly positive (Kõresaar 2002). The situation is different in the stories of people born in the 1950s (Jaago 2003). On the one hand, relations with parents weaken, since they either have long workdays or children live apart from their parents, with their grandparents, for example. On the other hand, it becomes clear that parents do not talk about the events of the 1940s. This is because of safety considerations for the children as well as fear of political repression. I asked a life story narrator born in 1934 to discuss the meaning of family and the change in this meaning. Her father was also in a Stalinist prison camp, and in her life story she describes the hardships this situation caused her as well as her mother and siblings. But she does not describe the conflict stemming from the repression in family relations. She answered my questions in the following way:

> *We grew up in a family that still had strong pre-war Estonian influences and we had three families in the same yard. … What a child must do and cannot do, that was made clear by my mother, and sometimes she was short-tempered indeed: we were tweaked by the hair and in the event of bigger mischief, we also got the birch. After the punishment was received, the sky was clear again… When unstable times messed up the world order, a decent home was "a safe haven". … Perhaps contemporary times have diminished the meaning of home: parents, even if they are with their family, concentrate on their own lives, and children strive to handle the rights of "grown-ups" before their time, at the same time giving up the responsibilities of adults.* (MK: EKLA 350:1:1120, e-mail 2018)

I was amazed both by this woman's biography and the quoted e-mail about what was said regarding the punishment of children. The physical punishment of children, in particular, is one of the important things that post-1950s biographers present in their stories as a traumatic experience. But in this story of a woman born in 1934, the physical punishment of children has no connection with traumatic experience.

At the same time, her story emphasizes the common responsibilities of children and parents in the formation of the family, which is not found in the stories of those born in the post-war years.

It can thus be said that trauma is not caused by any particular phenomenon, such as the physical punishment of children. The analysis of the traumatic experience must be based on the relationship pattern presented in the biography as a whole. How did the relationship between the imprisoned parents and their children develop when the imprisonment was over? In the story of the narrator quoted above, this relationship is also shaped by the responsibility for the well-being of family members, as she stated in her email. "We grew up in a family that still had strong pre-war Estonian influences," she wrote.

There are, however, other examples of how parents with a traumatic past were experienced by their children. This subject caught my special attention after I made contact with two daughters of life story narrators. Both life story narrators had ended up in prison camps: one of them, a woman born in 1918, who was detained in a Nazi camp, while the other, a woman born in 1923, was in a Stalinist prison camp (EKLA 350:1:405; EKLA 350:1:444). Both stories were written in 1996–1997. I met both of the authors and analysed their stories in more detail (Jaago 2004; 2012; 2018). The daughters of both life story narrators (one of them born in 1938, the other in 1953) expressed long-lasting conflicts with their mothers (MK: EKLA 350:1:405, fieldwork report 2018; MK: EKLA 350:1:444, e-mails 2017). Although neither of these women speaks about the conflict in their life story narrations, the stories told by their children highlight how difficult it was for their mothers to cope with close relations post-imprisonment. But in both cases, another aspect is important. Namely, both daughters were separated from their mothers at an early age: one due to her mother being in the prison camp, and the other due to post-camp illness. This last aspect in particular begs the question of the extent to which the separation shaped the aforementioned conflicts.

The following life story examples are selected from those told by narrators born after the war and mass repressions. The narrator of the first story grew up at home, while the other was separated from her parents during childhood. The question is whether, how, and to what extent the war and Stalinist repressions are reflected in these stories.

The first example is chosen from among the contributions received in the 2016–2017 collection campaign "Estonia 100. My life and love" (EKLA 350:1:2657).[5] The author of this 13-page story is a woman born in 1957. She begins her story with words once said to her by her mother: "You should not have been born." The narrator explains her ambivalent feelings relating to this: initially shock, hints of difficult relations with her mother, but later a broader

realisation, followed by an understanding of her mother. There are three subthemes that serve as anchor points for her story: the house that her father built, which "has influenced both my mother's and my own choices"; predestination or fate ("I believe in fate and think that everything is written in the stars"); and the Second World War and Soviet imprisonments ("yes, I was born 13 years after the war ended, but the preconditions of my birth were still created in the turmoil of war").

The war led to her parents' first meeting: they happened to hide from the battles in the same forest. "This was how two people that were not supposed to meet met." They married in order to cope better with the situation that had developed, but the daughter says: "They were certainly not meant for each other." The man "was taken to Vorkuta for 12 years" and the woman was left with a 4-month-old son. This was the post-war period, when many women raised their children alone. The narrator indicates the general attitude of that time through the words of one of her mother's teachers: "During a lesson, a male teacher said that nothing good would come of sons who grew up without a father!" Influenced by these words, the mother raised her son "super properly", where a part of the upbringing included beatings, as the narrator stresses.

During this period, the narrator's mother met "the love of her life". But a little later he was imprisoned too. While both her husband and "the love of her life" were in prison, a third man, the so-called "romantic musician", entered her life. This encounter did not end in family life, but with a little boy, the narrator's half-brother. "The love of her life" returned from prison, but family life did not work out. As a reason, the narrator presents this little boy whom the man did not recognize as his. And the mother did not care about the narrator's father. "Father came home on the night of 24 February[6]. … When they heard the knock, the older son said: "Open the door, it's Father!" At that time, night-time knocks on the door were dreadful". Father started building the house and mother "liked the man who built her a house". Neither "the love of her life" nor the musician were "house builders". Into this house, a girl was born, the narrator of this story, and "now here in this house I sit, write and freeze".

The previous quotations show what and how she was told about the events in the 1940s and 1950s: she knows about seeking shelter in the forest, the nocturnal arrests ("at that time, night-time knocks on the door were dreadful"). By the time of her birth at the end of the 1950s, the situation and relations had become clear: her father was back from prison and was building a house; the family was together despite the twists of the intervening years. But it appears that all the preceding events somehow remained in their lives and started to influence the child who was born after the events previously described.

Her childhood was happy, she claimed. But fear was nevertheless a part of it too, because people told stories about war and prison. "I often saw war in my dreams, and when I woke up, I was immensely happy if I could see the blue sky and green birch tops from the window." A fear of night-time arrests was also a part of her childhood, as well as loud bangs, which were reminiscent of bomb explosions. She also describes sandbox games with her brother. It appears they built prisons instead of sandcastles, "the inescapable kind".

She did not develop close relations with her (biological) brother, who was 14 years her senior. Her half-brother was a playmate during childhood, but relations cooled in adulthood. "This boy had a tough childhood – he had to work a lot and was sometimes beaten." The issue of beating children emerges once more, being a part of the upbringing of the time. The mother beat the older son so that the fatherless boy (in defiance of the male teacher's words) would still grow up to be a decent person. The other son received beatings from both parents. The narrator – a girl – was not beaten though. "When I misbehaved, pointing to this [the belt] was enough." About herself as a mother, she writes: "The children cried a lot at night. I was jittery and screamed, sometimes I hit them. Yet I loved my children a lot. … And I will feel forever guilty for hitting them and pulling their hair. The children have forgiven me; I myself not yet." This story brings into view a pivot point between the childrearing methods of parents and their children. While for her parents beating a child as a means of punishment was natural and presumably efficient, for her generation it is no longer so. The problem for the narrator, however, lies in the fact that she also applied this method of childrearing herself when raising her children. However, now she regrets this.

But what is peculiar to this story? In contrast to the aforementioned relationships between daughters and their formerly imprisoned mothers, she describes the hardships that she faced when communicating with her mother, but she describes this through understanding, not through conflict. During the final period of her mother's life they were living together, and the daughter writes: "A difficult life began, incomprehensible to me." She seems to be closer to her father. Yet she knows her mother: she not only knows her life history but can also describe her mother's feelings and reasons for her choices. She learned about them from her mother and understood them. It can be surmised that she views her mother empathetically: as a narrator, she is not only a daughter but also a woman and a mother herself. In this way, this is certainly a story of contradictory feelings – but also a story of love.

The second example is from a 13-page life story contributed to the same collection campaign, narrated by a woman born in 1986 (EKLA 350:1:2778).

It appears from her life story that contact between her, her grandmother, and her parents is missing. Even if they speak about their experiences, it does not create a sense of unity. Rather, it seems that they do not understand or even listen to each other. Near the beginning of the story she claims: "Unfortunately, I have to admit that my parents did not love me." Then she stresses she has "grown up without love, without a father or mother, without sisters or brothers".

The previous story focused on trauma experiences that were linked to family relationships as well as the fear that was characteristic of that time. Traumatic experiences that the author deliberately dealt with were expressed. The following story contains a trauma that can be described as a lack of love. It is a traumatic experience, as the narrator perceives it. The narrator believes that love as a definite phenomenon exists somewhere for her – if she seeks, she will find it. The reader, however, understands that she cannot find it, because she has not experienced how love is created through intimate relationships. It appears her parents were alcoholics and that she grew up in an orphanage or in foster families. Although she describes life in a foster family being like the life of those who grew up with their parents, she does not develop trust in the foster parents. Actually, she did have a real sister and a grandmother, but she did not develop close relationships with them. Here, one important aspect relating to love unfolds: its existence in childhood and adolescence ensures the possibility of creating love on one's own and being ready for it. Although love brings along the pain of loss, it is still important in coping with the creation and shaping of new relationships. However, a bitter experience emerges from this narrator's story: in her imagination, love still exists for her somewhere, and she has not given up her search for it. But since she did not experience love in her childhood, she is unable to recognize and create this feeling. Traumatic experiences come to the fore in her story. She experienced violence in her foster home. She has been in contact with her alcoholic father. She feels that her sister has betrayed her and her grandmother does not care about her. She wishes to achieve closeness which she has missed all her life. But all her attempts to get close to someone fail.

The narrator of this story shifts the primary feeling of lack in her story to relations between the mother and her children. It appears her mother also grew up in an orphanage and had to somehow manage on her own, without the support of close relatives. "These hardships were probably the reason why mother started drinking, and in the end, she was unable to stop it." It turns out that her mother had eight children who ended up in an orphanage. As a result, the narrator's story shifts toward the Estonian state (bearing in mind the topic of the life story collection competition: "Estonia 100. My life and love"). She expects some kind of action from the state so that there would no longer

be such mothers unable to manage their lives. Specifically, she does not call for support for these types of mothers, but instead calls for the state to make sure that women like that would not become mothers. In this way, her story is also reduced to a discussion about a mother's role in the development of her child's life and well-being. However, in contrast to the previous story, there is no empathy connecting the mother and daughter in this story.

CONCLUSION

The life stories narrated in the 1990s in the main highlighted what happened in the 1940s and how these revolutionary historical-political events changed people's fate and identity. Researchers have also treated these narratives as traumatic life stories, because the events depicted in the narratives are presented in the context of Estonian history. This historical picture tells the story of the losses of the Estonian people (loss of national independence, destruction of homes, imprisonment of close family members, or their loss as a result of being scattered all around the globe).

Most of the narrators of these stories were also participants in the events described. In the stories of the 2000s, the narrators' focus shifts: what emerges are the issues of the immediate descendants of the oppressed and the war-torn – those who experienced the vicissitudes of the 1940s on an ongoing basis. The traumatic experiences of those who participated in the events of the 1940s shaped these participants in ways that their children could in turn experience as traumatic. This was due to the complicatedness or even the absence of relationships. The relationship between the person and his or her traumatic experience was manifested in the way the narrators position themselves in their story.

In stories describing historical events, the narrator places herself primarily in the societal position: she must manage political-historical situations such as war, imprisonment, and post-war or post-imprisonment economic difficulty. Individual roles of parents and children emerge in stories describing family relations. The stories that have been considered comprise instances where roles are not switched in personal narrations (e.g. daughter's conflict with mother) as well as those where this happens. In the latter case, the life story becomes multi-layered, and descriptions of confrontations are also augmented by understanding. Despite different foci, it is possible to see that there is a certain connection between these stories.

The more the descriptions of the pivotal periods and first-hand experience of the periods disappear from the life stories, the more we can see how the earlier period changed the society and the patterns of close relationships. While the

nightmares described in the stories of people born before the war were caused by historical events (the war, Stalinist repressions), the stories of the ones born in post-war years reveal a new pressure. This is characterized by an inability to cope with family relations and close relationships. Such an inability to cope is described in the context of shortcomings in the narrator's relationship with her parents. The narrators refer to the volatility and frustration of their parents, but also to domestic violence, which is now interpreted as a traumatic experience.

In the context of the above, the impact of the time covered by the narration on how the past is described must again be stressed. Today's narrators present their stories in quite a different cultural context as compared to their parents in the 1990s. While at that time, people were interested in the historical events and situations that the Soviet approach to history did not discuss, today's public sphere (e.g. mass media) brings to the fore the topics of family relations and everyday interpersonal relationships. This reveals the interconnection between storytelling and interpretation of the past: the roots of today's problems lie in the recent past, covering two or three generations.

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NOTES

[1] For life trajectories of the youth of Estonian origin during the Second World War, when Estonia was either a part of the Soviet Union (1940–1941, 1944 onwards) or occupied by German forces (1941–1944), see, e.g., *Soldiers of Memory*, a collection of articles and life stories compiled by Ene Kõresaar (2011).

[2] In her analysis of the traumatic experience of the descendants of Holocaust survivors, Carol A. Kidron (2003) offers a parallel to the question raised here, asking how the traumatic experience affects the survivors' children, despite the fact that the situation itself, which caused the trauma, has been left behind.

[3] This trend connected Estonia with the Central European literary tradition, where until the last quarter of the twentieth century, history-centred narration belonged primarily to the French and German tradition, while the literary narration of memoirs was a feature of Anglophone culture (see Haan & Renders 2013: 18–22).

[4] Impalement of children during war is a familiar trope in Estonian folklore, seen, for example, during the period of the Great Northern War in the early eighteenth century.

[5] The life stories sent as a response to the collection campaign "Estonia 100. My life and love" have been published partly in the book *Minu elu ja armastus. Eesti rahva elulood* (My life and love. Estonian life stories) in 2018, edited by Rutt Hinrikus and Tiina Ann Kirss. The life stories observed in this article have not been selected for this publication.

[6] The anniversary of the Republic of Estonia is 24 February, but this was obviously not celebrated openly in Soviet Estonia.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

EKLA 350 – manuscript collection of the Estonian Life Stories, Cultural History Archives, Estonian Literary Museum

MK – fieldwork materials collected by Tiiu Jaago, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu

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WHAT WE REMEMBER AND WHAT WE FORGET: SELECTIVE MEMORY IN THE HOLOCAUST

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Abstract: Why remember atrocity? This paper considers how trauma shapes the political memory of atrocity. What we choose to remember about atrocity is largely determined by the visibility of events, but also impacted by social norms, normalized violence, and perceptions of atrocity. Certain events, although common or not necessarily unusual, are suppressed from memory (both in collective and individual narratives) due to fear, shame, guilt, or disgust. In genocide, we rarely hear about acts that induce emotions such as the ones mentioned, including acts of rape, prostitution, and parricide. Most often, such acts are omitted from the narrative because they are not normal crimes in the societies where they occur, and are seen as particularly horrific. The consequence of this omission is a skewed image or conception of genocide and what it does to the people who are part of it, either as victims or perpetrators. This paper determines that, however uncomfortable, unusual, or painful it is to remember such acts, the memory of such acts is necessary to understand the mechanics of atrocity and victimization. It uses a case study of the Holocaust, focusing on sexual violence, to illustrate the concepts of memory omission, skewed historical perception, and the necessity of understanding atrocity through accurate memory.

Keywords: atrocity, genocide, Holocaust, narratives, political memory, sexual violence, trauma, victimization

INTRODUCTION

Why do we choose to remember some things in political memory and forget others? When we think of remembering and forgetting in atrocity, we are often confronted with especially traumatic and taboo experiences, which are often suppressed in memory for many reasons. Private emotions, public responses, and the interests of historians are but a few explanations for this suppression.

This paper looks at how trauma shapes political memory, specifically in the case of genocide. It considers what we choose to remember (or forget) in cases of genocide, and why we make these choices. To illustrate how trauma shapes memory and how some events are selectively forgotten, this paper uses a case study from the Holocaust, looking at sexual violence in memory. In particular, the author focuses on rape, prostitution, and reproductive violence as aspects that have been suppressed in the political memory of the Holocaust but are necessary to remember.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL MEMORY

In general, when we speak of history, we speak not only of events that have transpired in the past, but of memory – more specifically, political memory. Political memory can be defined as one or more of the following: a) collective memory as interpreted through a political lens; b) collective memory of a political event; or c) collective memory as expressed by social and/or political institutions (Verovšek 2016). Due to its ties to political events, actors, and institutions, political memory is particularly important to the way in which certain events – wars, revolutions, regime change, etc. – are remembered and memorialized. Consequently, political memory is a way of capturing the Zeitgeist surrounding a politically defining event, through the eyes of the people.

However, as is often noted about history, it is written by the victors, or at very least, the survivors. This means that collective memory is not always truly collective, but rather composed of the stories of those who managed to survive, win, or both. Even so, collective memory is not always the full memory of those who survive, as some survivors and victors choose to omit details of their experiences that are then lost to history.

REMEMBERING, FORGETTING, AND MEMORY

Before proceeding, we must separate memory as a cognitive process from memory as a historical process. When we speak of memory as a cognitive process, we are referring to neuropsychological memory, the ability to recall certain events, emotions, and relations. When we speak of memory as a social and historical process, we are referring to collective memory and/or political memory.

The mechanisms of forgetting in collective and political memory are different than in neuropsychological memory. While suppression of experiences or emotions often happens unconsciously or subconsciously in neuropsychological

memory (Koutstaal & Schacter 1997), in political memory it most often happens as a conscious event. In cases of trauma, there is often mental suppression of the event as a neuropsychological response to the extreme fear, pain, and disturbance of the event; however, victims of trauma are not always able to block out the occurrence of a traumatic event (or multiple events). In this case, one of two things may occur. Victims may unconsciously distort memories as a way of coping with their trauma (ibid.), or they may choose to consciously omit the traumatic event from their own history, which later leads to the omission of this event from collective history and memory. Further, even if an individual chooses not to silence his or her own narrative, the collective may choose to "enforce silence" in order to whitewash or forget historical trauma (Liem 2007).

Similarly, when we consider the process of remembering, we can see a subconscious effort to remember an event or experience in neuropsychological memory (Koutstaal & Schacter 1997), and, in the sociopolitical sense, a conscious effort to memorialize, explain, or relive the moment in political memory. We can thus further differentiate neuropsychological memory and political memory by stating that the former is an involuntary neurological process and a reflexive response to the experiences of the individual, while the latter is a voluntary and conscious response by the individual to his/her own experiences and incorporated into that of the collective.

MEMORY IN GENOCIDE

This paper considers, in particular, the case of genocide, which is a particularly traumatic event. The experience of genocide creates many traumas for victims and survivors, as well as perpetrators. As a result, when it comes to genocide, both neuropsychological and political memory are extremely fragile and complicated processes.

Despite the incredibly traumatic aspects of genocide, many survivors are still able to recount their experiences,[1] which proves that genocide in its entirety is rarely suppressed. This is possibly due to the longevity of some genocides, but also possibly due to the process of genocide, which generally employs incremental changes that, over time, lead up to exterminatory policies and/or actions.

In terms of political memory, the process of recounting survivors' experiences is a way of remembering the events of a genocide, usually so that they will not be forgotten, and future generations will heed the warning of the past. But also, the specific stories told by survivors hold a particular relevance to what is remembered as a collective. Certain experiences, emotions, and thoughts may be shared within the collective, and thus these shared aspects of memory become more salient in the collective history of the genocide (or collective memory).

Consider the opposite when we think about forgetting; survivors, aware of many traumatic events, but perhaps unwilling to share all of them, choose to omit certain stories. This may be because they trigger emotions of discomfort, pain, fear, anxiety, and even shame or guilt. It may also be because these stories or the emotions tied to them feel too personal to share. As mentioned, shame or guilt can make these stories seem like they are unacceptable or punishable (if they were ever to be revealed), causing survivors to feel as though they must hide these events from others.

TRAUMA AND THE TABOO

In particular, the pain and discomfort of trauma can be compounded by the guilt and shame that surrounds the taboo – forbidden or unspeakable acts – as well as non-normative events and experiences (Wiseman & Metzl & Barber 2006). Instead of merely feeling the guilt of survival, victims who have also been subjected to taboo traumatic experiences may feel the aforementioned guilt, as well as the pain and discomfort of the traumatic event, and additional guilt and shame from having been a participant (whether willingly or unwillingly) in an activity that is considered taboo. In addition, there is loneliness and guilt from not being able to share the experience with others, and fear of being found. As mentioned previously, these emotions of guilt, shame, discomfort, and even anger can lead to self-silencing and the silencing of others who shared the experience (ibid.).

Consider, for example, the hypothetical case of a mother who has nothing to feed her children in war. She may choose to steal food to help her family to survive but, given the dire circumstances, may have to steal from fellow victims, something which is considered wrong on multiple levels. While there may be those who might understand the mother's plight and sympathize with her, there are also others who will object to her actions as they were premeditated and increased the suffering of others. Furthermore, these actions could potentially be considered legally non-normative and punishable as theft.

Let us consider another hypothetical example, this time a more serious one. A young man is fleeing soldiers who are targeting him and others like him, based on ethnicity. He knows that there is nothing he can do to stop them from trying to kill him. Along with him is his elderly father, who cannot run as fast as him. He is faced with two choices: to remain at his father's pace and be killed or leave his father behind and survive. Either way, the young man will suffer greatly and his father will die, but in only one case can the young man survive. The decision to leave his father behind is unquestionably non-normative, perhaps

not legally (as in the prior example), but certainly morally. And, much more so than the prior example, this action is considered taboo, as sacrificing the life of another, especially one's own father, is generally considered an unspeakable and shameful act in most cultures and societies.[2]

Both examples described above are wrong, in a sense (whether legally or morally), but at the same time represent hard decisions that sometimes must be taken in extenuating circumstances. However, the existence of extenuating circumstances does not necessarily liberate the actor from feelings of guilt or blame, and as noted, the normative framework within which these actions occur often adds extra feelings of guilt and shame.

CASE STUDY: SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN THE HOLOCAUST

When we look at cases of trauma in political memory, there are few that stand out more than those in genocide. The Holocaust, considered by many as the embodiment of genocide, presents many strong examples of trauma that shaped political memory in history. This paper will focus on one such example, that of sexual violence.

Research on sexual violence in the Holocaust is a fairly recent development, having begun in the 1980s and only gaining traction in the last decade or two (Hedgepeth & Saidel 2010). This begs the question: if Holocaust and genocide studies are a relatively older field (almost a century old), why is this area of Holocaust studies so underdeveloped?

A review of the literature presents a number of potential answers. These answers can be distilled into three main explanations. The first is the morality of the topic. Sex, in general, is considered taboo; this means that sexual violence is extra taboo, as it is not only an intimate act but a violent one (Herzog 2009). For history and research, this means that any inquiries into questions of sex and sexual violence that are considered non-essential are often discouraged.

The second explanation has to do with the timing of social movements. Much of the research on sexual violence in the Holocaust resulted from inquiries by scholars in the fields of women's studies, and gender and sexuality studies. However, these feminists' movements did not gain their own place in academia until after the second wave of feminism (after the 1960s), which was after the initial phase of Holocaust research and analysis had been done. In the 1980s, equity and liberal feminism gained popularity, and research on gender and sex swelled in universities. With this trend came the revisiting of historical events, and the analysis of phenomena through a lens of gender and sexuality. We see the rise of strains of feminism coincide with the rise of feminist theories and

analyses of the Holocaust, particularly when we look at the rise of the third wave of feminism in the 1990s. Scholars such as Susan Jeffords (1991) and Judith Baumel (1999) performed early research into the topic, making way for the boom in research that was ushered in with the new millennium. If research exists on the topic today, it is only because of efforts to support the feminist theory in academia and the efforts of early scholars in the topic to revisit questions of gender in the Holocaust.

The third and final explanation for lack of data on sexual violence in the Holocaust is the silence of victims on the topic. As Thomas Kühne suggests, "[s]exual violence during the Holocaust has long been the subject of the wildest fantasies or impermeable taboos … facilitated by the silence of surviving but ashamed victims of Nazi sexual exploitation" (Kühne 2012). Victims have largely chosen to keep their silence because, as previously noted, the topic is taboo, and arouses feelings of guilt, fear, and shame. In addition to these emotions, victims are rarely asked about sexual violence in interviews, making it easier for them to maintain their silence and making them feel as though the experience is not a common one. This is further compounded by the desire to forget, leading them to omit such stories from their experience by conscious choice.

All of this, however, does not mean we do not have any data on sexual violence in the Holocaust; it simply means that it is fairly limited, at least for the time being. Despite this limitation, however, there are three actions related to the trauma of sexual violence in genocide, of which sufficient data has been garnered and which I can thus describe in this paper.

Rape

Rape is, quite often, the most common type of sexual violence that occurs in genocide, and the Holocaust is no exception to this (Burds 2009; Herzog 2009; Baumel 1999; Jeffords 1991). However, in the case of the Holocaust and World War II, there were multiple sides perpetrating rape, depending on location and year. In the years preceding World War II and during the early years of the war, it was German soldiers perpetrating rape, across Central and Eastern Europe; in middle years, this was divided into sexual assault committed in ghettos and camps in Central Europe (namely, Poland), and war rape occurring in the Soviet Union (Mühlhäuser 2017). In late years of the war, Russian troops, moving across Eastern Europe and advancing on Germany committed atrocities including rape as they moved along (Mühlhäuser 2017; Burds 2009). As made clear through later testimonies taken of survivors, the victims of rape were mainly Jewish (although non-Jewish women were also raped) (Banwell 2016),

mostly of Slavic or Polish ethnicity.[3] On rare occasions, boys were targeted by German soldiers, but it was rare for such instances to culminate in rape and usually stopped at molestation.[4]

Prostitution

Prostitution, while less common than rape, is well-documented in the Holocaust, thanks to the bureaucratic efforts of the German Reich. Reflecting the values and mentality of the Reich, the Wehrmacht created military brothels for forces in the East, making prostitution not only an institutionalized but also highly regulated and almost ritualized practice (Timm 2002). Dagmar Herzog's work on sexuality in the Third Reich expands on this mentality and shows how this practice was meant to encourage productivity, masculinity, and satisfaction among German troops in the East (Herzog 2005). Robert Sommer's book, *Das KZ-Bordell*, has also been notable in documenting the existence of concentration camp brothels, drawing on German and Austrian sources (Sommer 2009).

However, the other side of this clinical operation were the experiences of sex workers. Many were incentivized into service, inmates who were offered "better" positions in concentration camps if they served 3 to 6 months in a military brothel (ibid.). Some were sex workers before working in military brothels, others were simply non-Jewish women who were deemed "acceptable" for intimacy with German soldiers.

In addition to the institutionalized practice of prostitution, there were also informal sexual economies in ghettos and camps, where sexual favors or actions could be exchanged for resources or other favors. While little work has been done on this aspect, Anna Hájková's study of the sexual economy present at Theresienstadt Ghetto presents an opening into further research of this kind, which is much needed at this time (Hájková 2013). Interestingly, Hájková's work highlights that "while sexual barter often was motivated at first by sheer necessity … the barter often developed a snowball dynamic, coloring many interactions and expectations" (ibid.: 504). However, the lack of additional research on the topic and lack of details on prostitution in survivors' testimonies presents a dilemma that can only be solved through second-hand testimonies or research of primary source documents that might substantiate the existence of this phenomenon further.

Reproductive violence

In addition to the abovementioned forms of sexual violence, we can also examine reproductive violence as another form of sexual violence imposed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Reproductive violence can refer to the harm (including removal) of reproductive organs, forced impregnation, forced abortion, and other denials of reproductive rights.

The most prevalent form of reproductive abuse during the Nazi regime was the direct denial of reproductive rights, particularly the right of some groups to have children. During World War II, Nazi policy specifically targeted Jewish women; in addition to the ways mentioned above, Nazi policy banned all births of Jewish children, to the point where "about 320,000 German persons with 'lives unworthy of life' were sterilized under the terms of the sterilization law" (Chelouche 2007: 203).

In addition to forced sterilization and persecutorial laws, the reproduction of the Jewish community was halted in its tracks due to Nazi policies regarding the youngest generation of Jews. Jewish infants and children born during the Holocaust had a very low chance of survival, due to their identity and the high probability that they would be chosen for "selection" – that is, death (see Holocaust Encyclopedia). As the survival rate for infants in the Holocaust was particularly low, women who had children during the genocide sometimes resorted to killing their infants, to avoid having them die of starvation or disease.

Additionally, having a child could pose a danger to pregnant mothers. In many cases, "the only way the mother could escape the death sentence was by undergoing a secret abortion or by suffocating the newborn, to prevent detection of the birth as anything other than a 'still birth,' and to protect all involved in saving the mother's life" (Weisz & Kwiet 2018: 2). As such, there were women who faced an unimaginable choice: jeopardizing their own lives to try to raise a child in a ghetto or concentration camp, or kill their unborn child in order to survive.

A final challenge was that of women who were raped or who had accidentally gotten pregnant, who sometimes chose to resort to back-alley abortions, to avoid having children in these terrible conditions, and to avoid being sent to the gas chambers or otherwise killed for being pregnant (and therefore weak or unfit for labor). While German doctors were generally unopposed to ending pregnancies through abortion, many Jewish doctors expressed their discontent at performing these procedures, whether officially or under clandestine conditions. As one Jewish doctor, Dr. Aharon Peretz, stated, "I was forced to conclude that in the ghetto there was no way out except to abort these pregnant women" (Chelouche 2007: 204). Another Jewish doctor who operated on women in Auschwitz

stated, "No one will ever know what it meant to me to destroy these babies" (ibid.). Consequently, we can see how this type of violence destroyed not only the victim but also the "perpetrator" – or rather, the facilitator of violence, who was often forced into such actions.

REMEMBERING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

What then does this mean for how we remember sexual violence in the Holocaust? The aforementioned sections present what researchers now know of these topics, but where do they fit into public and political memory of the Holocaust?

Due to the issue of the taboo, these events – and other instances of sexual violence – have been suppressed in the public memory of the Holocaust. The rise of the #MeToo movement has allowed a more open discussion of sexual violence, but this still does not take away the disturbing aspect of these crimes. In terms of political memory and history, a stronger case is being made for why we should consider these crimes as a part of the methodology of genocide; however, until that argument is proven, sexual violence is unlikely to be thought of as a tool of genocide.

The reluctance of survivors to talk about sexual violence is somewhat lifting – perhaps due to changes in social values or political mood – but this is not enough, as many survivors have already passed away, taking their stories, memories, and experiences with them.

FORGETTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The converse of memorializing sexual violence in the Holocaust – purposely forgetting it – is still very, very real. While researchers have made an attempt to ameliorate this, there are few who wish to remember such a dark chapter. After all, if prior generations have deemed it worth forgetting, it may be best to let it fade away as was originally intended.

This raises two questions. The first is: Who gets to determine what is remembered? If it is historians, memory should be inclusive of all events that transpired, good and bad. If it is those who experienced the events, then memory is bound to be quite polarized, and have several different versions. If it is only the victims, we lose the danger of polarization but risk the danger of bias. In the latter two cases, we risk the danger of losing swaths of history to selective memory, as it is not (purportedly) unbiased third parties who determine what should and should not be remembered.

The second question is how we remember atrocity without dishonoring the victims. This is an important consideration, since memory attempts to be neutral, and not insulting or harmful to those who have already suffered. Additionally, many victims do not (or did not) want to share their stories for fear of being judged, shamed, or invalidated. The best way to go forth, then, is to provide context to the actions and reactions of victims. In the case of rape, for example, a victim may feel ashamed for not reporting her rape, but it is essential to remember that had she reported it (during the Holocaust), she would have likely been killed for insubordination against a German soldier.

CONCLUSION

The decision to remember some things while forgetting others is, in political memory, a very conscious process. And, as the above analysis revealed, there are some events that are considered more horrifying, shameful, or painful than others, even in atrocity, making individuals more likely to hide or suppress these experiences from their communities, historians, and researchers. This act of selectively remembering and forgetting events can create a challenge that neither the researchers nor the public may not be aware of, the creation of a false history, which omits variables that may be a key to understanding larger processes and phenomena.

It is thus up to scholars and researchers to delve deeper and, when confronted with experiences that appear to spark shame or guilt, to proceed with caution – but proceed, nonetheless. Although there are some actions and decisions people may wish to take back, it is important, if we want to understand the past, to allow all things to come to light.

NOTES

[1] The existence of the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive and its some tens of thousands of testimonies is proof of the ability and willingness of genocide survivors to recall and recount their stories.

[2] While there is limited academic literature on patricide or other forms of parricide during genocide and war, cases like the one illustrated herein are not uncommon. Even if they are not overt cases of parricide, or simply are passive allowances of death, we may observe them in individual testimonies of survivors. Take, for example, the case of Elie Wiesel's reaction to his father's death as described in *Night*: "I did not weep … I was out of tears. And deep inside me … I might have found something like: Free at last!" (Wiesel 1958: 112). Although mild among examples, Wiesel's case illustrates that even the most dedicated of sons may feel relieved from the burden

of the company of an ailing, elderly father in the midst of war, and that the death of a father – although painful at first – may also be considered a blessing (although, again, this may be morally shameful).

[3] See USC Shoah Foundation, University of Southern California, available at https://sfi.usc.edu/, last accessed on 7 April 2021.

[4] Due to confidentiality clauses, specific interviews may not be cited here, but are available for researcher perusal through the above citation, at the USC Shoah Foundation.

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ONE TRAUMA, TWO NARRATIVES: *ADAMAH* VERSUS *TOMORROW'S A WONDERFUL DAY*

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Abstract: In the three years after World War II, prominent Jewish organizations in the United States and in the Land of Israel made films aimed at promoting Zionist goals. The film *Adamah* (Helmar Lerski, 1948) was produced in the Land of Israel with the support of the Jewish-American volunteer women's organization Hadassah. It tells the rehabilitation story of Benjamin, a Holocaust survivor in the Land of Israel. When the final version was sent to Hadassah for approval, the directorate felt that the American public would not relate to it. Hadassah altered the footage and distributed its own version entitled *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day* (1949). This article presents a comprehensive analysis of the main differences between the two representations of trauma, which were taken from the same footage but shaped into two differing narratives. Based on studies in Zionism and a great deal of archival material, it shows how these films epitomized the differences in the perception of trauma and its representations between the Zionist organizations in the Land of Israel and the USA.

Keywords: aid organizations, Holocaust, Holocaust cinema, Holocaust survivors, trauma

In the three years after World War II, prominent Jewish organizations in the United States and in the Land of Israel (Hebrew: Eretz Yisrael) made films aimed at promoting Zionist goals (Steir-Livny 2018). The film *Adamah* (directed by Helmar Lerski, 1948) was produced in the Land of Israel with the support of the Jewish-American Hadassah organization. It tells the story of Benjamin, a Holocaust survivor who makes it to the Land of Israel. Traumatized and haunted by Holocaust experiences, his memories engulf him. Slowly he learns to process the trauma and becomes a hardworking pioneer. The Israeli version, like its American counterpart, was intended to elicit support and raise funds from American audiences. However, when the final version was sent to Hadassah for approval, the directorate felt that the American public would

not relate to it. Hadassah altered the footage and distributed its own version entitled *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day* (1949).[1]

Two previous studies have dealt briefly with the differences between the two films (Mandel n.d.; Deblinger 2014: 121–129). This article presents a comprehensive analysis of the main differences between *Adamah* and *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day*. Based on studies in Zionism and a great deal of archival material about the production of the films, it shows how these films epitomized the differences in the perception of trauma and its representations between the Zionist organizations in the Land of Israel and in the USA. Even though the organizations in both countries appealed to similar target audiences, the different locations in which they operated and their differing immediate agendas led them to construct two separate narratives of the same trauma. The Israeli version emphasized the healing powers of the land and its people, whereas the American version focused on the individual and the personal struggle to rehabilitate.

INTRODUCTION: THE POST-WWII ZIONIST CAMPAIGN IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL AND IN THE USA

The Zionist cinema in the Land of Israel in the 1940s was dominated by ideological considerations. Films were produced by Zionist organizations such as the Jewish National Fund and the Jewish Foundation Fund. They propagated Zionist notions and were designed to influence Western audiences and alert public opinion, while garnering support and donations. As such, they focused on the Zionist struggle, the establishment of the Jewish state, the importance of the land, and the idea of a "new Jew", a young, strong, handsome pioneer who works the land and is the opposite of the weak "diasporic Jew" (a generalization of the European shtetl Jew) who is detached from the land and who does not know how to defend themselves (Gertz 2004; Shohat 2007).

These films did not deal directly with the Holocaust, but rather focused on the Zionist message derived from the decimation of the six million: the importance of establishing a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. As part of this objective, the complex encounter between Holocaust survivors and Jews already settled in the Land of Israel was reduced to a repetitive narrative in which survivors emerged from the Holocaust to find redemption in the Land of Israel. These films portrayed Holocaust survivors as broken in body and spirit but who, thanks to the land, its healing powers, and its Jewish people, undergo a successful transition from trauma to revival (Zimmerman 2002: 27–124; Gertz 2004: 16–41; Steir-Livny 2009: 7–50). These films thus constituted a political bridge between

the complex issue of displaced Holocaust survivors and the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel (Avisar 2011: 51).

In the USA, in the aftermath of World War II, prominent Jewish organizations including the Hadassah women's organization launched media campaigns in which films played an integral part. By the end of the 1940s, Hadassah (founded in 1912) already had a membership of 240,000 in 701 branches throughout the United States (Hadassah Newsletter 1945a). In light of the intensification of the Zionist struggle at the time, the women of Hadassah decided to change their public relations policy and appeal not only to a limited Jewish audience, but to the general public as well.[2] The goals of the organization at the time were to communicate the urgency of helping Holocaust survivors, to elicit sympathy among the general public for Zionist objectives, and to encourage the American government to support the Zionist struggle (Hadassah Newsletter 1945b). Local Hadassah chapters were directed to use all possible media outlets to convey their message, distribute articles related to Hadassah to local media outlets, host lavish fundraising dinners (Hadassah Headlines 1945a) and disseminate Hadassah's message through speeches, pamphlets, newsletters, films, and radio productions. During that time, Hadassah produced several documentary films including *The Forgotten Children* (1945), *They Live Again* (1947), and *Do You Hear Me?* (1947) (Boim Wolf 2010; Hadassah Headlines 1945b).

The director of the International Film Department of Hadassah was Hazel Greenwald. Despite a lack of formal photographic training, during her long career she photographed subjects in twenty-nine countries. After having met Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold in the Land of Israel in the 1930s, Greenwald became involved in the Youth Aliyah movement, which was set up to help the Jewish youth immigrate from Europe. In late 1946, Greenwald was sent as a special photographer to a displaced persons camp in Italy where numerous Holocaust survivors had been sent. She spoke with children, learned about their traumatic pasts, their rehabilitation through Zionist Hachsharot (pioneer training collectives) (see Yad Vashem) and their hopes to immigrate to the Land of Israel. She also embarked on a photojournalistic campaign and published her impressions in newspapers and in the films she produced (Greenwald 1948).

ADAMAH AND *TOMORROW'S A WONDERFUL DAY*

Ben Shemen, a children's village located midway between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, was founded in 1927 and headed by Dr. Siegfried Lehman. The village absorbed young people from Europe through the Youth Aliya movement both before and after World War II. *Adamah* was the initiative of Lehman, who also

wrote the script. The film was directed by the well-known German director Helmar Lerski, who worked in the German film industry in the 1920s, before going to the Land of Israel in 1931. After integrating into the fledging Eretz-Israeli film industry, he directed several short documentaries, including the acclaimed *Avoda* (Work, 1935) and a short film which was later incorporated into the feature film *Miklala lebraha* (Out of Evil, Joseph Krumgold, 1951) (Horák 1998: 426–436).

The production of *Adamah* began in 1946[3] and the filming itself started in March 1947.[4] The film focused on the story of Benjamin, a teen Holocaust survivor whose entire family had perished at the hands of the Nazis. After surviving the concentration camps, he is sent to Ben Shemen with a group of other orphans. Unlike them, however, his integration proves to be more difficult. Traumatized and haunted by his wartime experiences, he is paranoid, and his memories of the concentration camp pursue him. He steals and hides loaves of bread, his belongings are stored in a bag he hides in case he needs to flee at a moment's notice, and he is incapable of participating in any activities with the other children. Slowly, thanks to the love, understanding, and support he receives in the village and from working the land, he sheds his paranoid diasporic identity and becomes a smiling, confident, hardworking pioneer.

Adamah was marketed to many countries in 1948,[5] and was described as the first film to emerge from the new Israeli State. Although it was a fiction film, it was marketed to the world as a documentary. The marketing material, which was distributed by the Forum Film company, stated that "there are no actors in this film … the children are acting the story of their own lives",[6] and the film was screened as part of the documentary film section at the Locarno Film Festival in July 1948.[7] The actor who played Holocaust survivor Benjamin was indeed a Holocaust survivor named Benjamin Hildesheim, but the similarity ended there. Unlike his character in the film, the real Benjamin had integrated into society relatively easily. His character's inability to fit in, his emotional breakdown, and violent outbursts were figments of the scriptwriter's imagination (although typical of the PTSD of survivors). Other children in the film, actual residents of the Ben Shemen village, also delivered lines from the script rather than presented their authentic stories (Steir-Livny 1998).

After the premiere, the reactions in the Swiss press, for example, were very enthusiastic. The *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* proclaimed that "the world premiere of the film about Ben Shemen Youth Village in the Land of Israel was undoubtedly the climax of the documentary film competition … a document of exemplary value that is shocking in its realism and fulfills its humanistic intent". Likewise, the *Basel Nachrichten* wrote: "The film was an astonishing success … it is a document of extraordinary importance." The *Neue Bundner Zeitung*

stated that "the director has been able to fully create a film of great perfection in all respects … a work of equal value, both artistically and educationally". Mrs. M. Kinert, the director of the documentary film department at the festival, said that the "wonderful documentary" brought her to tears.[8]

At the end of 1948, Forum Films distributed the film in Israel[9] where it was also highly acclaimed: the reporter for the *Palestinian Post* called it "the best Israeli film I have seen so far … the level of photography is very high... the dialogues in different languages add a sense of realism to the film". *Ma'ariv*, one of the major daily newspapers, praised the film's many facets: "Landscape, play, moral lesson, a trend towards educational guidance and reality, and the main thing is that you do not have the impression of a propaganda trend … The boy plays his role with Hollywood talent." A reporter for the daily *HaMishmar* stated that "it was crucial to put these things on canvas". A correspondent for the newspaper *Davar* commented that the film increased respect for the country and that "the acting has an unmediated faithfulness to the way of life … the film educates and exalts the story of the integration of youth from the Diaspora and the love of the homeland … the participants are not actors at all. Their lives were filmed as they are, without any theatrical makeup. These are the youth in Ben Shemen and these are their lives".[10] A contributor to the newspaper *Kolnoa* was impressed by the film's authenticity:

> *A good documentary film … reality is present… even though they play themselves, all the boys and girls displayed a special talent and an understanding of their mission and executed their performances faithfully.*[11]

A reporter of the newspaper *Haaretz* joined the praise: "The degree of truth in replicating the atmosphere demands that we sing the film's praises … the diversity of the types of children and teenagers, each burdened by their own history that is onerous for their souls … emphasizes the difficulties educators face at this institution".[12]

According to an initial agreement between Lehman and Hadassah, *Adamah* was released to Hadassah in March 1948 for the exclusive dissemination of the film in the USA.[13] However, the Hadassah directorate was not pleased with the result. Greenwald claimed that the film was "messed-up" and that it had to be reworked for American distribution, and so they did. The script for the Hadassah version was written by Mina Braunston, the organization's Director of Information, and was produced by Hazel Greenwald, chairperson of the International Film Department of Hadassah. Scenes were cut, moved around, the thematic focus was altered, and the narrator was replaced by an actor who "played" Benjamin's voice-over in the first person.[14] Lerski was outraged

by the cinematic and conceptual changes, but could do nothing since he was officially prevented from seeing the new version until it had been completed. In the meantime, the new version, titled *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day*, was distributed worldwide (Steir-Livny 2001).

Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day was one of the best-received films at the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1949.[15] Likewise, it was praised in the American press: *The New York Times* stated that *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day* is "proof that in Israel there are more struggles besides the conflicts of diplomacy and war", and that the film's story and message are very important. Irene Thorer, a reporter for the *New York Post*, wrote that the film was "a warm and charming display of a child's life in the new country", and that showing Benjamin's ability to overcome his past has educational value and should therefore be shown in schools.[16] This version also received favorable reviews from Jewish newspapers in Britain. *The Zionist Review* claimed that it was the most vivid and moving account of the lives of children in Israel.[17]

Films at that time were printed on flammable nitrate material and were prone to spontaneous flare-ups. The reels of *Adamah*, which were stored in Ben Shemen, combusted in 1960 and set fire to the dining hall of the youth village. The Hadassah organization claimed that it did not have a copy of the film. However, another copy was found after a lengthy search at the Jewish Foundation Fund offices in France. The film was transferred to a film laboratory in Tel Aviv and a 16 mm copy of the last five minutes was made. Nevertheless, bad luck continued to haunt the film, and a fire broke out in the bank above the laboratory. The water that helped put out the fire damaged the lab and destroyed the copy. Only the last five minutes of the film, plus the later Hadassah version were left, and for many years *Adamah* was considered a lost film (Steir-Livny 2001). In 2009, the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive received a copy that had been preserved in Europe. According to archive workers, this version comes the closest to the original script, although it is impossible to tell whether it completely matches the original edited film. The film underwent a process of recovery and reconstruction in the archives. [18]

The found version makes it possible to analyze the differences between the Eretz-Israeli and American versions. The changes initiated by Greenwald provide clear examples of the different agendas, goals, and attitudes pertaining to the representation of the trauma and the rehabilitation of Holocaust survivors in both Jewish contexts. While *Adamah* used the character of a Holocaust survivor to emphasize the importance of the healing power of the land, and the sacrifice necessary to defend it, *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day* focuses on the individual and his inner struggle. It highlights the survivor himself and the process of rehabilitation after a trauma that transforms him from a broken adolescent into

a healthy, functioning young man. Based on studies in Zionism and considerable archival material, the following sections analyze some prominent aspects of the two narratives of trauma and rehabilitation.

TITLES, PERSPECTIVES, AND NARRATION

The initial goal of *Adamah* was to highlight the vital role that the Land of Israel (and the youth village) played in the rehabilitation of Jewish orphans, mainly Holocaust survivors. The title of the film (meaning 'soil' in Hebrew) reflects the healing power of the earth. This focus on the land and on space replicates ideas that appeared in other Eretz-Israeli films of that era. Israel was depicted as an agricultural land even though urban settlements dominated and had absorbed a vast majority of the immigrants during the Mandate Period (the British rule of Palestine from 1917 to 1948). Although urban society was central to the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel, the representation of the Land of Israel as an agricultural land was consistent with the Zionist ideology that emphasized its biblical roots in the land and Zionism as a return of the Jews to a land that was theirs from antiquity. Hence, similar scenes were repeated in many films: verdant fields, beautiful settlements, and tanned, shirtless farmers driving tractors. The bourgeoisie and capitalists were marginalized and were replaced by figures that appeared against the backdrop of the Israeli landscape: strong young men and beautiful women in shorts working the land with apparent joy. Descriptions of development, progress, and prosperity were emphasized. The importance of the land was also evident in the fantasy of large, borderless spaces under Jewish control. The films constructed the space by the repeated use of distant photography of the surroundings (extreme long shots) and by panning (camera movement from right to left or from left to right) to survey large areas dominated by the Jews. This form of image deployment was described by cultural researcher Nurith Gertz as "optimistic geography" (Gertz 2004: 38–39). Since the Land of Israel was the real protagonist of films in the 1940s, very few scenes are set in closed spaces. Most events, even the most dramatic ones, which naturally might have occurred in more intimate spaces, are filmed outdoors against a backdrop of fields, trails, and roads that overlook the agricultural landscape. The ones that are filmed indoors focus on advances in the arts, crafts, science, and culture.

Consistent with this trend, many scenes in *Adamah* are set outside. The camera shows the wonders of Ben Shemen: the open paths, the blooming flowers, the sunny agricultural space. The scenes portray prosperity, and the children of Ben Shemen are seen running outside, exercising, and studying. The character of

Benjamin, wandering aimlessly along the youth village paths, becomes a vehicle for introducing this agricultural world to the audience. Benjamin's integration is symbolized by the connection to the soil. His transformation becomes apparent as he pumps water from the ground and his final integration in the closing scenes is portrayed through this connection with the land. These scenes also depict the work that remains to be done; the reclamation of desolate places (seemingly devoid of Arab settlements) to which the young orphans are sent to settle. They work with tremendous strength and determination to clear away boulder after boulder with their bare hands, as they open the way to prosperity and new settlement.

During the film, the camera lingers on lengthy scenes of life in the children's village, focusing on the importance of the soil in the healing process. The narration explains that "centuries ago, the Jews were a peasant people. The misfortunes of exile cut them off from connection with the soil. It is only natural that their return to Palestine should be a return to the soil" (Adamah).

Moreover, the Israeli version is longer than the American version (75 minutes compared to 45 in the American version) and creates a more drawn-out transformation process to emphasize the importance of the land and its people in this change. In this narrative, Benjamin's recovery is attributed to the patience and warmth of the people, and the healing powers of working the land. Each scene in Benjamin's process of change describes another wondrous aspect of his new Eretz-Israeli life through education, culture, and work. As in other Eretz-Israeli Zionist films of that era, the survivor and their rehabilitation are used as a backdrop for showcasing the extent of Zionism in the Land of Israel (Gertz 2004: 18–37; Steir-Livny 2009: 7–50). Thus, the first time we see a smile on Benjamin's face is when he sees Miriam, another resident of the children's village. He also smiles when he hears the children's orchestra rehearse. Then he is taught about the Maccabees,[19] leads the torch race on Chanukah, joins the Sabbath ceremonies, learns to work the land, pumps water from the ground, and takes part in the Shavuot[20] harvest ceremony. The narrator mentions that time has passed between scenes, highlighting that this is a long process which relies on the powers of the land and its inhabitants.

The Hadassah organization had a different perspective on the right way to approach the American audience: the organization's aim was to ensure the continuation of donations and to combat "compassion fatigue". Hadassah women were aware that the presence or absence of media attention could be a matter of life and death for populations in distress. The media do not alter the importance of a humanitarian crisis but can change the world's attitude towards it. It is hard to retain public interest in stories of difficult and ongoing catastrophes because the next news event, the next crisis, always diverts public attention.

Implanting the Holocaust in the American public's consciousness was even more vital because it did not occur on the American soil (Moeller 1999). The images and reports about the Holocaust disappeared relatively quickly from the general press in the aftermath of World War II, both because the Holocaust ceased to be "fresh news", and because of the natural inclination of the public to distance themselves from problems on other continents. Moreover, the new division into two opposing world blocs influenced the American public's emotional distance from the trauma. As the US entered the Cold War and West Germany changed from an enemy to an ally in the war against communism, there was no desire to remind the public of the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime only a few years ago.

Members of American Jewish organizations were forced to face these realities in attempting to raise the awareness of Americans concerning the plight of Holocaust survivors. The reediting of the film by the Hadassah Film Department included changes that reflected Jewish American culture, i.e., what the Hadassah women thought would be most effective. The title was changed from *Adamah* to *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day*. This not only signaled a change in semantics, but also a change in the essence of the narrative itself. The Land of Israel was no longer the protagonist but was replaced by an individual who dreamed of a better future. The title is actually a paraphrase of the famous last line in the film *Gone with the Wind*, one of America's most popular historical dramas, produced in 1939, which featured a heroine enduring tragedy, yet maintaining her optimism that her fate would be different. This marked a change of focus from the healing power of the land to the power of the individual.

Both versions used an American narrator to achieve identification but did it in a different way. The Israeli version featured the narration of Sam Butler, an American radio anchor and former sports star, who accompanies Benjamin's journey as a third person spectator. In the American version, Jimmie Lipton, a young American actor, tells Benjamin's story after his rehabilitation, as he looks back on his first days in Ben Shemen. Benjamin's interpretation of the events reveals a complex process in which he is also an active participant in his transformation. He is not portrayed as a passive figure, dependent on the kindness of his new country and the healing power of its soil, but as a traumatized teen who must harness his own determination, with the help of others, to achieve complete recovery. The voice-over of Benjamin tells his story in retrospect, now that he is a "new Jew" and is capable of reflecting on the adolescent he used to be. It describes his inner world to the audience. Through the voice-over, the audience learns about a wounded and traumatized individual who shares his experiences and feelings, his fears, anxieties, and insecurities as compared to the free children of his new country, such as his initial suspicions about the

good intentions of the other young people, his misunderstanding of their excitement at greeting him and the other newcomers. This is not an introduction to the village, but a preview of Benjamin's state of mind and his confusion about everything that happens to him upon his arrival.

For example, in the Israeli version, when he gets to Ben Shemen, Benjamin appears fearful, and is unwilling to talk to the residents. The narrator in the Israeli version states that he is different from the other children. The narrator explains: "You didn't even remember what home feels like. 'Home' to you was Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Theresienstadt. Concentration camps. You didn't talk and you didn't want to be talked to. All you wanted was to be left alone." In the American version, Benjamin tells the audience about his fears, and delusions, which anchor the main theme of the film – the journey of the individual towards salvation. "When I got off [the bus], somebody tried to take my things. 'No, I said. No.'" What was described in the Israeli version in the third person by a narrator is seen in the American version through Benjamin's point of view. The voice-over mellows Benjamin's harsh image and enables viewers to relate to what he is going through: "The other [children] walked across the grounds like sheep … It is a habit you get when you live in a concentration camp. They just sat where they were told. They were used to it." Still in survival mode, Benjamin wonders if there is barbed wire in this village. Will it be hard to escape? As he puts it, to him this is "just another concentration camp". Another scene in which Benjamin is shown hiding bread differs greatly in its relatability. The narrator in the Israeli version explains the boy's actions as a general comment relating to all survivors ("There might not be any bread tomorrow. There might not even be a tomorrow") while the American voice-over of Benjamin personalizes the action. "Now I have bread," he says with excitement. The use of voice-over in the American version gives the character of Benjamin a depth which is absent in the Israeli version. It enables the audience to become familiar with the young survivor and to internalize his thoughts, fears, nightmares, and dreams. The voice-over creates intimacy and enables more audience identification than a formal summary told in the third person.

THE FENCE SCENE

The Israeli version includes two scenes in which Holocaust memories are acted out visually. The first one occurs when Benjamin is wandering down the paths of the children's village and suddenly hears a song that was sung in the concentration camp. As he comes closer to the singers, he suddenly has a flashback. The camera shows a documentary footage of a barbed wire fence,

as a weeping survivor shows a number tattooed on her arm.[21] The camera then returns to Benjamin in the present, who runs away. The second scene takes place at a fence in the children's village. In the Israeli version, the fence scene takes place during the first part of the film and is meant to illustrate a crucial transformation. Benjamin has been asked to go with other children to work in a field, but this kind of labor has no Zionist meaning for him, since he sees no value in the soil. For Benjamin, digging the ground reminds him of digging graves in the concentration camp. As the narrator says, "Work is work. Barbed wire is barbed wire." The barbed wire acts as a trigger for Benjamin, who has a flashback to the barbed wire fence in one of the camps. The image of a Nazi whipping a prisoner is presented, and as the whip strikes, Benjamin flinches visibly, as though he is being struck in the present. In a sudden act of rage he starts to tear down the fence, beating it hard with his ax. The cows stampede, ruining the field. Benjamin falls to the ground, as the narrator explains: "What is a nightmare, and what is reality? When does a terrible dream of the past break off and the actuality of the present begin?" As the camera focuses on the number tattooed on his arm, the narrator adds: "Past, present, future. Everything is so confused in your brain. And the others? You have ruined their work. They will never understand." During the next sequence which shows the celebration of Chanukah, the narrator refers to the previous scene: "You were wrong, Benjamin," he says, "they do understand and they want to help – teachers and children alike." With this realization, and Benjamin's acceptance of help, the children and the staff together guide Benjamin down his long road towards his eventual healing.

As noted, the American version of the film is shorter. Many scenes of the village showing the children in groups dancing, running, studying, and working were cut or considerably shortened. The Hadassah women focused more on the individual and less on his surroundings. The fence scene takes place in the middle of the film (min. 20). Viewers hear Benjamin telling his story, justifying his violent behavior, and explaining why his memories made him act out: "I saw them [the children working] and thought: 'forced labor again' … The cows scared me. The sight of those bent backs was like touching a raw nerve. Fresh earth reminded me of just one thing – graves." Since it is the older, rehabilitated Benjamin whose voice-over the viewers hear, naturally some of his memories are fuzzy or have been blocked out. He recalls that he did not want to eat with the other children who were taking a lunch break ("I didn't trust them") and when he passed by the barbed wire fence, he broke down. Documentary shots of a concentration camp's barbed wire are shown and the camera rolls in a loop, combining past and present, as Benjamin describes what was happening in his traumatized mind.

> *Suddenly something hit me, right in the back. It was awful. I swear to you I saw the camp, the wire; I touched it, I felt it like something in a nightmare. The barn behind the wire became a death camp and my turn was next… down it came, the whip, the whip.*

The scenes in which he damages the fence are explained as his hallucinatory revenge:

> *And then, it was a miracle that happened. I was going to fight back … it's different now; this time I'll kill you … I'm strong, I'm young, I can escape … then the cows came through the hole in the fence … and I hit them too.*

He also explains how the outburst ended:

> *It was the smell that really got me out of the fog. I looked down and I saw what I had done. They saw it too [the other children] and for the first time I saw it through their eyes. God was good to me, Miriam. I, who was 15 for the first time in seven years, bowed my head and wept.*

After this catharsis, he is able to begin his emotional journey towards a full recovery.

Freud considered melancholy and mourning to be two contradictory forms of coping with trauma: an individual in a melancholic state identifies with the lost object, obscuring the differences between the individual and the object, thereby damaging the ego. In contrast, the mourner undergoes a healthy process of internalization; he or she can deal with the past by creating distance from it. Mourning brings with it the possibility of starting a new life, and any interruption to this process can be harmful. Freud considered one of the central concepts of trauma to be 'repetition compulsion'; i.e., returning to a trauma while blurring the boundaries between past and present, and thus re-experiencing it. This repetition causes suffering and works against the desires of the sufferer (Freud 1978; 2002: 138–171).

Freud's students broadened the debate on trauma and its immediate and later symptoms such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which entered the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) in 1982. It is considered an extremely common mental disturbance among people who have undergone traumatic incidents. Its sufferers continue to experience the traumatic events even after they are over. One of its main characteristics is that the trauma is re-lived by the individual through intrusive, recurrent recollections of the past in the present (PTSD 2013: 271–280).

Drawing on the Freudian tradition, Dominick LaCapra's work on trauma distinguishes between two forms of reactions of people who underwent traumatic

events. The first is "acting out": the past is not construed as a series of remote events that are long gone or a distant memory but is reborn and experienced as though integral to present-day social and cultural life. The second form is "working-through": clear boundaries are maintained between past and present, and there is awareness of the differences between "then" and "now", with less identification with the assimilation of the traumatic period. While there is also a return to the past in "working-through", it is accompanied by conscious control of the past, maintaining a critical distance from it, and viewing it from a distant perspective (LaCapra 2000: 87–90).

During the 1940s, when so little was known about trauma and the acting out of traumatic memories, the two versions of the fence scene were rare examples of an attempt to explain the enormous disparities in survivors' reactions to trauma. The American version of the film is far less visually impressive, since many of Lerski's pathos-ridden heavy montages are missing. However, unlike the Israeli version, the American version is one of the only creative endeavors of this period, which enabled the audience to enter into the traumatic turmoil emanating from a survivor's soul. Benjamin's voice-over gives the audience the ability to look into his inner being, and also hints at a change he himself enacted: he has not healed through the help of the people around him as in the Israeli version, but has made the transformation himself. According to the American version, this transformation is based on his realization that he was mistaken. When he says: "I saw it through their eyes," he is finally looking at himself and his situation critically. For the first time, he understands the consequences of acting out, and begins to change his behavior. He also recognizes the boundaries between past and present, which represents a big step in working through his trauma.

THE CLOSING SCENES

The Chanukah scene, which appeared in the middle of the film in *Adamah* and marked the beginning of Benjamin's rehabilitation process, became the closing scene in *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day* (Mandel n.d.; Deblinger 2014: 121–129). The settlement-building scenes, which formed a lengthy conclusion in the Israeli version, were shortened and given less prominence in the American version, where they simply marked another step in his social-emotional recovery. These changes epitomize the differing agendas of Eretz-Israeli and American Zionism. Eretz-Israelis focused on the land as a Zionist political statement of a society influenced by socialistic ideas, so that the final step in Benjamin's rehabilitation was the building of a new settlement.

The land as a healing power is presented as the answer to all of Benjamin's problems. The narrator assures Benjamin and the audience that "there are no more memories to hold you back", as the smiling young man dances in the sun with the other young survivors. The concluding scene is the final triumph of this narrative, since according to the film, after the UN partition plan and the beginning of the 1948 war, young people from Ben Shemen set out to build a new settlement. Here the focus is not on Benjamin. Instead, a vast majority of the scenes are group shots. Benjamin is seen as a part of a group, a process, part of a project larger than all of them together.

Lerski was a socialist and the ideas of a group return to the land, visualization and fetishization of physical work coincided with the Zionist project (Mandel n.d.). "Your lives there will be dangerous and tough," says the guide to the youngsters before they leave Ben Shemen to find the new settlement, but no one flees. The camera follows Benjamin and his friends as they happily load trunks on a truck on their way to the "hill of Youth Aliya". The camera follows the truck, as it traverses empty lands, as if nothing in the country exists but Ben Shemen and the new settlement they will build. As they drive to their destination, the theme song of the film is heard in the background. It is Abraham Brody's *Adamah*, which glorifies the soil as the center of being. "Earth, earth, you are our mother. You are the mother of all men and of all life!" The narrator focuses on the wasteland: "It will take hard work to build a nation out of this wilderness." He describes how they will transform the malarial swamps into a country, and the stony hills will become a home. "But you are not alone. There are others on the bus, and other buses, and men, women, and children all over the world." The narrator thus recruits the audience, turning them into full participants in the project. There are those who will do the work with their hands, and those who will make it happen with their money.

At no point in the very lengthy "new hill" sequence do the youth rest. They are in constant movement, lifting boulders, walking from place to place, riding horses. The narrator points out the hard labor, the sacrifice. For him, this sacrifice is a given. "It won't be easy … there will be disappointments and defeats. A nation, like a child, cannot be born without pain. This is your challenge, and you are ready for it." The camera pans over the wilderness and then turns to a series of close-ups of huge boulders that must be uprooted. The multiple close-ups of the attempts to move the rocks are combined with low-angle shots of the young men straining in their labor, their muscular arms and their hands grasping hard as they try to move the rocks. These shots are edited as a montage to create the image of a joint venture of which Benjamin is a part. He is, however, not the center. The land is the protagonist and it receives the most screen time. "Each stone that you drag away conquers a new piece of home-

land," the narrator explains to Benjamin and to the viewers. "Your hands are bruised and your muscles ache, but you don't even notice because you know you are building something; something no one is going to take away from you." Their tenacity is reflected in the long screen time. There are no shortcuts. "Rock after rock, day after day, for a hundred days." The camera is in constant movement through a series of montages which combine pans of the new wall being built, tilts of digging in the ground and photomontages of the youngsters and the land. The soil is visualized as part of the body, of themselves. "Your elders have conquered the Jewish state. It is your job to keep it," says the narrator after the 100th day, explaining the role of the youngsters in the building of the Jewish state.

The only time Benjamin stops to rest is when other youth from Ben Shemen come to visit him after one hundred days of constant work, and even then, it is only a short moment of respite. He receives a message from Miriam, which contains only one sentence: "A man has only as much heaven above his head as he has earth under his feet." This is the same motto he saw Miriam writing on a big poster during his first days in Ben Shemen, but at that point he had not understood. She had promised him that one day it would become clear. And indeed it has. As he reads the sentence he has now come to understand, he jumps to his feet once again and continues to plow the field. The camera focuses on the plowed ground, on close-ups of barefoot children's feet walking straight and sure, and then turns into a superimposition of the feet and the soil, as the narrator repeats the above sentence, explaining that this will become the home for many other children like Benjamin. The film ends with a superimposition of Benjamin and his friends, groups of new children coming to the new settlement, and the soil, while the Hatikva anthem[22] is heard in the soundtrack. In the final shot, the camera tilts from the ground to the sky. This is not the story of an individual, but of the land itself. Benjamin is part of a generation who has been healed by the soil and whose destiny is to work the land, and even sacrifice himself for the soil. The nation has won.

Whereas pioneering was very impressive in the eyes of American Jews, socialism was not, but Jewish tradition was something they could actually relate to. Thus, in the American version, the Chanukah scenes end the film as they represent the ultimate transition from darkness to light, from Holocaust to revival. The holiday carries with it the symbol of transition from spiritual persecution to religious and political freedom, but above all, the torch relay signifies one boy's journey from Holocaust to redemption. The American version focuses on the triumph of an individual, which culminates in Benjamin's selection to head the traditional torch relay (from Modi'in where the Maccabees are buried to Ben-Shemen). The camera focuses on him leading the way for

the other young people who are running with him, holding a torch and lighting the dark path. He runs towards the village as the older Benjamin recalls the transformation he has undergone, and his new awareness:

> *It was as if a great door had opened to me. I said to myself: you who have no father are now a son in Israel. Kindle the light and run, Benjamin! Run! Run from the hill of sorrow and leave it behind you … hold your head high. They all seem to be calling out to me: 'Run for your village, Benjamin. We need you, Benjamin. Run for your country. You are not alone. Behind you lies the blackness of our history; before you a new life. You are the first. So run, Benjamin. Up there is the door, up there is your victory.' Now I knew it was a race for life.*

When he gets to Ben Shemen, Benjamin enters a hall. The children, assembled in two parallel lines, stand in the shadows, while the light is concentrated in the middle, where Benjamin strides with his torch. Even in this scene he is visually an individual. He recounts: "I, too, now fit like a fragment. A small stone in an ancient pattern." The camera, however, continues to emphasize his individuality, as it closes in on his face, as he sings and looks toward the horizon. The American version ends with expressions of gratitude to God, not to the soil. "Thank you, God," says Benjamin, after placing the torch in the hall "for myself and for Israel". This is a completely different narrative than the secular Israeli version, which turned the land into something sacred, and made people the agents of change. This switch from divine to human supremacy also appeared in many other Israeli contexts during this time (Shapira 1998: 415–441). By contrast, Greenwald included segments that Jewish American viewers would recognize, such as the Chanukah blessing. In this way, she sought to connect the more "foreign" concepts, such as the idea of a collective children's village, to more familiar Jewish elements, thus bringing the audience closer to the narrative. In order to highlight the prayer, it appears twice, once as a child lights the candles and chants the blessing in Hebrew, and a second time in Benjamin's voice-over as he repeats it, this time in English. The "Maoz Tzur" song is treated similarly: the camera pans over the children singing it in Hebrew, then Benjamin can be heard translating it into English. "Never again will it be dark for me," he says. The Israeli version concludes with a series of group shots that include Benjamin, and which emphasize the importance of the collective building of new settlements, whereas the American version concludes with a shot of Benjamin standing in the forefront, near the menorah, while Ben-Shemen's children are in the background. Here too, he is part of the collective, but he has maintained his individuality. The camera zooms in on his face as he sings. The individual has won.

TWO NARRATIVES OF THE SAME TRAUMA

The comparison of the two versions of the same story about a traumatized Holocaust survivor highlights the differing perspectives of American and Eretz-Israeli Zionist organizations in the 1940s with respect to trauma and rehabilitation. The Jewish organizations in the two countries affected public opinion in their countries and in turn were affected by them. The differing circumstances and environments in which they operated created two distinct narratives of the same trauma.

The Israeli version was a national narrative that focused on the land, while the Jewish American plot focused on the individual, and the personal strengths that played a role in the transition from physical and spiritual enslavement to freedom. These changes are expressed in the titles of each film, the narration/voice-over, and the editing of the scenes. These differences reflect two Zionist representations of the same trauma and two different approaches to dealing with it: one that relies on the community and the land and the other that relies on the individual.

In a nutshell, these two traumatic narratives capture the differences between prominent myths of mainstream Israeli and American Jews in the 1940s; namely, the "American Dream" which focuses on individuals and their ability to realize their dream as compared to the Eretz-Israeli myth of the transition from the "diasporic Jew" to the "New Jew" through the succor of the land and its people.

These differences also emerge when comparing other Zionist films produced in the Land of Israel to Zionist productions in the USA between 1945 and 1948 (Steir-Livny 2018). It would be worthwhile to explore whether these separate narratives continued to be represented in the 1950s, after the goal of the founding of the State of Israel had been achieved.

NOTES

[1] For the American version see: The Spielberg Jewish Film Archive: *Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day*, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iXkhML3MHk, last accessed on 21 April 2021. The Israeli version is available on CD.

[2] "The Forgotten Children", Hadassah File. The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[3] The board of Ben Shemen to Leibush, Kvutzat Geva, 6 September 1946, Adamah File. The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[4] Ben Shemen Board to Exelrod, 21 March 1947, Adamah File. The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[5] Including France, Belgium, Italy, Hungary, Switzerland, Sweden, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, South Africa, and others. See Internal Memorandum 1949, Adamah File. The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[6] Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[7] Telegram from Lehmann to Kramersky, May 25, 1948, RG 1 (Youth Aliyah). Carton 40, Box 2. Dr. Siegfried Lehmann 1946–1948. Hadassah Archive, NY.

[8] Newspaper Review, The Israel Defense Forces and Defense Establishment Archive (IDFA), S75/1629.

[9] Application form to the Film Review Board, Israel State Archives, September 7, 1948. MB 22/3605.

[10] Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[11] Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[12] Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[13] Siegfried Lehmann to the Hadassah chairman, March 2, 1948. Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[14] Miriam Warburg, Youth Aliyah branch in London, to George Landauer, July 26, 1948. IDFA, S75/1629; Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive; Promotional pamphlet *Tomorrow is a Wonderful Day*, undated, IDFA, KH4/B/5356; Siegfried Lehman to Hazel Greenwald, July 21, 1947 RG 1 (Youth Aliyah), Carton 40, Box 2. Dr. Siegfried Lehman 1946–1948, Hadassah Archive, NY; RG 1 (Youth Aliyah), Carton 40, Box 2. Dr. Siegfried Lehman 1946–1948. Hadassah Archive, NY.

[15] Adamah Catalog, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive, p. 19.

[16] Articles from April 1949, Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[17] Tomorrow's a Wonderful Day. *Zionist Review*, June 3, 1949, London, IDFA, KH4/B/5356.

[18] *Adamah*, booklet accompanying the film, 2010, the Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[19] A group of Jewish rebels who freed Judea from the rule of the Seleucid Empire and founded an independent Jewish state between 167 to 37 BCE.

[20] Jewish holiday which marks the wheat harvest.

[21] The footage was taken from a Soviet documentary of Auschwitz and Majdanek. See a letter to the USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, March 13, 1947. Adamah File, The Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive.

[22] National anthem of Israel.

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CARD INDEX OF FORMER LATVIAN SSR KGB AGENTS: TRAUMA AND THE PATH TO PUBLIC RECONCILIATION

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Abstract: In August 1991, the Republic of Latvia took over the documents of the former Latvian SSR KGB, including the card index of KGB agents. At that time, by postponing the card index publication, the political authorities made the issue of former KGB agents a hostage of their political interests. Discussion on the fate of the card index continued in Latvian public sphere over the next 27 years. The stance of the political elite, which found support in some groups of society, was opposed to the publication of the card index, being concerned about a possible witch-hunt and psychological trauma of the people mentioned in the card index as well as their relatives. However, as a result of public pressure, after lengthy indecision, the card index was made public in December 2018.

Unfortunately, the publication of the card index has offered only a formal solution to the issue of the former KGB agents, and the expected results have been achieved from the aspect of neither historical truth nor public reconciliation. Only a small number of people mentioned in the card index have admitted the fact of their cooperation and just a few have expressed public regret. In turn, after 27 years of political elite's hesitancy, most of the KGB persecution victims accepted the publication of the card index in silence. However, it is clear that denial and silence are not the way to public reconciliation and comprehension of trauma. Those few attempts to make one's experience public show that in today's situation people can seek reconciliation only with themselves and within themselves.

Keywords: card index of former KGB agents, 'Cheka Bags', Latvian Government Commission for KGB Research, Latvian SSR, trauma, victims of the persecution of the KGB

In December 2018, 27 years after the restoration of the country's independence, the card index of the former agents of the Committee for State Security (KGB) of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic (Latvian SSR) was published. This was an event that had been prepared and debated in Latvian society for a long time. There were several expectations in society associated with the

publication of the card index; first of all, the hope that this would put an end to vague guesses and the legacy of the Soviet regime. At the same time, in the future, the publication of the card index could have allowed the consolidation of certain values in society (Fedosejeva 2019), and, first and foremost, the belief in justice and openness. Today, more than a year after the card index was made public, we can say that some of these expectations have been fulfilled, but the principal assessment of the recent past has not taken place, and the expected results have not been achieved, neither in terms of historical truth, nor public reconciliation.

The main stumbling block, in this case, is that both the political authorities of Latvia and the Latvian society lack the will to clearly formulate their position. The uncertainty of the political authorities is, first of all, determined by the complex conflict between the condemnation of collaborationism and the fact that the card index of the former KGB agents contains the names of several people who belonged to the country's political elite in the 1990s. The restraint of society, in turn, is determined by a wider range of circumstances. The main thing here is the historical experience of society. Latvian society in the twentieth century experienced a number of dramatic historical upheavals: two world wars, two occupations, and two mass deportations. This has made the experience of trauma a permanent and even routine element of society's collective memory, accompanied by a number of features. First, these many shocks have caused some degree of indifference and alienation in the public opinion, not only as a condition for physical self-preservation, but also as a condition for maintaining mental health. Secondly, the frequent change of political regimes and, consequently, the model of heroes/traitors (perpetrators/victims) not only split society, but also fragmented its historical memory, so that in many cases it is difficult to talk about a unified public view of the past.[1] This state of affairs is further complicated by the national heterogeneity of Latvian society, in which different national groups have distinctly different views on events.[2] Due to all the mentioned circumstances, a situation has arisen in which the issue of the former KGB agents has found only a formal solution with the publication of the card index, but its balanced evaluation has not occurred.

The aim of this study is to find out how substantial the trauma discourse was in the discussions before the publication of the card index and in public judgments already after the publication, and why the publication of the card index failed to bring about public reconciliation. To answer these questions, on the one hand, it is salient to trace the major conflicts of opinions and arguments that were expressed in public discussions prior to the publication of the card index. The focus here is on the balance between political and emotional-psychological arguments, such as justice, regret, purification, and forgiveness,

which were used in these discussions. This ratio, albeit conditionally, would allow us to judge to what extent Latvian political authorities[3] and society as a whole were ready to accept the traumatic experience of an individual and a certain group of society in the common stance of society. On the other hand, it is no less important to find out how the people whose names were mentioned in the card index positioned themselves and their former activities after the card index was made public, and how the revelations of former agents were perceived in society. Researching these various aspects, the study seeks to confirm the hypothesis that the decisions of political authorities about the fate of the card index of the former KGB agents were dictated by political interests, using other arguments, including trauma arguments, only to cover up these interests, whereas the trauma of this historical experience in society's collective memory is not yet fully conscious.

In order to understand the various arguments used in the discussions, analysed in this study, it is necessary – slightly ahead of the sequence of their presentation – to agree on some factual issues and terminology used. Firstly, the documents seized from the former Latvian SSR KGB were in fact several sets of documents, the most important of which were the alphabetical card index of agents and the registration logs of agents. Data on the number of agent cards in the alphabetical card index had changed several times over time;[4] when the card index was made public, it turned out that it contained more than seven thousand agent cards. In addition to agents' personal data and the chosen nickname, each card also contains information about the specific department of the KGB that had recruited the agent. Unfortunately, in most cases there is a lack of documentary evidence of the agents' specific actions (or inaction), which makes judgement impossible. Secondly, when assessing the activities of the former KGB agents, it is necessary to take into account the fact that the tasks of the KGB covered both the internal security and external intelligence functions of the Soviet Union (USSR). Therefore, in the card index of the former KGB agents there are both external intelligence agents, whose status was usually associated with 'cloak-and-dagger' heroes, and regular 'kitchen conversations' reporters, most often associated with snitches. And finally, all the people whose names are mentioned in this study as former Latvian SSR KGB agents, are documented according to the published card index of agents, without claiming their cooperation with the KGB to be an indisputable fact.

TRAUMA PROBLEMATICS AND RESEARCH APPROACH

The issues of the agents of the state security of the former Soviet regime and the evaluation of their activities have remained in the public spotlight throughout the years after the restoration of Latvia's independence. The topicality of this issue is reflected in scientific research and media publications, as well as in several works of art. Among the scientific studies the publications by the Latvian Government Commission for KGB Research can be noted. Jānis Taurēns's research on public polemics over the KGB's documentary heritage deserves more attention here (Taurēns 2015). The list of works of art includes the documentary film *Lustrum* (2018), the Latvian television film *Atmodas labirintā* (In the Labyrinth of Awakening) (2020), and the New Riga Theatre production *Vēstures izpētes komisija* (History Research Commission) (2019).[5]

The present study differs from the previous ones in that it is the first work that attempts to analyse the issue of the relationship between the former Latvian SSR KGB agents and victims of persecution of the KGB from the trauma perspective. The difficulties here are, above all, caused by the fact that the trauma problematics in Latvia is a new research topic, and only in 2019 the first monograph dedicated to this issue was published, titled *Totalitārisma traumu izpausmes Baltijas prozā* (Manifestations of Totalitarianism Traumas in Baltic Prose) (Gūtmane 2019). However, the problem of trauma has been in the focus of researchers in the world for a long time and the number of works dedicated to it is significant. In the context of this study, special mention should be made of the study by Gilad Hirschberger (2018), in which differences of opinions in the perception and identification of collective trauma by victims and perpetrators are presented in a concentrated form. However, the number of studies dedicated to the activities of the former agents of state security in the so-called Soviet Bloc states in Eastern Europe is not extensive. The exception is Germany, where the dramatic consequences and victims of the former Stasi (state security service of the German Democratic Republic) actions have received more attention, coining a new concept in psychiatry: the Stasi persecution syndrome.

The main factor that has determined my approach to this issue is three major limitations: the very small number of published memories, the stingy and impassive, even 'dry' description of human experiences in these memories, and, finally, the complex and multifaceted understanding of trauma in this case. In order to avoid misunderstandings, it is important to emphasize that the reference to the small number of published memories refers to those publications which cover the activities of the Latvian SSR KGB agents, rather than the activities of the KGB in general, for which the number of dedicated memories and scientific research is much higher.

In the list of these memories, from the victims' point of view, those of the former Prime Minister of Latvia, Māris Gailis, deserve special attention: he briefly describes the unsuccessful attempt of his recruitment in 1986 and the subsequent persecution, carried out by the KGB, not only by questioning his colleagues, but also by spreading various slanderous rumours about him (Gailis 1997: 174–176). What makes his story meaningful from the point of view of our interest is the KGB's persecution formulated in it, pointing out that this often took place behind a person's back and they did not even know about it. Also, a biographical work dedicated to the well-known Latvian dissident Gunārs Astra (1931–1988) can be mentioned here (Ruks 2011).

The list of narratives of the former KGB agents includes the memories of Jānis Mazulāns, who fled to Sweden in 1960, and the autobiographical story of Juris Dimitris, a former double agent of the USSR KGB and the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) of the Federal Republic of Germany, about his activities in the 1960s. Their memories, although different in content, are united by a similar view of cooperation with the KGB. Mazulāns, describing his emotional experiences when agreeing to the cooperation proposal – to this "dirty and shameful work" – immediately adds that he could not reject this offer and "no one allowed him to give it up" (Melnais 1993: 7).On the other hand, Dimitris, who clearly postulated in the introduction to his memories that everyone has their own morality and he likes "pragmatic, rational morality" (Dimitris 2019: 10), remembers how he did not pass the competition at the Law Faculty of the State University of Latvia at the beginning of his agent career and complained about it to his KGB curator, after which it turned out that his name had "miraculously" appeared in the list of admitted students (ibid.: 33–34). The judgments of both these former KGB agents clearly show that they accepted cooperation with the KGB as a precondition for their career opportunities and certain privileges, including the possibility to travel abroad; this cooperation did not seem to be impossible or unacceptable to them, but they rather saw it as an understandable (and inevitable) choice at that time.

However, there were more than two sides in the model of relations between KGB agents and victims of persecution by the KGB. A clear example here is the story of musician, poet, and painter Valdis Atāls (real name Vladimirs Šatrovskis): arrested for political reasons and convicted in the late 1970s under the Criminal Code article on banditry, in imprisonment he agreed to cooperate with the KGB as an agent (Atāls 2018). His story, in which the entanglements of the Soviet era and complex human choices appear particularly sharply, shows that motives for people's cooperation with the KGB were different. And, at the same time, his judgments about cooperating with the KGB point to one important guideline in evaluating the activities of KGB agents: even in Soviet

times – no matter how "unfair and immoral the whole system was"[6] – it was everyone's own choice and responsibility to agree or disagree to cooperate with the KGB.[7]

The different human experience in this case makes the comprehension of trauma complex and multi-layered. If we are guided by the concept of trauma that links trauma to deeply disturbing and cataclysmic events that threaten the integrity of the individual, then it must be acknowledged that each of these people had a different and very personal onset of their trauma. In turn, for society as a whole, such trauma was, rather, the publication of the agents' card index, which unexpectedly forced to look from a new perspective at the people mentioned in the card index. In addition, the issue of trauma in this case is even more complex due to complicated relations in the perpetrator/victim model or what Primo Levi (1959) defines as the 'grey zone': the already mentioned story of Atāls shows that a person could have been in both roles at different stages of life.

However, the main problem is that neither in memories, nor in public discussions about the activities of KGB agents and their evaluation, with a few exceptions, this is not spoken of in the discourse of trauma. Just like individuals, society as a whole also formulates its position mainly through pragmatic intellective arguments and motives, and very rarely talks about it as specific psychological and emotional experience and trauma. By way of illustration, from the descriptions of the activities of eighteen former KGB agents, which were published in a series of articles under the heading "Bags Are Open" on the web platform *Delfi* after the publication of the card index, only one person named in the agents' reports considered the consequences of the agents' actions 'dramatic'. This impassive pragmatism can be explained by several circumstances. Perhaps, part of the explanation lies in the fact that the persecution carried out by the KGB often remained invisible to the public – in the 1970s–1980s there were no longer deportations or arrests, but broken careers and restrictions on professional activity – and today public opinion considers people who would position themselves as victims of persecution by the KGB losers seeking explanation for their career failures. But perhaps an even more important reason, with rare exceptions, for people's judgments not to formulate the understanding and content of trauma is that there is no such tradition in the Latvian public space of the issue of persecution by the KGB (unlike deportations). Media interest is more focused on the depiction of events than on experiences, so there is a lack of encouragement to express these emotional experiences in public. Using an analogy, we can say that Latvian society is in a 'childish state' as concerns the issue of former KGB agents' activities and the experience of victims of persecution by the KGB: it is clear that society is hurt but does not know how to express

it in words. Therefore, much remains unsaid and unformulated in these stories and the main trap for the researcher, in this situation, is the temptation to replace the unspoken with their own assumptions.

All of the above creates a certain dualism for the researcher: on the one hand, recognizing that, as a personal affair, trauma of the former KGB agents and KGB persecution victims is unquestionable; on the other hand, we have to admit that the small number of published memories makes it difficult to generalize and systemize these trauma experiences. A significant addition to documenting human memories is several series of articles published in electronic media after the publication of the card index. One of them, which deserves more attention, is a series of articles under the heading "Bags Are Open" on the web platform *Delfi*, which, based on the published KGB documents, is dedicated to the stories of individual agents and persons mentioned in agents' reports. A similar goal has the interview series "Self-Lustration", in which several well-known intellectuals recall and explain their relations with the KGB. However, in most cases, these publications, too, preserve the same emotionally meagre assessment of events. This limited amount of specific research material has determined the approach of the present study to the problem of trauma, first by focusing on the reflection of different views and judgments brought about by the publication of the card index of the former KGB agents, and then by looking at the stories of the former KGB agents and victims of the KGB persecution from a phenomenological perspective, noting the signs of trauma experience mentioned in them, but, at the same time, guided by the view that these stories cannot be generalized.

'CHEKA BAGS': A TICKET TO FREEDOM OR PANDORA'S BOX?

The card index of the former Latvian SSR KGB agents was taken over in August 1991, immediately after the failure of the August Coup and the complete restoration of Latvia's independence (Johansons 2006: 146–150; Miķelsone 2019a). When the card index was taken over, the agents' cards were displaced in bags, so in later discussions and media publications the card index got a new name: 'Cheka Bags'. It was at this time – during the takeover of the former KGB property and documents – that in great haste and deliberately created chaos, most likely, the first and largest 'cleaning' of the KGB agents' card index took place (Šāberte 2006: 303–313). The least that could be blamed on the Latvian political authorities in this situation was negligence.

The first practical consequences for the use of the card index data followed in 1992. In October 1992, Latvia's 5th Saeima (Parliament of the Republic

of Latvia) Election Law was promulgated, Article 21 of which required each candidate to sign a statement certifying that he or she is not or had not been a staff member or agent of the KGB (Taurēns 2017: 79). After the parliamentary elections on 5–6 June 1993, the agenda of the Saeima included the issue of five new deputies accused of cooperation with the KGB. Among these five, two names were better known: Edvīns Inkēns was one of the most popular Latvian journalists in the late 1980s, who produced and hosted the weekly programme "Labvakar" (Good Evening) on the Latvian television, and physician Georgs Andrejevs was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia from 1992. In response to the revelations, on 28 May 1994, Andrejevs published an open letter in the newspaper *Diena* (The Day). In the letter he acknowledged the fact of cooperating with the KGB, explaining his consent to cooperate with professional career interests (at that time he was the chief anaesthesiologist of the republic); as the main moral justification for his actions, Andrejevs mentioned the fact that the reports he wrote to the KGB concerned only his professional occupation and that he did not write reports about his colleagues (Andrejevs 1994). On 7 June of the same year, Andrejevs resigned as minister and surrendered his mandate of the Saeima deputy. Andrejevs's public confession was accepted as an action worthy of an 'honourable man' by society. The other four new deputies denied the fact of their cooperation with the KGB, and their cases were considered in court. All court proceedings ended with a verdict that no evidence was found of these people's deliberate cooperation with the KGB. These trials marked the beginning of the practice of establishing the fact of cooperation with the KGB through the courts, and over the next ten years, from 1994 to December 2015, the court of first instance heard 298 such cases (Stukāns 2015: 117).

The case of the Saeima's 'five' has actualized the need to adopt a special law for the use of documents of the former KGB. The Law on the Preservation and Use of Documents of the Former State Security Committee and the Establishment of the Fact of Cooperation of Persons with the KGB, adopted by the Saeima on 19 May 1994, set a ten-year term for professional restrictions on former KGB employees and agents, at the same time also determining the secrecy status of the KGB agents' card index.

In the second half of the 1990s and early 2000s, the issue of former state security agents in most Eastern European countries had already been resolved, usually through lustration. Meanwhile, discussions continued in Latvia, using various arguments. Opponents of the publication of the card index, whose opinion coincided with that of the political authorities, pointed out as the main argument that the publication of the card index would divide Latvian society (according to them, the card index was left in Latvia for this purpose),[8] and

may become a reason for a witch-hunt. In their judgments, the disclosure of the card index could cause a psychological trauma to the people mentioned in the card index as well as their relatives. The same idea was conceptually expressed in the wording: historical injustice cannot be the cause of new injustice (Veidemane 2019a). In addition, as one more argument, they emphasized the limited significance of the card index data, which does not allow one to reliably judge the specific role and activities of each agent.[9] Proponents of the publication of the card index, for their part, emphasized the need to draw a line under the legacy left by the communist regime. In support of their position, they also referred to a rational benefit, pointing out that publishing the card index would deprive Russia of the ability to use this information to blackmail former KGB agents.[10] As another important argument emphasized in favour of making the card index public was the right of victims to know the names of their persecutors, criticizing the peculiar approach of opponents who were more concerned about the moral suffering of former KGB agents and their relatives than about the rights of victims of persecution by the KGB.

The arguments used in these discussions deserve special attention, as they are relevant in the context of the tasks set in this study. On the one hand, it must be acknowledged that the supporters of the disclosure of the card index as well as their opponents referred to the experience of trauma in their arguments, thus showing that emotional-psychological experiences are given a certain role in addressing this issue. However, on the other hand, a more detailed analysis of these arguments reveals the weakness of the rhetoric of opponents of the card index disclosure. The argument about a possible witch-hunt sounded like distrust of Latvian society; moreover, it was a speculation which, remembering Andrejevs's case, lacked a real basis. Talks on the need to find out the specific guilt and responsibility of each agent, mentioned in the card index, sounded hypocritical against the background of the still classified status of the agents' card index. The judgments of opponents of the disclosure of the card index on the reliability of its data deserve special attention here. If we accept Judith Herman's view, which links the recognition of trauma and development of its research to the interests of political forces, noting that there are always such political forces that seek to question this trauma and discredit its victims (Herman 1992), then here we can see a kind of analogy. True, in this case, the trauma itself was not questioned but rather considered the guilt of the culprits: maybe not all the culprits are in the card index, maybe their names are recorded in the card index without their knowledge and, finally, maybe they are not culprits at all? The fact that these shadows of doubt were produced only at those moments when the issue of disclosure of the card index became relevant – meanwhile, the card index was still being used to check the

candidates for deputies – testified that the use of this argument had a specific purpose dictated by political interests. However, the most important thing that these discussions revealed was two statements that were not formulated openly but originated from their arguments. The judgments of the opponents of the publication of the card index, questioning the reliability of the card index and the guilt of the agents mentioned in it, indirectly made it clear that they also questioned the experience of the people mentioned in the reports of these agents: if there are no culprits, then there are no victims. Thus, the Latvian political authorities, as well as a part of society, indirectly confirmed that in the case of former KGB agents and victims of KGB persecution, they are not ready to accept the traumatic experience of an individual and a certain group of society in the general position of society. But perhaps the most frightening alogism that stemmed from the judgments of opponents of publishing the card index was the opinion that, in the case of the former KGB agents, the cause of the trauma – or at least a major trauma – is the disclosure of the fact of cooperation today, rather than a person's choice to cooperate with the KGB in the past. Such a view carried a distorted value orientation and, no less important, gave society a fairly clear signal that it was time to forget the past.

In the context of all of the above, it was not surprising that, thanks to a broad campaign of persuasion supported by the political authorities, the view that the publication of the card index of the former KGB agents should be postponed, prevailed in these discussions.

TO UNDERSTAND AND/OR CONDEMN, THAT IS THE QUESTION

The turning point followed in 2014, when the Latvian Government Commission for KGB Research was established. By public announcements and scientific conferences, the commission managed to mobilize the attention of the public, and in December 2018, due to public pressure, the card index of the former Latvian SSR KGB agents was published.

When assessing the importance of publishing the card index in public processes, various aspects can be highlighted. Undoubtedly, the publication of the card index gave the public one but very important benefit: it put an end to deliberate speculations and the unpleasant feeling that the government had something to hide from its citizens. Unfortunately, doubts and conjectures did not disappear completely. The main reason for this was the fact that in many cases the only evidence of a person's cooperation with the KGB was the agent's card without any indication of their specific activities. However, after weighing

all the aspects, including the tedious 27-year debate, in this case we must agree with the expression: a horrible end is better than endless horror.

In Latvian society, the publication of the card index caused different reactions.[11] The majority of the society, and especially its younger part, had an indifferent attitude towards it. There is an understandable explanation for this: people who are less than 40 years old today have not been objectively confronted with the reality of the Soviet repressive system and the activities of the KGB. In turn, the part of the society that is made up of people over 40 years old today remembers and understands the reality of the Soviet era well enough to, in most cases, receive the publication of the card index without a sharp emotional reaction. Therefore, the possible concerns that the publication of the card index could become a cause for a national trauma – snitches' superpower (Veidemane 2019a) – turned out to be unfounded. Against this background, a special group of society which has to be mentioned here were people who, after the publication of the card index, scrupulously scanned the list of agents in search of the names of their former or current colleagues, neighbours, and acquaintances.[12] Their motives remained unclear: perhaps, they were driven by envy and a sense of inferiority (in response to the sometimes expressed idea that "fools did not work for the KGB"), but perhaps, they had found another 'keyhole' in the card index to look at the world. In any case, from the point of view of human psychology, the reaction of this group of society to the publication of the card index seemed the most traumatic.

If we talk about the reaction of the people whose names were mentioned in the KGB agents' card index, several groups can be distinguished here. Most of them, at least in public, did not comment on the fact. Others, and especially those who belonged to the intellectual elite of Latvia and had played a visible role in Latvia's independence restoration processes, expressed surprise and most often claimed that the agent's card was made without their knowledge. Thus, in addition to the already mentioned Inkēns,[13] Ivars Godmanis, the former Deputy Chairman of the Popular Front of Latvia and the first Prime Minister of Latvia after the restoration of the country's independence, and Jānis Gavars, the former editor-in-chief of information programmes at the Latvian Television, reacted to the occurrence of their names in the card index of the former KGB agents. In turn, some others, including the former anchor-person of the TV weekly programme "Labvakar", Jānis Šipkēvics, and former basketball player Valdis Valters, reacted to their names in the card index with a sharp denial, expressing outrage at the denigration of their name (Vaidakovs 2019).

At the same time, among the people whose names were in the card index were those who publicly acknowledged the fact of cooperation, which they had

agreed to as a result of the circumstances or the blackmail by the KGB. Astra Skrābane, philologist, French language and literature specialist and translator, openly and without seeking excuses spoke about her cooperation, admitting that today she is ashamed of her naivety (Kalve 2019). Composer and organist Aivars Kalējs, acknowledging his cooperation with the KGB and the fact that he had written reports, cited, as an excuse, the fact that he had tried in principle not to mention and thus protect nationally minded people (Kiršberga 2020). This argument –*Yes, I cooperated, but I tried to protect and not to harm* – can be found in the stories of several people about their cooperation with the KGB; most likely, with this explanation, they sought to resolve the cardinal dilemma between the fact of cooperation and their moral responsibility. Aleksej Grigor'ev, a graduate of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and an interpreter, went a little further and deeper in his judgments. Repenting the sin of cooperation with the KGB, he spoke about pride,[14] about the stupid idea that "you can play with the Devil [the KGB] and the Devil can be defeated". And right there, he continues: "Yes, subjectively we tried not to harm anyone, but we did not know how we were used" (Miķelsone 2019c).

The story that deserves special attention here is the confession of poet Jānis Rokpelnis, which he made public in December 2017, i.e., a year before the publication of the card index. According to him, as a freethinker, he was twice invited for an interview at the KGB, and only his father's name – his father Fricis Rokpelnis (1909–1969) was a co-author of the anthem of the Latvian SSR– saved him from the arrest. In 1985, J. Rokpelnis was offered to become an agent of the KGB, and he agreed to this offer, explaining it with the desire to get to know the methods, used by the KGB, from the inside and then expose them publicly.[15] Undoubtedly, from today's point of view, the explanation given by J. Rokpelnis sounds naive and even infantile, but we have no reason to doubt its truthfulness.

If we contemplate the reaction of the people whose names were mentioned in the KGB agents' card index, we can draw one important conclusion. Most of the people whose cooperation was motivated by coercion (imprisonment, blackmail) or professional activity (interpreters, bartenders) are ready to admit the fact of their cooperation with the KGB. In some cases, such a motive was family past; for example, the father's service in the Latvian Legion (a formation consisting mainly of ethnic Latvians, as part of the German army during the Second World War).[16] The willingness of these people to confess can be partly explained by reasonable expectations that the public would more easily understand and accept this person's choice to cooperate with the KGB, but we cannot rule out the possibility that they themselves were actually going through their choices more deeply. In turn, those whose cooperation was more motivated by their career or

other privileges are less willing to admit the fact of their cooperation because they do not have this socially acceptable explanation. In this regularity, the main dividing line which exists in the judgments of the agents themselves and the society in the assessment of former KGB agents is very clearly indicated: if an agent's cooperation had a publicly acceptable motive, it gave the cooperation some justification in the judgments of the agents themselves as well as in the judgments of the society. We can see the same dividing line in the public reaction to the willingness of the former KGB agents to confess and repent of their misdeeds. As an illustration, the public confession of J. Rokpelnis was accepted by the society without condemnation, whereas the confession made after the card index publication by the former rector of the University of Latvia, Mārcis Auziņš, who a few years earlier, in 2014, as a presidential candidate in Latvia, had denied his cooperation with the KGB, received a more critical response. This reaction – not to generalize but note it as a trend – reveals an important feature: it showed that in this case, for society, *it is not the past faults that are more important, but their open recognition and regret*.

On the other side of the 'Cheka Bags' were the subjects of the former KGB agents' reports, i.e., the people who were reported. This is a peculiar paradox, but a vast majority of them, like most of the former agents, adopted the publication of the card index in silence. It can be assumed that the main explanation for this silence was the 27-year indecision of the political authorities, which forced these people to muffle their painful experiences, and over time their memories faded. In addition, probably, a certain role has the fact that by this time, the efforts of the media and political circles in the public sphere had already conceptualized the image of the 'victim of the Cheka', which consisted of several better-known victims of political repression, and there was no room for new victims in this image.[17]

At first glance, the reaction of people about whom the agents' reports were written and who now expressed their opinions in public interviews seemed surprising: most of them, at least in public, did not identify themselves as victims. An explanation for this view is most likely to be sought in two circumstances. Firstly, the agents' reports of those still alive today most often date back to the 1970s and 1980s, i.e., to the time when the activities of the KGB had transformed from the methods of brutal repression of the 1940s and 1950s into more moderate methods of 'educational conversations'. Therefore, as the already mentioned Gailis's story showed, it was often difficult for a person to notice the influence of the KGB on their professional career or personal life. Secondly, the description of people in the agents' reports, who at that time were described as 'anti-Soviet', from the point of view of today's independent Latvia, rather looks like recognition or even praise. For illustration, we can mention

the reports of agent Stirlitz (Normunds Grostiņš) about his fellow students at the Faculty of History and Philosophy, who had organized excursions to the First-World-War battlefields of the Latvian National Army and had spoken contemptuously about the Russians (Domburs & Radovics 2020).

In most cases, this tolerance also characterized the judgments of the people mentioned in the reports, on the guilt and responsibility of the former KGB agents. Usually, when a person recognized the name of the agent who had reported them to the KGB, they reacted conciliatorily, using arguments: "such was the time", and "they had to write something". True, the question remains: How sincere is this reaction after 27 years of waiting? There was an interesting dualism in Lidija Lasmane-Doroņina's judgments about the former KGB agents: while acknowledging that she did not condemn these people because the whole system was to blame and "we were all already forced to the knees", she immediately added that, having learned the name of the agent who had reported her, she could not forgive him (Meimane 2015).The exception is those people who, without being better known today, are looking for an explanation (or, perhaps, an excuse?) for their unfulfilled career expectations. One of them is composer and music teacher Atis Priedītis. Between 1980 and 1995, he was denied the opportunity to record his songs on the Latvian Radio, and therefore his songs remained unknown to a wider audience. He himself associates this with his 1980 song "Izkapts ābelē" (The Scythe in the Apple Tree), which in the Aesop's language was directed against the Soviet occupation of Latvia (the song's censors had mistakenly understood that it was directed against the German occupation) (Priedītis 2018: 68–69). As the most striking episode of his persecution, he noted a slanderous broadcast about him, prepared by the Latvian Television in the late 1980s. On the one hand, the aforementioned episodes of persecution cited by Priedītis make one think that the restrictions on his professional career had a broader ideological basis that reached beyond the authority of the KGB. On the other hand, however, his story contains a number of specific episodes of persecution – including the relocation of objects in his apartment during his absence and the connection of electricity to his apartment's gas stove (ibid.: 111–114) – which point to the KGB's working methods. Unfortunately, such methods of operation of special services are difficult to prove; moreover, in the case of an 'ordinary person' they sound incredible, so they are still scarcely mentioned in the public sphere.[18] For this reason, Priedītis has chosen a peculiar form of writing his memories – he writes books of fantastic content. In this respect, it can be argued that in the case of Priedītis, one of the characteristic features of a traumatic experience appears very clearly, when a person simultaneously wants to forget and make public his traumatic experience (Herman 1992: 1).

But there is another unnoticed group of victims that should be considered within the framework of the topic of the KGB agents. These are people who rejected KGB's offer of cooperation and did not become agents. The experience of such recruitment is described by several people, but the story of the well-known Latvian photographer Gunārs Binde is emotionally the strongest. In his judgments, he is harsh: the KGB's attempts to recruit "actually broke my life and myself" (Meiere 2020). Recalling the blackmail and intimidation used in recruiting, he describes these methods as disgusting. One of the strongest experiences, in his judgments, was the fear of the possible consequences of refusal: what would happen to me and whether my family would suffer – these were the questions he asked himself. However, another episode deserves the main emphasis in his story. Binde describes as psychologically painful for him the warning made by the recruiters at the very beginning about keeping the meeting and conversation a secret; after a long silence, he nevertheless decided to tell his wife about it. This small episode expresses the main moral postulate that cooperation with the KGB was a choice between loyalty to the state and loyalty to one's family, relatives, and friends. It is this choice that is the first and also the main thing which made people's cooperation with the KGB immoral.

When assessing the different public reactions to the publication of the card index, two conclusions should be emphasized. First, the generally tolerant reaction of the public and the media to the revelations of the former agents is certainly noteworthy. It is significant that during the year after the publication of the card index, only one publication has appeared (Fedosejeva 2019), which talks about the "snitches' fault" and the fault in general. This tolerance could be welcomed if there was no doubt that in this case there was no fear of open conversation. Secondly, the numerical ratio between the relatively large number of stories of the former KGB agents and the relatively small number of stories of the KGB persecution victims, which appeared in media publications and interviews after the publication of the card index, is striking. Moreover, as philosopher Ilze Fedosejeva points out (ibid.), this disproportionate balance is also reflected in the attention of society, which focuses more on the perpetrators than on the victims; she herself explains this with practices established by Christianity and accepted in secular society, which focus on sin and forgiveness.

In addition to the specific aspects of the relations between agents and victims, the card index of former KGB agents, published in 2018, brought up another question: how to evaluate the cooperation of people with the KGB, so that you do not have to rewrite the history of restoring the country's independence?

The first to give a reason for asking such a question was Edmunds Johansons, the last chairman of the Latvian SSR KGB: in his speech to the Saeima on 23 August 1991, he mentioned that 37 deputies of the Saeima, who had worked

for the KGB or cooperated with the KGB, had voted for the restoration of Latvia's independence (Taurēns 2015: 400–401). In subsequent years, this figure changed, but that did not change the fact itself.[19] But this is not only a matter of formal voting, but also of advancing the awakening processes. Among the people whose names were found in the card index of the former KGB agents were not only all the three (!) anchor-persons of the television programme "Labvakar" and the first head of the Latvian government; Juris Ziemelis (1941–1988), a member of the human rights group "Helsinki-86", Arvīds Ulme, head of the Environmental Protection Club founded in 1988, Valts Titavs, one of the founders of the Latvian National Independence Movement, and Mavriks Vulfsons (1918–2004), author of a public speech condemning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which caused a wide public resonance in 1988, were also in the agents' card index. The role of these people in the awakening processes was significant enough to give rise to speculations about the influence of the KGB on the progress of the awakening processes.

Today, in the judgments of the Latvian political elite, any assumptions about the possible role of the KGB in advancing the awakening processes are assessed as "nonsense",[20] leaving unnoticed the obvious contradiction of such a judgment with the overall assessment of the role of the KGB. On the one hand, when describing the processes in the society in the mid-1980s, we are talking about the KGB's comprehensive public control and ability to influence the fate of people (the last large-scale arrests of dissidents in the Latvian SSR took place in 1983). On the other hand, in the judgments on the awakening processes, practically all politicians of the early 1990s, including Dainis Īvāns, the first leader of the Popular Front of Latvia, agree that, despite the KGB's awareness, the KGB was unable to seriously influence the process of restoring independence (Īvāns 1995: 180–181). It is difficult to judge whether this contradiction in assessing the role of the KGB will persist or whether it will be resolved at some point, but it is clear that the link of several prominent leaders of the awakening with the KGB has been and remains one of the reasons for the reticence of the political authorities in overcoming the legacy of the KGB in Latvia.

CONCLUSIONS

Decommunization of all the countries of the former so-called Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe was an important process that was necessary for the successful development of the country. An important part of this process was the identification of employees and agents of the security services of the former Soviet regime and the assessment of their activities. Most Eastern European countries

have chosen the lustration path, allowing former employees and agents of the secret services to voluntarily submit an application and report on their activities. Latvia chose another path, publishing the card index of all former Latvian SSR KGB agents without any derogation. Compared to the choice of other countries, the path chosen by Latvia is the most radical and, in a sense, perhaps the cruellest, but it cannot be said with certainty that any of these choices was the best or the most correct. The main argument in favour of Latvia's choice is that by publishing the names of the agents mentioned in the card index, each of these people is given the opportunity to respond publicly and explain their motives.

Unfortunately, in the case of Latvia, the publication of the card index of former agents has not become the basis for a balanced assessment of the past, nor for reconciliation of different groups in society. There are several explanations for this, but the most frequently mentioned reason in the public debate is that the publication of the card index was belated, and it should have been made public a long time ago. And the main reason for this delay lies in the stance of Latvian political authorities, which, after taking over the card index in 1991, made the issue of the former KGB agents a hostage of their political interests. The indecision of political authorities was made even more unpleasant by the fact that, speaking loudly about the possible division of society and a possible witch-hunt, political circles used it for behind-the-scenes manipulations, the most striking example of which was a piece of media news in 2017 about the disappearance of the court case on establishing the fact of cooperation between Godmanis and the KGB from the court archives (Bērtule 2017). The position of the political authorities – indecision, judgments about the possible witch-hunt, and concerns about the possible moral suffering of former KGB agents and their relatives – gave a clear enough signal to the public that, from the point of view of political authorities, it was time to forget everything. And here it is necessary to make one broader and more significant generalization. If we turn again to the already mentioned work of Hirschberger, in which he describes the differences in the perception and identification of collective trauma between victims and persecutors, then a harsh conclusion must be drawn: consciously or unintentionally, yet objectively, as regards collective trauma, in Latvia during these 27 years the perception of persecutors has dominated over the perception of victims. In the case of Latvia, we see two main features that Hirschberger attributes to the persecutors' position: the desire to look at the former KGB agents in a positive light, by questioning their guilt and responsibility, and the desire "to close the door on history and never look back" (Hirschberger 2018).

In this situation, it is not surprising that after 27 years of hesitation, most people, at least in public space, have already silenced their traumatic experiences and forced them out of their daily consciousness. But silence is not the

path to reconciliation in society. Moreover, this silence, tolerance of society and the fear of intellectuals of offending someone did not allow us to start a serious discussion about assessing our common past and the responsibility of each person. Therefore, the question of how to evaluate people's cooperation with the KGB still remains open. It is clear that there is a difference between a KGB agent who dealt with the prevention of economic crimes, and a KGB agent who wrote reports on 'kitchen conversations'. Just as it is clear that there is a difference between a KGB agent who applied for cooperation on a voluntary basis and a KGB agent who was forced to cooperate for various reasons. However, recognizing these differences between different agents, a new threat emerges: such a view may lead to a paradoxical conclusion about the devilish KGB and the innocent and even good KGB agents. In addition, there is another aspect of this silence that historian Daina Bleierehas noted: acknowledging that reluctance to speak is the main problem of the 'Cheka Bags', she points out that those born in independent Latvia are not able to understand how the totalitarian system worked and why it is terrible if those who have experienced it do not talk about it honestly (Miķelsone 2020).

Where to look for a solution in this situation? In terms of historical truth, it may be necessary to allow time to pass so that the memories of the Soviet regime will remain only in 'parchments' and the issue of assessing the activities of the KGB agents will become only a "domain of professional historians" (Neal 1998: X). Unfortunately, in terms of trauma and public reconciliation, no such answer is possible. The already mentioned Atāls in an interview, acknowledging that in order not to fray his life and soul, he had forgiven his abusers, admitted: "As I wrote the book, I felt like I had thrown all the grievances in the trash" (Jundze 2018). This recognition formulates an important conclusion; namely, in today's situation people can seek reconciliation only with themselves and within themselves.

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NOTES

[1] A striking example is the so-called Red Latvian Riflemen, who were made a symbol of heroism in Soviet Latvia but have been forgotten after the restoration of independence (a certain symbolic significance, in this context, can be seen in the fact that the Red Latvian Riflemen Museum in Riga, opened in 1970, was closed in the early 1990s and in 1993 the Museum of Occupation of Latvia was opened on its premises).

[2] The national heterogeneity of Latvian society is especially evident in the annual events of 9 May in Riga, when the predominantly Russian-speaking part of Latvian society celebrates Victory Day, while for Latvians it is mostly a date associated with the restoration of Soviet occupation in Latvia.

[3] The term 'political authorities', in this case, must be understood as official institutions of state authority and public officials.

[4] There are various explanations for differences in the number of the publicly mentioned agent cards: Indulis Zālīte, the former head of the Centre for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism, who administrated the agents' card index until the end of 2018, explains it as a misunderstanding, assuming a calculation error in the past (Veidemane 2019b); meanwhile, already from the mid-1990s onwards guesses about the possible removal of agents' cards from the card index appeared in the media (Miķelsone 2019b).

[5] The author of this production was a well-known theatre director, Alvis Hermanis, who, as he admitted after the publication of the card index, also had his own experience in relations with the KGB: his father Voldemārs Hermanis, who since 1985 had been the editor-in-chief of a newspaper for Western Latvians, *Dzimtenes Balss* (Homeland Voice), was mentioned in the KGB agents' card index, while A. Hermanis himself had come to the attention of the KGB in the first half of the 1980s due to his free-thinking and had been admitted to a psychiatric hospital for refusing to join the Soviet army (the war in Afghanistan had begun at that time) (Raudseps 2019b).

[6] Such a description of the Soviet system was given by publicist Marina Kosteņecka, who at the end of the 1980s had actively participated in Latvia's independence-restoring processes and faced KGB persecution; by that characterization she substantiated her opposition to the card index publication (Raudseps 2019a).

[7] Nikita Petrov, vice-chairman of the Memorial Organization for the Study of Totalitarianism Crimes in Russia, admits that people could refuse to cooperate with the KGB or stop cooperating later, and one such example in Latvia was film director Rolands Kalniņš, who was recruited in 1975 but excluded in 1978 from among the agents for non-cooperation (Miķelsone 2019c).

[8] This judgment is based on the assumption that documents of the LSSR KGB were partly taken to Russia before Latvian independence restoration, but there are differences in the guesses about the proportion of documents taken out and those left in Latvia: extreme critics of the credibility of 'Cheka Bags' claimed that the KGB agents' files, taken over by Latvia in 1991, were left here with some special purpose or were a forgery altogether.

[9] The last attempt initiated by political circles to suspend the publication of the card index was an expert working group, established in 2018, which on 16 August 2018 published its conclusions on the inadmissibility of the card index publication; commenting on the findings of the working group, one of its members, Bishop Emeritus Pāvils Brūvers, in addition to the previous ones, noted as another argument a possible monetary compensation that people mentioned in the card index could demand from the Latvian state, strictly stating that in any case "publishing such a list would be a crime against the nation, specific people and the state" (Veidemane 2018).

[10] As an example of the blackmail of former KGB agents, to 'stimulate' their activities in favour of Russia, we can mention the case of Herman Simm, a former chief of the Estonian Defence Ministry's security department, which, according to Ivo Juurvee, an adviser at the National Security and Defence Coordination Unit of the Estonian Government Office, was a former KGB agent and had not acknowledged this fact after the restoration of Estonia's independence (Semjonova 2020).

[11] To illustrate the variety of this reaction and to emphasize the presence of healthy cynical sarcasm in it, one tweet published immediately after the card index publication can be noted here: Russian dictionaries will be bought out in bookstores tomorrow [agent cards were drawn up in Russian], but the day after tomorrow – hay forks and torches in Depo (a household goods store).

[12] This public reaction was also encountered by the author of this article, and in one case it was related to the fact that there was a person in the card index of the former KGB agents whose name was identical to the name of the author.

[13] In 2002, speaking about his name being in the card index, Inkēns acknowledged the fact of recruitment, but explained it as recruitment to the perspective, to the future; therefore, he did not perform any practical activities as an agent (Mille 2002: 29–31).

[14] One of the sins in Christianity.

[15] By the way, J. Rokpelnis mentioned Estonian novelist Arvo Valton as the only case when he was given a specific task to find out the thoughts of his fellow writers, but he refused this task (Veidemane 2017).

[16] One of the best-known examples here is Imants Lešinskis (1931–1985), head of the Latvian Committee for Cultural Relations with Countrymen Abroad, later an employee of the UN Secretariat in New York, a double agent of the USSR and US secret services, who fled to the USA in 1978. His cooperation with the KGB as an agent began in 1956, and as a recruitment incentive, the KGB had used the fact that Lešinskis's father had been drafted and served in the German army in 1944 (Lešinskis 2017: 37–38).

[17] As an illustration, in 2016 a wide public resonance was caused by the judgement given by the Latvian Prosecutor's Office that involuntary psychiatric treatment of Ģederts Melngailis, arrested in 1983 for "anti-Soviet activities", was "justified, mandatory, and legal" (Krēsliņš 2016). The same applies to already mentioned Atāls, to whom Latvian state refused to grant the status of a repressed person on the grounds that he had been tried according to the Criminal Code (Jundze 2018).

[18] A confirmation that A. Priedītis's experience is not a 'sick imagination' but a real method of special services, is given by the television documentary *The Stasi: Behind*

the Berlin Wall (2018) in the cycle *Forbidden History*, which tells about the operation of the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) of the former German Democratic Republic.

[19] After the card index publication, the magazine *Ir* found out that the card index contained the names of 17 deputies of that time, of whom 15 had voted for Latvia's independence. In this case I am more interested in another aspect: when journalists wanted to interview these 15 former deputies in 2019, it turned out that three of them were already dead, four refused the interview and only four of the eight, who agreed to be interviewed, acknowledged their cooperation with the KGB (Miķelsone 2019c).

[20] Such an assessment was given in 2019 by Indulis Zālīte, former head of the Centre for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism (Veidemane 2019b).

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ROUTES TO FORMING AN AFFILIATIVE POSTMEMORY ABOUT DIFFICULT PAGES IN HISTORY (BASED ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE ERA OF POLITICAL REPRESSION)

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Abstract: This article discusses the mechanism behind the formation in adolescents (representatives of the 4th generation) of an affiliative postmemory about one of the most controversial and complex subjects in Russian history – the era of political repression from the 1930s to the1950s. The first part of the article is devoted to questions of methodology and necessity, and to the possibilities of using an authentic space and an authentic artifact as mediators between past and present in memory practices. The basic ideas are the concepts of "postmemory" by Marianne Hirsch, "grief" by Alexander Etkind, and "affective management of history" by Sergey Oushakin. Additionally, there are the ideas of Varvara Sklez, Veronica Dorman, Olga Strelova, and Alexander Kotlomanov in relations to that very authentic space and/or artifact which helps to provoke and form the memory of complex pages of history, not from within, but from without, enabling the creation of a kind of "sensory laboratory" for the period. Thanks to this "feeling", dry information is experienced and appropriated by a person through the strong emotions provoked, and the level of individual affiliative memory of the era of political repression is built up. The second part of the article describes two experiments which allowed me to analyse the effects of an authentic space (an immersive drama performance) and an authentic artifact (an archived investigation casefile) on adolescents.

Keywords: affiliative postmemory, archived investigation casefile, era of political repression, executioner, immersive drama performance, memory practice, postmemory, students, the Great Terror, victim

The twentieth century was full of dramatic events for Russia and European countries, associated with the activities of totalitarian regimes. However, although in Europe the Holocaust trauma was worked through as a result of the activities of various social, political, and cultural institutions, and a certain

public consensus was reached, for the whole of Eastern Europe, including Russia, the pages of the history of the repressive policies of the Stalinist regime, and in particular the Great Terror, are still not fully understood, having instead become the subject of "memory wars", and an instrument of "conflict policy". This becomes especially important in a situation where representatives of the fourth and later generations turn their attention to the painful events of the past. The question arises for cultural actors: how can we formulate a memory of a difficult past in such a way that it is perceived deeply and emotionally, and becomes personalized for new generations of adolescents?

THE METHODOLOGICAL BASIS FOR THE STUDY

The author's own experience with senior secondary school classes has shown that touching on so-called difficult subjects of twentieth-century national history leaves teenagers with more questions, bewilderment, and dissatisfaction than it gives answers. They have neither the capacity, time, research tools, nor the authentic historical materials required to question and to adequately criticize conventional beliefs and stereotypes. Meaningful, deep, reflexive thinking, developing one's own point of view, and a personal, reasoned attitude towards the topic requires not a one-off study of the era, but a systematic and wide-ranging contact with it.

The development of such a system, and its methodological justification, were based on a range of theses. The first is the concept of postmemory developed by Marianne Hirsch: postmemory is "memory after memory", the memory of people about an event in which they were not directly involved, and which they did not witness. The researcher identifies three levels of postmemory: familial, affiliative, and associative (Hirsch 2016).

If I briefly summarize those provisions of Hirsch's concept of postmemory which are important for my work, I can say the following: the formation of postmemory about traumatic events, when it goes beyond the initial postmemory and begins to involve other people in the process, usually occurs / should occur at a deep emotional level, due to imagination and projection. It prompts the recipient to go through the pain of others experienced by their forbears, a pain which is distant from them in time and space, to appropriate their emotions and experiences, and to achieve a certain empathy and solidarity with them. After three or more generations, this becomes possible only through the development of special "mechanisms for the transfer of traumatic knowledge and materialized experience". Such mechanisms include the "reincarnation of

memory through other institutions", when they "give people the opportunity to relive these stories, [give] the possibility of personal identification with someone else's memory". One of these mechanisms is immersive practices (in our case, immersive memory practices) – a theatrical technique based on the involvement of the viewer, their "immersion... through the impact on all the senses", that is to say, through sensations (Zevako 2019: 395–396).

When putting forward his own concept of grief instead of trauma, Alexander Etkind emphasizes that Hirsch's concept of postmemory is easier to understand precisely in terms of grief, because "trauma is a response to the state in which I have found myself, grief is a response to the state of the Other" (Etkind 2016: 27).

A number of domestic and foreign experts also note this feature of working with the memory of traumatic events, in particular with the memory of the era of political repression. For example, Veronica Dorman focuses on the fact that "the memory of Soviet repression does not arise from within or from nearby, but from outside and at a distance, and it must not be so much stored and protected, as provoked, organized and actually formed" (Dorman 2010: 331). Achieving imaginary, symbolic intimacy with victims enables a special kind of contact with history: both as a real contact, the direct, bodily contact of a person with objects of history or identified history, artifacts, etc., and as a symbolic contact, through imagination, co-attunement, empathy, and emotions. This effect is achieved through affect, which helps to produce what Sergey Oushakin calls "chronographic cross-linking" (Oushakin 2014), or what Varvara Sklez describes as the ability to "transcend temporal, spatial, geographical, and national boundaries, to journey through both material and virtual remnants (for example, a song or a phrase)" (Sklez 2016: 226).

That is to say, the physical touch of a historical artifact (even if in the event it turns out to be a certain space rather than a thing – for example, the burial site of the executed victims of political repression) is important not in and of itself, but rather as the creator of the conditions necessary for the symbolic touch, conditions in which the appearance of an affect that overcomes borders becomes possible. Chronographic stitching turns out to be the more effective the more saturated and multi-layered the place is, when there is something there to "stitch" – the real interacts with the symbolic through imagination and empathy, and vice versa.

Alexander Kotlomanov points out the special relationship between space and memory. In his article, he considers from an aesthetic and symbolic point of view the "Masks of Sorrow" memorial to the victims of political repression (Kotlomanov 2017), erected in the centre of Moscow in 2017. Analysing the

description of the sculpture's design, he notes that it "recalls the tradition of creating memorial complexes, which was widespread in the USSR and Eastern Europe after the end of World War II... As a rule, these architectural and sculptural complexes [were] interconnected with the place where they were built, thereby perpetuating the space of a historical tragedy. … The characteristic difference between the new memorial and many famous examples from the Soviet period is the former's location, which is unlikely to be associated with something specific, with something that could be considered a symbol of the 'spirit of tragedy'" (Kotlomanov 2017: 444).

Furthermore, Kotlomanov references an article by Grigory Revzin, devoted to the same story, emphasizing the special importance of the interaction of space and monument for the formation of a memory space: "A place has been chosen... The only thing that can be said definitively about this place is that it is not distinguished in any way, it is an empty lot that arose by chance during the planning process for Novokirovsky Avenue. This is a bad decision in itself. In order to be noticed, a monument must be placed in some symbolic place. Or rather, the more symbolic the site chosen for it, the more effectively it will work. Here, the location does as much as possible to weaken the potential significance of the monument" (Kotlomanov 2017: 444).

In her article "History classroom – still 'a field of battle for the past', as 'memory wars' rage on", Olga Strelova considers among other subjects examples of memory museums (in which the spaces and buildings themselves are authentic places, potentially filled with history and memory), highlighting the House of Terror in Hungary, about which the authors quoted by her write: "The museum should not document history, but rather allow the visitor to feel and touch, so to speak, the substance of terror. The main task of the museum is not to present exhibits, but to provide a direct visual appeal to emotions" (Dr Mária Schmidt, Director of the House of Terror); "the House of Terror is not a traditional museum; it is organized on the model of postmodern museums in Great Britain and the United States. It might even be called a sensory laboratory" (Mark Pittaway) (Strelova 2012).

Sergey Oushakin notes that the "ordering effect is achieved not through the traditional building of a canonical narrative (in this case, the normative version of history), but through the emotional codification of events, things and/or symbols of the past... Affective experience ... stimulates the schematization of the understanding of historical events using concepts that have a personal meaning". The emotional experience of the past serves as a mechanism for appropriating that past. Oushakin calls such practices of the activation of sensory reactions using historical material the affective management of history: here, memory and perception are, if not fused together, then at least undivided. With

this attitude to history, the facts of the past are not so much taken into account and recorded as actively experienced, as phenomena which continue to retain their emotional impact (Oushakin 2014).

The scholar considers this concept more as a way to work with mass consciousness, with public space, with memory in public. However, within the same logic we can also distinguish a point-based, individual affective management of history, associated with individualized memory practices that focus on creating a less smooth and monotonous, more individualized landscape of memory/representations/feelings relative to a specific chapter in history.

In fact, we see that the affective management of history is indeed aimed at working with the affiliative postmemory, as a result of which the information acquires a special depth through the truly lived feelings of the subject. In this process, an important role is played by the use of an authentic space/artifact, which enhances the affective effect, that is, the emotional connection and the assimilation of information.

This study is devoted to testing this thesis in practice. On the one side, the author of this article, together with colleagues from the Museum of the History of Yekaterinburg, developed a project titled "You Can't Keep Silent: Practices of Memory about the Era of Political Repression",[1] the target audience of which is teenagers aged between 14 and 19 years old. First, participants were asked to go through the "touch" stage of this topic through various events, including an audio-guided bus tour called "The Route of Memory",[2] an immersive drama performance at the "Case of F. Zagursky No. 39496" memorial to victims of political repression on the 12th km,[3] an excursion to the GAAOSO – the State Archive of Administrative Bodies of the Sverdlovsk Region, and individual work with archived investigation casefiles. The task of the second stage is to translate one's emotions, experiences, ideas, and thoughts into a unique creative product according to one's abilities and desires in one or more laboratories (research, journalism, media, theatre or art) under the guidance of specialists from the chosen field.

On the other side, a research tool was developed that enabled us to track the internal mechanics of the formation of the affiliative postmemory in representatives of the 4th generation (when contact with a marked piece of history in the form of an authentic space or artifact helps the information to acquire a special depth through actually lived feelings).

This article will analyse the effects of two practices of touching the era of political repression – participation in an immersive drama performance, and individual work with archived investigation files.

Accordingly, in the first case, the focus of the study was the emotion-space-memory interaction, in the second, the emotion-artifact-memory interaction.

The task was to trace the possibilities and mechanisms of forming an affiliative postmemory (a postmemory based on emotional involvement) through the specially organized interaction of recipients with an authentic space and/or artifact.

Particular attention was paid to measuring and recording changes in the intensity of emotions in each case. This idea was prompted by the reasoning of one of the students. When I asked: "What did you get from the more in-depth work with the topic of repression at various extracurricular events?", she replied: "I used to feel sorry for them [the people affected], and now I feel very sorry." I realised that the change in the depth of (co)feeling is not obvious and does not lie on the surface, but is rather a serious and important personal result, and an indicator of the effectiveness of forming an affiliative postmemory.

In spite of the fact that in the last few decades there has been an emotional pivot in the social sciences and the humanities, representatives of different subject areas still do not have a single idea of what emotions are. Moreover, there is no clear line drawn between feelings and emotions, which are often used by researchers as terminological synonyms (Simonova 2016: 12–27).

This article is based on the position of Vladimir Ilyin, who says that "emotions are an external, observable manifestation of feelings that often have a hidden character. Feelings are an essence that appears in the form of emotions. It is actually through emotions that feelings become visible, turning from a purely personal experience into a social fact... Emotions indicate the presence of corresponding feelings" (Ilyin 2016: 34).

In addition, a note should be made of the following feature of emotions: they "act as highly reflexive phenomena… Reflexivity is expressed in reflexive identity, reflexive life history, and observation of feelings provides the individual with a sense of validity/authenticity. Emotions become the 'drivers' of moral choice aiming to confirm one's identity". Thus, "emotions are presented as a kind of 'key' to the authentic human experience" (Simonova 2018: 372).

The main tools selected to investigate this authentic experience were Carroll Ellis Izard's Differential Emotions Scale (Kunitsyna 2011), and an open-ended question and interview method.

The theoretical basis of the DES (Differential Emotions Scale) is the Izard's model. According to this theory, there are ten fundamental emotions that determine the component composition of the most diverse manifestations in a person's emotional life: interest, joy, surprise, sadness, anger, disgust, contempt, fear, shame, and guilt. The DES method enables the creation of a cross-sectional snapshot of the whole palette of current emotional experiences, and analysis of the affective components regulating current activity, components which reflect the features of the projection of motivational attitudes in the current situation (Kunitsyna 2011).

The respondent is asked to evaluate the acuteness of each emotional experience on a five-point scale – from complete absence (one point) to maximum intensity (five points).[4] A convenient format for qualitative analysis of the results is the construction of an "emotion profile" for all ten basic indicators, the peaks of which correspond to the most vividly coloured types of affective experiences. For a more general description of the type of emotional experiences that dominate in a particular situation, we can analyse the aggregated assessment blocks: A – actualization of positive emotions (interest, joy, surprise); B – actualization of acute manifestations of negative emotions (anger, wrath, disgust, contempt); C – the presence/formation of a relatively stable background of anxiety-depressive experiences (fear, shame, guilt) (Kunitsyna 2011).

The participants filled in a questionnaire at the project's outset, after the immersive drama performance, and after the casework. This allowed us to identify and track changes in the intensity of certain emotions. In addition, data on the permanent members (the teenagers who filled in the entry form and participated in both the activities) enabled us to compare the emotional state of the aggregate respondents in general (the teenagers who had only filled in the entry form).

In the survey materials after the immersive drama performance, the participants were asked to answer a number of questions that helped to explain/clarify the stories emotionally most vivid for them; at the end of the performance, they were interviewed in the format of a free statement in response to the question "What caught me / touched / interested me the most?"

The survey material after working with the archived investigation file also included a number of additional questions, and an explanation column after Izard's Differential Emotions Scale, in which respondents were asked to unpack the emotions most important for them.

At various stages of the project, 57 people took part in at least one event (the filling in of the entrance questionnaire), 28 people took part in the immersive drama performance, and 23 people took part in work on the archived investigation casefile. Of these, 16 people participated in both events, which involved filling in Izard's Differential Emotions Scale, and 13 filled in the survey material.

The article is based on the content analysis of this material. The analysis of the emotional impact of the immersive drama performance and work on the archived investigation casefile were carried out as a comparison of indicators from the entrance questionnaire and the questionnaire after each teenager took part in the event. The quotes presented in the text below remain anonymous.

EMOTIONS-SPACE-MEMORY

In accordance with the idea of director Irina Lyadova, the immersive drama performance was divided into several stages, which made the most of the space of the memorial and the small exhibition-utility room located on its territory. The performance began in this room, and the final reflexive conversation also took place here. The first stage included being photographed face-on and in profile, handing over personal belongings, filling in the questionnaire of the person arrested, and counting aloud the number of people who had been shot (at the memorial, 19,410 people have been identified by the archives to date).

Later on, the participants noted that this stage "strongly influenced the psyche": the requirement to follow instructions aroused both "fear and interest, due to the understanding [that this was] an allusion to the situation of being arrested, [and] the charges; "I already had goose bumps... it was somehow uncomfortable", but "when they took away all our things and told us to write down our details" – this led to an unexpected (amazing and frightening) discovery: "you feel just how simple it is to take a human life"; "very intense... when you are asked for all your information – the feeling that something is wrong, you start to feel awkward and... afraid of something... afraid maybe even for your relatives, that they could find them or something..."; "I thought, if I make some mistake, they will immediately take me away to be shot, I don't know".

A special effect was produced by counting aloud – the numbers also seemed to be identified in the sound and became a medium between past and present: "When you just see this number – 19,410 – that's one thing, as it were. But when you start counting, then... well, this is really a lot"; "I may have realized that this is a real number, but it really gets to you when you have already got to the third hundred and you are still counting... that is, you have not even reached a thousand, and there are nineteen of them".

The next stage – interrogation – is the reading of the Interrogation Protocol of Filipp Zagursky by roles (investigator/accused), and a short comment and explanation by the actor. Then – a walk through the memorial stones to the site of the first excavations, which uncovered the remains of 31 people, including those of the main character of the play – Zagursky himself. After that – a long, winding forest path to the next site. All three stages, having as they did a more informational rather than emotional and dramatic orientation, created the factual basis for a deeper and more meaningful experience of the next stages – "the apple grove", "the pit", and "the stone".

The apple grove stage was divided into two parts: first, the teenagers came in pairs to a tree, to the branches of which *kulechki peredachek* (small bags or

packages) were tied. Some packages had names written on them, others were nameless. The actor talked about how difficult it was to get food, that *kulechki* were accepted only at the time and place allotted for this purpose, and that it was no accident that the apple grove appeared in this forest: young trees were planted at the burial sites of those who had been executed, as apple trees grow quickly. Next, the participants were asked to take one of the packages (and allowed to see what was inside) and to take it to the person to whom it was addressed, if a name was marked on it, or to leave it with any person if no name was written. After that, they moved to another part of the grove, where photographs of people who were shot and later rehabilitated had been placed on the ground and on the trees, with brief information about them. Some time was given for walking around the apple grove, reading the information, placing the *kulechek*, and just spending some time in this place.

The analysis of the survey materials and the conversations after the performance enables us to reconstruct the thoughts, emotions, and motivations of the teenagers, to understand the internal mechanics of affiliation with the events of the era of political repression. The question was posed in this way: the name of the stage – what did you do? Why?

The desire to find out what was passed to the prisoners, their interest and curiosity prompted the teenagers to look inside the packages first: "The *kulechek* hung on a tree by a thread; I tore it down, opened it, and there were two small potatoes and a piece of candy in it"; "I chose a package, and inside it were boiled potatoes, cigarettes, and candy"; "I carefully examined the contents of the parcel". Then, on the strength of their own ideas on how this could be, intuitively, the teenagers played the role of the imaginary postman, of the medium physically and symbolically connecting the past and the present, passing/returning in the present day what had not been received, or not received in full, in the past: "I delivered the package"; "I ripped it open and took it to the photo of the dead person"; "I took one package and handed it to the repressed man with the terrible fate"; "I took a bag and placed it by the photo of a woman"; "I looked to see what was in the bag, I left it beside a photo"; "I took a bag, opened it, and read the biography"; "I took down a bag, and put it beside one of the photos".

Curiously, for many of the students, the anonymous recipients ("I placed a bag beside one of the repressed"; "I put a package next to the photo of a person who was shot in 1937 and only acquitted in 1956"; "I put [a bag] beside an old man, because I felt sorry for him") found quite specific names ("I put it next to Zorin"; "I left it by V.M. Tarik"; "I put a package beside two photos of Feoktistov at one tree"; "I left a parcel to N.F. Zbykovskaya"). The chronographic cross-linking was that, at the moment of sending the parcel, the line between

the past / the dead and the present / the living was blurred; at that moment, the recipients were perceived by the teenagers as living people ("living dead"): "I wanted to be nice to the deceased and gave the person [plaque] a sign of it".

The demonstration of care, and the returning of what was never received, was expressed by the teenagers in their involuntary desire to be nice ("I straightened his portrait"; "I looked into his eyes"), to feel pity ("I felt very sorry for the man who didn't receive a package from home"; "I became very sorry for the relatives of the repressed"; "I felt sorrow for the people who brought the parcels"; "After all, the people who cared about those who had died had to be sure that their efforts to put together the parcel were not in vain"), and to understand ("to understand what people experienced, what feelings they had when they received the parcels") both those for whom the parcels were intended, and those who sent them.

The lived emotional experience of injustice, which engendered "an unpleasant feeling of persecution", "shock at how people were treated by state structures", "grief for the dead and hatred for those who did it", resentment ("it was very insulting for those people who did not receive their parcels, who could not send parcels to their nearest and dearest, could not help in any way, write letters"), anger ("Most of all I was hurt by the packages. Because... when a person's family is taken away, it is unclear what will happen to them, their future fate... they are accused, you have to give some false testimony... and then it turns out that... You look for them all over the country... and it turns out that you went all this way in vain, the parcels all subside away to nothing") also prompted an internal need to see justice restored ("It's time to return the person's property"; "I wanted the person to get what was sent to them").

The authenticity of the place (the knowledge that these apples were grown not for beauty, but to hide a secret – namely, the people who had been shot), contributing to the imagination of those who were long dead (shot) being alive ("When you're in the midst of these apples, you already know that beneath the earth there is now a bone"; "the trees grow on bones"), reinforced the authenticity of the feelings of concern towards them: "I wanted to feel like I helped someone", if indeed it was still possible to do something to help.

Then the pupils went individually or in pairs to a pit that was 2.5–3 metres deep. The actor ordered each participant to go down into this grave-pit, and after one to two minutes gave the command to climb back out.

The provocation of the affiliation mechanisms – projection, imagination, empathy – occurred even before the descent into the pit: "When we were walking along this long road [to the pit], I could not get out of my head the fact that just before this we had been told that there were large burials in the places

where the land had subsided. And I noticed out of the corner of my eye that here, right here there might be something"; "We were told that the land had subsided – all the same, the logic works in my head... I looked around, and the area was all like this...". This contributed to a co-attunement with the space, the emergence of curiosity ("I was very interested to go down there", "because I'd never gone down into such a hole, so deep. I had climbed up high, but I had never gone down. It was interesting to see from below..."; "the feeling – the incomprehension as to what will happen next") and the desire to test oneself ("I wanted to feel the isolation of the space and seek new sensations"; "I wanted to plunge deeper into this atmosphere"), as a result of which none of the students refused to descend into the pit (even though one of them resisted (morally), and another was ashamed, since the grave was a "holy place").

Each participant spent one to two minutes in the pit: sitting, standing, examining, watching, "waiting for someone to call me back up" to "get out as soon as possible". Many noted that in the pit time somehow flowed more slowly: "I was in the pit for 5 minutes" [in fact, no one was in the pit for more than two minutes]; "I was there only for two minutes, but it felt like I spent about ten years there".

The authenticity of the memorial space, the knowledge of the number of people shot and buried in this place, helped to switch on the imagination, and to associate the pit that the students had themselves descended into with the pits that were all around ("thousands of people lie underground and this is one of those very pits"), thereby projecting their own experienced emotions onto the victims of the repressions, and vice-versa ("I tried to look up with the eyes of a dead man, to hear every rustle"), which allowed them to feel more deeply the atmosphere of that time, and to understand through their own selves the possible state of mind of those people.

The notional "grave" in the place of mass graves for victims of political repression enabled the provoking of an instant co-attunement with the past, a "stitching together" of the past and the present: experiencing genuine fear from scary, and a little scary to terrible and creepy ("it seemed that I was about to see a bone inside the pit"; "maybe there is a pile of corpses"); many participants projected this fear onto the victims of repression of the past, associating themselves with them in the present. So, they noted that they felt "hopelessness, fear, as if it was me they want to punish"; "it seemed to me that I'm about to be buried or shot"; "it felt like it was the last minutes of my life"; "an incredibly strong feeling that you're alone and... it was just frightening"; "when there is four metres of earth above you and you are standing here in this little pit and you feel buried alive"; "This feeling of doom arose... and...

I even had this fleeting thought... I thought he [the actor] was about to pull out a machine gun. A fleeting and, of course, a stupid thought, irrational... but nevertheless... that's how it seemed".

The palette of emotions ranged from complete emptiness and numbness ("I felt constrained"; "I did not want to move, I did not want to think about something"), depression, hopelessness, humiliation ("You are in there, and someone is looking at you from above – from the side of those who, let's say, do the burying... Like that... As if there is someone strong, and you are weak"), extreme discomfort, awkwardness, and heaviness to the point of almost physical pain.

The metaphor of life and death was especially discernible in the pit space: "When you are in the pit you just look up and realize that there are living people up there... And in the pit itself, even the vegetation itself is still green, as if it is still alive, but it... it is already frozen, everything is frozen..."; "In that pit, when looking up, you [see] life outside the place of your 'prison'".

The wrongness of what is happening is here and now with the teenagers themselves: the living should not be standing in graves to experience the unnatural state of being buried alive, to disturb the dead ("The understanding that... maybe with my presence I am disturbing... I don't know... the history of this place..."; "Initially I jumped into the grave, without even thinking – whose is this grave, and what is actually there. And now it weighs heavy on my soul because of that... there are people still lying dead here, [in this pit there were no burials], and they should be respected"; "You don't know whether people were buried here or not, it's very hard, it's really very hard, it's just impossible") on an emotional, symbolic, and physical level. They thought about the injustice of what had happened back then: "In the pit when I went down, I saw the numbers – the number of people who died – and I felt ill at ease that it was such a large number, and it was somehow too cruel... And then by chance it turns out that they are innocent, they are rehabilitated"; "I read how many people were killed there, and I just felt so awful: oh, so many people – and they are all here. This is terrible"; "These people did not die their own death, they were unjustly condemned and killed... and you can just jump in, and get out again"; "Just at that moment of being in the pit... I was struck by the understanding of the ruthlessness of this giant mechanism – the repressions, in which people died as if they were on a conveyor belt – mostly innocent people".

The natural continuation of the awareness of injustice was the desire to restore justice – for example, in the form of a conventional symbolic gesture ("I put my hand on the stone on which 19,410 was written, to honour their memory") or an attempt to "overcome temporal, spatial... borders" to convey to those who had been executed what they had been deprived of back then – rest and solace ("I tried to 'find peace'").

After the pit, the participants went one by one or in pairs to the next stage – to an actor standing on a hill in front of a ravine. Next to the actor were some stones, on one of which was written the number of the case of Zagursky. In a stern voice, the actor ordered them to throw a stone into the ravine and handed them a tin of stewed meat "for a job well done".

This movement from stage to stage, together with an unknown plot twist to the climax of the performance, seemed to gradually accustom the students to a loss of subjectivity – of their ability to intelligently and critically approach the actions proposed, and to independently make decisions. In response to the question "What did you do?", the students answered: "I climbed the hill and threw a stone"; "I threw [the stone] and then picked it up and put it back"; "I threw the stone and returned it"; "I threw it"; "I threw it down"; "I dropped it". When filling in the questionnaires after the performance, some students added: "I reluctantly threw it, and I got the stewed meat"; "I threw it off, not knowing there was a choice"; "I threw it off, but with difficulty"; "I threw the stone off, but it didn't make it"; "I threw off the neighbouring stone", as if trying to justify themselves and their actions.

They understood only later what horrible thing they did at this stage ("I felt that I had done something wrong"), which subsequently caused an internal need to search for exculpatory formulae that would allow them to remove the emotional tension and moral responsibility: "I was told to"; "I did what I was told to do"; "without thinking, I threw the stone"; "I did not understand why it had to be done"; "I did not think that there was a choice"; "I threw it down, well, without thinking... they said it – and I did it"; "at the time I didn't understand the point... either I was not thinking, or something else..."; "I did not immediately understand the subtext with the stone"; "I actually wanted to find a small stone, not this one... Maybe I also did not understand at once the message, the metaphor, the symbolism … of throwing that stone"; "I did not realize at once what it was. I realized only after ten to fifteen seconds once I had left the place – then I realized what I had done..."; "You throw it – you perceive it just as a task, and then, when you are already leaving the place, then you understand that you have killed someone and been given a can of stewed meat in return."

The unexpected metamorphosis in the roles performed by the participants made a strong impression: first, a vast majority of pupils passed through an emotional co-attunement with the memorial space and the victims of the political repressions (through genuine feelings of fear, despair, loneliness, injustice, compassion, a desire to help and to comfort, and to see justice restored). Then suddenly they are the "butchers" who killed this victim, they have created the condemned and experienced injustice with their own hands. The understanding

of this does not come immediately – for some after ten to fifteen seconds, for others a little later.

The inner turmoil that most of the participants experienced at this point was difficult to express: "then you understand it and... sort of... YES!"; "the soul weighs heavy from this understanding... I'm really..."; "the weight, it was very hard..."; "there was a load"; "morally hard"; "something sinks somewhere inside"; "I felt disgusted".

The role of the soldier who carried out the sentence and the ill-fated tin of stewed meat as "a kind of payment for the murder" provoked and formed, in addition to regret, horror and sadness, and the two key feelings – shame and guilt: "I wanted to throw this tin of stewed meat somewhere far away and go home! Honestly... the biggest feeling I feel now is shame and guilt"; "All the way back I walked and apologized in my head, because I felt bad… I wanted to apologize to everyone [those who had been shot] ..."; "Being given the stewed meat really upset me"; "I'm very sorry; I would do anything to fix my mistake". It is probable that this metamorphosis became very painful for the participants because the line between the victim and the criminal, which had previously seemed obvious, became ill-defined.

Afterwards, the teenagers returned from the forest near the memorial to the memorial space itself. There they were invited to honour the memory of the repressed in a way that was comfortable and appropriate for them (bread, candles, matches, etc., were laid out on a blanket), as well as to walk around the memorial, to find the name of F. Zagursky, of their namesakes, and simply to spend some time in this place.

The teenagers were then invited back into the building one by one, where they were given back their belongings and their "case"-files, and where they filled in a questionnaire sharing their thoughts and emotions.

The unpleasant, uncomfortable experience of fear (I am the victim), and of shame and guilt (I am the executioner), emphasizing the complexity and inconsistency of the era of political repression itself, encouraged the teenagers to ask questions about the nature and essence of the events that took place from the 1930s to the 1950s, as well as about the society and state of that time: "I had this question in my head: the soldiers who did this, what did they feel? Did they feel, well... compassion for these people, or did they stop feeling it when they killed more than one person every day... what did they feel then?"; "Is this the only place in Russia where so many are buried... or is the whole of Russia one big burial ground?"; "What happened in the country that people were treated this way? Why couldn't we deal with them in a different, more humane, more human way? ...It's so strange, it's not clear why, why exactly did it happen?"; "I can't get over the realization that this was.... that this could at

all... in principle... that this could happen in our country"; "I do not understand why all this happened".

The anxiety, incomprehension, and surprise caused by the imaginary touching of the past changed their direction of travel after the performance: the spatial and temporal boundaries were now overcome in the opposite direction. If there still remained an interest in the past ("very strong interest, to learn as much as possible"; "I want to know what was in our country before us"; "because we were not around then, and we do not know how people lived then, what they felt, what they experienced"; "I am very interested in learning about the history of the country – how everything happened, how people lived then"), along with sympathy and a duty of remembrance ("to remember and honour the memory of people who are dear to us, just people who were convicted back then without any guilt, without any reason..."; "to find maybe after this performance my own relatives who were repressed"; "at least to remember those who... and they are still finding people who were repressed in these pits to this day"), then the fear and a sense of injustice which they felt during the performance through their own experiences ("What affected me most was that the cases were fabricated... that these people were just like all of us... and if we had been there then, the same thing could have happened to us... it could have been us") came to be projected onto the present: "It was probably hardest at the end. When you realize the scale – and once again... you know that now too, because we are now also at such a level that a little more, just a little bit more, and..."; "At the moment we are moving towards a pushback, you might say... Now it is coming little by little: the children have a voice, the government does not like that, and gradually we are on the slippery slope, the people need to be silenced somehow... and it's quite scary – at least for the future, for the position of..."; "You understand in principle all the cruelty of human [nature]..., and it's scary that similar things are going on somewhere now, and may appear again sometime in the future"; "What if this all happens again"; "It's scary that all this will happen again"; "I don't even know how to relate to it – whether to prepare for it, or to resist it... But it's not clear how...".

The prospect of a future in which there would be no choice, no possibility to prove their case and defend their good name, where they would have to sign false statements and dissemble in order to survive, or die for nothing, was terrible ("When we were writing [filling in the questionnaires], there were not just awkward questions, but questions that I didn't want to answer at all. And those people who came here – they arrived already doomed... they had no choice. Many people did not want to admit their guilt, they wanted everything to be fair, but circumstances forced them to... to lie... not for their own benefit... but just because you they had to..."; "I was shocked that people had

to plead guilty for something they'd never done..."; "It's unpleasant, offensive, and sad... and somehow, even anger creeps in, when I think that people were unfairly convicted, that they were killed"; "How many good people were... for the smallest offences... killed"), as was the idea of hiding or erasing the faces of their family in photographs, as if rejecting them ("When we were told that on some of the photos faces were hidden, because their relatives despised these people, that they could betray their country and all that stuff. …if I were in the place of the relatives, I would, on the contrary, reveal the face and try to prove the innocence of this person. Because... well, it's like one of your own"; "You've known him, for ten years, you know all his faults...But in one moment you just go and abandon this person and say that you do not know him, that you cannot know him... how is such a thing possible?"), or being forgotten ("When people were repressed, they were expelled from the lives of the people, the country, the town where they had lived, they were forgotten... and people did their best not to remember them too often..."), or becoming a victim or an executioner.

The analysis above enables me to suggest that the participants in the performance, through their own "truly lived feelings" were able to achieve a certain empathy and solidarity with those who had taken part in those events – on both sides of the case: the unambiguous images of the executioner and the victim acquired a more complex structure.

The executioner is at once the system (the dictatorial regime, the leader, the people admitted to power), the state, and the simple person who does the job without thinking, because they were told to.

The victim is not only the innocent people convicted of falsified cases, sent to prisoner camps or shot, but also their relatives ("I felt very hurt on behalf of those people who did not receive their parcels, who could not send parcels to their relatives, could not help in any way, write letters"; "You need to study and to feel what the people who were subjected to these repressions felt, and what their relatives felt").

Thus, both the executioners and the victims are, first and foremost, people just like us. The formation of an affiliative postmemory makes it clear that any one of us can be one of them. This becomes an unpleasant and unexpected discovery. The interest and desire to understand what it was and why it happened is related, in large part, to the fear of ending up, voluntarily or otherwise, in a role that causes strong resentment, a sense of injustice and internal resistance in the present.

In this sense, the restoration and preservation of memory about the events and people of the era of political repression, about the past, becomes a kind of moral beacon for the present, a reflexive work, the main task of which is not

to be silent, but to speak out ("It seems to me that we are just now studying the times of repression. We are bringing these people back, remembering and bringing these people back into the life of our country... this is the right thing to do"; "We simply need to not be silent, and to talk about it, to try to somehow find out about our relatives, that yes, this happened... and not to hide or be ashamed of the fact that, yes, your relatives took part in it, and they were convicted; accept that it was so, remember it and talk about it...."; "If people feel panic, then they should show that they feel panic... the authorities will see that, and take some measures to restore some calm... that's what I think..."), not to condemn, but to try to understand ("To condemn the executioners who were there back then – in fact, what is the point now. Every time has its own executioners. We just need to know that this happened, and not allow the same to happen in our time"), not just to know ("it was"), but to feel ("how it was") ("...this is actually important in order to prevent the whitewashing of the dictatorial regime and the people who stood behind it...").

Emotions, according to the Izard's Differential Emotions Scale, were distributed as follows according to their degree of intensity: interest (84.8%), surprise (64.8%), sadness (60.8%). Then there was a differentiation between the girls and the boys: with a fairly high degree of intensity; the girls displayed emotions of shame (47.7%), guilt (44.4%), and fear (35.5%), the boys – emotions of disgust (37.1%) and fear (28.6%), which complements the qualitative analysis of the survey material presented.

It was curious that, when filling in the Izard's scale immediately after the completion of all the stages, the participants identified interest as the dominant emotion, which turns out to be quite multifaceted. It is both the unusual format ("I did not expect such a format – it is rather unusual"; "When we got here, I thought it would be just an ordinary play about the repressions, that someone will play some scenes... and then when... there is such an atmosphere: so cold, cruel, and you plunge right down to your bones into this atmosphere of repression. It's so spellbinding, it so touches the soul") and the unpredictability of the plot, the content of the further stages, which made the performance similar to a kind of quest, and the new information that was also given substance in the form of sound (the counting up of those who had been shot), the ground caving in under feet (the story of the burials), the reward for killing (the cans of stewed meat); it is the intense feelings and emotions experienced at particular phases or throughout the entire immersive performance. And the theme itself, shrouded in a halo of mystery, isolation, and incomprehensibility, which is difficult, but you want to understand it.

Thus, the actualization of positive emotions (interest, surprise) associated with the expectation of something unusual, unknown, and interesting, remaining at the same high levels after the event, was supplemented for all participants by the formation of a relatively stable background of anxiety-depressive experiences. Moreover, the boys were more likely to have acute manifestations of negative emotions than the girls.

The plot twists used in the play, coupled with certain dramatically played out memory practices, allowed the director and actors to create an atmosphere in which the participants were able to experience emotions and conditions that were perhaps close to those experienced by all the participants in the events of the Great Terror of 1937–1938. Each participant was able, to a certain extent, to recreate the atmosphere of that time for themselves and, through imagination and projection, to connect emotionally with the past. This co-attunement, carried out through substantiated history, where the main artifact itself was the authentic space of the memorial to the victims of political repression, helped to deliver the "chronographic stitching" and to overcome spatial and temporal boundaries.

The three central stages of the performance allowed each participant to provoke a special kind of experience about the past, which became part of their own memory (postmemory) about the era of political repression. The projection of their own experiences onto the past enabled the teenagers to identify themselves for a time with the people who had participated in those events, and at the same time to ascribe themselves to them, and to assign to themselves the feelings of those who had long been buried there. It enabled the students to achieve a certain solidarity with them – to feel and understand the fear of that era, to sympathize, to feel sorry for them, to try to participate in their fate and symbolically restore justice.

The performance turned out to be a kind of game played out in the space of the memorial, the authenticity of which contributed to the fact that the teenagers experienced strong emotions, and associated them with a specific place, period, and people.

EMOTIONS-ARTIFACT-MEMORY

The document-related work was divided into two parts (after each of which the participants filled in a short questionnaire): 1) a general introductory tour of the GAAOSO archive in Yekaterinburg, an overview and familiarization with the archive's equipment, the document collections, etc., related to the topic of

political repression (26 participants); 2) focused/individual study work in the archive's reading room and familiarization (reading) with the archived investigation casefile (28 people, of whom 23 filled in the questionnaire). Several people went on to the research stage and more detailed work with the casefile and its further elaboration.

Of particular interest here was the second part – the work with an authentic archived investigation casefile from the 1930s. I presumed that the familiarization with the documents of the investigation file (substantiated history), which contains the history of the fate of individuals, may contribute to the formation of an affiliative postmemory about the era of political repression, through the emergence of empathy and sympathy for a specific person, and by provoking strong emotions in the process of comprehending the content of the documents (the detainees' arrest forms, interrogation reports, sentencing, denunciations, complaints, letters, etc.), revealing the innocence of the convicted prisoners and the unfairness of the charges.

Processing the results of the questionnaires and interviews with some of the students enabled me to make the following observations and conclusions.

The main emotions in terms of intensity when working with the archive file in person were interest (83.8%), surprise (58.8%), and sadness (38.8%). The young people who came to the project later got acquainted with the archival cases from photocopies, but they had a greater range of emotions in terms of intensity: interest (76%), sadness (68%), and surprise (56%), and were supplemented with the emotions of shame (60%), guilt (48%), disgust (44%), and anger (44%). We can assume that this is because the second set of teenagers came with more interest in the topic, or because they had the opportunity to read the documents more carefully, to read small extracts, to discuss the details with someone else, etc.

Nevertheless, it is obvious that, in and of itself, working with an authentic document – regardless of how it is presented, in the form of an original or a photocopy – caused a strong emotional response from the respondents. The dominant emotions (as in all the project's activities) were interest and surprise. It is likely that, depending on the individual characteristics of the teenagers, their internal expectations, their individual susceptibility and interest in certain aspects of this topic, sadness, shame, guilt, disgust, and anger manifest themselves with different degrees of intensity.

The direction of these emotions, their specific vector and content help us to understand the comments of the respondents. What constitutes interest for a teenager? First of all, the archive document itself (the familiarization with the archived investigation casefile), which was interpreted by the students not just

as a new, or novel, but a really unique experience: it was interesting "to read old documents and decipher the strange handwriting of the investigators"; "to examine every detail, to dissect every written word, gradually opening up more and more strange accusations against my hero"; "to watch the chronology of his [the accused in the case] investigation, to track who says what about him, whether the testimony matches, and so on"; "to review case materials, revealing more and more new details"; "it was sometimes funny due to incorrect wording, crossed out words, followed by the writing of a completely different word, unnecessary words being highlighted; for example, in some places the word diesel was written with a capital letter"; it was interesting to analyse the "interrogations, written by hand... the drawing of a conclusion", "the sequence of events and chance coincidences"; "it was very interesting to read his [the accused's] case, to see what questions were asked during the interrogations, and how they formed and filled in the forms/verdicts/rulings/petitions"; "to find out the life history of the accused, the characteristics that were considered necessary to indicate in the questionnaire"; it was "scary and at the same time interesting to study the materials, and learn more and more about the repressions... like putting together jigsaw puzzles".

All this enabled the teenagers to feel like an investigator, some kind of detective who is investigating "the secrets and events of that time", and reading "an interesting, fantastic book".

The uniqueness, inaccessibility, mystery, dilapidation, illegibility (as a symbol of elusive knowledge, of a mystery, a hidden crime – especially in cases where the documents are handwritten) – all of this makes working with the casefile very attractive for the teenagers, like a kind of quest.

As you progress through this quest, reading the contents of the investigative case materials, yet another emotion – surprise – gains intensity. What turns out to be unexpected for the modern teenager?

The logic of responses is formed in a sequence: from the stating of a fact, through surprise (the acts are absurd, illogical, ridiculous) to the assessment of people and periods (sometimes through rhetorical questioning): "The charge was completely unfounded... there was no direct evidence whatsoever, and they were still sent to a camp for five years"; "I was surprised by the inconsistencies in the case, for example, the extra son, the children's years of birth"; "some of the questioning and testimony was just fake"; "For me the most amazing thing was the form of questioning of the suspect whereby his denial of involvement was simply met with vague counter-arguments; it was clear that the investigator was deliberately trying to 'inundate' Kondratiev"; it was surprising that "a man could be punished for words they hadn't said, and what's more, they

could be put behind bars for four years"; "I was surprised that a person could be put in jail even in the absence of evidence, and kept in custody"; "People who barely had anything to do with the life of foreign states were immediately put down as spies, without any honest trials being conducted"; "The most surprising thing for me was and remains that investigators can assign a case to an innocent person and put them in prison, just by forcing them to sign some papers"; "Some people immediately confessed to what they had not done"; etc.

An important feature of working with the case is the credibility and plausibility of the "crimes" of the accused, which are sketched out by the investigator through the complaints and denunciations against them, resulting from the interrogations of witnesses. Many of the teenagers began to believe that "this was a terrible person" – right up until they read the prosecutor's appeal and the decision to rehabilitate them: "When I read that he had been rehabilitated, I became very interested in reviewing the case again"; "I did not suspect that the testimony could be falsified. But when I realized that, I was extremely surprised".

At this point, the presumption of trust in the state as one of the basic foundations of a sense of security is questioned and undermined – this is what worries the teenagers most and causes strong emotions: "Reading further and further, I became more and more amazed – why did all this happen?"; "For me, it was surprising that people had no conscience or humanity in those days. They groundlessly imprisoned, killed and tortured innocent people; I was very much surprised that such cruelty and injustice existed in the 30s"; "I was very surprised how people can act towards each other"; this "caused a sense of injustice and insecurity for the well-being of an honest person at that time"; "In these documents I found another confirmation of how cruel and merciless, yet meaningless the mechanisms of repression were at that time... it seemed to me very shocking and sad".

Sadness was the third most intense emotion noted by teenagers on the list. The surprise of acquainting themselves with the contents of the casefile, of encountering unexpected facts (absurd, forged, with gross errors, with real sentences, and the same real rehabilitations "for lack of *corpus delicti*") invariably led to sadness. Sadness was expressed both as sorrow, and as pity for the victims: "I felt sorry for my hero, his family, his friends"; "I felt sorry for the innocent people who just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I felt sorry for those people who were broken, whose inner core was pulled out by force"; "I felt very sorry for Victor, who died in prison, where he should not have been"; it was "a shame that the relatives did not find out that the case against their family member was dropped after almost 30 years"; "It was sad

to read the letters of the brother, who was worried about Reinhold"; "I was sad because of the fate of this man and his life".

Moving forward, sadness could split into a whole palette of stronger emotions, from calm and contemplative sadness to bewilderment, incomprehension ("I was sad that such uneducated people clumsily wrote strange stories"), indignation, and even to some extent anger ("It was... a shame for the fate of this person. He was only 31 years old, and through such a coincidence of circumstances, his life quickly ended. It's just an offensive injustice"; "My soul was torn to pieces when one document or other spoke about the life of the victim. Whether the victim had family, children, or friends. The repressions traumatized many, they took away innocent people").

In its most extreme manifestations, the sadness caused by the realization of the injustice committed against innocent people turned into anger, disgust, and contempt – in relation to "the government that did it", "the investigator and the system", to people who "were almost animals, ready to tear anyone to pieces for their own benefit and to 'protect' the people"; "Any person could say such nonsense that immediately a person could be sent to prison, or worse still, shot"; "They felt superior to other people. They could mock others who they thought were weaker than them. They were arrogant". From the above quotes, it can be seen that the vector of open active condemnation is aimed not only – as is obvious from the investigation casefiles – at the criminals who signed and carried out the sentences (conventionally termed investigators-executioners, who were later also arrested and convicted). It is also aimed at the government and the state system as a whole, within which these crimes became possible, and at a society in which there were people who were able to "talk nonsense".

Because working with an archival investigation casefile combines both a real contact with history (whereby the casefile itself acts as substantiated history/an artifact) and a symbolic contact (when reading the contents of the case and feeling the fates of specific people that unfold on several tens (hundreds) of yellowed pages), it is possible to quickly and effectively switch on the mechanism of empathy as one of the key mechanisms for the formation of an affiliative postmemory.

Co-attunement occurs at the level of the simultaneous projection of one's own emotions into the past, and the appropriation of the emotions and experiences of the convicts and their relatives, as the teenagers themselves imagine them (often these emotions are hidden between the lines and only sometimes appear in letters, petitions, and other documents), and it is the feeling of fear which becomes the medium between the past and the present (an instrument of chronographic cross-linking).

It is curious that this is not a fear of the past ("Oddly enough, I felt no fear... I felt sorry for the innocent people who just happened to be "in the wrong place at the wrong time"; "I didn't really feel fear, because it was not happening to me"), but rather a fear of the present: "I wouldn't want to face that in my time. It is a terrible feeling of helplessness, of doom. Betrayal. The horror of everything that is happening – what a person does to a person"; "Fear came about from the thoughts that something like this could easily happen right now and from not understanding how it can be overcome"; "It frightens me that this may happen again".

In this way, the declared duty of memory in relation to the past becomes a manifesto of protection from repetition of this horror in the present. The fairly stable emotions of guilt and shame, directed as it were at the past, when combined with surprise and indignation at the injustice of the era of political repression, obviously appeal to the present day: "It is very unpleasant to realize that your ancestors, your compatriots could do this. To send a woman with two children to five years in the camps, without actually having any exact confirmation of her involvement in the [counter-revolutionary] activities, just because her husband had admitted his guilt (which was also not true)"; "I was sorry that this had happened... I was ashamed of the past because people deliberately put other people behind bars. They deprived them of everything... A person was simply taken away on false charges and that was that"; "I felt guilt and shame for the people and for their attitude to other people just like them"; "I felt shame that an arrested person could be convicted illegally"; "After working with the archive case, I felt depressed, it was unpleasant. I still feel ashamed and disgusted that there is such a shameful page in the history of my country".

The process of "feeling your way" into history through interaction with an authentic space and document, of gaining an affiliative level of postmemory about the era of political repression was, to a certain extent, in tune with the "work of grief" described by Etkind, by which he means "response to the state of Another" as opposed to trauma as "response to one's own state" (Etkind 2016: 27). Etkind emphasizes that the first generation, the victims of repression, know no trauma; it is experienced instead by the survivors – the generation of descendants, children, and only the third generation – the grandchildren of the victims, criminals, and witnesses – do not experience trauma, but grief for their grandparents (Etkind 2016: 13). The author notes that grief, cognition, and revenge are the cultural and psychological processes that combine to overcome post-catastrophic psychological states. A fundamental characteristic of grief is the desire to find out what really happened, a desire which is not present in those who suffered the trauma directly (Etkind 2016: 19).

CONCLUSION

Analysis of the impact of an immersive performance on teenagers from the point of view of forming an affiliative postmemory shows that the practices used in the performance worked towards a conditional re-traumatization through the provoked experience of their own experiences and the memory of their own experiences projected onto the past. That is, even if it was in the form of a game, in a specially organized space, nonetheless a kind of reproduction of traumatic experience took place, whereby chronographic cross-linking helped to mix together the past and the present. On the other hand, the beginning of the performance with the story about the "Masks of Sorrow" monument at the memorial, and the end of the performance in the space of the memorial slabs, where the participants were asked to search for their namesakes, became a means of distancing, which could protect the mourner from the risks of a traumatic past. It became a difference marker, a reminder of the separation between the past and the present (Etkind 2016: 37).

It is probable that, by combining the work of repetition and remembering, which results in the humanization of history, the acquisition by the adolescents of individual emotional experiences (of themselves as victims, relatives of victims, executioners) and co-experiences of those unjustly affected by the state system helps them to begin to rethink and to rid themselves of the narrative of redemption (the justification of repression), which hinders any understanding of a catastrophic past.

The same applies to working with the archived investigation casefile: in this instance, the marker for distinguishing between the past and the present was the very place where the familiarization with the document happened – the archive as a repository of documents from the past and about the past, and the cover of the casefile, which serves as a symbolic border between what was then and what is now.

The mechanism of distancing can also be seen in the analysis of the emotional experiences of the adolescents. Probably, the manifestation of a spectrum of negative emotions, provoked by interaction with an authentic space and/or an artifact from the era of political repression, was the result of the actualization of latent fears and anxieties in the lives of the teenagers about their own physical and psychological safety.

As part of the game (playing the victim/executioner – performance, playing the investigator/researcher – working with the archive and investigation casefile), the articulation of acute negative and disturbing experiences became possible due to the security of the game space, which can be entered and exited,

having experienced and left behind anger, disgust, wrath, shame, and guilt inside it, while taking interest, surprise, and sadness beyond it (the most intense emotional conditions before and after the performance and work with the casefile).

The principle of distancing is also important here because the game is "one of the main phenomena of human existence (along with love, death, domination and labour), which has the ability to reflect human existence in its entirety, and therefore acts as a most important means for the self-objectification of a person in culture (E. Fink)" (Gramatchikova 2004: 5), that is, experiences inside the game and outside the game are equally authentic.

Thus, note can be made of the effectiveness of the selected practices for working with grief and (the beginning) of recognition, understanding, and overcoming the apocalyptic past. Quantitative and qualitative research methods have allowed us to reveal features of the interaction of the recipient of immersive practices with an authentic space (the memorial to victims of political repression) and an authentic artifact (the archival investigation casefile) on a physical, symbolic, and emotional level, to show the emotional connection to the subject, in which information is of particular depth through feelings truly experienced. This study helps to reveal and analyse the internal mechanisms of forming an affiliative postmemory in adolescents about the era of political repression.

NOTES

[1] The project "You can't keep silent: Practices of memory about the era of political repression" was supported by the Presidential Grants Fund in 2019. The main idea and goal of this project are to look for and create new memory practices about the era of political repression from the 1930s to the 1950s with help from adolescents (see the project website at http://12memorial.ru/molchat-rasskazyvat, last accessed on 19 May 2021).

[2] We can read the following description about this original performance on the website of the Museum of the History of Yekaterinburg: "The Route of Memory is a documentary audio performance on wheels, dedicated to the private stories of victims of political repression during the Great Terror. This is a unique opportunity not only to visit the memorial, having already felt the theme thanks to the living memories of people, but also to see the imprint of the Great Terror on our city. The audio performance is based on more than 30 interviews with relatives of those executed in the Sverdlovsk region in 1937–1938. These were supplemented by excerpts from historical documents and casefiles of the repressed, recorded by actors from the Open Studio Theatre. The audio performance presents the stories of ordinary citizens and prominent figures of Sverdlovsk, such as I.D. Kabakov – the first secretary of the Sverdlovsk regional committee of the CPSU, V.M. Tarik – the initiator of the creation of the Sverdlovsk

Palace of Pioneers, etc." See the project website at http://m-i-e.ru/marshrutpamyaty, last accessed on 19 May 2021.

[3] This is also a project of the Museum of the History of Yekaterinburg, which was implemented by the director and actors of the Open Studio Theatre in the space of the memorial to the victims of political repression near Yekaterinburg. This article is devoted to analysing the effect of that performance. See the project website at http://m-i-e.ru/delo39496, last accessed on 19 May 2021.

[4] The task was formulated as follows: "Please mark in the table the feelings and emotions that you now experience when thinking about the repressions of the 1930s–1950s, and indicate the degree of their intensity (for 100%, take the highest degree of intensity of this feeling that you have experienced in your life, for 0% – the absence of this feeling/emotion)".

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HOSPITAL CLOWNING AS A WAY TO OVERCOME TRAUMA

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Abstract: Hospital clowning is a relatively new social practice for patients under prolonged medical treatment by means of play, fantasy, and humor. Opposed to circus or theater, hospital clowning is based on an individual, personal contact with a patient. It is not accidental that this social practice plays an important role not only in clinical context, but also as a wider social phenomenon. In the modern world with its tendencies of globalization, virtualization, standardization, isolation, and specialization the value of intimate face-to-face communication is gradually increasing.

The study aimed at exploring the relationship between hospital clowning and trauma: 1) trauma of the patient; 2) trauma of the clown; 3) meeting of the two traumas in the interaction within hospital clowning; and 4) hospital clowning as a social movement in the traumatized modern society. In order to reach such a complex goal, a combination of a literature review, empirical study, and single observations was applied. The empirical study was conducted in cooperation with a Russian organization "Doctor Clown", and included 19 semi-structured interviews with working clowns.

The results revealed three kinds of trauma related to hospital clowning. First, the trauma of the patient, a victim of the modern medicine. Second, the trauma of the clown, which may lead them to practicing clowning. Hospital clowning may have a healing and developing impact not only for the patients, but also for the clowns themselves. Third, the collective trauma in the modern society, which is being treated by clowning in the most general sense. Based on the modern concept of coexisting positive and negative aspects of trauma, such as post-traumatic growth and post-traumatic depreciation, some practical implications, such as professional selection of the clowns, are discussed.

Keywords: clown doctor, connection, hospital clowning, trauma

Human beings are by nature full of contradictions and ambivalences. It is well known that joy and happiness are often accompanied by grief and horror, and laughter and tears are close neighbors. This is true for both directions: no happy state can last forever and usually ends sadly, but extreme joy is

usually experienced after dark times. The best comedy is tragi-comic, and the saddest story is a comi-tragic one, comedy and tragedy supplement rather than contradict each another (Dzemidok 1974).

For a long time, psychology was mainly focused on different kinds of deviations and psychological problems, and the concept of psychological trauma has a broad background in these terms. During the past decades a new paradigm of positive psychology was developed. Representatives of this approach argue that it is worth concentrating on mental health, wellbeing, and happiness in order to provide more thorough understanding of how people overcome suffering and resist illness (Fredrickson 2001; Emmons 2020; Seligman 2008; Watkins et al. 2018). M. Seligman (2008) proposes a concept of positive health, meaning the necessity to improve health actively. He suggests that to achieve wellbeing, in the first place we should work on positive emotions, engagement, purpose, positive relationships, and positive accomplishment. This idea has been supported by numerous empirical data. Thus, character strengths, such as love, hope, curiosity, and zest are linked to life satisfaction (Peterson et al. 2007). Optimism predicts a better prognosis for cardiovascular diseases (see Seligman 2008). Positive emotions are regarded as a fundamental human strength (Fredrickson 2001). For instance, recent studies have confirmed a high impact of joy and happiness on subjective well-being and psychological functioning in general (Watkins et al. 2018; Emmons 2020).

The notion of trauma has various definitions. Usually it is related to some stressful event on the one hand and some vulnerability of the person on the other. Trauma decreases the ability to adapt and to develop oneself. Traumatization is associated to the fear of losing oneself, disintegration of the self or a group identity, and generally, to the fear of madness, a metaphorical analogue of death (Brodsky 2020; Magomed-Eminov 2014). The concept of trauma has a long history in psychology with three different conceptual transformations: as a traumatic neurosis, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and finally as a normal reaction to extreme situations (Magomed-Eminov 2014). Recently, in line with positive psychology, research has turned to the positive and developing aspects of trauma, which are conceptualized as a post-traumatic growth opposed to the PTSD (Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004). Now suffering may be regarded as a mastery of the changed oneself and the changed world, and an active transformation of the two (Magomed-Eminov 2014). Post-traumatic growth and post-traumatic depreciation are defined, respectively, as positive and negative changes caused by trauma (Baker et al. 2008). They are considered as different and unrelated domains of psychological functioning, although they can coexist (Zięba et al. 2019).

A sense of humor, as a unique human ability, has various psychological functions. R. Martin (2007) defines the following groups: cognitive and social benefits of the positive emotion of mirth, uses of humor for social communication and influence, and tension relief and coping. Each of them, and in particular the last one, has a useful potential in the case of traumatic experience. Although true, spontaneous laughter is mainly an automatic reaction, one is able to apply the sense of humor deliberately in order to manage their own emotional state in the face of adverse life situations (Abdullaeva 2009; Martin 2007).

The coping effect of humor and laughter has been shown in many psychological studies (Lefcourt & Martin 1986; Martin 2007). The paradigm of positive psychology and positive health results in searching for new kinds of interventions, where humor plays an important role. Humor-based methods and techniques are increasingly used for enhancing happiness and reducing depressive symptoms (Wellenzohn & Proyer & Ruch 2018). Humor predicts hope and post-traumatic growth among leukemia patients (Karami & Kahrazei & Arab 2018). In particular, the self-enhancing humor style influences post-traumatic growth in students, while aggressive humor hinders it (Kruger 2018).

A. Cvetkov (2007) analyzed the quantity and content dynamics of jokes sent to a popular website of anecdotes and matched them with the dates of major stressful events – terrorist attacks, natural disasters, airplane crashes, etc. He measured the "stressful potential" of an event according to the number of jokes sent to the website. Usually, right after a tragic event there is, in general, a sharp decrease of jokes for several days. People experience grief, fear, horror, and naturally they do not feel like laughing. Nonetheless, soon after, everyday humor is first replaced by dark jokes reflecting the very event, and the overall pool of anecdotes increases significantly. Then, the quantity of the dark jokes gradually decreases, the jokes unrelated to the tragic event replace them, while the normal quantity of everyday humor is quickly restored.

This social dynamic reflects the coping effect of humor and laughter very well. It has become even more evident during the coronavirus pandemic, when the number of jokes related to Covid-19, circulating around the world, has become enormous. This wave has been registered by many humor researchers (Amici 2020; Bischetti & Canal & Bambini 2021; Chiodo & Broughton & Michalski 2020; Eremeeva 2020), and many scholars have announced joke collection campaigns for their studies within various disciplines. This kind of humor reflects a global trauma and shows the process of coping with it on the level of personality as well as society. This humor also unites us when we share the jokes in everyday interactions (especially in virtual communication during the lockdown).

The coping effects of humor and laughter are universal, and the current global situation reveals it just more clearly. However, people differ considerably in their individual ability to use them, which, obviously, is highly influenced by the degree of subjective and objective danger for a person. Maybe the service of hospital clowning exists exactly for those who, for whatever reasons, feel it difficult to apply the life-giving laughter potential in the face of traumatic events.

Hospital or medical clowning is a modern practice of clinical support by means of humor, laughter, play, fantasy, and imagination (Raviv 2018). The aim of hospital clowning is defined in many ways by the clowns, researchers, and mass media. In the most abstract meaning its function is to bring humanity back to medicine, as it has disappeared along with the fast development of technologies. Specially trained clowns try to maintain communication with patients in the space of pain, fear, death, and the pressure of a special hospital culture (Sirotina & Miller 2015).

The history of hospital clowning begins in the 1970s with two very different persons: clown M. Christensen and medical doctor Patch Adams (Olshansky 2013). The former may be linked to the development of professional training for hospital clowns, while the latter has promoted it worldwide as a movement of volunteers (doctors, nurses, psychologists, actors, etc.). Nowadays there are more than a hundred organizations of hospital clowning in more than 40 countries (Gur'eva 2016; Dolzhenkova 2016).

Hospital clowning differs considerably from circus or theatrical clowning, as its primary aim is not to entertain the audience or to make them applaud, but rather to maintain an individual contact, a connection, which may be reflected in a wide range of emotional and behavioral expressions, besides laughter and joy, such as crying, grief, anger, annoyance, excitement, etc. (Olshansky 2013; Raviv 2018).

Normally, hospital clowns work in the tradition of Bakhtinian carnival, where laughter is directed to everyone around them: patients, their relatives, and medical staff (Ivanova 2017). Obviously, not always and not all of them are traumatized. However, despite the fact that a clown's interaction ideally influences everyone, usually it has a special "target". The Red Noses,[1] the organization that unites clown doctors' teams from many European countries, defines these people as those who are "in need of joy", but what is really meant by this nice metaphor? Below I would try to demonstrate its relation to traumatic experience.

Hospital clowning research has begun just recently (see the review in Dionigi & Canestrari 2016; Dionigi 2017). It stems from a practical demand, thereby it is mainly aimed at providing evidence of the effectiveness of clowning, thus maintaining and supporting the relatively new profession. Indeed, hospital

clowning has been shown to be effective for patients (Sirotina & Miller 2015; Dionigi & Canestrari 2016; Vagnoli et al. 2005, Vagnoli & Caprilli & Messeri 2010; Auerbach et al. 2013; Arriaga & Melo & Caires 2020), for their relatives (Agostini et al. 2014; Dionigi & Canestrari 2016), and for the medical staff (Ruch & Rodden & Proyer 2011, Vagnoli et al. 2005; Koller & Gryski 2008; Dionigi & Canestrari 2016), although in the latter case the data are more contradictive (Vagnoli et al. 2005; Dionigi & Canestrari 2016). C. Battrick et al. (2007) summarized all the effects into four groups: cognitive effect (distraction from pain or medical procedures), physiological effect (effects of laughter and positive emotions on organism), social effect (enhancing patient's communication with their relatives and doctors), and emotional effect (decrease of negative and increase of positive emotions).

At the same time, there is a lack of research dedicated to the influence of hospital clowning on the clowns themselves, despite the fact that in practice many of them mention its therapeutic impact. I argue that hospital clowning has its healing power also for the clowns, who have often become involved in the practice because of their own traumatizing experience, and this should be articulated and analyzed to a greater extent.

The very idea of hospital clowning in the modern society is becoming more and more popular, which is revealed by mass media, an increasing amount of clown doctor organizations, and a sharp rise in the research on this activity. For instance, the Scopus database includes 19 articles on hospital (medical) clowning from 2005 to 2010 and 102 – from 2010 to 2020. This change may be regarded as one of the reactions to traumatization in society. In the modern world with its expressed tendencies of globalization, virtualization, standardization, isolation, and specialization (see, e.g., Magomed-Eminov 2014), people can hardly be heard and supported, and the value of intimate face-to-face communication is increasing. N. Artemenko (2020a) argues that the very speed, abruptness, and depth of social changes of the current period of history has led to a shocking "contraction of the present" and traumatization. She distinguishes four main sources of cultural trauma in the modern society: unprecedented intensification of cross-cultural contacts, intensification of people's mobility in the world, changes in the fundamental institutions and regimes, and abrupt changes in beliefs, ideologies, and worldviews. The general traumatization of society results in searching for coping mechanisms, which reflects in such an approach as positive psychology, mentioned above, and in particular, the phenomenon of hospital clowning.

The aim of the study is to explore the relationship between hospital clowning and trauma from different points of view: 1) trauma of the patient; 2) trauma of the clown; 3) meeting of the two traumas in the interaction within hospital

clowning; and 4) hospital clowning as a social movement in the modern society. In order to reach such a complex goal, I have applied a combination of a literature review, empirical study, and single observations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

We conducted a study in collaboration with a Russian medical clowning organization called Doctor Clown.[2] This is a small collective, which provides training in accordance with modern international standards and is oriented to the continuous development of professionalism in their work. The activity of Doctor Clown began as volunteering, but nowadays the organization exists as a charity fund, which provides a small salary for the clowns. Doctor Clown collaborates stably with a state hospital in Moscow, which every clown visits up to eight times per month in order to avoid burning out (the problem of burnout in clown doctors is covered, for example, in Dionigi 2020; Reizer & Koslowsky & Antilevich-Steg 2020).

The whole collective of 19 clowns (10 men and 9 women aged from 24 to 43) with work experience in a clinic from 10 months to 9 years (average 2 years) was interviewed from 2018 to 2020. The age is indicated for the date of the interview. Most of them have basic theatrical education (12 out of 19), and all have passed a special training on hospital clowning.

The semi-structured interview, conducted with the clowns, contained several blocks of questions: biographical data, personal reasons, and the story of entering hospital clowning, worldview, personal beliefs and values, individual style of clowning, the most and the least successful cases at work, interactions with parents and medical staff, the impact of hospital clowning on their personal life, etc. Each interview lasted for about two hours and was recorded and transcribed afterwards. The data given about the interviewees include their initials, gender, and age.

The data from the interviews was supplemented by observations during six clowns' visits in the hospital, and published biographies of hospital clowns. I was also lucky to be able to observe the work of Patch Adams' volunteer group during their trip to Moscow, and to take part in a clowning training by Pedro Fabião, a professional Portuguese clown doctor and trainer, who teaches clowning around the world. I am very grateful for both opportunities.

RESULTS

Who is in need of joy? The trauma of the patient

Initially, hospital clowning was born as practical help for children being under prolonged medical treatment in hospitals (Olshansky 2013; Raviv 2018). Of course, this group is very wide and heterogeneous, some children may be in a very severe condition, suffering from sharp pain, some have to go through painful and scarring medical manipulations, some experience separation from parents or, on the contrary, overprotection, etc. Nonetheless, hospitalization itself evokes in children different kinds of behavioral and emotional disturbances, which sometimes last even long after: sleeping disorders, nightmares, fear of death, hypochondriac fears, nervous tics, enuresis, etc. (Vernon 1965; Yap 1988; Rennick & Rashotte 2009).

Moreover, besides all the possible stressful obstacles in a medical setting, all patients under prolonged hospitalization experience the impact of the special hospital culture (Hoff 1995 [1976]; Sirotina & Miller 2015), which is made up by the special rules, schedule, clothes, language, and traditions, elaborated by the medical system in general and by a concrete hospital in particular. Medical staff takes it as something usual and may hardly pay attention to the fact that for a patient who comes from outside, a cultural shock often takes place.

In pursuit of more and more comprehensive medical technologies, doctors inevitably tend to perceive a patient as an object of treatment rather than a personality, a subject of their own life, thus losing an opportunity to maintain a true therapeutic relationship. There are numerous studies which systematize various barriers and their causes in doctor-patient communication (Ong et al. 1995; Ha & Anat & Longnecker 2010; Chipidza & Wallwork & Stern 2015; Gordon & Beresin 2016). The hospital culture imposes its own rules and even values on a patient (for instance, the absolute value of the fight for health). Patients tend to feel themselves as objects of medical manipulations, as hindrances in the process of professional treatment, and finally, as laymen in the matters concerning their health as well as their life. These processes become especially sharp in the case of severe chronic diseases and often lead to patients' passivity. On the other hand, the importance of a patient's agency, an active focus on getting better, is known as one of the central factors of successful recovery (Wasserman et al. 2010).

The problem of assimilation and/or adaptation to hospital culture becomes the more relevant the more severe is a patient's condition, and the longer period they have to stay in hospital. In case of severe chronic diseases, a special shift in

the system of personal motivations and values takes place; the time perspective, the circle of interests and social contacts narrow (Chulkova & Moiseenko 2009). Finally (in the worst case), the relationship between a person and their disease becomes the only meaningful thing in their life, and the personality assimilates into the role of a patient, the host of the illness. The very crisis of a personality identity is definitely relevant to traumatic experience (Zepinic 2016).

The state of a traumatized person illustrates well the metaphor of "ill hope" and hiding in a shelter, proposed by U. Tishner (Lechowska 2014) or a similar metaphor of a bubble, used in the Red Noses. The metaphors catch the state of isolation, loneliness, disconnectedness, limited perception of the external world, and, on the other hand, the security function of the state. It is something they badly need, but at the same time, something that may bother and restrict them.

This is the circle of problems with which modern clown doctors M. Christensen, Dr. Patch Adams, and many of their followers began to work in the 1970s (Olshansky 2013). Nowadays the activity of hospital clowns is expanding to a wider contingent. They have begun working not only with children, but also with adults, including patients with dementia and Alzheimer disease, psychiatric patients, women during complicated birth, with premature babies, and refugees; they also work in the zones of military conflicts or natural disasters, etc. (see, e.g., Dionigi & Canestrari 2016).

According to the essence of clowning, and in line with Bakhtinian understanding of carnival, hospital clowns pay attention to everyone in the ward. However, they obviously distinguish those who need them more (which may be related to trauma manifestations). The following fragments from the interviews illustrate how the clowns distinguish their "target" patients.

> *Well…you feel it somehow. Today we visited that boy… he had got a whole car park from LEGO, helicopters, airplanes, he was playing with them. I come to him, but he doesn't need me. He is fine, why should I try to make him better?*[3] (M.V., male, 28)

It is very important to deal also with such children, but this interaction may be short. For instance, a clown told us about her work in the department of bone marrow transplantation:

> *I was pressed on by such a concentrated loneliness. Because there they even hold a child, wearing rubber gloves. I mean this is a place where you feel totally alone. Even if the mother is near, you are still alone*. (D.K., female, 27)

Of course, in a hospital, there are departments with more or less severe disorders in general, but a "target" child may be a patient in any ward.

> *It is not necessarily the diagnosis, but rather… Well, it is not necessarily depression, but the child is really down. And it may be something… well, not easy, but not very serious, but there is a big chance they wouldn't pull out of this. Because they are… this is it. The batteries are not recharging anymore.* (D.K., female, 27)

A clown does not choose children to interact with by walking along the hospital corridor. But implicitly there is an idea of the "target" and they expect to meet them.

> *The main activity of yours, the main aim is not even in every department, not at every entrance you meet such a child. The one you need to pull out, awake by means of all the tricks. They are not here every time, not all the time. But sometimes it is so much needed, and if such a connection happens… it's not about laughter absolutely, it's about magic. It's about altered consciousness, it's about your shared rhythm with the child.* (D.K., female, 27)

The need to bring joy: The trauma of the clown

Overall information from different sources led me to the conclusion that if we regard a patient as someone who is in need of joy, then hospital clowns may be seen as those who are in need of bringing joy, and this need may be rather strong. For instance, Patch Adams, the ideologist of the global hospital clowning movement, gathers a group of volunteers who pay for the opportunity to accompany him in his charity trips all around the world to promote hospital clowning and to meet those who need their help. The story of Michael Christensen, one of the first hospital clowns, began from the death of his beloved brother due to an oncological disease (Olshansky 2013). Pedro Fabião explains during his trainings that he began active work in hospital clowning since he felt a lack of connection with people.

In the interviews with the clowns, we also had abundant evidence of obvious traumatic experiences, such as severe diseases or injuries, deaths, losses in the families, for example:

> *…several years ago I got to a hospital. I had a surgery on spine, and I couldn't work for a long time, having a long period of recovery. Actually, it was my first time in hospital at that moment, 'cause I never… in my childhood I never broke anything, had never been hospitalized. And then such an immovability… so a feeling that I'm not able to do anything directed me to search for some possibilities. … I think those who come to*

hospital clowning try somehow to resolve their psychological problems or difficulties. They are all different; sometimes … a person indeed is convinced they're going to save the world… All of us have this motive, but it's not the main and not the only one. As for me, I can see a motive of lack of artistic professional demand. After the surgery, they didn't include me in the plays which needed plasticity. (A.M., male, 31)

Three years ago I got to a hospital with microinfarction and thromboembolism. And 1.5 years after that, every time I was talking to my doctor or just others… I saw… I understood it was the most awful thing that can ever happen to a human. They shouldn't look at an ill person with this awful pity. I remember I had an inner protest against it, and I said something like, "Guys, it's ok… we are not at a wake. When it is a wake, you will be welcome to look at me like that. I will lay down so beautiful and not knowing about it…" (E.F., female, 30)

When I was 12 years old, I had a little brother. He died when he was one year old because of immune deficit. And he was hospitalized in the very hospital we visit now. He stayed in these wards. And I think, although I don't recall it now, unconsciously this is one of the pushes for me to do it now. … It is important to give something for happiness. … Yes, it is hard there, but as a result, there is a kind of happiness. (V.A., female, 24)

I worked as a clothing pattern maker with leather and got good money, but I realized… deep inside I realized that this was not it, that I distanced from myself, the one I used to be for some time. … and this activity is not mine, I mean, in fact I began to live someone else's life… So, I became depressed, I developed anxiety… I began visiting a psychotherapist, who appeared to be a charlatan, who was pulling money out of me. … then I came to such a panic disorder… I realized I must do something with it. … I began to read… little by little I came to the conclusion… that you will not be happy if you think only about yourself… You know, all the people who come into volunteering or clowning… some special event took place in their life, which changed them, their understanding of life. (A.I., male, 28)

… my parents are deaf, and in general to help is… in my case… I'm not able to live without it. This is not heroic, but just a part of life… I mean… I will feel bad if I wouldn't do it. (M.S., female, 42)

You are in some pain… You know, it seems to me, honestly, one should come to it… it is when you are down, absolutely shitty …up to… suck… It may be some traum… well, not necessarily trauma… I got to a hospital,

> *but you may constantly face with… let's say penniless… Something that you feel you can't get out of…* (K.P., female, 30)

During an interview, two clowns could not remember any special events or reasons that could have pushed them to hospital clowning, but in informal talk afterwards they suddenly remembered deaths of their family members and feelings of isolation. One of them said that her brother had an autistic spectrum disorder and their mother led a social activity in this field, helping this kind of children and their families in Russia, while she herself was not sure if she was a good enough sister.

In other cases, people did not reveal such obvious severe events, but they spoke about some personality crises, experiencing the feeling of isolation, being out of place, lack of meaning, often related to disappointment in their professional field or particular job, divorce, moving. Anyway, they reported about some special motivation for coming to hospital clowning.

> *At that moment, I had a hard moment in my life, and it seemed to me that it would be interesting to get onto an absolutely new path. … Well, I had just got divorced. In fact, nothing super interesting, but together with my child I was moving from my husband to my mom. It was psychologically hard. … And this change of life position, the story, lack of understanding of how you would live further. … I could sit in such kind of lack of understanding, but this way* [coming to hospital clowning school] *I began to study a new activity*. (A.M., female, 33)

> *I simply did not fit anywhere. Any collective was somehow not for me. … I was always a kind of an outcast. An outcast at school, an outcast at the university… everywhere. The fund* [Doctor Clown] *is a union of such outcasts. …these are all people who did not fit somewhere for some reason; they came together and fitted each another, because they claimed that their main uniting characteristic was their otherness. I mean, we are all here a little such… well, fools. In a good way.* (D.K., female, 27)

> *When we came to the theatre… the ideas there were kind of primitive. I mean in most cases the director didn't put in any task, any meaning; I missed it. But here, in hospital clowning, this is clear and visible. I always understand the meaning I put in, the aim*. (A.S., male, 33)

> *I am a financial director in a non-profit organization, but… this is rather boring, routine communicative work with computers, negotiations, and with adult people*. (M.G., male, 40)

In other cases, they could not formulate well why they had come to hospital clowning, but insisted they badly needed something like this activity at that moment. The descriptions often reminded of the feeling of being at a crossroads or a turning point; they also referred to the feeling of meaningful life and/or the feeling of being needed.

> *– Why did you notice this announcement on Facebook?*
> *– Well… I don't even know… these are the most difficult questions – why? I don't know. Maybe I needed it at that moment. I mean I need hospital clowning also now. I just felt I needed it at that moment… or… Maybe I had some thoughts, trivial ones… like "it's a good deed, kind deed", "it is necessary to do it" – this is what comes to me first. It's obvious, superficial... But I think I just needed it at that moment.*
> *– Why?*
> *– Well… when you do it you feel you are needed. When I visit a child… we call it 'victory' with my colleagues… When you come to the ward… it doesn't happen all the time, but when it happens, you feel it physically like it has happened. This is called 'victory'. And when you do it, you feel it physically, you have won. Not something, not somebody, but it has happened and it is necessary. And you have changed and the child has changed. This very feeling I need.* (M.V., male, 28)

> *The thing that I do works, and I feel better. And it is arguable what is primary – that a patient would feel better or that you would feel better yourself; there are different opinions…* (M.V., male, 28)

Several clowns did not recall any special cause possibly related to their choice of the activity. However, absolutely all of them revealed high subjective importance of hospital clowning in their lives, which is especially remarkable as compared to the relatively short period of time spent doing it (not more than eight times per month in order to avoid burning out) and little income from it. For example:

> *85% of my life is hospital clowning*. (M.V., male, 28)

> *I would like hospital clowning to be my main job.* (A.M., male, 31)

> *I work in marketing, but hospital clowning is my big deed*. (E.F., female, 30)

> *I suppose it is one of my main activities*. (N.Z., female, 39)

> *Now it is an integral part of my life, a very important one, and I know if, for example, to take it from me, this moment, this part of my life, I would feel very uncomfortable, I would feel as if they tore the flesh from my body, seriously… This feeling, on the one hand, of inner freedom, and on the*

> *other hand, liveliness of everything that is happening… this is a very cool feeling*. (S.B., male, 30)

All the clowns also noted a great impact of hospital clowning on their lives and their personality development. The value of the job is very high.

> *I don't fall into depression anymore. I mean, I thought all people tend to…. suffer and to feel sorry about themselves. And I also liked it very much – to feel sorry about myself, to suffer, and others to feel sorry for me. And the very first visit to a hospital has changed me crucially. … I'm alive, healthy and everything is wonderful. I began to perceive life differently. I mean this job is a strong antidepressant for me.* (V.K., male, 26)

> *I felt one more time in my life that I'm busy, involved … in an important activity. I do it well. I feel I'm needed in the world. … I'm not stuck in the swamp of triviality … As far as I have the job I'm living, I'm included*. (A.M., male, 31)

> *I became… much more honest. Even in everyday life… More honest to myself and to the society. … For example, together with my friend and colleague we used to have a picnic nearby. We would buy some chicken and go to take garbage away. I wouldn't have done it earlier. I would say, "Oh, how dirty it is here," and go away. And now we say it and we take it away.* [Before] *I didn't pay for some things… like in transport… Now I'd better say humanly, I'm out of money, and ask to go without paying. Because if I say humanly, they will help me 90%.* (M.V., male, 28)

> *You realize you have such a feature – to err, it is normal. Maybe some conflict situations … well … you don't get into… or … you take a person with more compassion… maybe some conflict situation is happening in your life, and you don't burst right into it, but let it brake…* (A.I., male, 28)

> *Your norm limits widen.* (D.K., female, 27)

> *In fact, it's easier to talk to people*. (M.S., female, 42)

> *I became more disciplined, responsible… I simply didn't see it before. … I mean I knew there were sick children, but I didn't empathize, I didn't understand what a world it was, but when I got there, I realized what an egoist I had been. I'm still mostly an egoist, but now I've begun to share my egoism* [laughs]. (A.I., male, 28)

> *There is some freedom. Responsibility … I became kinder, you see, I hate it. … because people… I became… like it softened me. And people in everyday life began to use it. Well, briefly saying, I became responsive, sympathetic. And I feel uneasy about it*. (K.P., female, 30)

All these fragments illustrate that in hospital clowning not only a patient benefits, but rather both parts do. A story of a hospital clown is very often related to traumatic experience and a feeling of isolation, disconnection with the others. Thus, hospital clowning may be regarded as a meeting of two traumas, where in the therapeutic interaction both parts are healing and are being healed. Now the question is whether it should be seen in a negative way. Could clowns who are traumatized themselves make it worse for a patient? To what extent is it "acting out" their own trauma for clowns or "working it through"?

Many scholars stress the positive potential of trauma. Actually, we all tend to get involved in activities that touch us personally. The number of traumatized people is high not only among hospital clowns, but also among social workers and other human service providers (Black & Jeffreys & Hartley 1993; Esaki & Larkin 2013; Thomas 2016; Howard et al. 2015). The concept of a wounded healer, proposed by K. Jung, focuses on the positive sides of trauma, which may become a source of creativity (May 1997). The concept is widely applied by psychologists, medical doctors, social workers, and other helping professionals (Miller et al. 1998; Daneault 2008; Newcomb et al. 2015). Because of isolation, a trauma may become a bridge between people on a deeper level (May 1997). In the flow of the modern positive psychology this idea transformed into the concept of post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun 2004). Thereby I suggest that the personal traumatic experience of hospital clowns is not something unwanted, but rather an important factor that should be taken into account. This experience, if it is being deliberately worked with, may function as a useful, or even necessary, tool in hospital clowning.

On the other hand, the same trauma may obviously lead to harmful consequences if it is ignored or is not worked through enough. Thus, a very careful selection of clowns who practice in the organization Doctor Clown is more than justified. Besides the artistic talent and skills, a thorough psychological diagnostics of personal traumatic experience may be useful in order to distinguish between the cases when a person "deals with their trauma", which induces them to active personal transformations (Magomed-Eminov 2014), and some others when the very "trauma thinks of the subject" (Artemenko 2020b: 35); in other words, to distinguish the people who are inside trauma, fully involved in it, caught by it, and experience more negative than positive consequences of trauma, from those who managed to distance themselves to a certain extent, to get out of the trauma, to have a dialogue with it, to use it creatively and productively. Despite a popular myth about psychotherapy, one can hardly overcome their trauma fully, but for effective hospital clowning it is enough that the trauma of the clown would let them see the trauma of a patient and

would not obscure it. Let us say the relationship between the clown and their trauma should be productive, dialogical, and there should be some minimal level of post-traumatic depreciation along with expressed signs of post-traumatic growth (Baker et al. 2008).

In order to illustrate non-productive and productive impacts of trauma, let us present fragments from an interview, in which a clown describes different stages of his traumatic experience in his life span.

> *… my mother was ill and she died when I was fourteen; she had cancer, and she died. Before that I used to be merry, open, but after that, it happened that I became… like a stand-up comic. I mean humor became more like a weapon for me… to sting someone, not to bring joy, but… to arouse laughter and to hurt the others…*

Then the man explains how he began to work with his trauma:

> *And then I somehow realized that I should get to another level… I realized that I needed … to help others … and I came across the movie with Robbie Williams, this movie… and I realized it was something I used to do before, being a human, the one I originally was. I realized I wanted to return to it, this was my goal. I told you, I liked making people laugh. I liked to play a fool, so that people would laugh, to bring them laughter. It is very cool, I also helped myself, I… smiled when I didn't feel like smiling. I understood that I have to go further and further.*

The following fragment illustrates not just his personal experience of the therapeutic effect of hospital clowning, but also something similar to the way the patients might go through.

> [The experience of hospital clowning school] *was just huge. Because everything for me was such a… I got so shriveled in all my introverted world. … And here someone looks at you, you have to do something like… this is so scarring. And it was stressful for me, but this stress… it was absolutely upside down. … something that you have hidden deep inside, it went out, got out … I always wanted it, but I was always afraid of it, and then they made me work it through, this fear.* (A.I., male, 28)

One of the possible indicators of the shift from working the trauma out to working it through may be in the way the clown perceives and uses the "mask", which may be an instrument for dealing with trauma (Semenova 2019). As A. Dionigi et al. (2013) noticed, the ability of a clown to separate themselves from their clown persona and to be flexible, putting the mask on and taking it

off, reflects largely their productivity and may be related to manifestations of burning out. In the interviews many clowns told us that the red nose defends them from the traumatic experience and negative emotions they face in a ward. But they do not have to be only safe themselves but also sensitive to the needs and moods of their patients. One of the most important skills of medical clowns is to be able to quit in time or to give up their artistic plan if it appears to be inappropriate for the patient or at the moment. The work of a hospital clown takes place on the borderline between I and the Other, and demands from the clown not only well-developed skills of improvisation, but also high levels of reflection, self-observation, and empathy.

TWO TRAUMAS IN INTERACTION

If we regard a traumatized patient as if living in a shelter or in a bubble, we could imagine a clown to have their own bubble or dollhouse (as a kind of shelter), sometimes even being able to play with this bubble or in this dollhouse as far as distancing from the trauma increases the possibilities to manipulate with it. So, what are the clown's functions and possibilities here? What does a clown actually do? What kind of interaction may there be between the two traumas?

First of all, a clown can just be there, near a patient. 'Presence' is one of the key terms in clowning and the relevant research (Kontos et al. 2017 [2015]), which is understood as being there, being in the moment, being 'here and now' more than normally, being authentic. Via the presence, a clown develops a special intimacy, mutuality with the patient, which has the effect of blurring the self-other differentiation. P. Kontos et al. (2017 [2015]) stress that in hospital clowning the presence does not mean that a clown 'awakes' a patient. They propose the term 'relational presence', which focuses on the reciprocal nature of the engagement. In the study of elder-clowns' work in dementia care, the authors reveal three primary strategies of the interaction between the clowns and the residents: affective relationality (sensitivity to becoming affected by joyful and sad emotions of residents); reciprocal playfulness (residents' responses to clown-driven games, and residents' own initiation of such activities); and co-constructed imagination (co-creation of stories).

A clown attracts attention (distracts from negative emotions), maintains contact, surprises the patient, tries to make them interested, and evokes some emotions (not necessarily positive). A clown creates a special space of play and fantasy, distinct from everyday life (in hospital) (Dmitriev & Sychev 2005; Raviv 2018). Kontos et al. (2017 [2015]) point to the tension in clowning

practice between those who focus on giving happiness, and those who stress the importance of witnessing tiny moments of humanity including vulnerability, sadness, grief, and tragedy. The authors explain that experience of losses is natural, especially for elderly people, so affective relationality skills of a clown should include both joy and sadness. A clown invites the patient to look out of the shelter/bubble, makes them feel needed and important, and returns a sense of agency to them.

Therefore, there is a contradiction: on the one hand, the clowns seem to realize their 'target', their aim very well; on the other hand, they present the results of their work in a rather indefinite way, often defined through a clown partner, and they are much more oriented to the very process rather than the results.

> *For me success or failure results from my feelings for the partner, I mean if I don't feel him, I feel insecure. But it's about me, for me it's important to feel I'm not alone here*. (V.J., female, 24)

> *Successful entrance is mostly a good partnership, I mean if you succeeded to link with one another, if we were right in a tandem, this is a good entrance. … And then… it seems to me, there are two aspects: working in partnership and directly working with children*. (N.Z., female, 39)

> *Not always the thing you regard as successful is in fact successful, I guess* [laughs]. *It may just be different. For instance, I had such an entrance with N. that I remember. I can't really say whether it was successful or not, but it was among the first ones I could regard as successful. We had a great partnership, there were many different games that we invented spontaneously. Generally, I suppose it is already a success when something new is born, when your partner prompted you something interesting, or you did it to your partner. Because a successful entrance is any which is not unsuccessful, but the most successful is when something new happens.* (K.B., male, 43)

> *I don't underst… I mean… I don't think the entrance of a hospital clown may be unsuccessful. Because… well… we are not psychotherapists or doctors… and… what kind of failure? If you haven't managed to play with a child, it is not a failure, just a story – today it didn't happen, maybe it will happen next time, maybe not. Maybe it will happen in a year or two…* (E.F., female, 30)

The patient's agency may be revealed in many different ways, including a protest. Because of that, one of the central skills for a clown in the whole process is the ability to perceive rejection.

> *We come not to make them… not to pour happiness into them. The one who wants it will be with us*. (A.M., female, 33)

> *…well, if he tells me* [no]*, and I listen to him, and I would do it, next time, when he will need it… he will be more open to you. … if not, and you would bother him… it will irritate him more. He will think: "Hey, this is the idiot that bothered me the other time, when he shouldn't have, then now I'm sure I don't need him".* (A.S., male, 33)

> *We don't see the exact result of our work, there is no clear result. There are only small victories: a child smiled at you; a mother was kind to you today. It's not about recovery, not about something huge*. (A.M., female, 33)

> *…detailed talks about who he is, where he is from, who his mom and dad are. … This is not so important; it is more important to play well, to create… to change… to create an atmosphere for a while, which would help to pull him out of his consciousness, which lights the entire hospital like a flashlight; you switch his consciousness from there*. (A.I., male, 28)

> *There was a boy, four years old. … he was happy that the clowns came… and we began… and then, because of too much excitement or something… he began throwing up… and* [the partner clown] *says: "Well, it's ok, it happens," and we continued. And it was amusing, that the boy was vomiting, but he was looking up to us smiling. … A clown won't leave you if you vomit … I mean he would still be your friend. He came to hang out with you and he doesn't care…* (D.K., female, 27)

> *We are a small drop in a sea. We come into this ward once a week, while people stay there constantly. And they stay and stay and stay there, and they have no change of scenery. And here we are, we break in like a storm. We sweep away everything in your path and leave. … What is it, all of these* [toy] *plates, hearts… what is it, some magnets, bracelets, some knick-knacks… nonsense. Even* [clown] *interns ask me what they should do. How do I know what should be done… I don't know!* (V.J., female, 24)

Sometimes clowns can remember the more successful cases, like the following, but it is never a central part, although very valuable.

> *We were working* [during a painful medical procedure on eyes]*, there was a boy who used to scream the most. And we organized such a game, as if it was a show titled "The Voice", and who would scream the most, wins. … Finally, he laughed, and cried, but he couldn't scream at all, because it was so funny for him.* (A.S., male, 33)

> *This boy, he usually doesn't let us in, but we will come around just in case. And he will kick us out. And we come in, and … wow! Another atmosphere in the ward. Another color of the ward, another light, and he is sitting, watching TV. But he used to lay under the blanket all the time for half a year! His mother used to give him a plate almost under the blanket, literally. … and I'm proud that our clowns went right to the end. We reminded him every day, "We are here, we haven't forgotten you, we are together with you." And he told us, "Get out! I don't want to see you!" – "OK, but we are here if anything. We remember about you; you are not alone."* (V.J., female, 24)

Some of them explained the effect of working with trauma metaphorically:

> *You make an absolutely strange thing. … It may be laughter, may be tears, it may be some strange ideas. But you make it so that you knock some jelly out of this child. Then he may get angry, then he may cry, then he may laugh, then he may reveal great curiosity – it is not important at all. It is good that you knocked him out of this jelly…* (D.K., female, 27)

> *But the most important thing that lets you know it is not in vain, it is when you see in their eyes… I don't know what exactly, can't say what emotion it is… curiosity, interest, greed for communication, something like that. When they ask you, "When will you come next time?"* (K.B., male, 43)

To conclude, I suggest hospital clowning as a product of trauma, as a useful tool for working through trauma, and as a meeting of individual traumas – cooperation in coping.

TRAUMATIC SOCIETY AND HOSPITAL CLOWNING AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

The speed and depth of changes in the modern society are so huge that they are supposed to be traumatizing themselves, not to mention the high level of aggression, military conflicts, terrorist attacks, nature disasters, and pandemic situations. Intensification of intercultural communication, migration, major political and economic reforms, too fast technological changes, ideological shifts, etc., evoke the "cultural shock" (Artemenko 2020a) and a sense of instability, insecurity, and anxiety, which, in turn, provoke fear, panic or, on the contrary, aggression. Maybe it is not accidental that in these times hospital clowning has started to develop fast all over the world as one of the sources of humanity,

connectedness, and trust. Nowadays there are over a hundred hospital clowns' organizations in over forty countries in the world (Gur'eva 2016; Dolzhenkova 2016), along with plenty of independently working clowns or small informal groups.

Despite this work being more individual, the ideological effect to the society may be much wider and may lead to positive transformations in the way of collective working with trauma: for example, people after catastrophic events could be supported by official services, medical staff, psychological support, but also the clown service. Hospital clowns could help to re-center health care from physiological aspects towards the concept of positive health (Seligman 2008), supporting meaningful projects and nurturing of aesthetic and pleasurable ways of being-in-the-world in the present moment as valuable for themselves (Gray & Donnelly & Gibson 2019).

> *You are like a heart here. You don't just get love, you are like pumping it. You are a pump. Yes-yes-yes, you are like pumping it right at the moment. This is so cool. Well. I came for my salary, but I stayed because it's so cool to be a pump of love!* (D.K., female, 27)

DISCUSSION

The present study may be regarded as first steps, along with numerous other studies, in an attempt to understand the meaning of the newborn profession of hospital clowning and its role in the modern society. I analyzed hospital clowning in association with the notion of trauma, meaning both sides of it: the negative one, which may be referred to post-traumatic depreciation, and the positive one – such as the post-traumatic growth (Baker et al. 2008).

Following the main aims of the study, I explored the relationship between hospital clowning and trauma from different points of view by means of a literature review, single observations, and an empirical study based on interviewing the clowns. Firstly, the interviews with the clowns revealed that they, in fact, distinguished their 'target' patients, although the nature of clowning is supposed to involve everyone around and to improve the very atmosphere in the ward. These are depressed, isolated, lonely children, being as if hiding/closed in a bubble or in a shelter, which is related to their physical condition, but not directly.

Secondly, I stressed a special need of the clowns for being involved in hospital clowning, which may often be associated with their traumatic experience,

personal crisis, or a need for a new meaning of life. Thus, it is worth recognizing the effect of hospital clowning not only for the patients, their relatives, and the medical staff, but also for the clowns themselves. This conclusion leads to the practical problem of professional selection and professional aptitude in hospital clowning. There is a discussion and argument between clowns-volunteers and professional hospital clowns in clinics (Olshansky 2013). Besides the necessity of special training, one could recommend diagnosing the quality of individual traumatic experience within the selection in order to define possible signs of post-traumatic depreciation and post-traumatic growth, which must be assessed separately, like a profile (Zięba et al. 2019). Future studies may investigate the correlation between these variables and professional effectiveness or even harmfulness of a clown in the hospital, and the risk of professional burnout.

Thirdly, I regard hospital clowning as a meeting of two traumas – the clown's and the patient's – in interaction, which may result in (mutual) healing. This process is very personal, intimate, and very vulnerable. A clown should be near, but always ready to accept a refusal. The construct of "relational presence" (Kontos et al. 2017 [2015]) operationalizes the needed state of the clown.

Fourthly, hospital clowning as a modern social phenomenon may be regarded as a consequence of collective traumatization in the world culture (Magomed-Eminov 2014), and may result in more reflection on the balance between development and humanity.

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NOTES

[1] See https://www.rednoses.eu/who-we-are/our-mission/, last accessed on 8 April 2021.

[2] See https://doctor-clown.ru/, last accessed on 8 April 2021.

[3] Hereinafter the extracts are transcribed with the help of student-volunteer assistants and translated by the author.

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DISCUSSION

ILLNESS: NARRATIVES, IMAGERY, AND POLITICS

Remarks on a Seminar, an Exhibition, and a Conference

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Abstract: The article uses the review of a seminar, an exhibition, and a graduate conference, which took place at Tallinn University in the 2020–2021 academic year, as an occasion to reflect on the different ways in which illness has been represented in literature, the arts, and film across the history of Western culture. The specific focus of the article is on the theoretical contribution of the humanities to a more complex and adequate understanding of the phenomenon of illness. The study of illness narratives reveals different patterns and strategies of constructing the illness experience into a coherent and meaningful story, but also the resistance that the disruptive impact of illness on our everyday lives poses to narrativisation. The complex historical imagery which endows the biological fact of being sick with additional cultural and social meaning has also to be critically investigated in the humanities and social sciences. Metaphors about illness and the use of illness as a socio-political metaphor have often had a nefarious impact on sick people as well as entire social groups and communities. This is why the article also considers illness in its relations with politics and power and describes various attempts to empower sick people in their relations with medical institutions and their social environment. The article ends with a review of the "Illness: Narratives, Imagery, Politics" graduate conference (27–28 January 2021), which is a good illustration of the many literary and artistic works and of the plurality of methods that can be used in the study of the illness phenomenon from a humanities perspective.

Keywords: illness and metaphor, illness narratives, medical humanities, representation of suffering, the illness: narratives, imagery, politics conference

Since spring 2020 we have been living in a global state of emergency that has deeply invested all the aspects of our personal and social life. Illness, which used to be in our experience rather a private and intimate issue, has suddenly become something that requires our common effort not only in terms

of behaviour, but also of feelings and cognition. And yet, this should not have come as a surprise, as in the past ten years we have been constantly warned of the possibly devastating effects of new emergent diseases such as Ebola, SARS, swine and avian flu, etc. The HIV pandemics is in many respects still with us, and while it has never had such a comprehensive social impact as Covid-19,[1] it has nevertheless profoundly influenced our social and cultural imagination as well as changed our sexual behaviour.

The HIV pandemic and concerns about new emergent diseases in our globalised world have been accompanied by an unprecedented boom in references to disease and medicine in literature, movies, and popular culture since the last decade of the 20th century. At a moment when medicine continues to progress at high speed together with our life expectancy, we are particularly at pains in the attempt to make sense of illness and its consequences for individuals and societies. And the imagination of present or future pandemics tends to merge with the general apocalyptic attitude, which seems to increasingly structure our feelings at the beginning of the 21st century with its sense of never-ending crisis (terrorism, economy, refugees, etc.) and impending final catastrophe (ecological breakdown).

In the 2020 autumn semester, I organised a seminar at which students of different MA curricula of Tallinn University's School of Humanities had the opportunity to discuss many of the issues that the present health and social crises engender from the perspective of the humanities. This means investigating how culture (literature, the arts, film) has represented and interpreted the universe of illness in its different aspects. In order to do so, we took as our material a long series of works in different media. As for literature, we read texts stretching from the description of the 5th century BC plague of Athens by Greek historian Thucydides to the classics of illness in 20th-century literature, such as Albert Camus's *The Plague* and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, as well as individual illness narratives published just a couple of years ago (e.g. Porochista Khakpour's *Sick: A Memoir*).

The movies included, among many others, Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957), Milos Forman's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), Lars Von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011), and Michael Haneke's *Amour* (2012). Artworks spanned from Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Melancholia* (1514) to contemporary artists' photographs and video art inspired by the AIDS epidemic.

NARRATIVES, IMAGERY, POLITICS

The conceptual framework of the seminar was mirrored in its title – "Illness: Narratives, Imagery, Politics". We approached it with the help of theoretical texts that offered us interpretative tools from different disciplines of the

humanities and social sciences with a particular focus on the rapidly growing field of the medical humanities.

Illness marks a disrupting interruption in the ways of our 'normal' life with important consequences for our perception of ourselves and our social status. As Virginia Woolf claims in her beautiful essay "On Being Ill", illness brings about a "tremendous spiritual change" (Woolf 1926: 32); while we are ill, we cease to be "soldiers in the army of the upright; we become deserters" (ibid.: 37). If, on the one hand, the illness experience corresponds with a "loss of self" (Charmaz 1983), on the other hand it opens the gates to alternative existential dimensions and temporalities, a "world of illness" as opposed to the "mundane" (Radley 1999: 785). This is why the different ways in which we tell illness and make it into a story play a crucial role in our understanding of the illness phenomenon as well as the cure process and its results. Narrative has long been an important component of the biomedical *logos* with its emphasis on the patient's HPI ('history of the present illness') and the anamnesis-diagnosis-prognosis articulation of the three temporal dimensions of the illness and cure processes. More recently, the academic emergence of the medical humanities has directed the attention of scholars to the ways in which patients themselves construct their illness narrative – how this helps or hinders the recovery process and the tensions that the clash of incompatible stories may generate in the relations between the patient and the medical institution.

Our stories can construct illness into a teleological and meaningful experience or, on the contrary, be deranged by the meaningless disorder of the illness experience. Arthur W. Frank (1995) classically distinguished three different "storylines" in illness narratives: 'restitution' ("I was heathy, I am sick, but I will be better again"), reflecting the "modernist expectation that for every suffering there is a remedy" (Whitehead 2005: 3); 'chaos' ("I will never be well again"), which describes the sufferer as "sucked into the undertow of illness" (Frank 1995: 97); and 'quest', which recounts illness as an existential opportunity for change, a transformative journey giving us access to a knowledge that remains barred to healthy people. Lars-Christer Hyden rather focuses on the relations between narrator, narrative, and illness. On this basis he distinguishes between 'illness *as* narrative', in which the narrator tells his or her personal experience and "makes it possible to integrate the symptoms and consequences of the illness into a new whole" (Hyden 1997: 54), and 'narrative *about* illness', in which knowledge and ideas about illness are conveyed by other people such as doctors. While most of the cultural representations of illness have traditionally been 'narratives about illness', in which illness was narrated from an external perspective, since the late 20th century we have witnessed a proliferation of autobiographical illness narratives (Hawkins 1999), which the new narrative forms offered by digital technology (blogging, YouTubing, etc.)

have exponentially increased. Hyden's third category is 'narrative *as* illness', which describes situations in which "a narrative, or an insufficient narrative generates illness" (Hyden 1997: 55), i.e., the failure to structure the illness experience through narrative becomes the very cause of suffering.

Frank's and Hyden's categorisations of illness narrative are based on a quite traditional understanding of narrative as synonymous with verbal expression, linearity, and coherence. For this kind of narrative the body is, as Woolf (1926: 32) claims, "a sheet of plain glass through which the soul looks straight and clear"; on the contrary, in illness the body becomes opaque, its "daily drama" (ibid.: 33) escaping the rationalising grip of the soul. Stella Bolaki (2016) consequently claims that the traditional understanding of narrative is challenged by illness narratives and must consequently be replaced. She advocates an understanding of narrative in which stories are 'embodied' and 'improvised' rather than told. This does not lead to 'chaos' (Frank) or 'insufficiency' (Hyden); rather, it might be, in many cases, the only available way to 'narrate' the illness experience. This is particularly true when the medium of illness narrative is not literature, but other artistic forms such as photography, video art, sculpture, performances, etc.

A related and huge topic, which has been extensively explored in trauma and memory studies, is the ethical aspects which the aesthetisation of illness in the representation of one's own suffering or the suffering of others, unavoidably raises. In this respect Bolaki (2016: 11) stresses the need to distinguish between the positive pluralism, ambivalence and polyvalence of aesthetic practices that deal with illness and the reductive and homogenising aesthetisation of the illness experience.

It is interesting to observe that the narrativisation of the illness experience is not limited to the individual level (be it from an internal or external perspective), but also directly includes collective illness experience such as epidemics. In the history of Western culture narrative has played an important role in the attempt to construct a religious and social explanatory framework for the interpretation of the illness phenomenon. Two grounding masterpieces of Western epic and drama, Homer's *Iliad* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, start with descriptions of an epidemic sent by the gods to punish the community for the moral trespasses of its sovereign. Thucydides and Lucretius have left us memorable depictions of the plague of Athens (430 BC), and Giovanni Boccaccio of the devastating Black Death that struck Asia and Europe in the mid-1300s. Alessandro Manzoni dedicated two chapters of his historical novel *The Betrothed* to the description of the 1630s Italian plague while Daniel Defoe wrote an entire semi-documentary journal of the London 'plague year' of 1665. In Albert Camus's *The Plague* (1947) the fictional story of the plague of Oran becomes

a humanistic reflection on evil, solidarity, and engagement. Since the 1990s a long series of popular catastrophe movies – for example, Wolfang Petersen's *Outbreak* (1995), Steven Soderbergh's *Contagion* (2011), Marc Forster's *World War Z* (2013), and the recent Russian TV series *To the Lake* (2019), to mention just a few – have rethought the epidemic narrative in the context of our globalised and ultra-connected world.

From a scholarly perspective, Charles E. Rosenberg (1989: 2) has claimed that "as a social phenomenon, an epidemic has a dramaturgic form", in which the 'progressive revelation' slowed down by politico-economic interests and fear (Act 1) is followed by recognition of the calamity and the creation of an explanatory framework for the 'management of randomness' (Act 2). The managing of response to epidemics, argues Rosenberg, can "serve as a vehicle for social criticism as well as a rationale for social control" (ibid.: 6), as is clearly evident in the case of the HIV epidemic, to which Rosenberg refers, as well as the Covid-19 pandemic that we are currently experiencing. Act 3 of Rosenberg's narrative deals with 'negotiating public response' to the epidemic, the complexity and tensions of which we know all too well. The epilogue to epidemic narratives always relates the lasting effect and the lessons learned. In her book *Contagion: Cultures, Carriers, and the Outbreak Narrative*, Priscilla Wald similarly describes what she calls the "outbreak narrative", defined as the way the media, literature, and movies narrate epidemic disease emergence in the "spaces and interactions of global modernity" (2008: 2). In the same way that I stressed above the performative effect of individual illness narratives on sick people, Wald stresses the performative effect of collective outbreak narratives on 'sick' societies: "as they [the outbreak narratives] disseminate information, they affect survival rates and contagion routes. They promote or mitigate the stigmatizing of individuals, groups, populations, locales (regional and global), behaviours, and lifestyles, and they change economies" (ibid.: 3).

Along with illness narratives, the works analysed in our seminar during the 2020 autumn semester exposed a complex cultural and social imagery in which the biological fact of being sick acquires additional cultural and social meaning, sometimes coinciding with dangerous alterity, impurity, decay, and sometimes with a different and privileged human condition. Susan Sontag's works (1978, 1989) are probably the best-known critical attempts to study the uses of illness (tuberculosis, cancer, and AIDS) as a 'figure' or 'metaphor'. Metaphors are, on the one hand, used to describe the causes, development, and consequences of diseases, as can be easily observed in many of the epidemic narratives mentioned above; on the other hand, diseases themselves become scary and harmful metaphors used to characterise many other aspects of our social life, such as, for instance, politics.

It is therefore not by chance that Sontag ends her first book on illness and metaphor with an analysis of the use of disease imagery in the political rhetoric of the modern age. The understanding of politics in terms of a healthy vs pathological process is as old as Ancient Greek medicine and philosophy (see Hope & Marshall 2004 [2000]). While the direct parallel between the order of the psyche and the order of the polis was established by Plato in his *Politeia*, the comparison between the biological body and the political order took more precise shape since the Middle Ages when the sovereign started to be represented as the personification of what scholars called the 'body politic', i.e., state and society as a whole. The most famous illustration of this idea can be found on the cover of Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651), where the 'body politic' is represented as a giant body made up by the countless tiny bodies of subjects and the big head of the crowned sovereign. If society is a political body, it is subject to illness, which in the imagination of political thinkers tends to mean a loss of internal harmony, with civil strife menacing society with disorder, chaos, and the eventual dissolution of the 'body politic' (see Bertman 1978). Political enemies and opposed ideologies thus become diseases (from cancers to viruses) which need to be fought and cured by cordon sanitaires, purification, amputation, etc. of the sick and infected body parts in order to restore the harmony and unity (health) of the body politic. Illness, war, and politics are perversely entangled in the modern imagery with nefarious consequences for our ways of understanding and treating medical as well as social issues. The aim of Sontag's analysis is to expose and criticise the "lurid stereotypes" (1989: 46) that transform diseases into sources of social discrimination, militarisation of public discourse, authoritarian politics, etc.

Another important aspect of the relations between illness and power has been investigated by Michel Foucault in his study of the birth of the clinic (Foucault 2003). According to Foucault, the birth of modern medicine as a separate field of knowledge goes through the institutionalisation of the clinic and the new power relations that it establishes between the doctor and the sick. The "medical gaze" of modern biomedicine sanctions the unbridgeable hiatus between the knowledge of the doctors who see, understand, decide, and intervene, and the passivity of the sick, who cannot but trust and submit to the power of the knowledge that remains inaccessible to them. Alan Radley (1999: 783) describes the result of this submission as the "sufferer's sense of alienation and colonization by medicine".

In his book *Eros and Illness*, David Morris challenges the power of the biomedical *logos* with the opposite concept of 'medical *eros*'. Medical *eros* "encompasses all the various emotional, psychological, and personal implications of desire" (Morris 2017: 8) in the field of human health and illness; it connects with the uncertainties, lack of knowledge and control, disordered passions that

characterise the inner life and lived experience of sick people and mainly pass unrecognised by biomedicine that ignores the role of desire in illness. Morris advocates a tense collaboration (*concordia discors*) between medical *logos* and medical *eros*, citing the example of the "medical pluralism" (ibid.: 50) of the Greek tradition in which the Hippocratic *logos* shared its power with the healing god Asclepius. Alternative and folk medicine have known an unprecedented revival in our digital era where everyone is eager to share their remedies on the internet. While this represents a challenge to the power of biomedicine and potentially makes different sources of knowledge accessible to patients, contemporary alternative medicine often turns into a lucrative and unscrupulous source of exploitation of the uncontrollable desires of sick people. When it not only complements, but also completely replaces medical *logos*, medical *eros* can become a self-destructive power.

An interesting attempt to conceive the collaboration between medical *logos* and medical *eros* as a way of empowering sick people and turning the illness experience into a tool for political struggle is represented by Audre Lorde's path-breaking illness narrative *The Cancer Journals* (1980). A poet, Afro-American and lesbian activist, Lorde sets the example of a narrative that deeply connects the individual and social dimension of illness and existential and political transformation by making visible, and sharing, the traumatising consequences of the illness experience: "If we are to translate the silence surrounding breast cancer into language and action against this scourge, then the first step is that women with mastectomies must become visible to each other. For silence and invisibility go hand in hand with powerlessness" (Lorde 1980: 115).

One of the biggest challenges for the medical humanities today is how to propagate a more integrated and comprehensive view of illness and illness experience, a view that would contribute to reshaping "the nature, goals and knowledge base of clinical medicine" (Bolaki 2016: 8), raising at the same time patients' awareness of the possible risks of medical pluralism in the post-truth era of digital capitalism.

THE ONLINE EXHIBITION

This very brief and partial overview of the current state of the humanities research on the issue of illness reflected the conceptual basis of our 2020 seminar. The seminar was not conceived to present a systematic historical reconstruction of our ways of understanding illness. It rather attempted to explore specific issues comparing different works, often produced in different periods, in order to investigate constants and changes in our narrative, philosophical, visual, and political imagination about illness.

In addition to reflecting on artistic works in different media which engage with different aspects of the illness experience, students were encouraged to submit their own creative works over the course of the semester. They used the opportunity to do so and produced a long and wide-ranging series of videos, blogs, artworks, short stories, podcasts, photographs, etc., based on their reflections about the material analysed in class as well as their personal experience of illness (see some examples in the figures below). The results were so interesting that we decided to make a selection of them available to the public in an online exhibition[2] curated by graphic designer Jaana Davidjants. The exhibition can be freely visited until December 31, 2021. Many of the topics discussed above are reflected and rethought in the students' works, which, understandably, do not fail to address the current pandemic and the existential and social anxieties it brings.

THE CONFERENCE

The seminar culminated in a graduate conference, which took place on the 27th and 28th of January and offered the students an opportunity to present their final seminar papers to a wider audience. The variety of topics, objects and theoretical frameworks considered in the conference papers is a good index of the multiplicity and interdisciplinarity which characterise a humanities approach to the issue of illness.

The exploration of illness narratives which, as I have observed above, is a predominant issue in the medical humanities, was the central topic of a few papers too. In her analysis of the different narrative layers of the *Awakenings*, **Hande Akiman** reconstructed the changes occurring in the fifty-years' narrative about the surprising results of Oliver Sacks' experimentation with L-dopa on post-encephalitis lethargic patients. This narrative includes the letters and journal articles published by Sacks in the early 1970s, his book *Awakenings* (1973), the homonymous documentary (1973) and movie (1990), and the interviews and speeches that followed until Sacks' death in 2015. Akiman's analysis revealed the continuities, tensions and changes of this 'narrative about illness' through different genres, media, and perspectives. **Natalie Arand** focused on 'chaos narratives' and explored the fragmentation of the self in illness through a comparative analysis of Elyn Saks' memoir *The Center Cannot Hold: My Journey Through Madness* (2007), Richard Glatzer's movie *Still Alice* (2014), and Pablo Picasso's later self-portraits. The comparison of these representations of schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, and depression was based on the distinction between the fragmented self and the episodic self (Mackenzie & Poltera 2010), the role of the Other, and the ethical aspects of mental illness narratives. In her paper on

illness and the mind, **Marlene Suits** discussed coping techniques outside the biomedical framework in Camille Shooshani's documentary *Léa & I* (2019), and Chuck Palahniuk's novel *Fight Club* (1996). Both works explore the instinctive and irrational medical desires of the protagonists as opposed to the dominant medical *logos*, although they present two opposite outcomes. In the documentary the search for alternative cures for fatal cystic fibrosis turns into a 'quest narrative' positively changing the protagonist who eventually finds the right balance between the medical *eros* and *logos*. In *Fight Club*, the failure of the erotic solution draws the protagonist into an alienating and self-destructive spiral.

Figure 1. *Hannah Schaefer. "The puppeteer" (digital picture). A reflection on living with chronic cystitis.*

The issue of illness and alienation was a recurrent topic in the conference papers. **Iveta Aare**'s paper also analysed *Fight Club*, although the focus of her attention was on the representation of the Dissociative Identity Disorder in the novel and in David Fincher's homonymous movie adaptation (1999). The paper showed how both authors use the narrative device of the unreliable narrator to create a character-centred illusion that becomes physical through Palahniuk's and Fincher's masterful use of chaotic narration, a mixture of actual dialogue and the protagonist's inner reflections and repeated allusions to the controversial nature of the characters. Eventually, the confusion caused in the process of reading/watching reminds us of the confusion experienced by the mentally

ill person himself. **Naz Özgen Üstünkaya** explored the alienating effect of illness by comparing Sylvia Plath's novel *The Bell Jar* (1963) and Thea Sharrock's movie *Me Before You* (2016). The paper developed a close analysis of the protagonists in the novel and the movie and showed how, respectively, the bell jar of depression and the wheelchair of quadriplegia are made into symbols of the social isolation and self-estrangement of the protagonists. Suffering has no positively transformative effect here. It rather pushes the protagonists toward oblivion and self-annihilation, similarly to *Fight Club*. **Marta Marita Lauri** compared the depiction of radiation sickness and people affected by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Ōta Yōko's novel *City of Corpses* (1948) and Ibuse Masuji's novel *Black Rain* (1965). In the novels the alienation provoked by illness is existential and individual as well as social and collective, and the narratives bring to the fore the tension between the suffering of the victims and the official discourse on the bombings. While in the *City of Corpses* writing coincides with the process of becoming sick and mirrors the confusion and frustration in the early post-war period, *Black Rain* dives into the past in order to affirm the right of suffering and to challenge the careful silence on the bombings in 1960s Japan.

Figure 2. *Iveta Aare. "A Midsummer Night's Dream". A reflection on medical eros and Shannon Murphy's Babyteeth (2019).*

Figures 3–5. *Mari Armei. "Blue Devils" (photo series). A reflection on melancholia.*

The representation of illness and suffering in different media and arts has often been a means to reflect on the issues of human finitude and death. **Mari Armei**'s paper adopted the perspective of phenomenology to investigate the transformative effect of terminal illness on one's being-in-the-world in Leo Tolstoy's novella *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* (1886) and Akira Kurosawa's movie *Ikiru* ('To Live', 1952). The radical changes in the bodies of the protagonists alter their relations with the world, turning it into an uncanny place. This starts a process of re-signification which in both cases transforms terminal illness into the access point to a more profound existential truth. A Heideggerian hermeneutical perspective on suffering and death was elaborated in the paper by **Milani Perera**, who compared Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Masque of the Red Death* (1842) with Ingmar Bergman's movie *The Seventh Seal* (1957). While Tolstoy and Kurosawa represented individual illness, Poe's and Bergman's stories are set against the background of a lethal epidemic. Here being on the threshold of death does not bring about existential transformation. The social and political failure to properly deal with illness, suffering, and death results in an existential crisis (Bergman) or self-destructive denial (Poe). **Michaela Dlouhá**'s paper followed continuities and changes in the theme of illness, suffering, and death

in the work of Ingmar Bergman from *Wild Strawberries* (1957) and *Persona* (1966) to *Cries and Whispers* (1972) and *Autumn Sonata* (1978). While in the first movie the focus is on the world of a single sufferer on a journey through life towards death, Bergman's later works dig more complexly into the clash between the suffering worlds of different characters. The interaction between physical and psychological suffering, the dynamic of suffering within a family circle, the issues of maternity, care, and indifference thus acquire an increasingly important place in Bergman's mature reflection on illness.

While works on illness and finitude tend to focus on the individual level or the relations between people who are very close, and works on illness and alienation reflect in general more on the social norms that provoke additional psychological suffering for sick people, artistic representations of epidemics often take a more explicit political stance. This is particularly true of the representations of the AIDS epidemic, which was the topic of two conference papers. **Mayra Lynn Assink** proposed a queer perspective on AIDS through a comparison between the TV series *POSE* (2018–…) and Jeffrey Friedman and Rob Epstein's documentary film *Common Threads: Stories from the Quilt* (1989). Both narratives move between the levels of the individual, the community, and the institutions, challenging the established 'them vs us' binaries through which political discourse conceptualised the epidemic. These works of art are consequently able to add to the existing written history of the AIDS epidemic, transforming the perspective in which it was and is seen, narrated, and judged. The issue of visibility in personal narratives of the AIDS epidemic was explored by **Ellie Power**, who compared the use of sight and vision, the visible and the invisible in Felix Gonzales-Torres' billboard *Untitled* (1991) and Derek Jarman's documentary *Blue* (1993). Making invisible and obscuring visions of the bodies of their subjects, Gonzales-Torres and Jarman not only express their personal experience of the disease, but counter the wider political and societal reactions that condemn sufferers to invisibility and exclusion, the misinformation and fear that surrounded the disease having devastating consequences on those who were sick.

The visibility and exposure of sick and suffering bodies is an important political, ethical, and aesthetic issue in the representation of illness by the visual arts. What are the limits of the bearable? Who should decide? What kinds of reactions are these visualisations intended to provoke in the spectator, and what do they actually bring about? These are only some of the many questions that this particularly delicate aspect of illness narrative raises. **Raya Bouslah**'s paper took the bull by the horns, exploring the evolution of representations of non-normative bodies in the history of cinema, asking how to film, how to look, and how (not) to react. In order to answer these questions, Bouslah compared Tod Browning's *Freaks* (1932), David Lynch's *The Elephant Man* (1980), and

Aaron Schimberg's *Chained for Life* (2018). While the first two movies stimulate emotions of fear and pity, focusing on sensationalistic and superficial issues that do not fix the problem or even go as far as emphasising the idea of the other, *Chained for Life* manages to make the spectators critically face their inherited ideas about non-normative bodies through absurdity, meta-discourse, and the reversed roles that only film, as a visual medium, can offer. **Anna Botalova** approached the topic of the artistic representation of sick bodies through an analysis of pictures of lepers in medieval illuminated manuscripts. The status of leprosy and lepers was quite ambiguous in the medieval imagination. On the one hand, body deformity was thought to be a manifestation of soul's corruption, associated with sin or sexual misconduct. On the other hand, lepers as humble sufferers were considered closer to God, with compassion for the ill, helping Christians express their religious devotion, as the widespread artistic motif of 'kissing a leper' clearly shows. In **Andreas Fecher**'s paper the 'revolting revolt' of suffering bodies is analysed from a semiotic perspective through a comparison of two movies which challenge the viewers with representations of terminal cancer: Peter Greenaway's *The Belly of an Architect* (1987) and Marian Dora's *Carcinoma* (2014). Fecher describes the protagonists' confrontation with the terminal disease as a semiotic crisis which forces them into a struggle with their own identity, conceptualised in the paper with the help of Yuri Lotman's understanding of the semiosphere and semiotic heterogeneity, and Julia Kristeva's concept of the pre-symbolic.

Figure 6. *Mayra Lynn Assink. "The answers". A reflection on scars, memory, and viewpoints.*

In many of the works discussed so far sick bodies are represented in connection with gender and sexuality. For centuries these have been important categories in the cultural imagination about illness. The gender bias that takes the masculine body as the healthy norm, makes a dangerous source of sin and contamination of the feminine body, or a repository of a frail and helpless, sickly beauty to be protected and cherished. Femininity and illness are thus often related in the literature and art of the past and this stereotypical relation sadly resurfaces in many phenomena of contemporary popular as well as high culture. **Pierangelly Del Rio Martinez** investigated one of the most pernicious gendered stereotypes about illness, that which depicts hysteria as an essentially feminine disease. Her paper developed a feminist approach to two American autobiographical fiction works, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Paper* (1892) and Sylvia Plat's *The Bell Jar* (1963). Both texts offer instruments for a critique of medical diagnoses and treatments which deprive women of their essential needs and forbid them from actively participating in their recovery. And both authors try to regain a sense of agency in the midst of illness by the act of writing their accounts. **Jonas Henrik Holm Pedersen**'s paper described and deconstructed another stereotypical conjunction of illness with femininity, the 19th-century aesthetic *topos* of the *femme fragile*. Pedersen analysed John William Waterhouse's painting *The Lady of Shalott* (1888) as a prototypical representation of the fragility of a woman materialised through illness as symbolic of her godliness and purity. Princess Fiona, from Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson's animated film *Shrek* (2001), was used in the paper to subvert the typical imagination of the *femme fragile*, as the curse and illness which are usually the cause of *femme fragile*'s eventual demise become the means of Fiona's empowerment in the movie.

This brief overview of the conference papers clearly shows that the attention of the participants focused mainly on first person illness narratives and on documentaries and fiction with an autobiographical background, or on cultural representation of illness from an external, third person position. Only two papers explicitly focused on doctors as fundamental shapers of illness processes and narratives. I started my overview with Akiman's paper on neurologist Oliver Sacks' fifty-years' construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of the awakenings narrative, and I will finish it with **Margherita Marchetti**'s paper comparing doctor Gregory House from the TV series *House M.D.* (2004–2012) with Sherlock Holmes from the TV series *Sherlock* (2010–2017). Marchetti showed how medicine and criminology share the same ambition of revealing the unknown through a pattern of clues that give access to deeper knowledge. Both characters exemplify the ambiguous relationship with the *pharmakon*, which according to Jacques Derrida (1968) is at the same time both a remedy and a poison. Their addiction to mystery and solution seeking specifically leads

House and Sherlock to drug addiction, keeping the discussion about medicine and criminology open.

If illness is, as Susan Sontag claimed, the night side of life, the seminar, exhibition, and conference reviewed above offered their modest contribution to shedding some light on the way in which that night has been represented and understood by the arts and humanities at different times and in different cultures. The present pandemic has uncontestably revealed the complexity of the illness phenomenon. An adequately comprehensive academic approach to such complexity would include a long list of disciplines from virology to psychology, from anthropology and cultural studies to law, from political science to philosophy, from economy to demography, etc. Such an open multidisciplinary domain should be supplemented by the historical perspective which not only allows us to unravel the causes of the present situation, but also to become aware of the fact that nothing is quite new under the sun and that we have a lot to learn from the past, as the literary and historical chronicles of real and fictional epidemics clearly show (see Monticelli 2021). The humanities are in a privileged position to address the multidisciplinary complexity of the illness phenomenon, as well as the historical developments and comparisons required to understand it more adequately. And, as humanities scholars, we have to take responsibility for promoting, even in the bleakest of times, trust in the transformative potential of research at the individual as well as the collective level of our existences.

NOTES

[1] If we take internet coverage as a litmus paper of the global impact of social phenomena, Google currently offers over 5 billion search responses for Covid-19 and 'only' 1.5 billion for AIDS (as of 25th March 2021).

[2] See https://illnessnarratives2021.cargo.site/, last accessed on 5 May 2021.

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Daniele Monticelli (PhD) is a translation scholar and semiotician. His research focuses on cultural transfer and translation in history with particular attention to the role of translation in the construction and deconstruction of national identities in Central and Eastern Europe at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, translation, power, and censorship under communism; political thought in contemporary critical theory (G. Agamben, A. Badiou, J. Rancière); and the theoretical legacy of the later works of Yuri Lotman. Monticelli currently works as a professor of translation studies and semiotics at Tallinn University, Estonia, and is the project leader of the Estonian Research Council PRG grant "Translation in History, Estonia 1850–2010: Texts, Agents, Institutions and Practices".

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NEWS IN BRIEF

MARE KÕIVA, LEADING RESEARCHER OF THE ESTONIAN LITERARY MUSEUM, ELECTED AS MEMBER OF ACADEMIA EUROPAEA

Photograph by Juri Fikfak 2019.

Mare Kõiva, Leading Researcher of the Estonian Literary Museum, was elected as a member of Academia Europaea, the European Academy of Humanities, Letters and Sciences. Kõiva has outstanding achievements in the field of Estonian folklore, folk belief, and mythology, and has authored over 200 scientific publications. Since 2000, she has been working as Head of the Department of Folkloristics of the Estonian Literary Museum, has led several voluminous scientific projects, and has been Head of the Centre of Excellence in Estonian Studies, supported by the European Regional Development Fund, since 2015. Membership of Academia Europaea is a recognition of Kõiva's international research and her continuous contribution to European scholarship.

Academia Europaea is a functioning international scientific academy, established by the London Royal Society in 1988, with a membership of more than 3000, involving experts from many different fields: physics and technology, biology and medicine, mathematics, letters and humanities, social and cognitive sciences, economics and law.

This reputable academy has 17 members from Estonia. This year Mare Kõiva and Andra Siibak, Professor of Media Studies at the University of Tartu, were elected as members. Members formerly elected from Estonia are Jaak Aaviksoo, Jüri Allik, Jaan Einasto, Jüri Engelbrecht, Marina Grišakova, Jaak Järv, Veronika Kalmus, Toivo Maimets, Ülo Mander, Helle Metslang, Viacheslav Morozov, Tarmo Soomere, Margit Sutrop, Jüri Talvet, and Rein Vaikmäe.

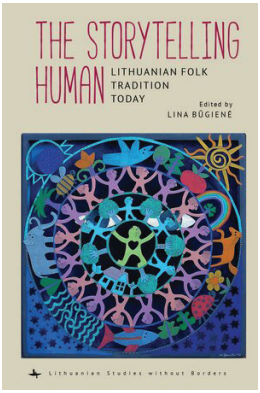
The academy's mission is to encourage the highest possible standards in scholarship, research, and education in Europe, and to promote a better understanding among the public at large of the benefits of knowledge and learning, and of scientific and scholarly issues which affect society, its quality of life, and its standards of living.

New members of Academia Europaea were elected by the Council of Academia Europaea in June 2021 (see the website of Academia Europaea at https://www.ae-info.org/).

Piret Voolaid

BOOK REVIEWS

THE MANY FACES OF LITHUANIAN FOLKLORE



Lina Būgienė (ed.). *The Storytelling Human: Lithuanian Folk Tradition Today*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020. 290 pp.

This collaborative work of eight folklorists opens up the world of Lithuanian vernacular culture to international readers. The foreword describes the challenges that Lithuanian folklore studies faced when Lithuania regained its independence after the collapse of the USSR. At that time Lithuanian folklorists had to redefine the objects of their study as the focus exclusively on rural folklore was no longer relevant; they also turned to new methodologies and interpretative approaches – including the interdisciplinary ones – to broaden the field of their research and explore new angles of vernacular culture. One of the trends was the focus on cultural memory which combines collective and individual aspects. Thus, many of the chapters of this volume attempt at bringing together the common and the singular by illustrating the general trends with particular examples.

The first part of the volume starts with Aelita Kensminienė's chapter titled "Predominant Modes of Perception and Folk Narrative". The author reflects on the difficulties in collecting oral riddles via fieldwork interviews in contemporary Lithuania. She searches for the possible reasons for it by contrasting the modes of perception and presentation of reality of her two interviewees: one of them remembers some oral riddles and other traditional folk genres while the other recalls only some fragments of them during the interview. Kensminienė argues that the former relies predominantly on the auditory mode of perception while the latter frames her memories mostly in visual terms. The author then further generalizes her observations by pointing out that visual mode of perception becomes more and more dominant due to the spread of education, television, internet, and other environments that provide mostly visual stimuli, and, therefore, less people now remember and can actively reproduce oral folklore. The comparative study of individuals' folklore performances with the subsequent generalization is a fruitful strategy in folklore research (see, for example, Oring 2016: 199–213) and the issue discussed in the chapter is indeed one of the focal points of contemporary folklore use. However, some of the statements in the paper sound a bit too categorical; for instance, the claim that the interviewee with the visual perception "is not a bearer of oral tradition" (p. 19) and might require elaboration in future works.

Radvilė Racėnaitė's chapter discusses the reconstruction of mental landscapes in memoires. The author provides a broader historical context of urbanization and other drastic changes of Lithuanian landscapes in the second half of the 20th century, and then proceeds with the analysis of famous Lithuanian folklore informants' and writers' autobiographies. She reflects on the dichotomy between the pragmatic and aesthetic attitude towards the landscape, and illustrates that in the traditional rural worldview these attitudes were complimentary rather than contradictory. Racėnaitė also points out that a certain spatial and temporal distance between a person and the landscape

conditions the aestheticization of the latter; it is the mental image of the landscape rather than its physical embodiment that acquires aesthetic value. Moreover, she draws connections between the nostalgic feeling of loss and the poetic representations of landscape in autobiographical writings.

Chapter 3, "The Dead Want to Come Home: Stories about the Repatriation of Siberian Deportee Remains to Lithuania", by Daiva Vaitkevičienė tells a moving story of Lithuanian people's efforts to return the remains of their deported relatives to their homeland. The author uses an extensive number of sources ranging from artworks to newspaper articles to interviews with those who participated in the expeditions to Siberia. She describes various aspects of the remains repatriation: the complications of a journey to the distant land, bureaucratic issues, rituals accompanying the reburial, the criteria for choosing the reburial site. Vaitkevičienė also draws parallels with other Lithuanian burial rites as well as rituals with similar semantic implications. The reburial is interpreted not only as an act of symbolic fulfilment of the living's duty to their dead, but also as a mechanism that re-established the family and community ties and the status of the deceased as an individual (p. 81). The study inspires a deeper investigation of the topic and, in particular, further cross-cultural studies aimed at uncovering if similar rituals were conducted by the deportees' relatives in other post-Soviet countries.

The issue of subjectivity in personal reflections on historical events transpires in Lina Būgienė's article titled "Borderland Lives: Historical Reflections in Eastern Lithuanian Life Stories". The author analyses the idiosyncratic memories of elderly inhabitants of Valkininkai community in south-eastern part of Lithuania and focuses specifically on the period between 1939 and 1944, when the region experienced several transitions of power (Polish, Lithuanian, Soviet, and German). The narratives touch upon the conflicting issues of ethnic identity, the relationships between people of different nationalities, the status of Jewish minority before and during World War II and the ambiguous attitudes towards various groups of partisans. Būgienė underscores that the aim of her work (and folklore studies in general) is not to establish objective historical facts but rather to show how personal aspects intertwine with social reality and create a multifaceted representation of historical processes building on the grassroots experiences. One of the key concepts of the chapter is *borderland lives* that the author defines as "the subtle balancing between opposing or competing political regimes" (p. 111). In conclusion Būgienė argues that this concept can be used to characterize Lithuania as a whole due to its cultural and geographical location between the East and the West.

The second part of the book opens with Jūratė Šlekonytė's chapter titled "Life in Folktales or Folktales in Life? How Storytellers Influence Folk Traditions". In some way this work continues the discussion initiated by Aelita Kensminienė's chapter. It reaffirms the focus on particular performers and their narrations of folktales. The author evokes several important questions: the balance between individual creativity and community demands (p. 117), the impact of storytellers' personalities on their narrations, the meaning of folktales in contemporary world and the interweaving of the fictional world of folktales with reality (p. 118). Some of these issues are discussed in detail while the author describes the fieldwork encounters with two storytellers, one of whom tends to approach the tales more rationally and use them for didactic purposes while the other adopts a more conventional storytelling approach and tells the folktales for their own sake. Unfortunately, other questions, such as the constraints imposed by community needs, are not reflected upon sufficiently in the chapter, stimulating the reader to seek

their own replies to them. Nevertheless, the chapter provides a decent analysis of the role of storytellers' personalities in the folktale performances in contemporary context.

Dalia Zaikauskienė's chapter "The Contemporary Consumer and Creator of Proverbs, or Why Do We Need Proverbs Today?" focuses on the use of traditional proverbs and anti-proverbs in contemporary communication. The author tries to uncover the reasons why traditional proverbs might lose their popularity, and what conditions their modifications and the creation of entirely new anti-proverbs. She also explains linguistic mechanisms of proverb transformations and indicates the sources from which new proverbs can become a part of the vernacular (for example, literary works, films, other forms of popular culture). The proverbs can also be borrowed from other languages, and Dalia Zaikauskienė analyses the influence of Russian and English paremiological corpus on Lithuanian contemporary folklore. Finally, she describes how proverbs can be used outside of their traditional milieu (i.e., in oral speech) by bringing examples of advertisements, journal and newspaper articles, political rhetoric, and anonymous internet communication. While the work provides a multi-layered overview of contemporary paremiology, some of the author's generalizations of online interactions are debatable, such as, for example, the claims that "on the internet… there is no interaction between sender and receiver" (p. 161) and the idea that "the internet is a tribune from which you can say whatever you want" (ibid.).

Humour is the focal issue of Salomėja Bandoriūtė's chapter titled "Homo ridens: The Joking Human in Lithuania from the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twenty-First Century". The author arranges her analysis in chronological order and describes the most prominent topics of Lithuanian canned jokes during three periods: late 19th and early 20th century, Soviet era, and contemporary epoch. She concludes that three groups of targets continue to be popular throughout all the periods under investigation, namely, women, foreigners, and social groups belonging to higher social classes. As these groups of targets can be found in humorous folklore of many (if not all) countries, it opens up interesting possibilities for cross-cultural research. Bandoriūtė notes that the particular characters within these target groups vary and adapt to the social, political, and economic circumstances. In her quest for the most popular target groups the author mostly discusses the joke texts themselves but does not extensively analyse the context of the spread and collection of these jokes. For example, it would be useful to mention that the popularity of female joke targets might also be connected with the fact that the joke-tellers are predominantly male (Kuipers 2006: 44). Likewise, the relation between joke scripts and stereotypes could have benefited from further problematization (see, e.g., Davies 2011: 9). An interesting follow-up to such a diachronic study would be to see if the popular plots of Lithuanian jokes also continue throughout different historical epochs.

The volume concludes with Povilas Krikščiūnas's chapter "Between Culture and Subculture: The Case of Lithuania's Basketball Fans". The chapter gives a brief overview of the popularity of basketball in Lithuania and discusses various forms of vernacular expression that testify to this popularity. The author uses the examples of internet folklore that Lithuanian basketball fans create and share to promote their favourite sports and particular teams as well as to denigrate their opponents. Krikščiūnas touches upon different aspects of basketball fandom: its strong gendered identity, the various levels of communities that it generates, the interrelations between basketball and other important spheres of life such as religion and patriotism. The chapter abounds in colourful examples (mainly textual jokes and demotivators) but, unfortunately, does not provide a substantial analysis of them. The author has managed to show that the case

of Lithuanian basketball fandom is indeed a noteworthy and multi-layered phenomenon, but the interpretation of it remains a job of the future researchers.

"The Storytelling Human" is not only an eye-catching title for an academic study on folklore, but also a fairly accurate metaphor for the volume itself. The authors do not attempt at creating complex theoretical frameworks or universal interpretative models, but rather tell stories of different genres and practices of Lithuanian folklore in a humane and engaging manner. The volume is not a sophisticated scholarly jigsaw puzzle where pieces stick neatly to each other; it is more of a huge wooden chest with all sorts of curiosities, each of which deserves hours of close examination. Much like the folklore itself, "The Storytelling Human" poses more questions than it gives answers – and, hopefully, these questions would lie at the foundation of further volumes dedicated to Lithuanian vernacular culture.

Anastasiya Fiadotava

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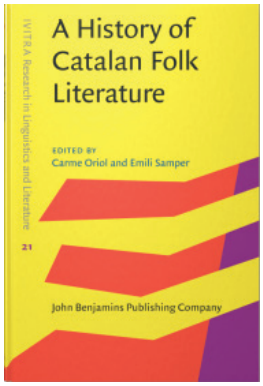
A MULTINATIONAL HISTORY OF CATALAN FOLK STUDIES

Carme Oriol, Emili Samper (eds.). *A History of Catalan Folk Literature*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2019. 273 pp.



This welcome volume provides an overview of the activity of folklorists in Catalan-speaking areas from the onset of Romanticism until today. Catalonia proper is the focus of a third of the book, while the Balearic Islands, together with the Valencian Country and El Carxe take up a further third. The final third of the book covers the Aragonese Strip, Andorra, Northern Catalonia (in France) and L'Alguer (in Sardinia). A useful map on page xv shows these contiguous areas. The work concludes with a valuable twenty-page bibliography and a triple-columned index. Altogether, four modern states are featured in the book: Spain, Andorra, France, and Italy. Curated by folklorists Oriol and Samper from the University of Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, this work, with its multinational coverage, is also very much a multi-authored work, with fully 15 people involved in its writing. It represents a fluently translated English version of the Catalan original, *Història de la literature popular catalana* (2017).

Not so much a history of folk literature (we do not find citations from songs or stories in the work) as a historiography of folk literature, the book introduces us to a series of interesting folklorists. Among some of the most remarkable people are foreign-born students of Catalan folklore, such as Sara Llorens i Carreras (born in Buenos Aires in 1881) and Archduke Ludwig Salvator of Austria (born in Florence in 1847). Alan Lomax, who

spent time in Mallorca and Ibiza in search of traditional music during the Franco era, is also mentioned, as is Walter Anderson, who worked collaboratively with the foremost mid-century Catalan folklorist, Joan Amades i Gelats (pp. 57–58). The interaction of dictionary-making and folklore-documentation is also hinted at by remarks such as those noting Antoni Maria Alcover i Sureda's "articles and other writings on folk literature and folklore … published in the *Bolletí del Diccionari de la Llengua Catalana*" (p. 112) and references to Francesc Bonafè i Barceló's unpublished dictionary of Majorcan dialect, folklore and place names (p. 134).

There is also interesting institutional history traced here as well. Following on from the formation of the Folklore Society in London in 1878, and the Andalusian Folklore Society's foundation in 1881, a Catalan body dealing with folklore emerged in 1885. Intriguingly, this was not an autonomous society, but the folklore section of the Catalan Excursions Association. The section published a series of scholarly books between 1884 and 1910. The phenomenon of excursionism and excursionist associations is one that has analogues in other countries during this period from English field clubs to Bavarian Alpine societies, and it might be interesting to dedicate a conference to comparative (and contrastive) excursionism in Europe and its relation to folklore. One writer with excursionist connections, Cels Gomis i Mestre, was well aware of folklore research elsewhere in Europe. His books on plants and animals in popular sayings, customs and beliefs were inspired, we are told, by Paul Sébillot's *Traditions et superstitions de la Haute-Bretagne*. And Sébillot, in turn, returned the compliment by referring to Gomis's work in some of his own later research.

Catalan folkloristics went through many twists and turns over the subsequent years through the post-World War I period, the Spanish Civil War, the Franco era, and on to the modern period, and the book covers these developments too. Interestingly, following a period (1978–1989) that saw the resumption of folkloristic activities, the period of renewal in folklore studies in Catalonia was 1990–1999, according to Oriol's account (pp. 77–84). This is precisely the same period that saw the renewal of folklore studies in the Baltic states in the opposite corner of Europe. One important intellectual element in both of these renewals was the reception of the works of 1970s American folklorists such as Ben-Amos, Dorson, and Dundes. Another parallel is that the newly released enthusiasm of the 1990s benefited, in both cases, from governmental financial support. In fact, there is yet another parallel as well, in that both areas swiftly adopted the internet for archival purposes, as well as for the dissemination of research.

The book as a whole is a serious piece of work; indeed, a little leavening might have been provided by a few revealing or characteristic anecdotes about the personalities involved. It is also perhaps a pity that we do not have photographs in the book of some of these pioneer folklorists. Then again, such images are easily locatable online, and would no doubt have added to the cost of the book.

But what we now have is a description of the development of folklore studies in a particularly interesting area of Europe, available in English, which is full of details of folklorists who will be unknown to many of us. As such, it is an achievement that opens doors for those far from the Catalan countries to a vast quantity of research. It might also serve as a useful model for those compiling histories of folkloristics in other settings. And, finally, it should also be stated that one of the most heartening aspects of this history is that so much of the period it covers is recent – a sign of the present vitality of folklore studies in this area.

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