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In search of global connections
between traumatic memories**

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Redakcijos adresas / Address of editorial board

Lietuvos socialinių tyrimų centras

Etninių tyrimų institutas

A. Goštauto 11, LT-01108 Vilnius, Lietuva

Tel.: +370 5 272 20 63

El. paštas / e-mail: ces@ces.lt

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Foreword. Beyond the nation? In search of global connections between traumatic memories

Dovilė Budrytė

GEORGIA GWINNETT COLLEGE, LAWRENCEVILLE GA 30043, USA
E-MAIL: DBUDRYTE@GGC.EDU

Erica Resende

CANDIDO MENDES UNIVERSITY, RIO DE JANEIRO, RJ 2001-901, BRAZIL
E-MAIL: ERICA@IUPERJ.BR

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During the last decade, many works exploring the role of memory in Eastern and Central European politics and societies were published (Bernhard and Kubik, 2014; Ilic and Leinartė, 2016; Mink and Neumayer, 2013; Aleksandravičius, 2014; Davoliūtė and Balkelis, 2012, and others). This growing body of literature has demonstrated the crucial importance of memory politics in nation-building projects and ethnic relations. Many of these works, however, were still embracing national frameworks and thus failing to capture the full extent to which global forces and non-state actors can influence complex processes of memory production. Recently there have been several attempts to escape this tendency to think about memory on the national level. For example, in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe* (2013), editors Blacker, Etkind and Fedor argued that their goal was to “operate on a consciously transnational scale” in re-thinking the role of memory in the region. Similarly, a growing body of literature in various fields, including history and political science, has attempted to conceptualize various projects to create a common European memory on the regional level (Leggewie, 2008; Mälksoo, 2014; Assmann, 2013; Snyder, 2013; Sierp, 2014; Sierpand Wüstenberg, 2015; and others). Recent work by Altinay and Pető (2015) sought to explore the ways in which feminist thinking can help to establish connections between gender, genocide and memory studies.

Following this way of thinking, this special issue draws on the emerging literature on memory and trauma in international relations to transcend the limits imposed by national frameworks and traditional ways of thinking about ethnic relations and identity politics. The uses of ethnic and national categories in analytical research on ethnic and international relations tend to normalize these divisions, thus contributing to the same problems that it wants to address. We believe that it is important to challenge such categories and transcend divisions imposed by thinking in static identity terms by switching to the study of relevant practices instead, as it is done in trauma and memory studies.

This new trend of scholarly interest in trauma and memory studies has yielded thought provoking discussions about practices of memorialization and remembrance (Gillis, 1994; Sturken, 1997; Winter and Sivan, 2000; Zehfuss, 2007), culture trauma (Greenberg, 2003; Alexander et al., 2004; Kaplan, 2005), collective and transnational memory (Caruth, 1996; Levy and Sznaider, 2010; Langenbacher and Shain, 2010), and witnessing and reconciliation (Hayner, 2001; Booth, 2006; Lind, 2008). While some of them engaged with different issues and applied different approaches, others were more firmly located in the field of International Relations (Edkins, 2003; Bell, 2006; Resende and Budryte, 2013; Auchter, 2014), they all have tried to bridge an existing gap regarding the role of trauma and memory in world politics, even going beyond the traditional focus on the Holocaust as the paradigmatic case of a global traumatic event to include other traumatic experiences, without erasing important historical differences between them.

Issues related to trauma, identity and memory (that are central in trauma and memory studies) are likely to be interesting to anyone studying Eastern and Central Europe and probably to most people who trace their roots to this region (as this is the case with one of the editors, Dovilė Budrytė). But, as with story of Erica Resende, the other editor of this special issue suggests, these issues can become appealing to anyone who pays attention to the escalation of violence in world politics and cares about it. Trauma can become the basis for connections between people from different cultures, regions, ethnic groups, generations; or, to use a relevant term from the literature on trauma and memory, the basis for “radical relationality” connecting individuals with very different backgrounds (see Husanović’s contribution in this special issue).

Erica Resende’s engagement with these topics started a while ago when she was a young adult backpacking in Europe in the early 1990’s; she visited a museum in Norway and saw Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*. The famous 1893 painting, depicting a distorted mummy-like figure against a stark landscape with a tumultuous, infinite orange, red-blood sky struck a chord deeply within her. Why was that figure screaming? Was it suffering and in pain? Was it calling for help? Help from whom? Why was its impact so deep? During that summer in Europe, watching daily reports about the escalation of violence and genocide in the Balkans, Resende felt like entering the canvas and taking that figure into her own arms. To this day, *The Scream* – more precisely, the unsettling feelings the painting stirred in her – is the background against which she reads and reflects about acts of violence in world politics.

Indeed, as pointed out by Simeon and Abugel (2006), the imagery of *The Scream* has been most commonly linked to acute traumatic experiences, encompassing a palette of violent emotions from anxiety to despair, madness to hopelessness. All of them trying to signify human suffering resulting from experiences of “depersonalization, decentering, distortion and the void of one’s self” (p. 127). Acknowledging the influence of this particular painting, it is possible to identify the main themes that guide this special issue on the relation

between memory, trauma and identity in world politics. Traumatic events remind us of a key characteristic of the human condition in modern times: our existence as bare life, which we comfortably and promptly force ourselves to forget in order to continue living.

The aim here is not to exhaust the discussion on the relationship between traumatic memories, politics and ethics, but to offer some considerations on why the cry from *The Scream* resonates across time, places and communities. The impact of the mummy-like figure painted by Munch has much to do with the very experience of facing a traumatic event, of having been submitted to an “enforced encounter with death, violence, and brutality” that ultimately reveals the contingency of social order (Edkins, 2003: 3-5). Munch’s figure cries in helplessness because it realizes the unbearable truth of human condition in modern times: the subjection of life to the power of the *Sovereign* (broadly conceptualized as the power of the state), which allows for some to live and some to die, thus betraying our trust and expectations about how the world functions.

The notion of trauma, derived from the Greek word *τράυμα*, meaning “wound” or “injury”, was a key concept developed by Sigmund Freud,¹ the father of psychoanalysis, throughout his career. In his early works on the subject of hysteria, Freud argued that trauma was deeply connected to the idea of a violent shock capable of shattering the psychic apparatus that enables us to function. Psychic trauma occurred, he claimed, as a consequence of a major traumatic event or a temporal sequence of smaller temporal traumas that have impacted the psyche of an individual overrunning its protective barrier. Thus, Freud argued, traumatic events were capable of abruptly or progressively interfering with psychic processes.

The subject of traumatic events received greater attention by Freud later on. In his 1926 work *Inhibition, Symptom and Anguish*, he investigated the phenomenon even further by identifying the impact of experiences associated to losses of loved ones, breakdowns and dissolutions of family relations, death or loss of emotionally significant figures, etc. One aspect to be understood early on was not the traumatic event per se – such as the death of a loved one – but the way the event impacts on the psychic apparatus, i.e. how the individual processes and reacts to the event. This led Freud to highlight that how one reacts to a traumatic event depends on one’s individual psychic history, on memories inevitably mixed with fantasies of prior catastrophes, and on the particular cultural and political context within which a catastrophe takes place, especially how it is mediated and managed by institutional forces. Interestingly, recent literature on trauma theory highlight the importance of cultural and historical forces, and argues that it is important to find connections between traumatic experiences and paradigms “that must work in, and despite, different contexts” (Rothberg, 2013: xiii).

¹ Although Sigmund Freud is an inescapable figure in trauma theory, we do not contend he was the first or the definitive author on the subject. By quoting Freud we merely wish to highlight how Freud’s ideas about hysteria and trauma belonged to a turn-of-the-century discourse on trauma that would anchor the debate for decades. See Leys (2000, especially chapter 1).

Traditionally, the study of trauma and of traumatic events originated in the context of treatment of war neuroses following World War I and II – under the clinic rubric of shell shock – and of research about the Holocaust. In both cases, their undeniable magnitude rightly authorized the use of a trauma vocabulary. However, the escalation of war, violence, conflict and abuse throughout the 20th century made it so that the concept of traumatic event has been extended to include other types of suffering terror, in various degrees and kinds of trauma (Kaplan, 2005: 1). In contemporary times, where war, conflict, disasters, famine, abuse, strife, and insecurity abound, a traumatic event has come to be generally understood as an event “defined by its intensity,” by the subject’s “incapacity to respond adequately to it” and by the “upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organization” of individuals (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1967: 465-9).

Stolorow (2007) described similar situations as he characterized our age of an “age of trauma.” Modernity, he claims, has provided us with a range of tranquilizing illusions that has long allowed us to keep on living, to function socially. Today, however, we are forced to deal with globally threatening situations – such as climate change, world hunger, genocide, nuclear proliferation, terrorist attacks, finance and economic crisis, etc. – that produce collective trauma on a global scale as the very possibility of their occurrence thrusts us into a situation of existential anxiety due to the shattering of what Stolorow (2007: 16) calls “the absolutism of everyday life.” For Stolorow, the essence of psychological trauma lay in the experience of unbearable affect, which may not be explained in terms of the quantity or intensity of the pain inflicted by or as a result of a traumatic event. It has to be interpreted in regards to the failing of mechanisms we counted on to assist us when processing a traumatic event.

Normally, whenever we refer to “a traumatic” event, we think of something out of the ordinary, outside the flow of History itself, that may have occurred. For example, the events of 9/11 have effectively altered our perception of time and space. Besides the great loss of life and financial losses, 9/11 brought about the experience of the impossible. The acts witnessed that day made it impossible for people to just go about one’s daily business. September 11th, 2001 became 9/11, a traumatic event.

If it is true that 9/11 constitutes a fine example of a traumatic event in the age of trauma that Stolorow talked about, it stands by no means alone. A decade later, a catastrophe involving nuclear leakage following an earthquake and a tsunami in Japan, with the subsequent release of radioactive material, triggered similar feelings of a traumatic nature. On March 11, 2011, a nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima I Nuclear Power Plant produced what is today considered the largest nuclear disaster since Chernobyl of 1986. At the first anniversary of the nuclear disaster, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda said that officials had been blinded by a false belief in the country’s “technological infallibility,” which sat the heart of a “safety myth” regarding nuclear power. Arguing that all would have to “share the pain of the responsibility,” Noda claimed that Fukushima represented “the end of Japanese illusions” (Funabashi, 2012).

It is precisely in this sense – in the end of illusions – that both 9/11 and Fukushima produced their traumatic effects. When the impossible and the

unthinkable happened, people's sense of being safe and secure in regards to their expectations about the order of things imploded. 9/11 and Fukushima produced a collective global trauma because they were responsible for "violently and irrevocably introducing horror into the world of things that exist" (Levi, 1987: 96). Faced with the need to emotionally cope with the unbearable – as well as to mourn the loss of dear ones – anxiety and angst emerge. The "eventness" quality of both 9/11 and Fukushima leads us to recognize their quality as traumatic events. In the context of Eastern and Central Europe, Fukushima's disaster probably brought instant memories of Chernobyl, thus creating an "affiliative" structure of memory, bridging different experiences and different cultures.

Curiously, the sense of shock, despair and hopelessness experienced at those two particular contexts of trauma yielded very similar representations of angst. Inspired by Munch's *The Scream*, American painter Reza Sepahdari and Canadian cartoonist André-Philippe Côté attempted to express through art what then could not quite be understood, processed, rationalized and put into words, yet felt. This is another example of radical relationality, bridging different cultures and mapping traumas.



Illustration 1: Reza Sepahdari's 'Scream 9/11' (2001)²

² Rights to reproduction kindly released by the artist.

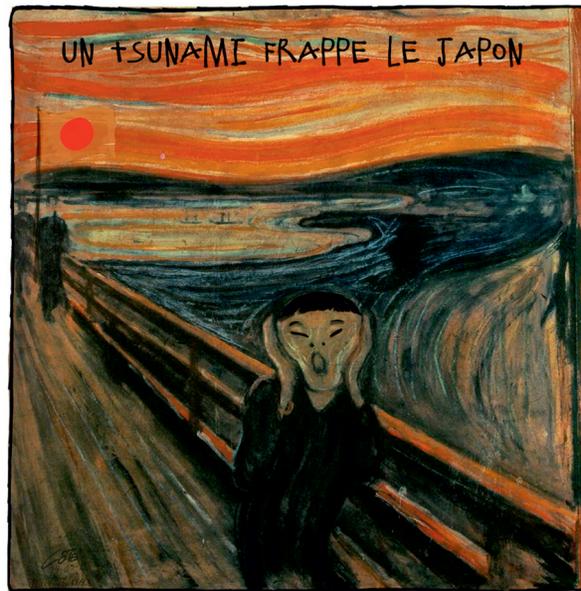


Illustration 2: André-Philippe Côté's 'Un tsunami frappe le Japon' (2011)³

For Caruth (1996: 11), “trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled and repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.” It is, quite simply, something that lies beyond the realms of normal experience, outside the frontiers of language or normal comprehension, on the “limit of writing,” as elsewhere argued by Blanchot (1995: 7). Trauma expresses the momentary incapacity of language to describe reality: an exposure to such a disturbing and destructing event that our system of references for reality is shaken to the core. Recent critiques of the conceptualizations of trauma as articulated by Caruth and her followers (e.g., Trezise, 2013: 2-3) point to the importance of making sure that the voices of the victims who have experienced trauma are not silenced by imagining trauma as “an overwhelming experience” that defies any articulation using language as well as making sure that history about traumatic events is not obscured when the indescribability of these events is underlined.

Jenny Edkins admits that it may be impossible to adequately describe trauma; however, she feels that it is possible to map the places where it has occurred. In addition, she holds that trauma makes people feel betrayed in their expectations about the order of things. “It brings to the surface existential questions which at least in the modern world we prefer to keep submerged,” she observes (Edkins, 2002: 245). This is why trauma always implies in recognizing realities and limits

³ La Presse Montreal, March 14th, 2011. Rights to reproduction kindly released by the artist.

“that most of us have not begun to face” (ibid). The human mind is incapable of processing trauma in the same way it processes any normal event. Standing “outside the ordinary experience,” trauma does not slot into the framework of normal social reality, which is why there is no language for it or any other tools which one would normally rely on to make sense of the world.

And this is where the paradox lies: trauma is felt but not understood; it is memorized and recalled, but not necessarily experienced; it defies language but insists on being communicated; it refuses to be incorporated into normality but goes on perpetuating itself in memory; it is triggered at a specific moment in time, but alters its linearity; it must be forgotten, but is always being recalled and relived. Trauma is a slayer of certainties, a shaker of truths: it irrevocably changes our spatial and temporal concept of the world and ourselves. As Edkins (2002) argues, trauma shatters our expectations, our understanding of how the world looks like. This is why a traumatic event literally “unmakes” our world, for it destroys “the metaphysical certainties that were normally taken for granted” (Edkins, 2002: 246), especially our own sense of security.

Trauma, then, becomes part of the experience of recognizing our mortality. Life can only be bearable if we buy into a kind of unwritten compact, especially in western culture, of willfully forgetting how tenuous our condition is. Trauma gives us a sudden, painful reminder of how useless and impossible such a compact actually is. We are mortal and we are vulnerable, and the idea of total security is no more than a device used to trick ourselves into believing we can escape death, relieving ourselves of the anxiety brought on by the recognition of our mortality.

This seems to fit perfectly with the circumstances of 9/11 and Fukushima, as well as the cases explored in this special issue, for they shattered life absolutes. Overnight, individuals realized that the world was not benevolent, and that their lives might not have been worthy of protection. In this sense, understanding and emphasizing with those who have experienced traumatic events helps us to focus on our common humanity.

Drawing on case studies of traumatic experiences not only from the Global North, but also from the Global South, we hope to demonstrate how theoretical concepts such as hauntology (Auchter’s contribution), displacement (Davoliūtė’s and David’s essays), unresolved genocide (Boykin’s contribution), aporia (Resende’s contribution), transitional justice (Dario’s essay), or witnessing to trauma (Husanović’s essay) can inform the study of trauma and memory by transcending ethnic and national borders and placing the experiences commonly associated with Eastern and Central Europe in a global context. The common denominator of all contributions is a traumatic event (displacement, genocide, a terrorist act, and a civil war); however, conceptualizing traumatic memory as a “sensitizing concept” (that is, a way to attract our attention to various representations of the past instead of treating it as a measurable phenomenon) helps to make sure that important historical and cultural differences separating these events are respected.

Inspired by Rothberg's (2009, 2013) concept of "multidirectional memory" and Hirsch's (2012) concept of "post-memory," this volume attempts to develop its own connective approach to the study of traumatic events and related memories. Michael Rothberg's prism ("multidirectional memory") suggests a way to globalize the European memory debate by including insights from postcolonial studies. He proposed to expand the geography of memory by not merely shifting from "Paris to Warsaw" (that is, shifting the focus in memory studies from Western Europe to the East) but thinking Paris *with* Warsaw (that is, exploring connections between these two different regions), along with a number of other localities, such as Atlanta, Gaza City, and Istanbul. Rothberg's multidirectional memory mandates the inclusion of interdependence and "free and coerced flows of people, goods, and ideas that accompany colonial expansion" into theorization about memory, thus adding dynamism and a global lens to the equation. Rothberg proposes a revolutionary thinking about memory, arguing for "deconstruction of a straight line that is assumed to connect collective memory and group identity" (2013: 86). According to him, memory is capable of both assembling and dissecting identities. At the same time, exploring dialogical relations between memories as diverse as slavery, colonialism and the Holocaust will allow to transcend competitive relations between different memory communities and empower groups with traumatic experiences to obtain resources to voice their "claims for recognition and justice" (Rothberg, 2013: 87).

As conceptualized by Hirsch (2012), "post-memory" is a term describing the feelings and the relationship that the "generation after" has established with the trauma experienced by their parents and relatives. Post-memory is shaped by stories, images and behaviors; however, these experiences can be so powerful that they are capable of constructing new images and new stories, or "memories in their own right" (p. 5). For trauma to be transmitted from the people who experienced it to others (in this case, the next generation), "affiliative structures" must be in place, and these structures are constructed by stories, images and behaviors, thus developing connections between individuals with different experiences. In this way, Hirsch's approach helps to theorize about connections in the processes of transmission of traumas.

Drawing on Rothberg and Hirsch, we hope to demonstrate that search for similarities in various cultural contexts can be emancipatory—if nothing else, it inspires imagination which is a powerful way of resisting domination of national dogmas and state-sponsored memorializations. At the same time, the warnings of emerging critical multidirectional memory studies (e.g., Sanyal, 2015) about dangerous "collisions and conflations" in the global traffic of memory when traumatic memories are misrepresented and misused are valid. It is important to respect historical specificity of traumatic events, and it is crucial to remember that there is a crucial distinction between surviving a trauma and receiving its memory. As argued by Sanyal (2015: 8), "the overwhelming focus on victimhood in the reception of such [traumatic] memory can lead to appropriation of stories that are not our own and can even become alibis for the perpetration of violence." Listening to a story about a traumatic event and feeling compassion is not (and should not be)

the same as appropriating this trauma and using it for political needs. Consequently, when studying the ways in which traumatic memories are transmitted, the questions about misuse, perhaps for pragmatic goals, and inappropriate appropriation of such memories are as important as the creation of affiliative structures.

The volume starts out with Jasmina Husanović's contribution, which establishes theoretical parameters for the study of traumatic memory that can transcend national and ethnic borders. By articulating a stringent critique of the strategies of management of trauma in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Husanović puts forward a compelling alternative to nationalism and liberalism. In her words: "An affirmative politics of witnessing to trauma does offer ways of identification and participation that are an authentic challenge to the ethnopopulist mobilisation of affect and passion on the one hand, and the aseptic liberal management of affect in white gloves and in the name of human rights, on the other." Such politics, drawing on feminist theories, demands a focus on real voices and real bodies and thus resists the erasure of traumatic experiences which can occur when traumatic memories are appropriated and commodified by local ethnonationalist groups or obscured by international actors, acting in the name of "transitional justice." The goal of such politics is to produce a "shareable story" by engaging in affective corporeal activities and ethical practices of remembrance. The author's own work becomes part of this shareable story as she documents her own engagement as a feminist writer and activist in activities of non-governmental groups working towards radical relationality.

Jessica Auchter's essay suggests another way to create a shareable story. Similarly to Husanović, bodies are central to her argument. Auchter's contribution seeks to explore the concept of haunting by examining two cases in which memorialization has proceeded very differently: Rwanda and Darfur. As argued by Alexander Etkind, who has used the concept of "hauntology" to describe the problems related to remembering in the post-Soviet Russian context: "If the suffering is not remembered, it will be repeated. [...] When the dead are not properly mourned, they turn into the undead and cause trouble for the living" (Etkind, 2013: 16-17).

As demonstrated by Auchter, Rwanda and Darfur provide two very different contexts for the study of memorialization of traumatic memories: in Rwanda, built memorials form key sites for memorialization and the display of human remains as evidence of atrocity, while in Darfur, there is ongoing conflict, no physical memorial sites, and the bodies of victims mingle with desert sands, yet oral testimonies persist as key ways deaths are memorialized. Both of these examples posit questions about lingering identities and the relationship between identity and physical memorial sites. Exploring tensions between how deaths and narratives about deaths are managed (or attempts to manage these) and the continuing competing narratives that persist at memorial sites allows Auchter to explore more fundamental questions of identity as it relates to who and what is memorialization, how memorialization proceeds, and what it might mean to be haunted by lives and deaths that have been silenced or coopted into particular memorial projects. Unlike

Etkind, who conceptualized haunting as the crux of “warped” (and, by extension, inadequate memory in Russia), Auchter argues that by allowing ourselves to be haunted, new avenues of politics open up that gesture towards a shared human vulnerability rather than a politics based on competing victimhood.

Erica Resende’s contribution also focuses on developing a global connective approach to the study of politics of memory and trauma. Drawing on what many analysts in International Relations consider to be a breaking point in the international system (9/11), which she characterizes as “an aporetic moment”, she makes several important observations about “the events that open us to another time”, that “alter our perception of time and space” in the global age. It is difficult to grasp exactly what happened, she argues; such traumatic events disrupt the flow of “normal” time and, despite the avalanche of visual representations, are impossible to “make sense of.” Yet, at the same time, 9/11 represents an unprecedented simultaneous global experience on many various levels—personal, visual, digital, virtual and global, thus transcending borders and creating instant affiliations among strangers. Resende’s analysis is an example of the impact of technology in memory making, and it illustrates the power of “connective memory” in identity construction. Collective narrative construction about a traumatic experience can be a source of comfort and a connector between individual and collective identities. At the same time, Resende’s article raises numerous questions about the construction of “global” trauma in a global age: What is the relationship between trauma, collective identity and security? How can traumatic experiences challenge power structures and inspire construction of new international norms?

Scott Boykin’s analysis of the Armenian genocide and its impact on the development of international norms sheds some light on these questions. He creates a concept of an “unresolved” genocide as “one for which there was no or little action taken to prosecute those responsible for committing the genocide and one the status of which as a genocide is disputed or not acknowledged by multiple states that are regarded as legitimate actors in the international community.” Acknowledging the constraints to human rights protection stemming from the current international system based on the sovereignty of states and the interpretation of “national” interests, Boykin nevertheless argues that transnational memory of genocides, both resolved and unresolved, has played a role in the emergence of an international norm against genocide and in the institutionalization of that norm. His essay analyzes the ongoing struggles regarding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the lack of any punishment for the Turkish government, highlighting the intersections between the “unresolved” genocide and the assertion of international expectations about “responsible complicity” (an expectation that responsible members of international community will recognize the crimes of the past). Boykin makes a case for the “intersubjective recognition of human rights abuses” and argues that such recognition can play a role in the development of international law.

Diogo Dario’s essay also addresses the international law by tracing the evolution of international norms related to the punishment of the crimes of previous regimes (transitional justice) and analyzing the ways in which these norms were applied

to the Colombian conflict. Dario describes the importance of strategies such as confessions that are designed to create a sense of unity and an intersubjective recognition of human rights abuses. His analysis suggests that (at least in the context of Colombia) it is very difficult to agree on who is a victim and how to develop effective policies addressing victimhood. Dario focuses on the Justice and Peace Law of 2005 and describes an instrumental use by the government of the ambiguity conveyed in the notion of victim. Emphasizing “reconciliation” and not reparation, the Colombian government succeeded in avoiding holding certain individuals responsible for the crimes of the past. In addition, using the narratives of victims to construct a usable political memory, the government avoided creating a truth commission and opted for a state-sponsored research commission who was charged with writing of an official history of the “post-conflict” Colombia. The reader will detect connections with the Baltic states (Pettai and Pettai, 2014), including Lithuania, where the narratives of victims (at least partially) were appropriated by official memory, and deep reconciliation and honest confrontation with multiple pasts has not yet taken place.

Questions about who can be considered a victim are also addressed by Isabel David’s case study of “retornados” (the white Portuguese living in the colonies who were forced to “return” to Portugal in early seventies). The term “retornados” is often seen in Portugal as having a pejorative connotation to describe the fate of approximately 800,000 Portuguese who experienced discrimination and marginalization in Portugal that was undergoing abrupt political and socioeconomic changes in early seventies. David analyzes links between social phenomena in the Portuguese society (including democratization) to the experiences of displacement and attempts at social integration. According to David, “Portugal provides an example of how a state decided to forget its colonial past and the visible remnants of that past – its settlers.” Such strategic forgetting was deemed as essential for democratic transition.

Strategic forgetting is also the core of Violeta Davoliūtė’s article about the Jewish memories of 1941 deportations from Soviet Lithuania. In the past, Lithuania’s experiences of Stalinist repressions and deportations were described as “genocide,” first by the Lithuanian diaspora in the West, and later by the Lithuanian nation-state. Davoliūtė traces how deportations are remembered by Lithuania’s Jews (who also experienced Stalinist deportations in 1941), thus opening a space for connective memory between the groups whose memories are often seen as competitive and diametrically opposing. Davoliūtė’s contribution also highlights the close personal connections between the deportees belonging to two different ethnic groups and describes cases of interethnic marriage between the deportees.

As a whole, this special issue opens what we believe are promising avenues for the study of memory and trauma in the global context. Instead of assuming that traumatic memories are sources of division in the “global marketplace of trauma” (Tomsy, 2011) the contributions suggest that it is possible to conceptualize them as part of “a shared human vulnerability” (Auchter’s term; see her contribution in this issue) or part of a “shareable story” (Husanović’s

term; see her contribution in this issue) that transcends national and regional borders. Several contributions suggest specific ways of developing theoretical connective approaches to the study of traumatic memory. Husanović's article highlights the importance of understanding resistance strategies to "securitization of life" by states through a feminist lens, especially in contexts affected by collective trauma (war), and the ways to develop "affective solidarity" against terror. Resende's essay points to the importance of technology in creation of "instant affiliations among strangers." Davoliūtė's contribution demonstrates the importance of resisting strategic forgetting and shows how discourses about displacement can connect different ethnic groups who are usually portrayed as embracing opposing traumatic memories. Hopefully, in the future, such connective approaches to the study of memory will challenge hierarchies embedded in the study of national memories and help to understand memory work pursued by non-state actors that have become increasingly important in producing local and transnational memories.

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Economies of affect and traumatic knowledge: lessons on violence, witnessing and resistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jasmina Husanović

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF TUZLA
DR. TIHOMILA MARKOVICA 1, 75000 TUZLA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
E-MAIL: JASMINA.HUSANOVIĆ@UNTZ.BA

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to outline the current dynamics of the economies of affect and traumatic knowledge concerning the politics of memory and witnessing to trauma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also refers to some specific instances of cultural and knowledge production and grassroots activism in war and post-war contexts outlining the deadlocks faced, as well as some promising trajectories of antinationalist, left, and feminist activism seeking political and social justice. For those who experienced various forms of wartime and postwar violence in the countries that composed the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and who oppose and traverse the dominant logic of victimisation and commodification, this is a multidirectional, affective and collective effort of reconstituting memory for the purposes of hopeful politics.

Keywords: politics of memory, trauma, witnessing, feminism, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslavia, knowledge and cultural production.

How can the bodily experience of war traumas be *translated* into a form of knowledge is a touchstone for the memory studies today as it has been through the whole of modern times, considering that the very act of remembering is also an act of translation, intending for the reconstruction of the past in the present context, a transition from life through death into life. One should approach this challenge underlying discursive/material economies that encircle the material rupture of trauma across and between human experiences (collective, individual, historical, ontological, and so on) as the very traumatic knot of constituting and communicating experience through various modalities of representation, politically, ethically, and aesthetically. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, rampant commodification of trauma has entered into its third decade. This paper discusses how the normalisation of violence and deepening social inequalities have affected the position of “victims/survivors” who experienced various forms of wartime and afterwar violence and exploitation. The resistance or revolt against the twin logics of victimisation and commodification that produce traumatically alienated forms of life, thought, and labour, with dissolved capacity for political subjectivisation,

solidarity, and transformative action, proves to be strongest in the domains of cultural and knowledge production, as well as grassroots activism dominated by women.

It is difficult to chart the way through complex affective politics, hidden economies of violence and oppression in the dominant politics of memory, and the normalisation of terror through the governance of life, without intimate engagement with promising public efforts and critical interventions in the field of social activism, knowledge, and cultural production pertaining to women's experience of violence, witnessing, and resistance in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is very little scholarship in "non-local" languages containing empirical details of these processes, but their lessons are universal ones. When it comes to resisting the "securitisation of life" and its gendered dynamics of oppression, feminist lessons are of particular importance if we are to think in-common and materialise affective solidarity by investing hope and labour in the politics of equality, and against the governing terror (also embodied in the dominant politics of memory and trauma), which increasingly deepens and cements the ultimate precarity of women's bodies and labour, life, and thought.

Therefore, there are several starting theses this paper develops on:

- i. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the (inter)national governance of life through the ethnonationalist and neoliberal ideological apparatuses is perpetuating the same matrices of wartime and postwar sexual/gender and other forms of violence and exploitation.
- ii. The management of affect encircling the terror of the post-atrocity order operates through various biopolitical strategies masked in the "therapeutic" paradigm of "transitional justice".
- iii. Their most decisive sovereign inscriptions and ruptures have happened precisely across women's bodies and lives, caught in the material/affective vortex of perpetual violence that shapes the totality of war and postwar experiences of sociality and politicality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- iv. In this sense, feminist, materialist and psychoanalytic lessons on violence, trauma, witnessing, and resistance are of key importance for understanding the pitfalls and the potentials of the affective economies and traumatic knowledge engendered by this experience.

Economies of affect in Bosnia and Herzegovina: few notes on transitional justice and management of trauma

In order to offer several remarks on the strategies/mechanisms/institutions of transitional justice tackling the problem of wartime crimes of sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I will draw on two illustrative stories

“from the field” that are by no means an exception, but a rule the examples of which saturate all spaces of publicity. These points of reference should hopefully serve as a way to open up a space for the discussion of critically important challenges having to do with the speedily collapsing “public outreach” mission of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last few years. It is particularly important to focus our attention on what is happening with the voices and bodies of those who survive(d) political violence in the form of wartime rape and crimes of sexual violence because of the alarming disparity between the experience (of perpetual and normalized violence in everyday life for the “survivors of wartime atrocities” in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and its representation/interpretation in legal and scientific discourse framing the transitional justice field. It is the experience of those who, as the subjects of international law awaiting justice, are framed and silenced as “victims”, and whose “participation” in the process of delivering justice is reduced to a very complex set of strategies of governance, all of which result in an ongoing traumatic commodification of lives, their exploitation and alienation.

Story 1 (March-April 2012): Between the “Triumph” and the Absence of Justice

The whole year of 2012 was marked by a series 20th anniversaries of the events happening in 1992 when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina broke out, invoking personal and collective accountings for what happened. In March and April 2012, the outreach division of the Hague Tribunal released a documentary in their production entitled *The End of Impunity: Sexual Violence and the Triumph of Justice*. In their own description it “depicts the Tribunal’s historic role in the prosecution and adjudication of wartime sexual violence. It includes testimonies from witnesses and survivors of sexual violence, who bravely gave evidence at trials, and interviews with former and current ICTY professionals who worked on these cases.” (UN ICTY, 2015) The words – the end of impunity and the triumph of justice – sound cynical from the perspective of everyday experiences of those who demand justice within and outside the given position of victims. The documentary was released and promoted in the same weeks as the Amnesty International’s report *Old Crimes, Same Suffering: No justice for survivors of wartime rape in north-east Bosnia and Herzegovina*, which,

Focuses on the current situation of the women survivors of wartime rape living in Tuzla Canton in the north-eastern part of the country (and) illustrates the problems survivors face in accessing their rights at local level. Survivors living in Tuzla told Amnesty International of the serious physical and psychological problems they continue to suffer, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, sexually transmitted diseases, diabetes, hypertension and insomnia. Very few have health insurance adequate to address their specific medical conditions, which limits their

access to the health services they desperately need, and most are unable to pay for all the medication they require. None of the direct perpetrators of the crimes against the survivors interviewed during the research has been brought to justice. Out of tens of thousands of documented cases of crimes of sexual violence committed during the war, fewer than 40 have been prosecuted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague or by Bosnian domestic courts. The briefing highlights the fact that the complex, multi-layered and under-resourced Bosnian judicial system obstructs the progress of criminal trials, denying survivors their right to justice. (Amnesty International, 2012)

Obviously, we have here two clashing representations by two institutions in the domain of human rights – in Amnesty’s report there is no triumph over the old crimes, and no end to the same suffering. The documentary about the Hague legacy as the triumph of justice when it comes to wartime crimes of sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally had been introduced to the audiences through a coordinated PR campaign on local level, announcing on media portals the one-off screenings of film at special public events with debates and roundtables hosted by the selected team of local-international TJ actors in various places in Bosnia and Herzegovina. University professors and students were invited. Yet, for my research students dealing with wartime violence it was difficult to find out the actual schedule and the dates for particular towns, except for the Sarajevo event, and this required calling up the outreach office in Sarajevo for days. In any case, local research students who attended the Tuzla event on the 19th of April 2012 remarked on the way the event was structured as to minimize the level of interaction with the audience who might ask any questions. More importantly, any kind of question pointing at the problems today and the inexistence of justice at local level was encountered with the usual reprimand: “we/you should be grateful for the Hague...,” it is now about “locals taking responsibility,” or taking the mantle of *transitional justice*. Presumably, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been groomed internationally to take over the Hague legacy and continue with the triumph of justice and the end of impunity for sexual violence. But, there was no public discussion of the actual work of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sector of wartime crimes of sexual violence at these roundtables and debates. And yet, alarming things were and are happening there, precisely at the same time, which leads to my second illustrative story about localising international law in the public outreach strategies of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its blind spots.

Story 2 (March 2013): In the Abyss of “Justice Anonymous”

Speaking to a colleague who has been following the trials for crimes of sexual violence at the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of her PhD research, I have learnt several important things that are not publicised in the media or are part of any public debate; i.e., are part of the knowledge of inner circles. Yet, they totally implode the very meaningfulness of public outreach by this Court

for the crimes of wartime rape and sexual violence. The turmoil of governments in the past two years has meant that at the moment, no information is available on how many wartime sexual violence cases are being investigated or brought to trial. That is the least of the troubles for a member of the public interested in their work, let alone the “victims of these crimes.” In 2012, though it only became clear to the interested parties outside of the bounds of the Court in 2013, a set of special procedures was installed for the prosecution and trials for wartime rape and sexual violence, whereby any public and media access to these trials (court sessions, court materials including indictments, transcripts of witness statements, etc.) was denied. The only thing anyone in the public was able to get is the actual verdict (without the preceding indictment). Also, each verdict was to be anonymized (names of people and places) and the public would only know the initials of the perpetrator too.

It seems as though this marked yet another new brand emerging from the Bosnian and Herzegovinian laboratory of transitional justice global industry: *justice anonymous*. Whose claims for justice and recognition does this enact? Somehow, amongst all those costly institutions, mechanisms, and regimes of transitional justice around Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are coming closer to the limit: the erasure of experience, the exemption of legal evidence from the public domain, whilst still holding onto superficial calls for the participation of those who are wounded by the crimes tried: overspent people who survive the same kind of political violence for more than two decades. It is important to note that BIRN media network had sued the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina for denying media access to the trials for wartime rape and sexual violence, and complained to BiH Ombudsmen Office who could not reach a consensus and failed to decide anything on the matter. (Justice Report, 2015) Recent practices of both the Hague and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina have had a huge public impact - prolonging a sense of injury, rather than delivering any promise of justice, truth, reparation, reconciliation. How can we think of the public outreach of institutions once they get more and more compromised before our very eyes? This is only a snippet of the affective terror that the witnesses to the war crimes undergo in the local courts, before, during and after the actual act of appearing in the court of law.

Managing trauma, governing life: some questions for knowledge production

A gaze from the particular form of ghettoized political community such as Bosnia and Herzegovina reveals how everyday experiences are saturated with “terror as usual,” (Taussig, 1984; 1992) with the material abject rupturing sociality and politicality in “irregular rhythms of numbing and shock.” Material remnants of genocide in mass graves are the abject upon which the trades in the politics of memory unfold, fortifying the very same projects that produced deadened and ghettoised lives. What is evident in the political economy of remembrance and

witnessing, loss, and affect in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its region, is the penetration of metaracism, fascism and violence in a myriad of collective and individual instantiations of abject (Kristeva, 1982) that encircle the experience of both *ghetto* and *mass grave*, the two material spaces of terror or governance of life through biopolitics as *thanatopolitics*, where life and death are governed (sovereign biopolitics as thanatopolitics). If we understand ghettoization as a process constitutive of the “waste-disposal mechanisms” that operate over the bodies and lives of those who are no longer useful (to state, to capital, to nation...), as elaborated by Bauman (2001) and Wacquant (1993), *ghetto* can also be understood as the metaphor for human life governed as *waste*, produced by spatialized structural violence, alienation and politics of inequality. It is a continuation of the politics of atrocity that left primary, secondary, and tertiary mass graves, those metaphors for human waste produced, displaced, relocated, exterminated by political violence and genocide.

The twin faces of trauma and destitution as the common grounds for the perpetuation of ideologically construed threats behind ethnonationalist/neoliberal politics through (non)inscription into the “normal” order (nation/market) and “natural” territory (local/global). The trauma of sovereignty and governmentality normalized on the level of everyday life through various techniques and strategies is the key mechanism for producing the citizen and its remnants: everyday life emerges as a materialised ideology of the sovereign fantasies to render society and life governable, through bare life as labour power violated into human slum (Husanović, 2011). In my previous research (Husanović, 2011; 2009a; 2009b; 2007) I have criticised various technologies of codifying and governing trauma (specifically those they relate to as “mapping a genocide” and “telling the story of a mass grave”), which in terms of its internal political economy operate as a peculiar management of affect. The paradigm of *managing affect* and indexing its abject results like mass graves is based on a sort of an illusionary belief in “magic legalism” around the notion of “the end of impunity,” and also in the scientific or bureaucratic administration of projects whose common denominators are terms like “transitional justice”, “peace building”, “social reconciliation”, often emptied out of their political substance and performed in techno-managerial style.

The main strategy of this paradigm of managing affect is decontextualisation, evident in various jurisprudential (inter)national practices concerning mass atrocity in the former Yugoslavia (the greater the affect, the more distance one needs to administer). Categories of transitional and restorative justice based on the model of therapeutic governance of trauma, have been exposed to a great deal of justified criticism from feminist and postcolonial scholarship and politics, as well as from the field of art and cultural production. This is because they often teem with problematic, anachronistic and colonial narratives, resulting in a “demoralized subject of human rights” (Pupavac, 2005) which constitutes victim into a commodity on the trauma market. The whole story of atrocity, affect, and abject, of the political origins of violence appears disconnected from the sphere

of the political by being reduced to the language of law, science, institutional administration, religion, by being culturalised into ethnic registers. The effect of this is further fossilization of ethnic differences and duplication of ethnonationalist logic by another means.

The challenge to constitute and communicate the public language of grief out of the heavily ideologized coordinates set by national or international institutions experimenting in the BiH laboratory of governing life, is an ethico-political imperative for many activist groups in the field of art, theory, and education. It problematises, resists, and transforms the dominant technologies whereby what remains in the zone of political visibility is mere scientific and judicial data cleansed of everything, with science and law made to stand in for one's experience, as the only possible representation of trauma and the only possible language to politically articulate your claims for and attachments to justice. Science, law, and religion do provide the most effective management tools for trauma and experience, but such tools erase human experiences and memories or commodify them, thus furthering alienating position where one is given only the opportunity to express, subjectivise, and represent experience in their own terms. How to speak out of these registers, because they are not about the triumph of justice or the end of impunity, but rather about a dissolution of subjects' political capacities, harnessed towards the normalisation of violence in everyday life (which is perpetuated by the institutions of justice too)? What languages are available to us to speak publicly against the (inter)nationalised ghetto as the nexus of poverty, banality, and corruption?

It is in the field of cultural production, arts, and activism that these questions are once again productively posed; in these spaces, we have a future-oriented critique of new inequitable relations of truth, power and capital which infuses social experiences (Husanović, 2015; 2011; 2007). An affirmative politics of witnessing to trauma does offer ways of identification and participation that are an authentic challenge to the ethnopopulist mobilisation of affect and passion on the one hand, and the aseptic liberal management of affect in white gloves and in the name of human rights, on the other. The issue of justice as something that is to be embodied in a political community which lives (with) realities of mass atrocity and trauma (past, present, future) is a challenge for all concerned with emancipatory normative and political frameworks in international law and politics. Academic engagement needs to follow non-institutionalised and/or non-state spaces of publicity (fields of cultural and knowledge production, art and activism) which are nesting new solidarities and subjectivities beyond the closures of institutional politics. These are the sites of promising transformations when it comes to witnessing to trauma, through thinking and acting upon political violence, radical contingencies of the world around us, and our radical relationality, which atrocity/trauma brings to the fore, both betraying and revealing it, in all its potential to be done otherwise, towards justice.

Witnessing and resistance – hopeful politics of memory, or intervening into the public language of grief

There are very few attempts to map out the affective economies that besiege and envelope the action and production concerning the politics of memory and witnessing by feminist activists, artists, and theorists in Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as Šejla Šehabović, Tanja Miletić-Oručević, Ferida Duraković, Adisa Bašić, Danijela Majstorović, Gorana Mlinarević, Jasmila Žbanić, groups like “Crvena” and “Naš glas” and so forth. Being one of them, and engaging with their work as an activist and a theoretician, I have tried at least to address this lacunae by my own writing, however insufficient or small (Husanović 2014; 2011; 2007). Attempting to translate the experiences of trauma, terror and abject into the public political memory in the aftermath of genocide is an affective corporeal activity and an ethical practice – producing a shareable story that makes that kind of sense or political meaning which brings us in common. Therefore, enacting a modality of witnessing to trauma in cultural production is an embodied experience which creates anew shattered webs and coordinates of humanity, sociality, and politicality. Cultural production and grassroots activism has a critical public pedagogic function (Giroux, 2010) within the resisting spaces of public education, thought and action in Bosnia and Herzegovina, continuing to play a key part in the ongoing struggles against violent and exploitative political imaginaries (Husanović, 2014).

The search for this kind of solidarity and commonality in shared collective spaces, whilst engaging with the traumatic contents of everyday life and politics in the post-SFRY region, is also evident in a series of interventions by the public classrooms of the Cooperative Front Slobode in Tuzla on cultures of memory and emancipatory politics, as well as by Grupa Spomenik, on the issue of missing persons. The Cooperative Front is a Tuzla-based informal platform with open-ended and issue-based membership structure, consisting of individuals and organisations in the fields of knowledge production, cultural production and arts, and social activism, from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the post-SFRY region, who share Front Slobode principles with regards to the issues of the culture of memory and emancipatory interventions with the focus on the politics of equality and solidarity. Since 2007 they have produced a number of public classrooms throughout the region using various formats (multimedia events, publications, social and political actions) and under a host of temporary institutional umbrellas. Grupa Spomenik or the Monument Group, is currently based in Belgrade and Tuzla, its members being artists, theorists, and activists who have been critical of the memorial politics in the region in the two decades through the medium of art and public education. Similar to Front Slobode, it grew out of the productive interventions concerning the memorialisation of the 1990s wars in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo. Since 2008 has been particularly concerned with the problems of codifying, institutionalising, and narrativising genocide, as well as the resistances to the dominant politics in art and education.

Together, these two groups, apart from sharing some members, have collaborated since 2008 on the development of the Yugoslav studies platform, that has materialised in reality, if not in name, over the course of last seven years, through various public interventions in the social fabric combining the tools of art, theory, and school/classroom in order to furnish the prospects for a different kind of sociality and politicality – “community as academia” (Husanović and Arsenijević, 2011). Indeed, their struggles to find words conducive for affirmative political gesture in a terrain framed by two questions – “telling the story of a mass grave” and “mapping a genocide” (Husanović, 2011), has characterized the last three decades of artistic, cultural and knowledge production in this region. Many interventions and collaborations of artists, scholars, students and activists in this period have fought the inability to think and talk about the wars and the (post)-war collectivities, struggling to do so within the framework of emancipatory politics.

The Grupa Spomenik’s intention in the “Mathemes of Re-association” public production was to navigate politically through the terrain of post-genocide culture as a culture of lies, a culture of denial, and a culture of amnesia. This culturalised terror of governance, produced and practiced by a range of local, regional, and international actors, is understood to mask the ongoing exploitation and enclavisation of governed life, as bare life (Agamben, 1998), or as labour power (Sylvester, 2006). It is also testament to the inability of various forms of authority to find properly *political* rather than *managerial* solutions to the crises of “transitional societies”. In opposition to this, “Mathemes of Re-association” production and public events in Belgrade, Zagreb, Novi Sad, and Banja Luka, critically explored the genocide industry constitutive of Srebrenica today that holds the potential to reveal the ethno-nationalist politics in all its bankruptcy and that testifies to the limits of multiculturalist identity politics. In Srebrenica we are witnessing the current stalemate in the form of ethnicized apartheid involving post-genocide collectivities, including the relations existing between refugees, survivors (women, men, children), international scientific community, the local government, civil society initiatives, NGOs but also the destroyed houses and newly built ones, identified and non-identified human remains, buried and non-buried individuals, identified and non-identified mass graves, and so on. The ideology of reconciliation has left a political wasteland in Srebrenica today quilting it as a society of the symbiosis of dead and living, perpetrators and victims, functioning through apartheid where traumatic injustices endure. However, the paradigm of reconciliation has its distinct technologies and economies, a coalition of science, administration and religion encircling the management of remains of those killed in genocide. How is it possible to think and enact new collectivities, communalities, and solidarities in the face of the material object that permeates the everyday of the post-genocide society?

Through lectures, readings, and exhibitions with theorists, artists, and activists, as well as with the staff of International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP), the “Mathemes of Re-association” explored how genocide in Srebrenica is construed as an object of science, law and international administration in the work of ICMP.

This process consists of a set of forensic doctrines and bioinformatic technologies (the forensic DNA analysis and database management designed to identify the remnants of the victims of genocide found in mass graves and other sites, or to “help find the missing through the means of science,” as was repeatedly expressed by the ICMP staff members, during many field visits to their facilities), as well as a set of legal-administrative mechanisms that purport to produce a “story of a mass grave” and a “map of genocide” in the service of “transitional justice,” reconciliation, and civil society development (Husanović, 2011). The “Bosnian technology” as it is called by Wagner (2008), can be summed up as follows: through the process of reassociation of bodily remains of those killed in mass atrocity, it construes a *matheme* which is a description of the place and method of killing the victim, and through which, after the DNA analysis, the bodily remain retroactively acquires identity. In other words, through a hyper-expert discourse, “the missing” become “*mathemes*” or mere bar-codes, before identity is reassociated and ethical/political visibility is restored to them.

Through a series of debates, texts, exhibits, and performances, “*Mathemes of Re-association*” transformed into a public classroom on the knowledge-technology complex behind the governance of the missing, where DNA identification technology was politically analysed in order to shed new insights into the relationship between states and their citizens in moments of crisis and disorder, mass atrocity, and its aftermath (Wagner 2009, 249). By fixing identity to nameless remains through a public gift of identification (granted not only to families, but also to ethnonationalist orders that reinsert them back into their projects), sovereign power reasserts itself through “a mechanism for tabulating losses and indexing postdisaster/postconflict political will” (Wagner, 2008: 255). The process of identifying nameless remains thus feeds directly into modes of commemoration; the “extra-legal” is occupied by the ethnonationalist mobilisation of affect through mythologisation or denial, still as profitable as ever. This completes the circle, since modern science and religion identify their object, thereby repeating the procedures of the politics of atrocity. After Srebrenica we do not have silence. On the contrary, in its name speaks a mute coalition of science and religion; science which construes identity and religion that gives it “dignity” and meaning, at the price of repeating and reiterating the procedures of the politics of terror/atrocity by other means. In contrast to this knowledge-technology complex, “*Mathemes of Re-association*” remained faithful to an uncomfortable surplus, a remainder of the process of identification/culturalisation, that is to say, those bodily remains which cannot be identified by modern science. What remains, in other words, are bones without identity. It is not possible to construe its identity, nor count it, nor render it dignified and deserving of the religious burial and morning rituals. This abject remainder opens up the space of politics, of a specific type of subjectivisation that is not based on identity or counting, but opens up the process of remembering, whose task it is to break up “parallel convergence” of contemporary construction of identity and the culturalised politics of terror.

In this way, “Mathemes of Re-association” interventions engendered promising public spaces and a new form of solidarity in thinking genocide, where each participant may position her or himself politically in relation to genocide, through a new language that critically engages with the ideological mechanisms perpetuating the politics of genocide for two decades. This new public language rejects those dominant public languages of biopolitical statecraft that go hand in hand with “administrative” demands from a new Leviathan – internationalised forms of governance framed as a therapeutic management of affect, and yet preoccupied with the politics of security and freedom through internationalised practices of ghettoizing life (Husanović, 2011: 502-503). Instead, the “Mathemes of Re-association” platform insisted on producing and practicing a new politics of hope beyond both ethnic and multicultural discourses of nation and religion, law and science. It collaborated outside of the dominant protocols of civil society in the post-SFRY region (involving international organisations, cultural policies, inter-state cooperation programmes) and against the current paradigm of reducing everyday life in a post-genocidal society to the management of cultural and ethnic differences through hyper-scientific and (extra-) legal practices of governance. The Monument Group’s interventions gathered people across the divisive terrain induced by the politics of affect concerning genocide, in a proclaimed effort to enact emancipatory gestures in the fields of arts and theory and to impact productively on everyday lives against the identitarian culture and politics of terror. Their gesture was that of a resistance to the paradigm of culturalised identitarianisms in “transitional justice,” seeking that which stands against the culturalisation of politics, which exploits the capital of the living/dead through new and old forms of (inter)national political authority.

The public engagement around the “Mathemes of Re-association” project affected various new paths and interventions towards affirmative and universal politics of the new subject, through the public language of political humanity and equality, whose “poetry does not stem from the past but only from the future” (Marx, 1852). When witnessing the legacies of atrocity, ethical and social relationships must be forged anew, based on the critical reflection on the origins and methods of violence, where mass atrocity is only the culmination of everyday biopolitical control over life and death. An affirmative politics of witnessing to trauma and thinking genocide does offer a space for a new public language of grief and hope, and ways of subjectivisation which are an authentic challenge to both the ethnocentric mobilisation of affect and the aseptic liberal management of affect. The question of how to embody justice in a political community that lives (with) the realities of mass atrocity and post-genocide order poses a challenge where academic engagement needs to follow non-institutionalised and/or non-state spaces of publicity (fields of cultural production, art, and activism). Spaces and public voices created by new solidarities and subjectivities beyond the closures of institutional politics are the promising site for social and political transformation. “The Mathemes of Re-association” thus operated as an “emancipated community” (Rancière, 2007) where the participants acted as “storytellers and translators,” engendering a different public

language of witnessing to trauma, repoliticising affect, thinking political violence, and acting upon radical contingencies of the world around us. It has been a process of producing a form of radical relationality in a way that strikes back through emancipatory politics, its centre being the political subject, where genocide was.

In lieu of conclusion

In the context of this special issue that searches for global connections between traumatic memories and the arguments posed in this paper, I would like to propose a few concluding remarks. Considering the global turmoils of the last decades, and in particular the erosion of the so-called “post-national European project” in the last few years, it should be noted that what Timothy Snyder (2013) calls the “comfortable controversy which paralyses the study of traumatic events in Europe,” which is framed through „discourse, language, terminology, and representation”, is particularly acute in the case of the successor states of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina with its landscape of massgraves caused by genocide “on European soil” at the end of the 20th century. The positions between the East and the West, however constituted or however problematic this dichotomy is, are further complicated by the peculiar position of Yugoslav exception in the Cold War and post-Cold War paradigms.

In any case, the „commemorative causality“ in synthetic histories, as elaborated by Snyder, when applied to these parts of the world has been contaminating all attempts to theorise the knots between historical events and traumatic memories, to the effect of reducing them to „a reflection of contemporary emotions“ (2013: 1), and producing a traumatic knowledge instead. This traumatic knowledge is embedded in and generates from the blind-spots of both local and international elites and regimes of governance, including the academic field, with their colonial/colonised epistemic pertaining to the war and afterwar events in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on the tensions between narratives and power, mental geographies and real people, causal mechanisms and narratological problems, creating a particular implosion of sense in texts and a „zone of textlessness“ (Snyder, 2013: 4-5). In a way, the Eurocentric powers that have been intimately engaged in the political, social, cultural, and economic context of people’s lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, hallucinate their own stories, whether civilizing or nationalizing.

The commemorations in Srebrenica every 11th July in the past decade, which these elites and political regimes actively frame, make and partake in, are a blatant illustration of how commemoration becomes „the siren song of signification, appealing to emotions fatal for thought“ (Snyder, 2013: 8). Moreover, Srebrenica elucidates how profitable the forging of „commemorative communities“ is in the current political economies of new empires, with its categories of memorialization firmly belonging to the desires of the „unsustainable present“ (Snyder, 2013: 13-14) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as its region. It is therefore essential

for the critical knowledge induced by trauma to unmask and criticize such memory-making technologies and competing victimhoods, towards such politics of witnessing to trauma that communifies us through affective bonds with the eyes set on the collective future(s) of shared/shareable humanity. Here it is worth remembering/reading/going with Walter Benjamin (1932) in this sense:

Language has unmistakably made plain that memory is not an instrument for exploring the past, but rather a medium. It is the medium of that which is experienced, just as the earth is the medium in which ancient cities lie buried. He who seeks to approach his own buried past must conduct himself like a man digging. Above all, he must not be afraid to return again and again to the same matter; to scatter it as one scatters earth, to turn it over as one turns over soil. For the "matter itself" is no more than the strata which yield their long - sought secrets only to the most meticulous investigation. That is to say, they yield those images that, severed from all earlier associations, reside as treasures in the sober rooms of our later insights - like torsos in a collector's gallery. It is undoubtedly useful to plan excavations methodically. Yet no less indispensable is the cautious probing of the spade in the dark loam. And the man who merely makes an inventory of his findings, while failing to establish the exact location of where in today's ground the ancient treasures have been stored up, cheats himself of his richest prize. In this sense, for authentic memories, it is far less important that the investigator report on them than that he mark, quite precisely, the site where he gained possession of them. Epic and rhapsodic in the strictest sense, genuine memory must therefore yield an image of the person who remembers, in the same way a good archaeological report not only informs us about the strata from which its findings originate, but also gives an account of the strata which first had to be broken through.

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Afekto ekonomikos ir trauminis žinojimas: prievartos, liudijimo ir pasipriešinimo pamokos Bosnijoje ir Hercegovinoje

Jasmina Husanović

FILOSOFIJOS FAKULTETAS, TUZLOS UNIVERSITETAS
DR. TIHOMILA MARKOVICA 1, 75000 TUZLA, BOSNIJA IR HERCEGOVINA
EL. PAŠTAS: JASMINA.HUSANOVIĆ@UNTZ.BA

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SANTRAUKA: Šio straipsnio tikslas – aptarti dabartinę afekto ekonomikos ir trauminio žinojimo dinamiką, susietą su atminties politika ir traumos liudijimu Bosnijoje ir Hercegovinoje. Straipsnyje apžvelgiami keli specifiniai kultūros ir žinojimo kūrimo pavyzdžiai bei aklavietės, su kuriomis susidūrė visuomeninės iniciatyvos karo ir pokario kontekste, taip pat nurodomos kelios daug žadančios antinacionalistinio, kairiųjų ir feministinio judėjimo trajektorijos ieškant politinio ir socialinio teisingumo. Tiems, kurie patyrė įvairias karo ir pokario prievartos formas buvusios Jugoslavijos Socialistinės Federacinės Respublikos šalyse, ir tiems, kurie priešinasi ir siekia peržengti dominuojančią viktimizacijos ir komodifikacijos (suprekinimo) logiką, tai yra daugiakryptė emocinė ir kolektyvinė pastanga performuoti atmintį, kad būtų galima kurti viltį teikiančią politiką.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: atminties politika, trauma, liudijimas, feminizmas, Bosnija ir Hercegovina, buvusi Jugoslavija, žinojimo ir kultūros kūrimas.

Theorizing haunting and the international after genocide: the cases of Rwanda and Darfur

Jessica Auchter

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA
615 McCALLIE AVE, CHATTANOOGA, TN, USA
E-MAIL: JESSICA-AUCHTER@UTC.EDU

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ABSTRACT: This contribution seeks to explore the concept of *haunting* by examining two cases in which memorialization has proceeded very differently: Rwanda and Darfur. It makes the argument that by allowing ourselves to be haunted, new avenues of politics open up that gesture towards a shared human vulnerability rather than a politics based on competing victimhood. It specifically seeks to elucidate how an ethics of haunting offers an alternative lens with which to view memorialization after mass atrocity. Rwanda and Darfur provide two very different contexts for this process: in Rwanda, built memorials form key sites for memorialization and the display of human remains as evidence of atrocity. In Darfur, there is ongoing conflict, no physical memorial sites, and the bodies of victims mingle with desert sands, yet oral testimonies persist as key ways in which deaths are memorialized. Both of these examples posit questions about lingering identities and the relationship between identity and physical memorial sites. Exploring tensions between how deaths and narratives about deaths are managed (or attempts to manage these), as well as the competing narratives that persist at memorial sites allows me to explore more fundamental questions of identity as it relates to who and what memorialization is. Furthermore, it allows me to explore how memorialization proceeds and what it might mean to be haunted by the lives and deaths that have been silenced or coopted into particular memorial projects.

Keywords: remembering, poetry, identity, human vulnerability.

The drive for remembering after a traumatic event forces us to come to terms with loss in some way. But, as Judith Butler points out, “loss must be marked and cannot be represented. Loss fractures representation itself and precipitates its own modes of expression” (Butler, 2003: 467). During and after a traumatic event, traditional schemas of identification and representation are ruptured and fractured. Identities, spaces, and times are thrown into disorder. This is widely agreed to be a key aspect of trauma, perhaps best articulated by Cathy Caruth (1995 and 1996). Newer approaches to trauma have focused on the inability to describe the traumatic event through language, and sought to move beyond the national level of memorialization. Erica Resende and Dovile Budryte, for example, have advocated challenging nation-centered accounts of memory construction, and

argued that “memory is pluralistic, multidimensional and multilayered, and to study memory means to be ready to explore various (including non-territorial) spaces of memory and to construct various memory communities” (Resende and Budryte, 2014: 9-10). It is in this same spirit that I approach this paper, as a way to interrogate questions of identity and memory in various spaces and via a variety of mechanisms, in order to ask questions not only about identity and memory themselves but about how we think about and study these concepts.

This paper travels through the politics of death, memory, and forgetting in order to explore how and why specific narratives become memorialized in physical memorials and by various mechanisms of storytelling, and how this can retrench or shift salient identities. I seek to allow several literatures to speak to one another, including work on ethnicity studies, identity politics, genocide, and memory studies. Genocide studies has tended to focus on transitional justice, and the formalized legal and policy-oriented mechanisms of reconciliation and post-conflict, leaving out questions about the importance of memorialization for identities, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (Auchter, 2014b). Meanwhile, memory studies tends to focus solely on the building of physical memorial sites, and not on the relationship these have to the way individuals and groups conceptualize their identities and the ensuing effects on political communities.

Elsewhere, I have laid out a framework of *hauntology* that offers up a new way of thinking about life and death in modern politics (Auchter, 2014a). This framework focuses on the importance of being haunted by marginalized voices and stories and bodies in global politics; that is, it views haunting as both a political and ethical commitment to rethink the problem of life and death in global politics. It argues that by thinking about how decisions about life and death and memorialization are political ones, it becomes possible to rethink the ontological foundations of modern statecraft, which is the attempt to tell one unitary story about identity and subject formation. This logic of haunting draws strongly on past theorization of bodies, visibility, and the ghostly, but refocuses these into an analysis specifically of memorialization. It views memorialization as a complex process that involves negotiations and contestations of stories and physical sites, but with particular attention to how stories are told and how lives and deaths, as well as personhood are rendered structurally impossible by particular logics. The ontologically “dead”, as Anna Agathangelou (2009) refers to them, allow us to interrogate questions of identity and subject formation by being haunted by how lives and deaths are often co-opted into political projects. In this paper I use this framework to address identity politics in Rwandan genocide memorialization and in the ways in which stories of the Darfurian genocide are told by refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). I explore questions of memorialization in these two cases, interweaving a story about whose stories in Rwanda and Darfur are told, and whose are forgotten. I look for how specific stories are told at sites of memory, and the exclusions this necessitates, focusing particularly on the storytelling aspect of memorialization. I seek to expose the way memorialization relies on haunting as a means of ordering, bordering, and

limiting by declaring a particular narrative to be concretized at a memorial site. I also explore the role haunting can play in resistance, the way ghosts can play with our conceptions of visibility, thereby opening up avenues of resistance, particularly in terms of reconceiving notions of identity.

Thus, as I will demonstrate below, memory studies tends to conceptualize memorials as performing very specific, often static narratives, even while theorizing memory itself as fungible. I hope to bring literatures in conversation with one another to explore how the desire to memorialize comes to fruition in two very different contexts: Rwanda and Darfur, whose stories are being told, how this relates to identity politics in these two places, and finally what it might mean to be haunted by those both captured within and silenced by these memorial logics. I explore how identity is often not discussed in the context of genocide memorialization, despite its seemingly natural link to genocide itself, and the atrocities committed in its name, and what implications this has for memory in Rwanda and Darfur. I conclude by offering up thoughts on how, by allowing ourselves to be haunted, new avenues of politics open up and gesture towards a shared human vulnerability rather than a politics based on competing victimhood.

Theorizing memory and identity

Jeffrey Olick (2003: 15) has referred to memory as “the central faculty of our being in time; it is the negotiation of past and present through which we define our individual and collective selves.” This link between memory and identity is what makes memory so significant, particularly in a post-colonial and post-Cold War era, where new countries and regimes emerge, defining their identities in relation to their pasts. Political identities are not static, but constantly shifting. Wars force us to divide ourselves according to our political identities, thus the criteria for defining these become ever more important. Because decisions of life or death are decided upon questions and definitions of political identity, memory becomes the defining feature of our identities. As Geoffrey Cubitt (2007) outlines, it is in representation of the past that the markers for a present identity can be located. And as Douglas Becker (2014) has argued, this often translates into particular foreign policies at the national level via the role of memory entrepreneurs, because nations share “common memories and forge a common identity through them,” later adding that “identity becomes a vehicle by which a nation can define its historical existence. It is a lens through which international interactions are viewed” (p. 58-9).

Thus memory becomes a way to perceive the world that is inherent to our identity, an integral part of who we are: Duncan Bell (2006) has referred to memory as a defining feature of the human condition. And as Robert Eaglestone (2004) suggests, “identity without memory is empty, memory without identity is meaningless” (p. 125). Memory constructs our identity, and has the power of naming, of legitimizing. The fact that the identity was constructed through

the performance of survival, in the aftermath of a trauma, makes holding onto that identity as a unique one extremely important, and can lead to the creation of extreme dividing lines with little compromise because of the fear of any threat to the sanctity of that identity. These dividing lines are both a product of memory and in fact construct memory. Memory has the ability to create divisions by hardening political identities and the boundaries between them. However, memory is also itself inherently contested, contingent, and provisional (Huysse, 1994). As Duncan Bell (2009) says, “memory is the product of conflicts, power struggles and social contestation” (p. 351).

Memory, like identity, is a social construction, but based in reference to historical or contemporary events. It has no fixed meaning or content, and is always in flux (Cubitt, 2007: 8). Thus, memory has the ability to retroactively construct a past, to imbue a past event with a particular meaning that it may not have had when it occurred, as Maja Zehfuss (2007) has demonstrated in the context of German memory in the 20th century. Similarly, W. James Booth (2009) has noted that “memory is not only of the past—it saturates our experience of things and so shapes the present. But at the same time memory stands in need of the present to confirm the past’s reality as something still present” (p. 370). Memory blurs the lines of past and present. It is not fully of the past, because it is reliant on our present emotional responses to the events of the past. However, it is not fully of the present, because it does recall a past and at times leads us to relive a past through commemorative practices.

A key aspect of memorialization is the collective witnessing that comes from the construction of memorial sites, which can themselves be considered forms of testimony in that they testify to the occurrence of a specific set of events through remembrance. Memorials are sites of remembrance. In this sense, they are both highly individualized in the sense that they mean something different to each individual visiting them based out of their own experiences, and also highly communal. “Memorials can realize individual and commemorative impulses, assuage postponed demands for justice, and (re)assert political identity” (Hite and Collins, 2009). Commemoration brings up the question of what to remember and how. It ultimately privileges certain kinds of experience and excludes others (Sherman, 1996). Memorials provide the sites where groups of people gather to create a common past for themselves, places where they tell the constitutive narratives, their “*shared stories of the past*” (Young, 1994: 6-7). In this sense, as Young theorizes, they are sites not of *collective memory* or *common memory*, but rather *common sites* for memory. Though they may maintain the illusion of common memory, the monument is in fact, despite its “land-anchored permanence,” as James Young calls it, a performance of a multiplicity of narratives of the event being memorialized.

Memorials serve to, as James Mayo (1998) argues, create “an ongoing order and meaning.” Trauma shatters linear time, and disrupts linguistic conventions and norms because the event never fully passed; it is still experienced by many in the present, and the past event cannot be firmly and finally situated in the past (Nichanian, 2003). The monument then can act as means of attempting to place the event firmly

in the past. In the aftermath of a genocide and mass atrocity, people want to re-order society in some way; they want exact facts and settled limits (Andrieu, 2009: 12). Hutchison and Bleiker (2008: 386) state that “in most instances, political elites deal with the legacy of pain and death by re-imposing order”. The monument is an attempt to do so by making concrete the memory of the event. According to Hite and Collins (2009: 380), “memory discourse asserts that monuments and memorials often serve as attempts to relegate away, to erase conflict-ridden, politically traumatic pasts”. To do so, they represent one conception of the event among the multiplicity of conceptions possible, but often impose this unitary narrative as the purported truth of the event. One of the things we often see regardless of the specific location of memorialization is the attempt on the part of one group to establish their narrative as the accepted history and basis of memorialization, rather than another group. This often takes the form of political rhetoric, as we have seen throughout Eastern Europe after World War II and again after the end of the Cold War, for example, where competing memory narratives led to the effort to try to impose once conception over the other as a way to exercise political power. Memorials, then, can be used as tools of political elites to tell particular stories.

Memorials are generally established for the purpose of ensuring that a memory or a person or group is never forgotten. As Booth (2001: 781) puts it, “if the victims of mass crime are left faceless and nameless, if the hour, manner, and place of their last moments are unknown, then they are outside the light of truth, lost to forgetting. The world is left incomplete; its integrity broken; its reality undermined”. Booth emphasizes here the idea that memory is linked with truth, that memory enlightens us to a reality about the world that we require to find and understand our place in the world. Without memory, we are lost, because we not only lack a sense of self but also a sense of how we relate to our past and those around us. We are without a sense of identity, which is where our truth is situated.

Memory studies as a genre of scholarly work has focused very heavily on testimony and on the construction of monuments. Identity has remained a key feature of analysis, particularly the differentiation between collective and individual identity when it comes to memory and memorialization. Additionally, much work, as noted above, has tended to focus on how unitary narratives of the event are performed through the memorial site, one of the critiques that is often posed of the government in Rwanda in the context of genocide commemoration.¹ Yet in most cases of atrocity, of which Rwanda may be exemplary, memorials seem not to be static, even as government policies may espouse particular narratives, as I have demonstrated elsewhere (Auchter, 2014b). This previous work argued that although many scholars have critiqued the formalized commemoration ceremonies in Rwanda as marginalizing survivor memory by imposing specific understandings of the genocide, the fact that there are a multiplicity of memorial sites indicate that

¹ This often appears as the argument that Rwandan reconciliation policy marginalizes genocide survivors by using genocide as a tool, made by Straus and Aldorf (2011), Cobban (2007), Lemarchand (2009), Buckley-Zistel (2009), and Burnet (2009).

multiple narratives still exist. It also demonstrates that for many, justice is about being able to memorialize the way one wishes in a cultural and ethical sense, rather than necessarily in a national one. I traced the way government bodies acknowledged in official documents the need for multiple memorial forms. Museum style memorials do tell a story of the genocide, but other memorial forms commemorate by drawing attention to shared human vulnerability instead (Auchter, 2014a). Thus even in this case, where the memorial narrative is often depicted as unitary, there are numerous genocide memorials that have been built, and they express a variety of stories and memory narratives that go alongside official commemoration ceremonies and individual practices. Similarly, in other cases of atrocity, there may be no practical impetus to build memorials, when people have been driven off of their land and have not been able to return, as in Darfur, or when political constraints do not allow for certain memorial narratives, such as in Eastern Europe under the Soviet Union after the World War II. In these cases, perhaps the tendency of memory studies scholarship to focus on physical memorial sites doesn't allow for a bigger picture that would encompass storytelling, other memory narratives, and forms of memorialization. This has been the case, even as memory narratives have become increasingly important and common in a post-Holocaust world.

As Jay Winter (2006) traces, memory and memorialization has shifted from memory acting in the service of national identity construction, which characterized post-WWI memorials, to a more victim-centered approach that emerges from the Holocaust and new technologies that enabled the recording, both audio and video, of these stories, as well as their mass dissemination around the world, which he calls "the acts of remembrance of the witness." Siobhan Kattago (2009) elaborates on the type of memorialization that emerges after the Holocaust. Death was no longer honorable, but senseless. Memorials began to take on an abstract cast focused on private individual reflection rather than figurative heroic monuments. Ultimately the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC in the United States heralded a new kind of monument that completely separated individual death from ideological cause.² Both Kattago (2009) and Winter (2006) acknowledge the shift we see in the 1960s and 1970s towards individual reflection at memorial sites, and the focus on individual narratives in the form of testimonies told by Holocaust survivors. Holocaust witnesses assumed, and indeed were awarded, a semi-sacred role as truth-tellers who experienced something that no one else had. As Winter says (2006: 62), "they spoke of the dead, and for the dead, whose voices could somehow be retrieved in the telling of these terrifying stories".

² The Vietnam Veterans Memorial reconceives of the structure, style, and function of memorials by focusing not on triumphalist representations such as the arches or figural monuments that emerged out of the world wars, but rather on individual reflection and the commemoration of loss rather than triumph. As a black wall etched with the names of the dead, it was originally deemed a scar on the landscape because of the rupture it represented with traditional memorial forms. However, this rupture inaugurated a new era of memorial architecture precisely because it focused on individual loss rather than on a national narrative of triumph.

The Holocaust memoir brings up many interesting questions, both about the personal act of memorialization as it comes to the survivor speaking about his/her experiences, and about its contribution to the sense of a group identity. Biography can be seen as a tool of proper nominalization, where the proper name of the survivor is able to construct a meaningful memory which others will pay attention to. The survivor, who has been through a process of dehumanization, who has forcefully had his/her name removed and thereby his/her personhood, is claiming the proper name back, for the purposes of proving that s/he has claimed back his/her humanity and is utilizing it to speak out against the perpetrators or to memorialize the event. The concentration camp prisoner who was identified merely by a number, whose name and thereby life was stolen, whose story was written for him or her, is reclaiming his story for him or herself. Memoir is thus viewed as a tool to regain the power to represent oneself. This becomes particularly relevant in the case of Darfur, where we do not see the practical ability to build physical memorial sites, due to the fact that the regime that perpetrated the atrocities is still in power in Sudan. I now address Rwanda and Darfur as two cases to flesh out the relationships between memory and identity I have traced above.

Rwanda: the proliferation of memorial sites

2014 marked the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. The commemoration ceremonies drew attention to Rwanda's ongoing memorialization. Even as legal prosecution is wrapping up with the conclusion of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) trials, and the end of the *gacaca* court proceedings, the continuing commemoration demonstrates that for many Rwandans and members of the international community, remembrance is a lasting concern. Nowhere is this as evident as in debates about physical memorialization. This section addresses how Rwanda remains haunted by the legacy of the genocide, and raises questions about what sort of Rwandan identity is constructed at memorial sites. It is widely accepted that memorialization always performs a particular narrative, as I have demonstrated above. If this is the case, then what identities are being memorialized and how, and what identities remain at the margins of memorialization? And finally, what implications does it have for memorializing the genocide if we allow ourselves to be haunted by the lives and deaths, both those coopted into the memorial project and those left out of it?

There is a significant way in which remembrance in Rwanda is tied to political activity, because reconciliation is itself government policy, as well as individual and community practice. This mandate to memorialize has often been critiqued for performing a particularized narrative of the genocide, even to the extent that Paul Kagame, the former head of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and now longstanding President of Rwanda, and the RPF itself have been accused of marginalizing genocide survivors in the name of the heroic

RPF liberator narrative.³ But the situation is more complex than this, and in fact multiple narratives coexist at a variety of levels in Rwanda. This is evident at memorial sites and in the widespread agreement that physical sites are themselves necessary to memorialize the genocide. In 2011, on a research visit to Rwanda, I interviewed several survivors on their thoughts on memorialization in Rwanda.⁴ Every single survivor I interviewed said that they felt that physical memorial sites and commemoration ceremonies were the best ways to remember the genocide in Rwanda. One said that genocide memorials should be constructed in every sector as well as at the national level, and that these should be used together with commemoration ceremonies focused around education to transform knowledge. This emphasis on communal memory and shared physical sites is what makes an exploration of memorial sites in Rwanda so salient.

Memorials in Rwanda fit with official commemoration narratives and the attempt to exclude ethnic identities from conversation, yet at the same time they memorialize ethnic cleavages that led to genocide, and the commemoration is very much centered on themes of identity, as in the renaming of the genocide to highlight that it was a genocide against the Tutsis. Main memorial sites that attract foreign visitors are museum-based, as in Kigali Genocide Memorial and Murambi, both of which were partially sponsored and designed by foreign organizations, and contain museum exhibits to explain the story of the genocide to visitors. Anytime a story is told, space opens up for accusations that it is only one particular story, and opposition politicians such as Victoire Ingabire, recently imprisoned in Rwanda, have criticized memorial sites and commemoration ceremonies for not telling the stories of moderate Hutus, and failing to recognize the role of the RPF in committing atrocities in Rwanda as they took back the country after the genocide. Still, the majority of Rwandans regularly visit memorial sites that are local-level mass graves, which are often less prone to the political debates that the main memorial sites engender because they are not incorporated within national commemoration ceremonies or discussed as national representations of the genocide by national or international media. At mass graves that do not contain the museum component, commemoration of the genocide and the individual lives lost often takes the form of testimonies and storytelling. This facet of memorialization is often less addressed in Rwanda because it is a local-level practice rather than a formal memorial site. Testimonies form key parts of formal and informal commemoration ceremonies, and religious organizations and judicial institutions alike often involve the telling of one's own story of survival or loss. Yet these forms of narrating war with political and community discourses that pressure survivors and the country as a whole to reconcile and move on from the trauma.

³ The Rwandan Patriotic Front was the military group made up of mostly exiled Rwandans in Uganda that was fighting the Rwandan military for control of the country during the genocide, who ultimately ended the genocide by taking over the country. It now refers to the political party of Paul Kagame.

⁴ For further details, see Auchter (2014a, especially pages 47-50).

President Paul Kagame's 2013 speech at the genocide commemoration ceremonies is illuminating in this context: "this year we are holding commemoration in our communities so that every Rwandan has the opportunity to participate fully in activities of remembrance where they live. Remembrance of the genocide is an obligation for every Rwandan. It is also falls on us to teach and pass on that responsibility to the youth so that they, in turn, can pass it on to successive generations. Sharing our history, some of which has been tragic, will help us prevent future evil, fight genocide ideology and anything that could take the country back to the bad past we have left behind. It will also help us focus on that which will advance the collective good of Rwandans" (Kagame, 2013). Memory is also posited as a counterpoint to forgetting; remembering allows us to not forget. As Booth (2009: 370) says, "remembering is a duty rooted in filiation; and forgetting is an offense against those debts shared by a community".⁵ This characterization of memory elides the fact that all memory entails some forgetting⁶ and that memory is not simple by any means. It also gestures to the instrumentalization of memory in the service of political tools such as reconciliation and the future.

Commemoration narratives focus on the universality of the need to remember, and the result of this is often a unitary and universalized content to remembrance via public ceremonies and physical memorial sites. As these are often the sites most observed by outsiders, there has been the tendency for the argument to be made about exclusionary memorial practices, particularly the exclusion from the memorial narratives of moderate Hutus who died, as well as atrocities that were perpetrated by the RPF, documented by a well-publicized Human Rights Watch report. It is certainly the case that Rwanda has recently targeted opposition politicians for what is termed *genocide ideology*. These potentially exclusionary practices have led to the hardening of dividing lines, even to the extent that recent studies have traced the persistence of animosities between ethnic groups among young schoolchildren in Rwanda, even though they were born after the genocide. If memorialization and commemoration have hardened lines of identity, then is there an alternate way memorialization can proceed that focuses on shared human vulnerabilities rather than identity and differences?

This is perhaps to be found in the variety of memorial sites evident around Rwanda. Though some sites do perform specific memorial narratives, many of the

⁵ Other examples of scholars who emphasize the problems with forgetting include Adorno (1986), who remarked after WWII that the desire for forgetting is one expressed by the perpetrators of an injustice, and that the threat of fascism within democracy was being forgotten in the name of coming to terms with the past, Douglass and Vogler, who also argue that there is a tension between remembering and forgetting, labeling forgetting the dead as impious (2003: 42-3), and Cubitt (2007), who says that not forgetting is a human moral obligation.

⁶ As Susan Buckley-Zistel (2009) writes, forgetting is an intentional silencing of some aspects of the past, which is a coping strategy to help survivors move on with their lives, especially in a context where they have to live with the perpetrators.

sites simply display the bones of victims, or mass gravesites.⁷ They do not tell a particular story of what happened aside from its stark material reality. Because of this, they offer the opportunity for reflection based on shared human vulnerabilities. Similarly, testimonies offer us alternative ways for a multiplicity of stories to be told. However, it is potentially how remembrance is situated rather than the ways the genocide is remembered that poses the most interesting questions in the Rwandan context. Forgetting, as noted above, is thought of as a crime against the dead, and remembrance as a responsibility of every Rwandan, but at the same time, a certain amount of forgetting is required for the country to reconcile and move on. Without some forgetting, there can be no reconciliation between opposing sides and thus no ceasing of conflict. As Margalit describes (2002: 13), “communities must make decisions and establish institutions that foster forgetting as much as remembering”. Douglass and Vogler describe this tension: to remember the dead is obsessive, to forget the dead is impious (2003: 42-3). Thus both remembering and forgetting are identity-building acts (Lambek, 1996: 243). Rwandan genocide memorialization is often depicted as a struggle of memorialization between competing narratives. However, I find it more useful to think of Rwandan genocide memorialization as a constant tension between remembrance and forgetting as a means of parsing out Rwandan identity. Though there are disagreements over the official commemoration narrative as noted above, larger questions emerge about how to remember in a context of political and social reconciliation, to what degree old identities and their associated divisions remain salient, and how to build identity out of a traumatic event, when it is precisely identity that led to the violent cleavages that caused the genocide as a traumatic event in the first place.

The Rwandan case also demonstrates that identity is a process that is consistently being constructed, shaped, and reinforced by processes at a variety of levels, formal and informal. Rwandan identity after the genocide remains haunted by its own construction; that is, it must take into account the myriad of voices, alive and dead, that form part of its historical memory, and it is also haunted by the understandings it imposes about who is a member of the qualified political community. This is made even more salient by historical exclusions, but the fact that a multiplicity of memorial narratives and forms exists makes it easier to listen to ghostly voices, to be haunted by their inability to be captured in a single memorial logic or story, and for human vulnerabilities to form a basis of how identities are parsed out in contemporary Rwanda, regardless of whether the current government seeks to impose a single understanding of what it means to be Rwandan.

Before discussing Darfur, a context where there are not even any physical memorial sites, it is important to describe the relationship between Rwanda and Darfur. Indeed, Rwanda has politically made very much of the fact that it has

⁷ This itself is a controversial memorial form, as bones are not usually displayed post-atrocity. Rwanda is an exception, where the display is situated within concerns about ensuring that the evidence of the genocide is displayed to guard against genocide denial, though there are examples in other cases of genocide, such as Cambodia.

gotten involved in the genocide in Darfur, even while, and precisely because, the international community was unwilling to intervene in Rwanda. As Douglas Becker (2014: 69-70) lays out, Rwandan involvement in Darfur is conditioned by its sense of abandonment during its own genocide. He characterizes Paul Kagame as a memory entrepreneur:

Kagame then used his involvement in the AU/UN peacekeeping force in Darfur to protect General Karezi Karake, his old friend and comrade, from charges of war crimes and atrocities during and following the 1994 war. Karake was set to command the Rwandan forces in Darfur. Rwanda had both the first troops as well as the largest contingent on the ground in the battered nation. In February 2008, Spanish judge Fernando Andreu Merelles indicted 40 Rwandans, including General Karake, for their involvement in killings in Rwanda following the RPF victory. Human Rights Watch had alleged that Karake was also responsible for killing civilians in the Congolese town of Kisangani in a 2000 battle between Rwandan and Ugandan forces. The United Nations had known about the charges against Karake and had vetted him for command in Darfur. Upon the indictment, the US State Department urged the UN to renew Karake's contract and supported Kagame's threat of a withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the nation should Karake be forced to step down (Becker, 2014: 69).

As Becker argues, Rwanda has for a long time experienced fewer political constraints on its actions as a result of the invocation of trauma, and the desire of other states and the international community to respect Rwandan historical memory, especially given that they did not intervene to prevent or stop the genocide there. It is thus important to keep in mind the way these two cases are inextricably intertwined.⁸ Rwandan memory and memorialization not only has set the tone for understanding genocide in the contemporary era via a comparative genocide studies framework, it has also been key as an example of the way memory and identity can influence foreign policy, in this case, decisions surrounding Rwandan humanitarian intervention in Darfur.

Darfur: where stories take the place of memorials

Much of comparative genocide studies focuses on the way identities and memories are laid out and dispersed within communities and to the outside world via concrete formalizations of testimonies: either memoir or monument. The uniqueness of the memoir of the survivor, which emerges out of the ashes of an oppressed past, became the genre of testimony, which has been so integral to Holocaust studies and genocide studies in general, with its focus on

⁸ It should be noted that this is true of many cases of genocide, where the historical preconditions or political contexts are inextricably linked. As Mylonas has noted in the context of the Balkan states, states' foreign policies are inextricably linked to the way they conduct nation building, and conflicts and their historical memories cannot be understood in isolation from wider regional or geopolitical contexts (Mylonas, 2013).

the figure of the witness as the key locus of both individual and community memory. Testimony, according to Eaglestone (2004), is a genre characterized by its disruption of the processes of identification normally associated with the text. As Agamben (1999) writes, the evolution of the camp disabled us from the possibility of differentiating between our biological body and our political body, between what is incommunicable and mute and what is communicable and sayable. We can no longer understand ourselves or others within the traditional frameworks of comprehension. Agamben (1999) characterizes testimony as that genre which represents the very aporia of historical knowledge, where what happened in the camps appears to the survivors as the only true thing and, as such, completely unforgettable, but at the same time the truth is unimaginable. The survivors bore witness to something impossible to bear witness to. It is impossible to bear witness from the inside of death, because to do so one would have to be dead. At the same time, the survivors' experiences as the walking dead enable them to bear witness in a way that is unprecedented. The language of testimony becomes a language that no longer signifies. This is because language, in order to bear witness, must give way to non-language in order to show the very impossibility of bearing witness. Testimony is therefore this disjunction between two impossibilities of bearing witness, as Agamben (1999) posits. As such, it poses interesting questions for how stories are told and for the relationship between this traumatic disjuncture and haunting. There has been a radical shift in understanding forced by specific events, and it is this shift that characterizes testimony as a literary form of memorialization.

As in the Darfur case, testimony need not to be written down, published, or widely dispersed in order to serve a memorial function. What distinguishes the Darfur case from other cases of genocide is that due to the ongoing conflicts and the nature of the targeting, there are not yet any formal memorial sites, and even memoir is not widespread. The genocide in Darfur emerged from a long historical context in Sudan of particular groups being disenfranchised in terms of political and economic participation, which resulted in a long civil war between north and south. Groups in western Sudan, in Darfur, began to demand increased recognition and protested against their circumstances, sometimes by taking up arms. The response by the central government in Khartoum was swift and harsh. Supported by local militias known as Janjaweed, often translated as the devil on horseback, and composed of men of herding tribes in the region, the government, which identifies as Arabized African, began a systematic campaign to eradicate black Africans in Darfur, mainly from three agricultural tribes known as the Fur, the Zaghawa, and the Masalit. The government engaged in widespread bombing campaigns from airplanes and helicopters, followed by the Janjaweed's killings, carried out on the ground. Villages were burned and destroyed, civilians massacred, women raped, and water supplies contaminated to prevent the return of groups to their lands. The resulting refugee crisis was immense, and many refugees faced targeting even in refugee camps. United Nations (UN) estimates are that between 200,000 and 300,000 people were killed (Unicef, 2008), though most estimates place the

death toll at closer to 400,000 (United Human Rights Council, n.d.). Nearly three million people remain displaced, either internally or in refugee camps, mostly in neighboring Chad. As of the time of this writing, the crisis in Darfur is ongoing, though the height of the killing occurred from 2003 to 2006.

Though there are several documentary films and memoirs on/about Darfur, these are focused on raising awareness of the atrocities to the outside world, rather than on transmitting and exploring memory within the community. The most common way remembrance takes place on a community level is via shared oral and visual storytelling. Below I will explore two brief examples, the pictures drawn by children that have become well-known via their status as evidence for the International Criminal Court trial proceedings, and oral testimonies, specifically poetry, to illustrate the idea that the construction of memory narratives is fraught with complexities, that memory and identity are inextricably linked, and that these types of storytelling expand our traditional conceptions of what memorialization looks like. I explicate what it might mean politically to be haunted by these stories and pictures.

The memoir is specifically interesting for this examination. Michael Taussig (2006) refers to the poetry that facilitated remembrance, and terms this idea “speaking the past” rather than questioning or interrogating the past. In this sense, poetry as an art of interruptions, of cultural and temporal montage rather than a reflection of a continuous tradition, may have the potential to redeem the past by disrupting the traditional framework with which we typically view the past. This is akin to Eaglestone’s notion that grammatical dislocations of narrative flow, which are characteristic of testimony, serve to disconnect the reader from identification and thus from a framework of forced mimesis which disables us from connecting with the past in an ethical way so as to redeem the past. The stories told in the refugee camp exhibit narrative dislocations that accompany the way we typically understand trauma. As Resende and Budryte (2014) have noted, trauma is characterized by the incapacity of language to discuss reality; it lies outside of the normal bounds of comprehension. The narratives and drawings I explore exhibit this same sort of trauma-driven unknowability and undecidability.

Children’s drawings have become famous representations of the conflict in Darfur because they have been used as part of the prosecution’s package of evidence at the ICC. Members of the humanitarian organization, Waging Peace, traveled to refugee and IDP camps and asked children to draw their strongest memory and their dreams for the future. Their strongest memories were often of the attacks that had destroyed their villages and killed family members. The drawings depict government bombers dropping bombs on villages, government helicopters bombing civilians, Janjaweed on horseback or camelback or in trucks, men, women, and children being killed by gunshots, severed limbs, babies being thrown on fires, children being taken away into slavery or to become child soldiers, and homes burning with people inside (the Drawings, n.d.). The drawings are done by children, and they are not captioned or labeled. They are not traditional monuments or even memoirs. They have been situated in terms of evidence of atrocity because that is how they have been utilized by the international community. They are more than this, however.

They are memorials, stories that represent the trauma of the event that cannot be communicated through words. They are drawings of traumatic rupture, memorialized through crayon and paper. The drawings are similar because the traumatic experiences are similar; they form a collective, shared memory that the refugee and IDP community share precisely because they are witnesses to something which is fundamentally unsayable in conventional language.

Darfur is a unique case because oral testimony does not typically circulate within refugee camps or diaspora communities except when external observers are present, and in those instances it is used to raise awareness. Poetry, on the other hand, is one way that refugees from Darfur reckon with their own circumstances, and circulate ideas within their own communities and to external observers. As noted above, poetry forms a unique way for communities to communicate with one another, both in Chadian refugee camps, and to a wider diaspora population created by the practicalities of refugee flow, which is also true of other cultural forms of remembrance such as music and art. Similarly, as Erica Resende (2012) has noted, poetry and art are unique ways in which we can move beyond explaining international phenomena and instead focus on understanding them, especially in terms of encountering traumas that result from times of crisis. She advocates rejecting the Archimedean point as the basis of social scientific research and instead integrating artistic-poetic language as a way to engage Otherness. Following this same impetus, the poetry I explore here allows for an examination of alternative memorial narratives to trace the relationship between memory and identity, and to illustrate the themes that emerge. First are two poems by Emtithal Mahmoud, written when she was a thirteen-year-old Darfuri refugee living in Philadelphia.

What Would You Do?
What would you do if your town was bombed
And everything near it was gone?
What would you do if you were cold and alone,
And cast to the streets without a home?
What would you do if
someone killed your mom and dad?
And you had lost everything you had?
What would you do if
you were shattered and broken
Because you have witnessed
the unspoken?
If you run, where would you go?
If you died, would anyone know?
I myself would pray
And hope for a better day (Mahmoud, 2011).

The themes in this poem reinforce key themes of the conflict in Darfur: the bombings of villages, deaths of loved ones, and displacement of survivors.

Emtithal Mahmoud herself was forced to flee Darfur with her family as a young child due to the violence, thus she writes from the perspective of a witness to displacement, one whose very identity is bound up with this spatial distancing from her home, as she joins the growing diaspora from Darfur. The experience of survivors in Darfur is one of witnessing these atrocities, of being placed in the position of one who is left to tell the story as the witness, yet the atrocities are themselves unspeakable. In this sense, as noted above in the discussion of trauma, alternative forms of memorialization such as poetry can take into account the ruptures in language that render it impossible to represent these events, as Mahmoud notes in the poem, “because you have witnessed the unspoken”. Rather, the ruptures inherent in the style of poetry allow for the rupture and disaggregation of language to mirror the same rupture associated with the trauma itself.

Another poem by Mahmoud, called War in Darfur, reinforces similar themes:

The merciless soldier,
With a heart that's a boulder,
Blinded by fear,
Desperate cries for help, he'll never hear.
Roaming the streets with a charred black soul,
No one is safe, not woman not man, not young and not old.
Knowledge is forcibly pushed aside,
Because power has now taken the stride.
What was once a sanctuary, a haven for all,
Is now no haven, but a place where innocent lives did fall.
What's going on is a senseless, cold hearted war;
Bad against good, strong against weak, all in Darfur.
Possessions are gone,
Everything is wrong.
People aren't happy,
They're homeless and hungry,
Worst of all is that no one is free.
Families are shattered,
In this big bloody battle.
Good people loose [sic] jobs,
And are replaced by slobs.
No female is safe,
Because she is a subject to rape.
People are murdered throughout the nation,
Because of this, mostly orphans make up the population.
There is no respect and there is no pride,
The only thing there is, is GENOCIDE.
I believe it's time to put this to an end,
For there are lives to defend.
Take action, or sit in grief?
If you still don't know which side to choose,

Ask yourself one question,
“What did the children do?” (Mahmoud, n.d.)

The poem focuses on the atrocities that have been committed, such as rape, and names the soldiers as implicated in the carrying out of these atrocities. Yet the end of the poem is the most striking, because it implicates the reader in Mahmoud’s own witnessing, by asking the reader to take a side. Similarly, as she notes that knowledge is pushed aside, she emphasizes the importance of her own and the reader’s witnessing to reinforce the power of knowledge and awareness in the face of brute power.

Another poet, a Darfurian translator working with the African Union forces there and listed as an anonymous poet, writes in 2006:

Darfur is a Casualty
Worry nights about poor babies
whose life on the ground resources
Still waiting for the cloud raining
cleans starvation conflict boiling
The youth instead of standing by
They left Darfur to North Sky
Music of Darfur drums noising
not only for singing and dancing
neither for harvest nor collecting
only for chairs politicians are fighting
also for diet many people are suffering
The youth instead of standing by
They left Darfur for North Sky
Darfur is a great mother of men
she paid for now and then
but nature of life is often
loses hand of generous thieving smile
wonderful world beautiful people exile!
and the robust case which is alive
When do we build responsible life?
The youth instead of standing by
They left Darfur to North Sky (Soldier of Africa, 2006).

The poem gestures to the suffering experienced by residents of Darfur, including conflict, but also makes reference to the cultural identity of Darfur’s people. North Sky could be a reference to the Nuer people’s belief that God is the spirit of the sky (Nuäär, n.d.). But the overarching theme of the poem is indicated by its title, “Darfur is a Casualty”, which renders the issue larger than one of individual targeting, and focuses on the loss of culture and identity itself.

As I have noted, both the drawings and the stories and poems told by refugees focus on several key recurring themes: Antonov bombers, Janjaweed on horseback or other form of transport, fire, rape (though this is often only implicitly stated),

direct violence usually described or depicted as shootings, disaggregation of families, displacement, and abandonment by the international community. When the international community in the form of a relief or human rights organization interviews refugees, the stories also often focus on how Omar al-Bashir should be brought to justice, a narrative that is likely disseminated by the human rights activists and then re-circulated by the refugees themselves.⁹

Yet what is missing from these narratives, what remains at the margins, is the racialized rhetoric that is the cause of the genocide itself. That is, the stories are often told in such a way that the identity of particular groups is pushed into the background. These are not stories about identity, but about victimization. Yet the victimization occurs precisely because of identity contestations. And the storytelling itself, as a form of memorialization, despite its lack of concrete permanence, is also a key way these refugees construct their community identity. Despite alternative tribal identities, their status as witnesses and their trauma-language have created new identities for them, ones which subvert the genocidal logic of ethnic identity, and instead bring to bear how shared identity can emerge from what Judith Butler (2004) might call “precarious life”: the way in which the human being has experienced vulnerability and witnessed death in a way that we are all precariously close to. Though most people have not witnessed what these refugees have witnessed, we can still understand the precariousness of human existence via the ruptures and sutures rendered by these communities in the drawings and poems that act as forms of memorialization. Via these forms of storytelling, what becomes memorialized is human vulnerability rather than racial divisions.

Concluding remarks: on being haunted by Rwanda and Darfur

What I have traced above is an exploration of the complexities of memory and identity in two very different contexts. In both cases, efforts are made to retrench identity through memorialization, and yet there are always numerous varied stories to be told, about the particular experiences of individuals. This resistance to the official co-opting of memory narratives for political use often only exists on the margins of memorialization as a project, but it demonstrates how political communities and identities are being reimagined and re-envisioned after genocide.

Ultimately, what I have demonstrated in this paper using these two cases is that identity is what haunts the memorial narratives. In Rwanda, physical memorial sites focus on telling the story of the genocide as one where the blame lies with genocide ideology and agitators, without making the notion of ethnic identity central. Instead, the story is told in the service of a unified Rwandan identity, said

⁹ This is particularly evident by the testimonies available on the Waging Peace website, the source of the children’s drawings as well. Available at <http://www.wagingpeace.info/index.php/the-drawings/testimonies>, accessed 12 January, 2015.

to be the aim of memorialization in the first place. Thus, memorials serve two impetuses: to tell the story of what happened, and to unify the country with one identity based out of a self-perception of Rwandans as the keeper of an important memory that belongs to part of their history. But tensions between memorialization and forgetting allow us to perceive Rwandan genocide identity as multiple, and to parse out the implications for political reconciliation within Rwanda. In Darfur, memorial testimonies focus on drawing attention to atrocity, made even more salient by the existence of humanitarian aid groups in refugee camps and the context of ICC proceedings. Yet these stories remain haunted by questions of identity that linger in the background, and by the precariousness of human existence highlighted by the violence in Darfur. Both of these cases demonstrate that ethnic identity is not the salient factor in memorialization, indeed that it is possible to move beyond ethnic divisions even as these divisions were at the root of the atrocity that was perpetrated. Instead, they raise questions about what it means for identity to emerge out of witnessing, and whether communities can form out of shared human vulnerabilities that are contested and memorialized. If this is the case, then it beckons to a shared ethics of witnessing that may not be limited to a victim community and could instead form the basis for an ethics and politics of haunting that refigures and reimagines the very concept of identity as a basis for political communities. This offers the potential for memorialization to break down boundaries rather than entrench identity divides by broadening the basis for memorialization of atrocity to human vulnerability, which is shared by all.

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Teorizuojant šmėkliškumą ir tarptautiškumą po genocido: Ruandos ir Darfūro atvejai

Jessica Auchter

POLITIKOS MOKSLŲ IR VIEŠOJO ADMINISTRAVIMO FAKULTETAS
TENESIO UNIVERSITETAS ČATANUGOJE
615 McCALLIE AVENIU
ČATANUGA, TENESIO VALSTIJA, JAV
EL. PAŠTAS: JESSICA-AUCHTER@UTC.EDU

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SANTRAUKA: Šiame straipsnyje siekiama plėtoti šmėkliškumo (angl. *haunting*) sąvoką analizuojant du atvejus, kai memorializacija vyko labai skirtingai: Ruandoje ir Darfūre. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad leisdami mus persekioti šmėkloms, atveriamė naujas politikos erdves, kurios rodo bendrą žmonijos pažeidžiamumą, o ne politiką, paremtą konkurencija dėl aukos statuso. Konkrečiai autorė siekia aptarti šmėkliškumo etikos pasiūlytą alternatyvų objektyvą, per kurį galime žvelgti į masinių žudynių memorializaciją. Ruanda ir Darfūras atskleidžia labai skirtingus šio proceso kontekstus. Ruandoje paminklai ir demonstruojami žmonių palaikai formuoja pagrindines memorializacijos erdves. Priešingai, Darfūre, kur konfliktas tebesitęsia, nėra fizinių atmintinų vietų ir aukų kūnai maišosi su dykumų smėliu, o žodiniai liudijimai išlieka pagrindiniu būdu atsiminti įvykusias mirtis. Abu atvejai kelia klausimus apie tapatybės formavimą ir santykį tarp tapatybės ir fizinių atmintinų vietų. Įtampos tarp to, kaip mirtys ir pasakojimai apie mirtis yra valdomi (ar bandomi suvaldyti), ir tarp tebesitęsiančių konkuruojančių pasakojimų, kurie išlieka atmintinose vietose, analizė leidžia autoriui kelti esminius klausimus apie tapatybę: kaip ji siejasi su tuo, kas yra memorializacija, kaip vyksta memorializacijos procesas ir ką gali reikšti būti persekiojamam šmėklui – gyvenimų ir mirčių tų, kurie buvo užtildyti ar įtraukti į specifinius atminties projektus.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: atmintis, poezija, tapatybė, žmonių pažeidžiamumas.

Aporia, trauma, and emotions in the crisis of meaning of 9/11

Erica Resende

CANDIDO MENDES UNIVERSITY
RIO DE JANEIRO, RJ 2001-901, BRAZIL
E-MAIL: ERICA@IUPERJ.BR

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ABSTRACT: Employing concepts and theories that relate meanings, representations, memory, and trauma, I attempt to show how the 9/11 events have been able to destabilize representations and meanings, break the line of history, subvert senses, bend space-time perceptions, and shake the grids of intelligibility that had allowed Americans to make sense of reality and of themselves. Our aim is to understand how mute and hyperreal representations of the events of 2001 provoked a situation where language failed, producing aporia. Due to the difficulty of its signification, 9/11 sits at the heart of a trauma in American collective imaginaries, which may be understood as a collapse of hegemonic political discourses regarding American sense of security.

Keywords: United States, 9/11, memory, trauma, emotions.

*There have been no words.
i have not written one word.
no poetry in the ashes south of canal street.
no prose in the refrigerated trucks driving debris and dna. not one word.*

First writing since
Suheir Hammad

Introduction

In a letter to a fellow countryman, English novelist Peter Carey (2001), resident of New York, describes what he experienced on September 2001: “The last week is a great blur with no divisions between night and day. Time is broken. The events of the first day bleed into the next and all the powerful emotions and disturbing sights are now so hard to put in proper sequence. [...] They now have this nightmare branded into the tissue of their cerebral cortex,” writes Carey. What was it that happened on that day that had the power to generate such a representation? What was so special or unprecedented? Besides the great loss of life and financial losses, it also triggered a widespread feeling that the world had changed. Time had been cut in two and from then on September 11th 2001 would mean just one thing: 9/11. The events of 9/11 effectively altered our perception of

time and space. Whether we were in São Paulo, Pretoria, Berlin, Sydney, Mumbai or Tokyo, we felt as if New York and Washington were actually invading our homes as we sat glued to our television and computer screens. Indeed, the virtual nature of the experience only added to the feeling that time was out of step, off kilter. Precisely the broken time that Carey speaks of.

Whatever the different economic, political, or military outcomes that day in September may have brought about, the most important and unwarrantedly neglected of these was the crisis of meaning it sparked. What really underpinned the national collective trauma was the breakdown in the system of intelligibility that people relied on to make sense of the world, as evidenced by how hard people found it to put into words what had happened, or indeed to articulate a coherent narrative about it.

For those able to recognize that “something new under the sun” had taken place (Talbot and Chanda, 2001) and that beneath the immediate rhetoric to carry on, to conduct “business as usual”, lay an inexorable shift in world view, it was still hard to understand what had actually happened that morning. At the heart of the difficulty in answering such a question as “What happened?” lies a far larger issue that is raised by dates like 9/11: the incapacity of people to make sense of reality at that moment, even when fully aware of the inherent rupture or crisis at play. In actuality, an event that causes so much shock, stupefaction, and consternation that it strips individuals of their capacity to articulate, process, record, or understand things is clearly one that defies comprehension. As Passavant and Dean (2002) shrewdly observe, 9/11 was an event that went beyond the order of representation and intelligibility.

This article is an attempt to show how the 9/11 events have been able to destabilize representations and meanings, break the line of History, subvert senses, bend space-time perceptions, and shake the grids of intelligibility that had allowed Americans to make sense of reality and of themselves. Rather than going into the analysis of concrete US power discourses before and after 9/11, which has successfully been done elsewhere (Croft, 2006; Krebs and Lobasz, 2007; Holland, 2009; Nabers, 2009; Solomon, 2012; Resende, 2012), I turn to the emotional experience of the trauma in order to frame it as a moment of aporia, in which language itself failed. Due to the difficulty of its signification, 9/11 sits at the heart of a trauma in American collective imaginaries, which may be understood as a collapse of hegemonic political discourses regarding America’s own sense of security.

Drawing on trauma studies, the first part of the article highlights how representations of 9/11 in the media and the artistic field took on mute and hyper-realistic qualities as a result of a failure of language. The need to communicate and to bear witness something beyond the possibilities of intelligibility, beyond verbal communication – the world of no words, no poetry, no prose – as described by Suheir Hammad, created an aporetic situation that points to an emotionally collective trauma. The second part of the article is an attempt to integrate this moment of aporia in the theoretical framework of hegemonic discourses, representation and social order following the readings of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (1985).

The impossibility of making sense of 9/11

A statement by a CNN reporter covering the responses to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 at the United Airlines terminal at JFK International Airport in New York City is illustrative of the media accounts that circulated that day. “No one’s talking. They were just staring at each other with their arms dropped to their sides. A pin could drop in the United terminal. No one’s saying anything [...] There’s several hundred people standing around not knowing what to do and no one’s even speaking”. Indeed, this general inability to make sense of what was going on seemed to be the rule on 9/11, when images of dust, confusion, death, and pain were being beamed into homes around the world in real time by television, internet and satellite dish.

For Jenny Edkins, confusion, disbelief, and horror were at the center of media coverage that day. “One of the most striking images of September 11 was that of people on the sidewalks in New York, their hands clasped over their mouths, transfixed in horror as they watched the impossible turning into the real in front of their eyes. This gesture was repeated, endlessly, on our television screens, along with the repetitions of the planes slamming into the buildings, and it testified to the unspeakable.” (Edkins, 2002: 243) Images upon images seemed to want to communicate what apparently defined words and meaning. “People sat in silence, absorbed, thinking yet unable to think, overwhelmed”, she noted.

Peter Carey’s, Kitty Coburn’s and Jenny Edkins’ accounts illustrate the sheer inability to make sense of the events of 9/11. The date was marked not by the deaths or the losses, but by the fact that the events “opened us to another time – a time of conflict, transformation, and decision”, Rayner observes (2002). It became impossible to “go about one’s daily business”, he argued, for 9/11 did not merely “happened” to people; it “confronted” them. It “overcame us, incorporated us within the process of [its] unfolding, and in the process, transformed us.” The world might even carry on the same way, materially speaking, but “our existential trajectories, our patterns of becoming” were changed, he claims.

Indeed, 9/11 was experienced simultaneously on a personal, visual, digital, virtual and global level like no other. David Campbell (2001) comments on how the explosion of images only made 9/11 harder to express in words: “Real events, in real time, offered up to us through the reality of television. Which then looped the video of those extraordinary 100 minutes in which some 6,000 people were killed, and repeated it, and reused it, and recycled it endlessly, searing those images into the public mind. And yet those images stubbornly defy comprehension.” The overwhelming feeling was that those images could not be real; they could only belong in apocalyptic films produced in Hollywood.

In this sense, the picture of the moment when a man falls out of one of the towers (Image 1) expresses not just the horror of this tragic loss of life, but the power of the silence the events made us witness. It makes Susan Sontag’s (1990) observation about

the photography's capacity for representation increasingly difficult to refute¹: "Each still photograph is a privileged moment turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again." Several were the moments and instants captured in images that seemed to be branded right onto the back of our eyes. As such, the unbearable silence imposed upon us by "The Falling Man" forces us to live and relive over and over again the horror of that instant until it smothers us.



Image 1: "The Falling Man".

Source: WorldPress.com.,

<<http://911allthetruth.wordpress.com/2008/11/08/hom-bre-aire-falling-man/>>.

The picture above taken by Richard Drew conjures up the same connection between falling and trauma as already postulated by Eleanor Kaufman (1999), for whom "fall" is a word that operates as a marker of the chasm-like quality of the logic of trauma. It signifies loss of control and balance, plunging into a chasm, having nothing under one's feet. We can see no beginning or end, just the infinite fall into the chasm. In a way, the image translates the feeling of what took place on 9/11: we cannot see its beginning, its cause or its origin, nor indeed can we see how it will end. Of only one thing can we be certain: that we are *falling*. The image above defines the boundaries of what the human mind can take, subjecting us to a mimetic identification with a death that is intolerable to us.

On that and the following days, thousands of images seemed to close in around us, following us wherever we went. Hundreds of people stood by, speechless, as they witnessed not just the towers collapse, but the unthinkable taking place before their eyes as they witnessed the same speechless, petrifying horror that

¹ "Photographs may be more memorable than moving images, because they are a neat slice of time, not a flow. Each still photograph is a privileged moment turned into a slim object that one can keep and look at again" (Sontag, 1990: 17-18).

painter Edward Munch distilled so well on his “The Scream.” Munch’s existential angst was felt throughout the following weeks, and was aptly appropriated by Iranian artist Reza Sepahdari² in her attempt to synthesize the sense of shock felt at these events that could not be understood, processed or rationalized using traditional forms of signification. Drawing on Primo Levi (1987: 96), it was the moment when horror was “violently and *irrevocably* introduced into the world of things that exist.”

Writer Caroline Knapp (2001) tried to put her bewilderment into words: “The stories of individual tragedy were beginning, cruelly, to blur. Even language had failed us, leaving most people I know with a single empty fallback word: ‘stunned.’ I’m stunned. I don’t know what to do with myself, I’m just stunned.” The main challenge brought up by 9/11 is how to make sense of an experience that defies the boundaries of language and human intelligibility? For Campbell (2001), the search for understanding was the key to identifying the *event-ness* of 9/11: an event is not what happens *per se*, but what can be narrated. And the clear difficulty in narrating 9/11 was indicative of the extent to which collectively experienced meanings had been broken down.

Indeed, exposure to such an unforeseen, inconceivable event capable of causing such disorientation deprived individuals of any certainty they may have had about reality or themselves – and this applied not just to those people who lived in the vicinity, but to everyone who experienced the event in real time, even via the media. At the same time, an overwhelming moral obligation to bear witness, to communicate and perpetuate what had happened was felt by all. This self-engendered paradox beyond which one could not pass produced an impasse in terms of knowledge: the incapacity to process, absorb or understand what happened because meanings and representations of reality had been disrupted, and the moral obligation to speak out. This is what leads me to characterize 9/11 as a moment of aporia – a kind of “blockage” of action, a “blindspot,” as elsewhere described by Jacques Derrida (1993), who stressed its indeterminacy and undecidability.

The aporetic quality of 9/11 was exacerbated by two things that jointly made 9/11 so special: its hyper exposure and muteness. The attacks were broadcast live by an incalculable number of television companies, radio stations, 24-hour news channels, both free-to-view and subscription, amateur filmmakers, cell phones images, websites, blogs, etc. A spectacle³ of images, as we can see just by looking at a small selection of the newspaper and magazine covers on the world’s newsstands the next day (Image 2). Almost dispensing of words, they resorted primarily to pictures.

² The reproduction of this painting is featured in the introduction of this special edition.

³ As Zehfuss (2003: 513) notes, if 9/11 was lodged in our memory, this was not in virtue of the dimension of the attack on a superpower in its own territory, but rather because it was a great spectacle. “It was a tragic event for those whose loved ones died. But at the same time it was a spectacle. The ‘greatest work of art ever’, as composer Karlheinz Stockhausen said controversially, but spontaneously.”



Image 2: A world sample of newspaper and magazine covers about 9/11.
Source: September 11 News.com, <<http://www.september11news.com>>.

The prolonged overexposure to this avalanche of stills, multiplied by continuous-loop videos running 24/7 for weeks, months and even years, only went to reinforce the aporia, while simultaneously preventing any opportunity for distanced observation or reflection (Der Derian, 2002b). To go back to Knapp's (2001) account, there was clearly an "absence of meaning", and a difficulty in dealing with the emotions produced by the aporia: "I am not used to harboring such a wide variety of conflicting emotions at one time." Stating that her consciousness was "on overload," she goes on: "The magnitude of the physical devastation; the fear about what it may unleash; the sense of sudden vulnerability; the reach of the grief, each life lost touching an incalculable number of other lives: This is more than an ordinary brain can process."

The experience of aporia was further deepened by what James Der Derian (2002a: 181) calls a "war of networks:"

Whether terrorist, internet, or primetime, most of the networks were linked by a push/pull propagation of violence, fear, and dis/mis/information. For a prolonged moment, in the first week of confusion and chaos when there was no detached point of observation, these networks seemed almost neutrally attached, immersing viewers in a 24/7 cycle of tragic images of destruction and loss. [...] It was as if the American political culture experienced a collective Freudian trauma, which could be reenacted (endlessly on cable and the Internet) but not understood at the moment of shock.

The second element that deepened the aporia was identified by Göle (2002) in her comments on how remarkably “voiceless” the episodes were. Acknowledging that history has to be interpreted by both images and narratives, she argues that the difficulty of finding the right words to string together a narrative for it was partly due to the unexpected form the terrorist acts took. She suggests that the reason the “voicelessness” was so noticeable was due to a lack of claim of responsibility, whether to draw attention to a cause, make demands, blame leaders, or even just to boast.

Silence accompanied the catastrophe. Absence of meaningful narratives on the part of the spectators. We were reduced to being passive spectators; it was like watching a silent movie on the apocalypse. Silence accompanied the catastrophe. Absence of meaningful narratives on the part of the spectators. We were reduced to being passive spectators; it was like watching a silent movie on the apocalypse (Göle, 2002: 334).

9/11 as a traumatic event

The root of the difficulty individuals have making sense of reality and themselves after a rupture like 9/11 lies at a far deeper level than just having trouble comprehending acts that had previously been unthinkable and unforeseeable. The almost immediate proliferation of questions like, “What happened?”, “Why did they do this?” and, perhaps most symptomatically of all, “Why do they hate us so much?” were indicative of something more pertinent and profound about that moment: a trauma.

As such, it is important to understand the implications of the 9/11 trauma in the specific context of the notion of security, and particularly looking at discourse about national identity, sovereignty, and state power in American society in the months and years following 9/11. What can we say about the trauma? What does it represent? How does it interplay with the issue of security and specifically with the political community within the structure of the nation-state?

But before this, we need to define and characterize trauma. For Cathy Caruth (1996: 11), trauma describes “an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled and repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena.” It is, quite simply, something that lies beyond the realms of normal experience, outside the frontiers of language or normal comprehension, on the “limit of writing,” as noted by Blanchot (1995). Trauma expresses the momentary incapacity of language to describe reality: exposure to such a disturbing and destructuring event that our system of references for reality is shaken to the core.

Jenny Edkins (2002) holds that trauma makes people feel betrayed in their expectations about the order of things: “it brings to the surface existential questions which at least in the modern world we prefer to keep submerged” (p. 245). This is why trauma always implies in recognizing realities and limits

“that most of us have not begun to face” (Edkins, 2002: 245). The human mind is incapable of processing trauma in the same way it processes any normal event. Standing “outside the ordinary experience,” trauma does not fit into the framework of normal social reality, which is why there is no language for it or any other tools which one would normally rely on to make sense of the world.

And this is where the paradox lies: trauma is felt but not understood; it is memorized and recalled, but not necessarily experienced; it defies language but insists on being communicated; it refuses to be incorporated into normality but goes on perpetuating itself in memory; it is triggered at a specific moment in time, but alters its linearity; it must be forgotten, but is always being recalled and relived. Trauma is a slayer of certainties, a shaker of truths: it irrevocably changes our spatial and temporal concept of the world and ourselves.

According to Caruth (1996: 4), it is precisely the “un-assimilation” nature of a traumatic event – its refusal to be an object of human knowledge – that lets trauma slip back and haunt the individuals that experienced it. This is why Edkins (2001) shows no surprise at the incapacity of people who have experienced traumatic events to describe what happened, only reliving it as if locked into a ceaseless flow of flashbacks. Many years back, Laplanche (1976: 406) maintained that it was “memory of the event, not the event itself, which is traumatic.” In the case of 9/11, especially because of its overexposure in the media, individuals could literally relive the memory of the trauma, unabridged and unedited, pretty much indefinitely.

Edkins criticizes the TV networks and technology for basically regurgitating the events of 2001⁴ *ad infinitum*, etching almost indelibly and inescapably the contradictory emotions that welled up in response to 9/11 in the collective American imaginary. Indeed, this is how trauma can spread, because even people who were not there ended up experiencing it one way or another and partaking in the collective feeling. And so the very collective identity gained new meaning: “Only a true New Yorker knows what that day meant,” or “You’re only American if you lived through 9/11.” In one sense, the trauma operated like an endless wellspring for the discursive construction of the collective national identity.

For Edkins (2001), traumatic events shatter one’s expectations and preconceptions of what the world is like, for which old frameworks and languages are helpless. “Our maps of the world no longer work,” she sums up. And we keep remembering not the event itself, or its violence, but the experience of having survived it and being forced to come to terms to it. As Resende and Budryte (2013: 2) describe, “trauma is felt, but not understood; it is memorized and recalled, but not necessarily experienced; it defies language, but insists on being communicated; it refuses to be incorporated into normality, but goes on perpetuating itself in memory,” as a constant reminder of our own vulnerability and mortality, which we prefer to forget so that life may remain minimally bearable.

⁴ For Edkins (2001) the use of the word “event” and the expression “9/11” continues the trauma. She sees the use of expressions like “atrocities”, “attacks” and “acts of war” as symptomatic of an attempt to domesticate the trauma. Even today, coming across the term “events” only goes to prove one’s survival of the trauma.

The notion of survival is central to the correlation between trauma and security. As Gaddis (2004: 69) sees it, it was not so much to do with the collapse of the towers as the toppling of the myth of the inviolability of American soil. With the exception of Pearl Harbor, the United States of America had not been attacked on its own territory since British troops set fire to the White House in 1814. Indeed, the author goes on, few countries had been so unconcerned for so long about the vulnerability of their sovereign territory. In other words, 9/11 shattered one of the few certainties shared in the national imaginary: the inviolability of US territory, or what Woodward (1960) calls “free security.” Given the growing perception that the country’s geographical position and military power could no longer provide any guarantee of homeland security, a new perception of vulnerability emerged, which should be understood in the light of the destruction of the myth of free security.

Trauma, then, becomes part of the experience of recognizing our mortality. Life can only be bearable if we buy into a kind of unwritten compact, especially in western culture, of willfully forgetting how tenuous our condition is. Trauma gives us a sudden, painful reminder of how useless and impossible such a compact actually is. We are mortal and we are vulnerable, and the idea of total security is no more than a device used to trick ourselves into believing we can escape death, relieving ourselves of the anxiety brought on by the recognition of our mortality.

To develop this point a little further, it is interesting to observe the relationship between Americans’ direct and indirect experience of 9/11 and the sense of vulnerability, anxiety and uncertainty that has grown in US society since that day. Since 2001, experts⁵ have tried to map out and gauge the full dimension of the trauma brought on by the incapacity of the human psyche to grasp the terrorist attacks. In particular, psychologists, therapists and health workers noted a rise in the number of cases of depression, insomnia, anxiety, hyperactivity, cardiac arrhythmia, panic syndrome, and other symptoms in the weeks and months after 9/11, which could be diagnosed as post-traumatic stress brought on by the events.

Referring to this point, Herscher and Pascual (2008: 1) comment:

The morning after the World Trade Center towers crumbled to dust, Amanda Fuqua arrived at her job 3,000 miles away in downtown San Francisco. She sat down at her desk, attempted to start working, and astonished herself by falling apart. “When people tried to talk to me, I just burst into tears,” Fuqua says. “I was sobbing. People said I should go home, and I’m glad I did. I couldn’t concentrate on anything”. Fuqua, a 22-year-old human resources consultant, didn’t lose anyone close to her in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the trade center

⁵ "Stanford Psychiatrist on 9/11 and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder". Stanford News. (Available at <http://mednews.stanford.edu/releases/2006/september/5q-spiegel.html>); "Large Study Of World Trade Center Responders Finds Persistent Health Problems In Many". ScienceDaily. (Available at: <http://www.sciencedaily.com /releases/2006/09/060906084107.htm>.) and Holman et al. "Terrorism, Acute Stress, and Cardiovascular Health". Archives of General Psychiatry, v. 65, n. 1, Jan., 2008. (Available at: <http://archpsyc.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/short/65/1/73>.)

and the Pentagon. [...] Like Fuqua, Americans close to the epicenter, as well as people thousands of miles away, will continue to feel the effects of terrorism in the days and months ahead.

Individuals were having a normal reaction to profoundly abnormal circumstances. The trauma, inflamed by endless references to the memory of the event on television, by state authorities and even in people's private lives,⁶ seems to have overloaded the capacity of the human mind to deal with such violent, overwhelming emotions. The nation was undergoing post-traumatic stress disorder: "America seemed to have plugged into an existential crisis," the authors conclude.

Indeed, the relationship between trauma and existential angst is nothing new. Sigmund Freud devoted himself exhaustively to the topic in a bid to understand the causes and symptoms that accompanied the state of anxiety. In his theory of seduction, Freud (1963: 63) argues that "angst originally emerged as a reaction to a state of threat," and is re-experienced "whenever a similar situation occurs." This is why trauma resides in memory, the repeated recollection of the original experience, rather than in the event per se (Laplanche, 1973: 406).

This gives us a key to distinguishing between angst and fear. In Freud's view, angst is the anxiety experienced when one is anticipating something uncertain, something one is unable to define. This emotional state is awakened by the memory of a traumatic event. It is therefore somewhat ill-defined in relationship to its purpose and object: it exists as long as the memory of the trauma lasts, independent of reality. Meanwhile, fear (*Furcht*) is when an individual encounters a real object upon which he or she can project his or her angst.

Traditional studies of post-traumatic stress have identified fear as being the main reaction to the trauma (Herman, 1992). In line with the so-called "paradigm of fear," individuals with biological or psychological vulnerabilities that experience extreme situations start to organize their lives on the basis of the belief that nothing can be counted on in life except death. The fact that they have faced a situation in which their very lives were on the line makes them recognize the absurdity of an existence where everything but death is unpredictable and uncertain. The angst is caused by recognition of one's own mortality and fear of the future.

In a proposal that touches on many of the questions being framed in this research, psychoanalyst Janoff-Bulman (1992) proposes a paradigm of "world assumptions," by which trauma shakes the three fundamental assumptions people hold dear: that the world is benevolent, that the world is meaningful, and that the "other" is worthy. By shifting the focus of fear to an evaluation of reality and of others after a trauma, the author explores how cognitive schema and factors impinge on how people react after traumas. What she finds is that individuals resist any change that affects their world assumptions, which is why any sudden change would be so traumatic. Individuals are incapable of conciliating the old

⁶ The authors even mention a new social conversation topic: rather than, "Where were you on the day they shot Kennedy?," we now have, "Where were you on 9/11?"

and the new, which is why they react through trauma. In this context, anxiety is the outcome of people's difficulty or incapacity to accept and adapt to change.

This seems to fit perfectly with the circumstances of 9/11, which so abruptly shattered the set of assumptions prevailing in US society. Overnight, individuals realized that the world was not benevolent, nor was it meaningful, and, faced with the random loss of over six thousand lives, they may not be worthy any more, either. McFarlane and Van der Kolk (1996) note that society resents sudden change and finds it hard to take account of trauma, leading to the emergence of narratives apportioning blame that highlight the abnormality of the new reality.

The third possible reaction to trauma, which is equally applicable to 9/11, is the "paradigm of betrayal." While admitting that it could be useful for society not to recognize betrayal, Freyd (1999) suggests that victims of trauma triggered by their own provider may remain ignorant of the betrayal they have experienced, albeit unconsciously. For instance, when a child is abused by a parent, they cannot distance themselves because this would put their own survival in jeopardy. Their angst results from a sense of betrayal.

A similar rationale can be seen in Shay's (1994) study of war veterans. The military environment fosters "dependent-provider" relationships, with soldiers depending entirely on the military apparatus for their clothing, food, training, medical care, equipment, instructions, etc. When these servicemen return to civilian life, especially after being at war, they often feel betrayed by the State for not having received enough food, clothing or training or for not having been given due recognition for their efforts.⁷

The three paradigms set out above suggest there is a relationship between trauma, the political community and power. In the contemporary world, we assume that the State exists to instill order, stability and security: to protect the population from other traumas, as if there had actually been an original trauma (Lozzano, 2007). Yet this assumption is far from peaceful. It is enough to recall the prerogative of states to recruit citizens to go to war on their behalf, exposing them to risk. Certain policies can also threaten a population's security, such as an aggressive foreign policy. Inside its own borders, a state may use force to penalize any deviant acts, as in the use of prisons.

We should therefore recognize how closely related are trauma, the political community and the specific type of power at play: biopower. As in Foucault's concept, the power of the state in the modern world operates in such a way that distinctions are drawn that include or exclude individuals from the political process to the point of entirely disregarding the value of human life. Individuals are reduced to the masses, which are put under surveillance, controlled, disciplined, and punished. Using arbitrary norms, biopolitics encompasses life, excluding and including individuals and groups, adjusting and reining in their

⁷ The case of Vietnam War veterans is a fine example of this paradigm, especially for the general feeling of having been abandoned by the state after they returned from their "defeat" and were unable to adapt back to civilian life.

bodies to the processes envisaged by the state. Thus, in the name of those who should live, it is decided who should die. In the words of Foucault (2003: 255), “the death of the other, the death of the bad race, is something that will make life in general healthier.”

In this sense, Agamben (1998) shows us how biopolitics has given rise to a new category of human life: “bare life,” or the kill-able bodies of subjects that form the new political body of the West. The basis of modern democracy, he argues, has ceased to be the free man, with his prerogatives and his statutes; now, it is bare life, the *homo sacer* that may be killed but not sacrificed, life that can be left to die because it has been excluded from human jurisdiction. The trauma that is experienced could then be framed as a collective reaction to the recognition of our condition of bare life⁸ that was forced upon us on 9/11.

Overcoming trauma, overcoming aporia, and reconstituting social order

Traumatic events, such as wars or terrorist attacks, produce rupture and break continuity. As correctly noted by Hutchinson and Bleiker (2008: 385), dealing with the legacy of traumas and the powerful emotions they generate is a major political challenge. Once the rupture has been acknowledged, it is time to overcome the crisis, domesticate the event, give it new meaning, frame it in a coherent narrative in order to reconstitute identity and community, and reinstate social order. In this case, it became necessary to give 9/11 some sort of meaning in an ordered sequence of causes and effects so as to overcome trauma, reconcile emotions and heal the rupture in space, time and language.

The first attempts drew on former strategies of differentiation and equivalence based on familiar meanings and representations. The forms of linguistic expediency used, including metaphors, analogies, and metonyms, tended to express negation, historical references, and indistinct terrors. Expressions like “It’s like something from a film!,” “It’s like Pearl Harbor,” or “It’s the end of the world” were amongst the first attempts to make sense of the events.

Even in the first few days, it seemed clear that any narrative capable of making sense of 9/11 would have to acknowledge to a greater or lesser extent the fact that it was a historic date, a unique, unprecedented event. There immediately started to be a “before 9/11” and an “after 9/11”, just as there is a “before” and “after” the storming of the Bastille on July 14th, 1789, a “before” and “after” the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on September 28th, 1914, a “before”

⁸ Primo Levi (1987) shows how the Holocaust marked the frontier where man ceased to be man and started to be bare life. In his account, in the concentration camps, life was something that could be used instrumentally in medical experiences, as slave labor, or as plain fun. Punishments were totally arbitrary and unquestionable. There was no reason for anything.

and “after” the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9th, 1989.⁹ 2001 quickly joined the ranks of turning points like 1929, 1945, 1973 and 1989: September 11th, 2001 would henceforth be 9/11.

Challenging this narrative of exceptionality, Der Derian (2002c) points out that 9/11 quickly took on qualities of an “exceptional ahistoricity,” becoming a moment challenged by explanations within the normal course of history, especially if considered in relation to the contemporary thesis of the end of History.¹⁰ He goes on to stress the historical-milestone narrative and its implications for the production of knowledge. “Before 9/11 and after 9/11: All social scientists must now survey international as well as domestic politics by this temporal rift: [...] a repeat of what was heard at academic conferences after the fall of the Berlin Wall.” (Der Derian 2002c: 177)

Indeed, the danger of immediate and simplistic characterizations, especially narratives about some exceptionality which no existing theory can take account of, translates into a warning against reading terrorism exclusively in the lights of 9/11. According to Der Derian (2002b), political discourses around the exceptional ahistoricity of 9/11 pushes us to interpret it as an exception that bans critical thought and justifies a state of permanent emergency.

Rayner (2002) recommends that first we should “inhabit the time of the event”: domesticate it so we can take responsibility for its potential outcomes. This implies putting events in their due historical context, that is, articulating a narrative that helps us understand what happened without falling into the trap of making value judgments or pointing fingers. It is a search for a narrative of neutrality capable of preventing conflict, not spreading it.

Even so, it would not be wrong to say that “a fracture occurred; a fracture which took command of the memory”, as termed by Göle (2002: 333), and that it was then imperative to construct a coherent narrative to comprehend the reasons behind the fracture. Despite its over simplicity and flaws, Samuel Huntington’s thesis on the clash of civilizations successfully responded to the immediate outcry for an explanation for it named the guilty parties (Muslim extremist groups), explained their motives (anti-modernity and anti-Western civilization/culture/religion), and sketched out a course of action to prevent further attacks of a similar nature (as this was a conflict between mutually exclusive civilizations, conflict was the only answer).

⁹ Sturken (2002: 374) comments that when a given date is deemed exceptional, in that it is discursively constructed as dividing time into a “before” and an “after,” there is nothing exceptional in this, quite the contrary. Citing other declarations about milestones in history, he alludes to Virginia Woolf and Theodor Adorno: “Writing in 1924 about the experience of modernity, Virginia Woolf stated: “on or about December 1910, human character changed”. Many years later, Theodor Adorno wrote, “to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric”, implying that cultural production was irrevocably changed in the wake of the Holocaust.”

¹⁰ Zizek (2008) alludes to the topic when he says, symbolically, that the 2001 terrorist attacks represented the end of Fukuyama’s utopia. “It was the end of that merry age [of the 1990’s expansion of liberal capitalism]. We are now back to history,” he argues.

From a linguistic perspective, Linde (1993: 114) explains that narratives bring people together. "Telling stories creates a sense of belonging to the group and solidarity between its members." In unsettling, worrying times, they operate as channels for interpreting reality and trying to marshal and domesticate any strange or unintelligible elements. In other words, they serve to reconstitute the system of meanings and representations that make sense of the world, helping individuals to overcome the aporia triggered by the crisis.

This position is shared by Ross (2002: 305), who argues that "narratives are especially relevant for groups of individuals caught in situations of high uncertainty and high stress." When individuals are disoriented, he goes on, they tend to attribute meaning to what they experience through their senses. Collective narratives that are reaffirmed by the group help give them comfort and help them deal with their anxiety. For this very reason, narratives "do not come out of the same bag": they must be anchored in experience and fears that are interpreted selectively so that they can resonate collectively. I therefore conclude that narratives, especially those that are designed to overcome moments of crisis, are rooted in the culture of that specific group.

Here, I will address culture from the perspective of semiotics, as proposed by Geertz (1973): a system of historically transmitted "webs of meanings" that can be identified from the symbols by which individuals "communicate, perpetuate, and develop knowledge and attitudes about life." The public nature of culture stressed by Geertz allows it to be understood as a system of representations that transmits the cognitive and affective beliefs shared by the members of a group about reality and themselves. The sharing of these beliefs allows them to identify themselves collectively in relation to those that do not share them. This is culture as a lens for interpreting a reality, with the simultaneous capacity to express a different "way of life" and mark out belonging. It is in this sense capable of reconstituting identity, community, and solidarity, of (re)creating a "we-feeling" (*Wir-Gefühl*).

In situations of crisis and rupture, narratives evoke the imaginary past of a group to re-signify the meanings contained in its "way of life," thereby adapting and reconstituting individuals' cognitive and affective beliefs about reality and themselves. When ambiguity, uncertainty and anxiety are awakened by a crisis, narratives can often reconnect individual and collective identities, re-signifying reality and what things mean to people. There can be no doubt that a crisis is propitious for bolstering the sense of solidarity in a group, reinforcing the collective imaginary of a common origin and fate, curbing internal dissention and aligning bodies and behaviors.

The post-9/11 trauma shattered the traditional structures that made sense of reality and of individuals themselves. All of a sudden, America found itself unable to make sense of "the order of things." In particular, it lost all sense of what America itself was: What was it? What was its place in the world? Who were Americans in this scenario of crisis and trauma? It is no surprise, then, that the question that was most heard in the first moments was: Why do they hate us

so? This only goes to show that the meaning of American national identity had been cast into doubt, indicating the first cracks in the collapse of the dominant discourse regarding the very meaning of “Americanness” (Resende, 2012).

The question that now begs to be asked is: How can we seize the moment of crisis to initiate a transformation in social relations? More specifically, how can the dominant forces and discourses be reconfigured and rearticulated so as to rewrite national identity and transform social order? I now turn to the work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on the relationship between discourse, hegemony, and social order. Drawing on post-structuralist thinking, they propose a reinterpretation of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony in an attempt to incorporate the notion of language as co-constitutive of reality. Inspired by the linguist Ferdinand Saussure, they favor a relational notion of identity that is constructed discursively on the basis on difference, the negation of the “other” in favor of the self: identity as “something never positive and closed in itself, but [...] constituted as transition, relation, difference” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 95). Identity is then defined as a discursive construct on which one tries to impress a meaning that is neither inherent to it, nor inevitable, nor natural.

This concept of identity is similar to that adopted by Connolly and Campbell: identity as something that can only be established by difference, by the exclusion of one thing to permit the inclusion of another. They call this discursive practice of producing difference in identity construction as “articulation,” meaning any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice” (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 105). The constant articulating of distinct elements within a specific discursive formation serves to naturalize these representations and meanings, as if the associative chain was naturally logical, necessary, true, and eternal. Articulation therefore relates to the processes of producing contingent meanings that are contextualized from reality that start to circulate in the social order until they constitute a new discursive formation.

The elements that are subject to articulations are “fragments of a lost unity,” and any attempt towards its reconstruction would have to be of “an artificial character, as opposed to the natural organic unity” of the point of initial departure (Laclau and Mouffe, 1985: 94). Since the original unity cannot be returned to no matter how much it may be desired, individuals try to put back and join together the fragments in such a way that they produce a representation of wholeness, unity, universality, in an effort to create a sense of wholeness, with national collectiveness presenting them as the ultimate space for doing so.

However, any reconstruction of this kind is artificial by definition, and thus never stable, fixed, or final. And as it is artificial, it will always be tainted by its opposite. Yet when its articulation is successful, it can represent wholeness – without ceasing to be particularity – and enter into a relationship of hegemony with the other elements from the system of meanings. Thus conceived, national identity, where the representation of wholeness is tainted by particularities, is always in a state of unresolved tension with the different cultural and linguistic elements it is made

from. At times of crisis, dominant discourses around an identity loses its articulation capacity, meanings become unstable, and the elements of national identity may then be reconfigured and articulated in such a way that a new discourse of national identity is built up. However, we should remember that meanings are only ever fixed partially, and they are always unstable and temporary because the articulation of discourse will always be disrupted by other competing discursive formations, in an attempt to establish a new hegemonic order.

Times of crisis – such as 9/11 – tend to reveal how shaky the social order is, toppling truths that had until then been taken as self-evident, natural and derived from common sense. With this capacity of theirs to bring down dominant discourses, crises are privileged moments for breaking down old articulations and proposing new ones, thereby transforming social relationships. They operate as “focal points,¹¹” “critical junctures,¹²” or “tipping points¹³” for transforming the social order. As Katznelson (2003) notes, such moments alter material incentives precisely because the agents interpret the event differently. “[S]tructurally induced unsettled times can provoke possibilities for particularly consequential purposes,” he states. They are moments with no closed interpretation, he concludes, making each agent interpret them differently and determine their own course of action.

Based on the above considerations, 9/11 could be understood as a moment of crisis signaled by the collapse of the dominant discourse, which implies that it provided a window of opportunity for social change. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) see all crises, especially those with an international dimension, as having the potential to transform the established order because of the fissures they introduce to social structures. In other words, the dominant discourse is destabilized, allowing for the emergence of new discourses which struggle to remake the ruptured meanings in order to overcome the organic crisis. The new discourse brings new discursive arrangements, new identities, new social relationships, etc.

Crisis is therefore central to change in society. In reaction to or even in anticipation of a crisis that shifts meanings from their erstwhile dominant positions, new discourses emerge in an attempt to stabilize meanings and instill order. For Laclau (2005), when a discourse finally proves it is capable of establishing a dominant perception of reality for all the members of a

¹¹ Birkland (1997: 22) defines a “focal point” as: “sudden, relatively rare, can be reasonably defined as harmful or revealing the possibility of potentially greater future harms, inflicts harms or suggests potential harms that are or could be concentrated on a definable geographical area or community of interest, and that is known to policy makers and the public virtually simultaneously.”

¹² Collier and Collier (1991) define “critical junctures” as “a period of fundamental political reorientation in which countries are set on distinct trajectories of social change with long-term implications.”

¹³ Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 895) characterize a “threshold or tipping point” as the “moment of a norm cascade, at which a critical mass of relevant state actors adopt [a new] norm.”

communicative process, stabilizing meanings shifted at the time of crisis, the internal divisions within the social body are healed and it gains a new collective identity. Hegemony is established, reproduced and consolidated the moment our perception of social relationships and reality is altered according to the system of meanings and representations socially constructed by the dominant discourse.

It is precisely in this sense that we speak of the power of discourse to produce common sense, creating “diffuse and uncoordinated features of a generic mode of thought” describes Gramsci (1971: 33), or “categories of practical consciousness” (Hall, 1986: 30). Hegemony takes root, the discursive formation gains dominance and we experience a “moment of extreme ideological closure” (Hall, 1985: 105). The ideology that sustains the newly-dominant discourse now calls the shots when it comes to defining what can be deemed possible and intelligible in reality (Butler, 1993: 187), producing specific practices and institutions that reproduce this ideology.

Concluding remarks

The 9/11 attacks had a huge impact on the collective American imaginaries. The swift recourse on the part of the media and official government channels to “before and after” narratives in the following days is indicative of an urge to turn the date into a historical turning point. As noted in the previous sections, a large body of literature points that 9/11 was constructed as a moment of rupture, with the date working as a watershed in political, cultural, economic, and above all, cognitive terms. In this sense, the difficulty in making sense of that day’s events, which can be seen from the collapse of the dominant system of meanings and representations that people turned to comprehend and interpret reality and themselves, is indicative of its traumatic nature.

9/11 should then be interpreted as a moment of organic crisis, when the meanings and representations that American society had until then relied on to make sense of reality and itself were shaken to the core. It was a situation of aporia, when meanings were shifted out of their privileged places and the result was a blockage: a deep need to communicate, yet language failed. Above all, the narratives, myths, symbols, and images that jointly constructed the American identity as a community “safe” and “secured” from a “threatening” outside discursively ceased to make sense. Intense emotions around the aporetic situation on that sunny September morning made it possible for “9/11” as an event to emerge as well as the “War on Terror” to exist: a hegemonic discourse articulated to eliminate aporia, reduce social anxiety, to overcome the crisis, to reconstitute identity and community, and to reinstate social order.

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Aporija, trauma ir emocijos Rugsėjo 11-osios prasmės krizėje

Erica Resende

KANDIDO MENDES UNIVERSITETAS
RIO DE ŽANEIRAS, RJ 2001-901, BRAZILIA
EL. PAŠTAS: Erica@iuperj.br

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SANTRAUKA: Remiantis teorijomis ir konceptais, kurie susieja prasmes, reprezentacijas, atmintį ir traumą, straipsnyje siekiama parodyti, kaip Rugsėjo 11-osios įvykiai destabilizavo įprastus vaizdinius ir prasmes, sulaužė Istorijos tėkmę, suardė jausmus, iškreipė erdvės bei laiko suvokimą ir supurtė supratimo ašis, kurios leido amerikiečiams suvokti tikrovę ir save. Straipsnyje siekiama suprasti, kaip nebylios ir hiperrealios 2001 m. įvykių reprezentacijos sukūrė aporiją – neišsprendžiamumo persmelktą situaciją, kurioje kalba bejėgė. Dėl įprasminimo sudėtingumo Rugsėjo 11-osios įvykiai išlieka esmine traumine patirtimi amerikiečių kolektyviniuose vaizdiniuose, nes tie įvykiai gali būti suprantami kaip hegemoninio politinio diskurso apie amerikiečių saugumą žlugimas.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Jungtinės Amerikos Valstijos, Rugsėjo 11-oji, atmintis, trauma, emocijos.

The Armenian *Metz Yeghern*, one hundred years later: an "unresolved" case of genocide and the development of international norms

Scott A. Boykin

GEORGIA GWINNETT COLLEGE
LAWRENCEVILLE, GA 30052, GEORGIA, USA
E-MAIL: SBOYKIN@GGC.EDU

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ABSTRACT: Intersubjective recognition of human rights abuses affirms them and exerts pressure to acknowledge them in international norms and institutions. It is in this way that the transnational memory of genocides, made part of the common lifeworld of humanity, can assert itself against the contrary interests of states and shape institutions and conduct in international affairs. Thus, human rights abuses do indeed foster the development of the international human rights regime. The Armenian Genocide, an unresolved and massive human rights abuse, contributed powerfully to the development of the current law on genocide and demonstrates how transnational memory, encapsulated in legal concepts, can transmit intersubjectively recognized norms of state conduct through time and institutions. In spite of the fact that there was no meaningful remedial action for the Armenian Genocide, and despite the fact that it is not universally recognized and is to some extent the subject of dispute, the Armenian Genocide played a significant role in the development of the international law on genocide and, because it is still the subject of dispute, remains a focal point for discussion of the concept of genocide a century later. The Armenian Genocide offers evidence that memory of unresolved human rights abuses can drive the development of international norms, and the ways in which this historical case is remembered have played a constructive role in the development of the global human rights regime.

Keywords: Armenian Genocide, transnational memory, constructivism, international norms, international law.

It is often argued that the current international human rights regime is rooted in the trauma of the Holocaust, which has become an archetypal symbol of large-scale violations of human rights. There is a vast body of literature exploring the ways in which the Holocaust affected the development of human rights regime (Kiernan, 2007; Levy and Sznajder, 2010; Power, 2013). The ways in which other genocides, especially disputed or “unresolved” ones in which the perpetrators avoided punishment, have affected this regime are much less researched (the exceptions include Bassiouni (1996); Dadrian (1998a, 1998b, 1998c)). Here I address this question by focusing on the Armenian Genocide, which is still disputed by the Turkish government and still not officially recognized as a genocide by the United States government and others. The perpetrators of this

genocide generally avoided punishment, and there has never been a meaningful remedy for the offenses committed from 1915-1923 against the Armenian people by the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the Armenian Genocide was important in the development of international law regarding genocide.

I argue that the Armenian Genocide and the ways in which it is remembered have played a constructive role in the development of the global human rights regime. It is well-established that the legal concepts developed in the aftermath of the First World War associated with the Armenian Genocide formed part of the legal model and background for the International Military Tribunal that tried Nazi war criminals after the Second World War and, in turn, influenced the substance of the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (the "Genocide Convention") adopted by the United Nations in 1948. This history illustrates how an unresolved genocide can influence the course of the development of international law. The transnational memory contained within these legal concepts remained after the particular dispute that gave rise to them remained unresolved. Moreover, there is evidence that the fact that this was an unresolved genocide made it relevant to the establishment of the Nuremberg tribunal and the prosecutions of the defendants in those trials. The transnational memory of the Armenian Genocide — as evidenced in the statements of statesmen and lawyers who were not Armenian — offered a sense of urgency and purpose to resolving the Holocaust.

These observations suggest that additional research is needed to understand specific processes during which memories about "unresolved" genocides are constructed and are accepted transnationally. To gain insights into these questions, this essay is structured in the following way. In the first section, I define "unresolved" genocide with application to the Armenian case. In the second section, I present a theory regarding the role that transnational memory of genocides, both resolved and unresolved, has played in the emergence of an international norm against genocide and in the institutionalization of that norm. In the final section, I analyze the ongoing struggles regarding the recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the lack of any punishment for the Turkish government, highlighting the intersections between the "unresolved" genocide and the assertion of international expectations about "responsible complicity" (an expectation that responsible members of international community will recognize the crimes of the past). The political interests of states, I conclude, may offer challenges to the recognition of and remedy for an "unresolved" genocide, as illustrated by the Armenian Genocide.

The Armenian Genocide as an unresolved genocide

During the First World War, the Ottoman Empire regarded Armenians as disloyal and favoring Russia. In addition, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), representing the Young Turks' nationalistic ideology, sought the suppression and expulsion of Armenians from the Empire. In furtherance of that ideology, the Ottoman Empire engaged in genocide against the Armenian people from 1915 to 1923, killing hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children. Forced marches

and brutal mass murder of civilians were a means by which the Ottoman Empire sought to resist what it saw as Russian sympathy among the Armenians and to establish complete Turkish dominion and control over the Empire.

Estimates range from 800,000 to 1.5 million Armenians killed, up to half of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire at the time (Frey, 2009). In addition, the Assyrian and Greek populations also suffered persecution at the hands of the Ottomans. Although it is difficult to determine the number of Assyrians killed by the Ottomans, estimates range from 250,000 to 500,000 (Khosoreva, 2011: 271-72). A conservative estimate of 300,000 killed is about half the Assyrian population of the Ottoman Empire at the time (Gaunt, 2006). The Ottoman government encouraged economic boycotts of Greek businesses and also encouraged gangs to attack Greek Christian businesses and people in 1914 (Bjorlund, 2008). Turkish nationalism was a powerful force that laid claim to the territories occupied by Anatolians, which included Greek Christians in this time (Erimtan, 2008). That Assyrians and Greeks, as well as Armenians, were targeted by the Ottoman government is important because in the final analysis it was the response of the Allied powers to the violence against these groups by the Ottoman regime that left its imprint on the emergent norm against genocide.

The British and French insisted on provisions in the Treaty of Sevres that obligated the Ottoman Empire to turn over persons responsible for the mass murder and deportation of Armenians for trial, but that treaty was abrogated with the collapse of the Empire and its replacement by Ataturk's government in the Turkish War of Independence (Dadrian, 1998a). Division among the allies and the nationalist CUP, which established the Young Turk government that replaced the Ottoman Empire, prevented the Armenian Genocide from being more fully addressed (Dadrian, 2010). The Treaty of Lausanne, which replaced the Treaty of Sevres, did not include a demand that the Ottomans extradite anyone for trial (Dadrian, 1998c). The British, who still had British subjects held prisoner by the Ottomans at the end of the war, did not press the issue, and the French also did not insist on war crimes trials (Dadrian, 1998a). The United States and Japan, concerned about the Bolshevik takeover of Russia, did not want to offer opportunities to a communist Russia by weakening the Turkish government further (Bassiouni, 2011, 1997). There were war crimes trials conducted in the Ottoman Empire in the aftermath of the First World War, the loss of which brought on the downfall of the Young Turk government, and some of the Young Turk leaders were convicted in absentia and sentenced to death, though several escaped to Germany and only a few received punishment (Frey, 2009). Nonetheless, the failure to vigorously pursue those responsible for the Armenian Genocide left the matter unresolved. This failure, motivated by political concerns in the aftermath of the First World War, later "came back to haunt the very same Allies, and particularly the United States, after World War II" (Bassiouni, 1991: 4).

I define an "unresolved" genocide as one for which there was no or little action taken to prosecute those responsible for committing the genocide and one the status of which as a genocide is disputed or not acknowledged by multiple states that are

regarded as legitimate actors in the international community. The Armenian genocide is an unresolved one because there were only a small handful of Ottoman officials prosecuted after the war, several of whom were tried in absentia, and because the Armenian Genocide is still disputed or not acknowledged by legitimate actors in the international community, notable the governments of Turkey and the United States. By contrast, some genocides have been "resolved" in the sense that they are generally acknowledged by legitimate political actors to have been genocides and have resulted in a substantial number of criminal prosecutions. Examples of "resolved" genocides would be the Holocaust, the genocide committed by Bosnian Serbs in the former Yugoslavia, and the genocide committed by Hutus against Tutsis in Rwanda. Each of these are generally acknowledged to have had the status of genocides. The Holocaust resulted in the prosecutions of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg and elsewhere, such as the prosecution of Adolph Eichmann in Israel. The United Nations established an International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia that has prosecuted a number of Bosnian Serb military and political officials and has ongoing criminal proceedings. The United Nations also established an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, which also has ongoing proceedings. As Bass (2000: 285) has argued, "international tribunals are better than the usual alternative, which is simple vengeance by the aggrieved parties". Still, the resolution of genocides presents a continuum of degrees of resolution. There were, for example, a small number of prosecutions of Ottoman officials after the First World War, and many states today do recognize the Armenian Genocide. Nevertheless, it is possible to categorize a genocide as "unresolved" if there are major political actors in the international community that refuse to recognize it as such and for which there have been few or no prosecutions. The Armenian Genocide is such a case. The question I address here is whether, and how, such an "unresolved" genocide can influence the development of international norms.

Intersubjective recognition of the crime of genocide

Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2010), in their analysis of how the Holocaust and subsequent human rights abuses contributed to the development of the contemporary human rights regime, argue that memory of human rights abuses has driven the development of human rights norms and conditioned state sovereignty. Recognition of human rights and their violation is borne of our ability to empathize with others (Levy and Sznaider, 2010: 31). Further, they maintain, memories of human rights violations become most powerful when they are understood abstractly as human rights violations by persons who are not members of the group whose rights were violated (*ibid*, 14–15). They refer to these as "cosmopolitan memories" (*ibid*, 43). This abstracted and cosmopolitanized memory may influence the development of international law:

International law and the corresponding human rights legislation draw on particular historical instances, as do political and cultural justifications to establish

human rights as the principal source of the legitimacy of state sovereignty. Accordingly, these cosmopolitanized memories contribute substantially to the reconfiguration of sovereign legitimacy and the scope of political responsibility (Levy and Sznajder, 2010: 43).

Moreover, they argue, the power of historical memory has imposed conditions on state sovereignty, because acknowledging human rights has become a way for states to legitimate themselves (Levy and Sznajder, 2010: 17).

Levy and Sznajder focus their attention on the Holocaust's impact on the modern human rights regime, arguing that The U.N. Declaration of Rights and related human rights conventions "must be understood as direct responses to the shared moral revulsion of the delegates to the Holocaust—a sentiment that was also reflected in the direct connection between the declaration and some of the legal principles established in the Nuremberg trials" (Levy and Sznajder, 2010: 80). The same is true, they argue, of the U.N. War Crimes Commission and U.N. Human Rights Division, in which "concerns about the illegality of retroactive jurisprudence were overcome by replacing conventional (i.e., national) legal principles with the broader notion of international law and its implicit appeal to a civilized consciousness, now viewed as a safeguard against the barbarous potential of national sovereignty" (Levy and Sznajder, 2010: 80).

Levy and Sznajder demonstrate how recognition of governmental abuses of persons has given rise to the human rights regime. Genocide provides an especially powerful source of social memory that, due to its brutal and readily comprehensible nature, is capable of generating transnational consciousness of human rights abuses.

Trauma, transnational memory, and intersubjectivity

Traumatic events that are on a large collective scale can have great political meaning, and this is a reason why the study of trauma and memory have become important areas of inquiry (Resende and Budryte, 2013). Such events include war and mass killings, but they also include environmental and even natural disasters that change our perception of the world and that are difficult to internalize and understand. One way to view trauma, therefore, is as something that is not supposed to happen according to our previous understanding of the world. This is consistent with the reactions of the victims of historic genocides. Victims of the Holocaust have reported that they could not believe what was happening to them even as it was happening. One victim of the Sobibor camp, for example, states that "I could not believe that this was an extermination camp, because it looked so nice. It was 23 April 1943. The sun was shining and it seemed like a beautiful summer's day. I knew we were going to die but, at the same time, I could not believe it" (ten Have and van Haperen, 2012: 25). This exemplifies the kind of trauma suffered by an individual, which is one kind of politically significant trauma (Resende and Budryte, 2013).

The transnational memory of genocidal acts gave rise to the articulation of genocide as a crime and a moral outrage. Transnational memory has political and cultural dimensions. In the former, actors pursue their aims with their own conception of the relevant memory, and in the latter, affected cultural and ethnic groups transmit their memory to subsequent generations and to others (Budryte, 2013). In diaspora communities, the memory of a trauma is transnational in that it is shared across national boundaries. The form the memory takes in such communities can provide social solidarity and identity among the community (Paul, 2000) and can influence policies in both the countries in which the diaspora community resides as well as the home country (Shain and Barth, 2003). But transnational memory can extend to other groups besides the community affected by the trauma as well. Transnational memory, as Levy and Sznajder (2010: 31) argue, is made possible by shared understandings that arise from our common humanity. Indeed, one function of remembering trauma, for example, in the form of criminal prosecutions for violations of human rights, is "to reconstitute a community of humanity against which there can be crimes (hence, 'crimes against humanity')" (Minow, 1999: 430). Culture and time are subjective, because these constitute individuals in their perceptions of events around them and across time. Where individuals are able to cross culture and historicity in their understanding of the experiences of others, there is real sociality because sociality consists of "shared knowledge" (Wendt, 1995: 73).

A normative principle and an international rule such as the contemporary Genocide Convention is a social structure. Social structures arise from these "intersubjective understandings," and they are "are real and objective," because they can be observed and explained, "but this objectivity depends upon shared knowledge" (Wendt, 1995: 73-74). Further, social structures consisting of intersubjective understanding are real because they are "collective phenomena that confront individuals as externally existing social facts," and we can have objective knowledge of these facts (Wendt, 1995: 75). It is not only what political elites perceive about international norms that is important. Individuals and cultures are important in international relations because what people believe matters, and international norms based on socially constructed ideas can also be changed (Hansen-Magnusson, 2013). An international norm against genocide acknowledges an intersubjectively recognized, and therefore objective, constraint on state action that has arisen not only because political elites have established this principle as an international norm but because it is affirmed by people across national boundaries as norm that constrains the conduct of governments toward their citizens. When conceptualized in this way, even "unresolved" genocides, as large-scale traumatic events, have the capacity to influence international human rights regimes. Memory and communication of trauma then become the key variables.

The concept of the crime of genocide is one that both requires and demonstrates the intersubjectivity of our recognition of states destroying people because of who they are. It is the intersubjective recognition of the crime of genocide that makes it a crime that anyone can declare criminal and reject the authority of the

state to commit. The fact that states must justify their actions demonstrates that state actors acknowledge that their conduct is subject to standards that transcend national boundaries and the authority of states themselves. There are some shared understandings of just conduct that exist across time and culture, and states, despite their claims based on sovereignty and security, cannot avoid criticism of their acts of people worldwide who will subject these claims to criticism on grounds of a shared humanity. This criticism reflects an intersubjective, and therefore objective, rejection of the authority of states.

Transnational memory reflects an intersubjective acknowledgement of a common human experience and genocide, as a particular kind of trauma, is a particularly clear instance of this. This recognition evidences transnational, or as Levy and Sznaider (2010: 36-37) suggest, “cosmopolitan,” moral principles that are constraints on the authority of the state. Cultural memories are intelligible to us as individual participants in a culture. Transnational memories we have as persons who are not members of the affected group are intelligible to us by virtue of our humanity in common with persons across culture and history. Transnational memory, as recognition of our common humanity, can subvert and challenge politically constructed ideas regarding the state’s normative authority to treat its citizens by its own lights. Demands for the construction of principles to constrain the state’s treatment of its own citizens, seen in this way, reflects underlying normative principles that can pierce the subjectivity of nation-states, ideology, and nationalism and that can be reflected in international norms and institutions.

Transnational memory and the construction of the principle of crimes against humanity

The Armenian Genocide offers a useful case study in how transnational memory of an unresolved and unpunished trauma can nevertheless aid the development of the human rights regime. While the Armenian Genocide did not result in more than a few prosecutions, it was the occasion for the development of the concept of crimes against humanity that would form a basis of the concept of genocide after the Second World War. At the same time, the Armenian Genocide is a useful case study because it shows how the interests of key states may slow or inhibit the recognition and remedy of genocide.

The Armenian Genocide worked a direct influence on the development of international law. It did so because the International Military Tribunal for the trials of Nazi war criminals deliberately adopted the concepts developed by the Commission of Fifteen of the Preliminary Peace Conference of Paris which considered, among other matters, the conduct of the Ottoman Empire that constituted genocide of the Armenian people during the First World War. This legal analysis, in turn, was important in the legal framework the Nuremberg tribunal employed to try Nazi war criminals after the Second World War and subsequently in the formation of

the U.N. Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (Bassiouni, 2011; Dadrian, 1998a, 1998b, 1998c; Schabas, 2008, 2009). These historical and legal developments demonstrate how an unresolved genocide can influence the generation of international norms. Further, they illustrate how, in terms of the theoretical framework I have proposed, the transnational memory of a genocide can be impressed upon international law.

The Allies failed to significantly punish the Ottoman Empire for the Armenian Genocide, but the transnational memory of Ottoman crimes helped to construct the current human rights regime. It did so immediately in giving birth to the idea of crimes against humanity during the preliminary peace talks to end the First World War, which would later become critically important in the Nuremberg trials and subsequently in the Genocide Convention. It is meaningful too that the idea of crimes against humanity arose from the concept of conduct that "civilized" nations could not tolerate. The empathetic and intersubjective recognition of the suffering of others at the hands of their states abstracts that suffering from those who suffered it and enables it to play a part in the construction of norms of international law that prohibit such abuses. The Armenian Genocide played such a role, both in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and again, to greater practical effect, in the aftermath of the Second World War.

At the end of the First World War, the victorious allies sponsored a Commission of Fifteen to investigate responsibility for wrongful acts in connection with the war in preparation for peace talks. Almost thirty years later, the U.N. War Crimes Commission identified the link between the "crimes against humanity" tried by the International Military Tribunal and the precedent established after the First World War as follows: "the Governments of France, Great Britain and Russia issued a declaration, on the 28th of May, 1915, denouncing these massacres as '*crimes against humanity and civilization*' for which all the members of the Turkish Government would be held responsible, together with its agents implicated in the massacres" (United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948a: 35). The Commission on the Responsibility of the Authors of the War and on Enforcement of Penalties of the Paris Peace Conference, 1919, based upon reports gathered by the Allied powers on the actions of the Ottoman government toward its Armenian and Greek subjects constituted violations of "the laws of humanity" (Commission on Responsibilities, 1919: 16).

This analysis of the Ottoman Empire's conduct against its Armenian population was to become the basis of the international norm establishing crimes against humanity on which the Nuremberg proceedings and the Genocide Convention would be based (Bassiouni, 2011). The Treaty of Sevres (1920) had provided that the Allied powers would prosecute those responsible for these offenses, and this provision "constitutes, therefore, a precedent for Articles 6(c) and 5(c) of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Charters, and offers an example of one of the categories of '*crimes against humanity*' as understood by these enactments" (United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948a: 45). The U.N. War Crimes Commission, in its report on information regarding human rights arising from war crimes trials,

noted that “the two categories of offences with which the Commission of Fifteen concerned itself, namely, violations of the laws of war, on the one hand, and offences against the laws of humanity, on the other, correspond generally speaking to ‘war crimes’ and ‘crimes against humanity,’ as they are distinguished in the two Charters of 1945 and 1946 and in the Control Council Law No. 10. Thus, in 1919 we find for the first time the specific juxtaposition of these two types of offenses” (United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948b: 11).

It is well-established that the legal concepts developed in the aftermath of the First World War formed the basis for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals for crimes against humanity (Bassiouni, 2011; Dadrian 1998a, 199b, 1998c; Schabas, 2008, 2009). What I wish to underscore is that these developments can be understood not only as historical facts and evolving legal concepts, but also as elements of transnational memory transmitted by lawyers and statesmen from one catastrophe to another. The theoretical framework offered by Levy and Sznajder contends that human rights abuses drive the emergence and development of international norms through the recognition of human suffering, which, abstracted from their concreteness in the particular features of the victimized population, are articulated in norms that may be applied universally. In Wendt’s terms, the intersubjective recognition of social facts based upon shared knowledge are the objective matter from which social structures can be constructed that give effect to and reflect those shared understandings.

The lawyers who applied the customary international law implied in the Hague Conventions to the facts of the Armenian Genocide to produce the concept of the “laws of humanity” that the Ottoman government violated listed the violent atrocities committed by that government. These included such acts as the massacre and starvation of civilians, rape, mass deportations, and the destruction of religious and cultural monuments (United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948b: 8). In their plainly stated recognition of the human suffering these actions caused, they denominated these as violations of the “laws of humanity.” In doing so, they proposed a norm that existed on paper, though not given full effect at the time. Their proposed concept, which applied to the atrocities of the Ottoman government the “laws of humanity,” was abstracted from its concreteness in the Armenian Genocide and later articulated and made a social structure in the Nuremberg tribunal and subsequently reflected in the U.N. genocide convention. In this way, the transnational memory of the Armenian Genocide generated international law.

In addition to the general historical evidence, there are also statements by statesmen and lawyers that illustrate how the memory of the Armenian Genocide figured in the translation of memory into current action. British political leaders, recalling their government’s failure to successfully prosecute Ottoman war criminals responsible for the Armenian Genocide, urged their government to push for the establishment of a war crimes tribunal before the end of the Second World War. Lord Maugham, a member of the London International Assembly (an unofficial body established by the governments of

the Allied powers to examine the problem of war crimes), argued in the House of Lords in October 1943 in debate over the establishment of the U.N. War Crimes Commission that it was necessary to establish judicial mechanisms before the war's end for trying Axis war criminals promptly upon the conclusion of the war. "I cannot,' he said, 'too strongly state that delay will mean the escape of the guilty.' To illustrate this point, Lord Maugham went on to review the futile attempts at retribution which were made after the First World War, including the Leipzig trials" (United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948a: 109). In addition, "Lord Cecil of Chelwood, who spoke from his own experience at the Paris Conference after World War I, and who, as President of the London International Assembly, had taken an active part in the deliberations on the subject of war crimes, agreed that too little previous consideration had been given between 1914 and 1918 to the question of war criminals, and urged that plans should be worked out this time before the end of hostilities" (United Nations War Crimes Commission, 1948a: 109).

During the Nuremberg trials, the British Chief Prosecutor, Sir Hartley Shawcross invoked the Ottoman government's offenses against their subjects in explaining the theory on which the Defendants had been indicted and tried during his closing argument to the International Military Tribunal in July 1946:

Yet international law has in the past made some claim that there is a limit to the omnipotence of the state and that the individual human being, the ultimate unit of all law, is not disentitled to the protection of mankind when the state tramples upon his rights in a manner which outrages the conscience of mankind. [...] The same view was acted upon by the European powers which in time past intervened in order to protect the Christian subjects of Turkey against cruel persecution. The fact is that the right of humanitarian intervention by war is not a novelty in international law-can intervention by judicial process then be illegal? The Charter of this Tribunal embodies a beneficent principle-much more limited than some would like it to be-and it gives warning for the future. I say, and repeat again, gives warning for the future, to dictators and tyrants masquerading as a state that if, in order to strengthen or further their crimes against the community of nations, they debase the sanctity of man in their own country they act at their peril, for they affront the international law of mankind. (International Military Tribunal, Trial of the major war criminals before the International Military Tribunal, Nuremberg, 14 November 1945-1, October 1946, (19): 470-71; see also Schwelb (1946), Dadrian (1998c).)

These statements illustrate the manner in which the memory of the Armenian Genocide, translated into abstract principles by persons who were not victims of the Ottoman government, impressed upon them the urgency of establishing social structures to address crimes of the type that had been committed before. Statesmen indicated their regret at having not resolved the past offenses and urged the establishment of social structures to address current offences in light of the past remembered. Shawcross' closing argument directly connects the Allies' efforts after the First World War, not only to Nazi war crimes, but also future

offenses. These illustrate the way in which shared understandings of human suffering may call for the establishment of norms and structures to address their violation with authority.

The significance of continuing controversy over the Armenian genocide

As both a legal and political concept, the treatment of genocide as crime imposes limitations on the authority of the state by means of a transnational principle of justice. The crime of genocide is regarded as *jus cogens*, that is, a peremptory international norm from which derogation is not permitted and which functions essentially as a principle of natural law (Bassiouni, 1996). *Jus cogens* principles are peremptory because they necessarily trump other international legal principles. As a result, sovereignty and reason of state cannot justify the breach of a *jus cogens* principle, such as the prohibition of genocide, in international law. The concept and term “genocide” changed the discourse of nations as no state can claim that it has a justification for genocide; instead, the state can only deny that it has committed genocide (Bechky, 2012). As Bechky indicates:

By changing the conversation in this way, genocide reconstituted the community of nations: it moved the community from one devoted (almost) exclusively to interstate relations to one concerned as well with (certain of) a nation’s own internal acts. The new community became transnational, rather than international, in nature (p. 623).

Continuing efforts to achieve more widespread recognition of the Armenian Genocide reflects both the affirmation of human rights and the resistance of the state and national sovereignty in the development of human rights law. Today, approximately twenty governments and a number of international organizations recognize the Armenian Genocide (Yeginsu, 2015). Most of these official recognitions occurred from 1995 to 2007 (Armenian National Institute, 2015). There was a wave of new resolutions by governments recognizing the Armenian Genocide in April 2015, which was the centenary of the events, and Turkey, which fears calls for reparations, including territorial concessions to Armenia, reacted with harsh and emotional criticism of these resolutions (Garland, 2015). The centenary of the Armenian Genocide was important because it reinvigorated and continued dialogue about the subject of genocide. As Levy and Sznajder (2010) argue, human rights abuses become part of transnational memory and further dialogue about human rights. Over time, more governments, more organizations, and more people worldwide have come to recognize that the conduct of the Ottoman Empire toward its Armenian population from 1915-1923 constituted a genocide. While a number of major powers, such as Germany and France, recognize the Armenian Genocide, others, notably Turkey and the United States, do not, a decision that reflects their particular state interests.

In 2015, Austria (Pamuk, 2015), Belgium ("Turkey Warns," 2015), Brazil (Yackley, 2015), Germany (Busemann and Nienaber, 2015), Luxembourg ("Turkey Pulls Envoy from Luxembourg," 2015), and the European Parliament (Peker and Pop, 2015) adopted resolutions recognizing the Armenian Genocide, and Pope Francis referred to the Armenian Genocide in a speech (Peker and Pop, 2015), each of which resulted in harsh condemnation and recalling of ambassadors by the Turkish government. During this same time, there was widespread discussion of the United States' failure to recognize the Armenian Genocide due to its security relationship with Turkey (see, e.g., DeYoung, 2015; Hudson, 2015).

The "unresolvedness" of the Armenian Genocide can be at least partially attributed to the governments of Turkey and its ally the United States, which have refused to acknowledge that the Ottoman Empire's mass deportations and massacres amounted to genocide. The international response to the centenary of the Armenian Genocide included affirmations of human rights by prominent nations, visceral reactions by Turkey, and commentary on American inaction. These force continuing dialogue and awareness of the crime of genocide as part of the international human rights regime. In this way, the Armenian Genocide contributes a century later to consciousness of human rights and its violation by states.

There are specific political conditions that have enabled key states with an interest in limiting the recognition of the Armenian Genocide the ability to do so. The Ottoman Empire was defeated, but not unconditionally defeated and occupied as was the German government in the Second World War, so the control the allies had over prosecution of these crimes was greatly limited. The unconditional surrender of the Nazi regime enabled the allies to organize and successfully prosecute the war crimes committed by its military and political leaders. By contrast, the British had little ability to require such prosecutions of Ottoman officials, and the French and Americans had little interest in doing so.

In the years after the conclusion of the First World War, the nature of the Armenian diaspora itself placed it in a difficult position to assert its claims against the governments of Turkey and the United States, which have resisted recognizing the Armenian Genocide. Persons who are part of a culture that has experienced a genocide are able to make the genocide a part of transnational memory by communicating their experiences to others outside their culture, who are able to understand and recognize the experience of those who have suffered a genocide, and a diaspora can aid the spread of transnational memory regarding genocide, as in the Armenian case (Budryte, 2013). In the case of Armenian Americans, for example, the memory of the Armenian Genocide is an aid to solidarity and group identity, and political elites use this historical memory to mobilize them for current political action (Paul, 2000). Further, a diaspora may act in international politics by either influencing the policies of the governments of the countries in which the diaspora communities live or by influencing the politics of their home countries (Shain and Barth, 2003).

The location of the largest concentrations of Armenian ethnic populations has presented challenges in seeking recognition and remedies for the Armenian

Genocide. The Armenian diaspora has its largest numbers in Russia, which has an Armenian population of 1.2 million, and former Soviet republics, particularly Georgia, which has an Armenian population of a quarter million, while elsewhere the numbers are much smaller, except for the United States, with an Armenian population of almost a half million, and France, with an Armenian population of approximately 800,000 (“Armenian Population”, n.d.). The location of these populations has limited the ability of Armenians to achieve more widespread recognition of the Armenian Genocide. For most of the twentieth century, Armenians in the Soviet Union were not in a position to press for the development of the human rights regime and recognition of the Armenian Genocide, because their government had little interest in pursuing these objectives. The largest Armenian population not in a former Soviet republic is in the United States. In the United States, the impact of efforts to achieve official recognition of the Armenian Genocide has been limited due to the United States’ aforementioned security relationship with Turkey. The United States has proven unwilling to suffer damage to that security relationship in order to recognize the Armenian Genocide. Thus, state sovereignty and the varied interests of individual states has resisted efforts to recognize and remedy the Armenian Genocide.

Due to the trauma of the Armenian Genocide and its transmission to the world by the memory preserved by the Armenian people, it is probable that, over time, more governments and more international organizations will recognize the Armenian Genocide. It will remain uncertain as to when particular governments will do so, because a particular government is likely to recognize the Armenian Genocide when doing so satisfies a segment of its population and is not contrary to the current interests of the government as understood by its leadership at that time. While this conclusion does not inspire admiration for the moral sense of governments, it should inspire confidence in the power of transnational memory to preserve and expand international awareness of the trauma of the Armenian Genocide. This transnational memory has grown due to the efforts of the Armenians themselves but also due to the efforts of others who recognize the brutality and genocidal nature of the Ottoman government’s conduct, whose sense of justice impels them to promote recognition of the Armenian Genocide worldwide.

Conclusion

Our common humanity enables us to recognize the horror of genocide and its injustice, which as a result was made a crime under international law. Intersubjective recognition of human rights abuses affirms them and exerts pressure to acknowledge them in international norms and institutions. It is in this way that the transnational memory of genocides, made part of the common lifeworld of humanity, can assert itself against the contrary interests of states and shape institutions and conduct in international affairs. Thus, human rights abuses do indeed foster the development of the international human rights regime. The Armenian Genocide, an unresolved

and massive human rights abuse, contributed powerfully to the development of the current law on genocide and demonstrates how transnational memory, encapsulated in legal concepts, can transmit intersubjectively recognized norms of state conduct through time and institutions. In spite of the fact that there was no meaningful remedial action for the Armenian Genocide, and despite the fact that it has not been universally recognized and is to some extent the subject of dispute, the Armenian Genocide played a significant role in the development of the international law on genocide and, because it is still the subject of dispute, remains a focal point for discussion of the concept of genocide a century later.

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Armėnų *Metz Yeghern* po šimto metų: „neišspręsto“ genocido atvejis ir tarptautinių teisės normų raida

Scott A. Boykin

DŽORDŽIJOS GVINETO KOLEDŽAS
LORENSVILIS, DŽORDŽIJOS VALSTIJA, GA 30052, JAV
EL. PAŠTAS: SBOYKIN@GGC.EDU

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SANTRAUKA: Intersubjektyvus (kelių asmenų santykio formuojamas) žmogaus teisių pažeidimų atpažinimas ne tik rodo didesnę jų svarbos pripažinimą, bet ir skatina juos įtraukti į tarptautinių normų formavimo praktiką. Būtent taip transnacionalinė genocidų atmintis, tapusi bendro žmonijos gyvenimo dalimi, geba atsispirti priešingiems valstybių interesams ir formuoti institucijas bei elgseną tarptautinių santykių arenoje. Žmogaus teisių pažeidimai skatina tarptautinių žmogaus teisių režimų raidą. Armėnų genocidas – neišspręstas didelio masto žmogaus teisių pažeidimo klausimas – svariai prisidėjo prie dabartinio genocido teisinio reglamentavimo plėtos. Šis atvejis parodo, kaip transnacionalinė atmintis, apipinta teisės sąvokomis, gali perkelti intersubjektyviai pripažintas valstybės elgsenos normas į kitą laiką ir kitas institucijas. Nepaisant to, kad nebuvo imtasi jokių žalos atlyginimo priemonių ir iki šiol armėnų genocidas nesulaukė visuotinio pripažinimo, *Metz Yeghern* atliko svarbų vaidmenį formuojant tarptautinę genocido teisę ir – kadangi tebėra ginčų objektas – išlieka svarbus debatuose apie genocido sąvoką, net ir praėjus šimtmečiui nuo aptariamų įvykių. Armėnų genocidas rodo, kad neišspręstų žmogaus teisių pažeidimų atmintis gali atlikti konstruktyvų vaidmenį formuojant visuotinę žmogaus teisių režimą.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: armėnų genocidas, transnacionalinė atmintis, tarptautinės teisės normos, tarptautinė teisė.

Transitional justice and the Colombian conflict: from universal jurisdiction to conflict resolution

Diogo Monteiro Dario

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF BAHIA (UFBA),
AV. ADHEMAR DE BARROS. NÚMERO: S/N. ONDINA
SALVADOR. CEP: 40170-110 BRAZIL
E-MAIL: DIOGOMDARIO@GMAIL.COM

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to analyze the leading narratives about transitional justice (TJ) and the ways in which parts of these narratives were interpreted in Colombia. This analysis includes the Justice and Peace Law adopted in 2005 and the consequent formation a normative framework centered on the notion of the victim. The theoretical part incorporates insights about the changes in the ways that TJ was conceptualized by various international actors and dwells on the impact of these changes, making them relevant to the case of Colombia. This case study demonstrates how the local actors have employed different narratives of TJ centered on a key symbolical dispute over the notion of victim.

Keywords: Colombian conflict, transitional justice, justice and peace law.

Introduction. Law, politics and transitional justice

The aim of this article is to analyze the narratives about transitional justice (TJ) and the ways in which parts of these narratives were interpreted in Colombia. The analysis starts with the Justice and Peace Law (JPL) and proceeds to examine a normative framework centered on the notion of the victim.

Ruti Teitel (2003), one of the key scholars in the field, defines TJ as “associated with periods of political change, characterized by legal responses to confront the wrongdoings of repressive predecessor regimes” (Teitel, 2003: 69). It is a definition that emphasizes legal practices. Teitel and Mark Oriel, another leading scholar in the field, point to the legal practices as the *sine qua non* condition of TJ, and they are indeed a crucial part of TJ instruments and how they work. But there are non-judicial mechanisms like truth commissions and public hearings that have played an important role in many scenarios of transition. For example, one important UN document states that “transitional justice is the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation”(UNSG, 2010: 2).

Before the creation of international norms to assist the transition from war to peace and dictatorship to democracy, the decisions of political actors in these scenarios were not subject to consistent scrutiny on either domestic or international level. Domestic legal systems did not have instruments to make the executive accountable for its decisions. The instruments associated with TJ, such as tribunals and commissions, attempted to change this situation. The end of the World War II and the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials are often seen as a breakthrough in this field (Kim, 2014). In a sense, TJ mechanisms were created in response to the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their allies. They reflected the attempts by Western victorious powers to build institutions to impose their normative standards upon the regimes in their zones of influence.

The creation of the International Tribunals (even if on an ad-hoc basis) to judge war criminals was a novelty and a controversial decision at the time. According to Catalina Botero (2006), on 11 August 1944, the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom made a public declaration asserting that the fate of the main Nazi politicians and commanders was a political issue, not a juridical one. However, after the meetings with the other victorious nations they decided to create an international court (Botero, 2006: 285-286). This decision created the momentum for the expansion of the agenda of international law, under the guise of the principle of universal jurisdiction.

Thus, at that time the aim of TJ was to assign responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity, thus creating an international norm (Uprimny and Saffon, 2005: 215). However, the dynamics of the Cold War created several obstacles to the consolidation of this universalist approach. In the contexts where confrontation was very violent and bitter, the implementation of such instruments ran the risk of further polarizing society and reinforcing the grievances between the different sides. The transition within these societies required a strategy of stabilization, and the instruments of transitional justice had to be adapted to that end.

During a democratic transition in Argentina, a non-judicial mechanism (a truth commission) was created to help investigations. The National Commission for the Disappeared in Argentina (CONADEP, 1984) was set up to find out what happened to the individuals who disappeared during the rule of the military junta. It became a watershed because it recommended making the top military commanders in charge during the dictatorship responsible for these crimes and punishing them.

However, the incorporation of non-judicial mechanisms created a precedent for a more substantial change within the field of TJ. At the end of the Cold War, internal conflicts increased in numbers throughout the world and became more important on the international agenda. The stabilization of those conflicts created a more difficult challenge than the processes of regime transition in South America. They were of a more “protracted” character with some of the parties organizing themselves along ethnic lines (e.g., civil wars in Central America, like in Honduras and Guatemala). Their termination usually led to profound divisions in society. Therefore, for TJ to fulfill its role of creating normative standards to

make regime transition possible, its mechanisms would have to be reformed to foster social reconciliation.

The experience of South Africa changed the debate about TJ. The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), presided by Desmond Tutu, was designed to allow different actors involved in the confrontation to communicate their grievances and incorporate their narrative in the reconstruction of the memory of that society. These mechanisms were intended to stabilize the process of transition not by assigning responsibility and avoiding repetition of human rights violations, but by performing a reconstruction of a common social identity and promoting reconciliation. In order to create an incentive for both parties to express their grief publicly and narrate their violent actions, the Commission did not recommend the punishment of the perpetrators.

The South African experiment created a TJ model that relied on a different notion of justice. Instead of retributive justice (that focuses on making the perpetrators responsible, like Nuremberg and the Argentinian truth commissions), Desmond Tutu opted for a commission based on restorative justice (which aims at repairing the damage that was caused and promoting the reconciliation of society). Currently there is a scholarly debate on how to reconcile these two ideas (Botero, 2006; Kim, 2013; Orozco, 2009; Osiel, 2005).

TJ found its way into Colombia through a counter-intuitive route: the demobilization of paramilitary groups that began in 2003.¹ The application of a set of norms associated with TJ became part of a struggle between the victims' associations, the government, the judiciary and the armed groups over the basic issues behind the conflict and possible solutions to it. It is noteworthy that TJ mechanisms are internalized in Colombia without a proper process of democratic transition, because there was no regime change.

This marks a new moment in the trajectory of TJ, when its instruments are deployed outside of the context of democratic transition. Inside of the conflict, the application of TJ mechanisms changes the configuration of the power struggle among the different actors on two levels. As the rights of the victims are consolidated as an issue to be addressed regarding the problem of violence in Colombia, the justice system (in particular the constitutional court) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) directly involved with the victims acquire a new power of agenda-setting that they did not have before. In addition, the trajectory of normative framework of TJ is not linear. There are different ways to assign meaning to the TJ instruments as they are deployed in the field. Therefore, the implementation of TJ in Colombia becomes an arena of struggles where

¹ Paramilitarism has been part of the landscape of the Colombian conflict at least since the 1970s. In 1997 these several groups were reorganized in a centralized organization under the leadership of the Castaño Brothers called United Self-Defenses of Colombia (AUC). In 2003, the then President Alvaro Uribe, in an attempt to redefine the security strategy and concentrate the official forces in a military struggle against the FARC, launched a negotiation to promote the demobilization of the AUC (El Gobierno Nacional, 2003). It was this initiative, and the reaction of part of civil society against it, that created the political conditions for the debate about TJ.

different actors dispute the legitimacy of the ways to apply and enforce the rights of the victims: through a focus on restorative justice, on retributive justice or by emphasizing the possibility of the victims of voicing their own narratives.

To gain a deeper understanding of this crucial turning point in TJ, the remaining sections of this article trace the relevant struggles that resulted in different articulations of TJ in the international agenda. It will be demonstrated how the instruments of TJ were affected by the idea of universal jurisdiction and how this concept changed as it was applied in various contexts outside of its intended use. Finally, the article discusses how the concepts associated with TJ were applied to the Colombian conflict. It describes the processes of internalization of TJ concepts as the demobilization of the paramilitary and the design of the JPL were taking place (El Congreso de Colombia, 2005). In addition, the article demonstrates how the application of TJ concept continued to transform the configuration of the conflict and the actors' agendas.

Transitional justice and universal jurisdiction

The Nuremberg Tribunal was the first attempt to set up such a judicial mechanism to make the transition to democracy easier. It was set up to judge Nazi officers accused of atrocious crimes during the war. In the immediate post-war period some institutions and norms that later contributed to the creation of the instruments used to regulate international conflict were created. An important example is the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also known as the Genocide Convention (UNGA, 1948). Article I of the Convention stated that genocide was an international crime that all signatory states should be committed to prevent and prosecute. Moreover, in Resolution 260 A (iii) from 9 December 1948, in which the General Assembly of the UN approved the adoption of the document, there was a recommendation to create a Commission of International Law to study the possibility of creating an international criminal court in charge of judging people accused of the crime of genocide (Botero, 2006: 292).

However, in the 1970s and early 1980s, the creators of the TJ framework had to adapt to the structural constraints necessitated by the logic of the Cold War. Although it was clear that TJ mechanisms could play a role in democratic transitions, there was no consensus regarding the universal jurisdiction of their application. Furthermore, there was no agreement regarding non-judicial mechanisms, such as truth commissions.

During that time, other actors, and among them some NGOs from the "Global North" played an important role in keeping the hope of harnessing the transitional process with some kind of criminal justice procedure alive in the international agenda. In 1973, the International Convention for Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (UNGA, 1973) was signed. It stated that people accused of the acts described in the document could be judged by a competent tribunal in

any signatory state who has jurisdiction over these persons, or by any international criminal tribunal recognized as competent by the signatory parts (Article V).

During this period truth commissions were created by transitional authorities (sometimes with the supervision of international organizations, as in the case of peace processes in Central America). Started in Chile, Argentina and El Salvador, this trend led to the spread of such commissions in more than twenty countries by the 1980s and 1990s (De Greiff, 2006: 207). In these cases, the application of TJ was related to democratic transitions. The 1984 Report by CONADEP, *Nunca Más* (Never Again), in Argentina was a watershed because the information collected by the Commission played a major role during the trial of the military junta, the first trial of this kind since Nuremberg. It indicated the responsibility of the highest levels of military command.²

This process of constructing norms to make the individuals responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity achieved an important victory on 17 July 1998, during the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries of the United Nations, where the Statute of Rome was approved, foreseeing the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Treaty (and thus the Court) entered into force 1 July 2002, and it created a permanent tribunal linked to the UN system, empowered to try the most severe crimes that transcended domestic criminal jurisdictions (Rome Statute, 1998). The ICC was made responsible for guaranteeing international justice when the states concerned were “proved” unwilling or unable to judge those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, crimes of war or aggression. It was also awarded jurisdiction in the cases when a juridical process is enacted with a concrete purpose of providing impunity for the crimes perpetrated, as in the case of general or partial amnesties (Botero, 2006: 300).

Transformation of the TJ framework

As instruments associated with TJ moved from being used to assist democratic transitions in Latin America to operating in scenarios of intense violence where a complete reconstruction of the social fabric was necessary, their functions changed. The South African experience became another key point in the genealogical analysis of TJ. The TRC was created in 1995 to deal both with the crimes of the government and the opposition movements. It was designed to emphasize public hearings, and its symbolic nature was essential to the reconciliation of society. In order to prioritize the willingness of individuals from the different groups to publicly confess their crimes, it had the power to grant amnesty to those who agreed to do so. In terms of how it dealt with the idea of justice and the relationship between justice and reconciliation, it meant an important transformation for the TJ framework.

² The report recommended the prosecution of the cases, but amnesty laws granted to the military in 1983 avoided that many of them were judged by their actions during the period. In 2003, however, amnesty laws were repealed by the civilian government.

International lawyers resisted the creation of a truth commission based on the logic of reconciliation. They argued for the creation of a national system that would provide lasting reconciliation and in which impunity for atrocious crimes would not be tolerated. According to them, the existing system undermined the reconciliation efforts in the long run, as it did not establish conditions for guaranteeing that the previous situation does not occur again (Uprimny and Saffon, 2006: 357). This position was articulated in a report “Question of the Impunity of Perpetrators of Human Rights Violations” (1997), also known as the “Joinet Principles,” (United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1997) which was submitted to the former UN Commission on Human Rights. The report argued that the victims of violent regimes had three inalienable rights: the right to know the truth, to justice and to reparation. The “Joinet Principles” reinforced the individual rights of the victims and the criminal nature of the acts committed.

But in many occasions, this vision of international experts was resisted at the local level. Societies torn by war needed reconciliation and closure as much as they needed justice (Osiel, 2006: 55). In various transitions, truth commissions and policies of reconciliation acquired legitimacy in the eyes of both domestic and international actors.

In light of these developments, those concerned with institutional design in the UN attempted to come with a new understanding that would provide a synthesis of truth commissions and policies of reconciliation. In the Report by the UN Secretary General “The Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-conflict Societies” (UNSC, 2004), addressed to the UN Security Council, such accommodation was proposed. This document had two main characteristics: 1) It pointed to the necessity for transitional justice to be more flexible in order to incorporate considerations from the local level (paying attention to the positions of key groups in the society in question); 2) it also asserted the complementary nature of the different mechanisms used in the processes of transition, such as the international tribunals and the truth commissions.

A powerful narrative started to develop, asserting that “the effectiveness of the right to the truth may be achieved through different strategies” (Botero and Restrepo, 2005: 43). According to this narrative, the “judicial strategy” (which emphasizes remembering the past by bringing crimes to justice, assigning responsibility and promoting punishment for individual reparation) and the “truth commission strategy” (which focuses on authorizing and opening institutional space for the narrative of the victim, promoting empathy and forgiveness as a means to collective reconciliation) not only could be reconciled, but did in fact complement each other.

However, the question about the degree to which the processes in truth commissions could obstruct decisions on the responsibility of a perpetrator according to the ICC is essentially a matter of the interpretation of the statutes and the institutional design of the transitional processes. There are no guarantees that producing reports by these commissions will permanently release a perpetrator from his or her responsibility before the ICC. The absence of such guarantees makes the adoption of the South African model in other contexts unlikely

(Stahn, 2005: 131-132). The documents created by the UN tried to accommodate new procedures within an existing institutional design. But there were deeper contradictions between the two approaches to justice that were difficult to address, and they had to do with different conceptions about the meaning of justice.

Retributive and restorative justice

Restorative justice has been designed and used as an alternative paradigm to fight ordinary crime inside a community.³ It is part of a wider critique of the repressive and retributive character of criminal law, and which emerged through an attempt from American scholars to conceive methods of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), such as mediation or arbitration. The problem they were trying to solve is that litigation was expensive and time consuming, and designing informal alternatives to the judicial route might help reach agreements that were more desirable to both parties (Spangler, 2003).

Instead of grounding itself in the traditional idea of retribution and punishment, it assumes that reconciliation between the victim and the perpetrator helps to create cohesion within society. There are authors and groups that defend the claim that criminal law must not be focused on the criminal act and its author.⁴ Instead, the attention should be shifted towards the victim and the damage she or he has suffered. According to this perspective, the needs of the victims and the reestablishment of social peace are the basic goals that must lead the fight against crime. Because of that, the acknowledgement of the suffering caused to the victim, the reparation of the damage and restoration of dignity are more pressing issues than punishing those responsible for the crimes (Uprimny and Saffon, 2005: 217-218).

It was argued that such a synthesis could allow transitional societies to heal their wounds and guarantee stability. Contrary to what was being advocated by the Joinet Principles, the approach that informed the design of the TRC emphasized the idea of empathy and forgiveness to promote reconciliation at the collective level and laid the foundations for the reconstruction of a coherent social identity. It was understood that restorative justice provides TJ with an important degree of legitimacy that may be crucial for the successful implementation of new policies (Uprimny and Saffon, 2005: 219).

³ Conceptually, most see restorative justice as an alternative to TJ, as a variation and an attempt of disputing the original meaning of TJ. Some, however, embrace a different position, as they conceive transitional justice and restorative justice as opposing each other: "While the concept of restorative justice- born in the scope of the small cases courts to provide reconciliation between the victims and the perpetrators, as well as between the latter and the communities-emphasizes the reparation of the victims, the concept of transitional justice emphasizes the punishment of the perpetrator" (Orozco, 2009: 5).

⁴ The notion of restorative justice was developed by the Critical Legal Studies movement that was associated with the Civil Rights movement in the United States and had a significant impact on the critique of Criminal Law. The importance of restorative justice is discussed in the key works by Sullivan and Tift, 2001, and Braithwaite, 2002.

However, there are costs and risks associated with the creation of truth commissions informed by the idea of restorative justice. The “truth” produced through such commissions can be called into question once it does not follow the requirements of a legal process, such as the presumption of innocence and a standard procedure to establish the facts and measure evidence. Besides, by emphasizing a non-confrontational logic, it is possible that the truth commissions can prevent useful controversies and tensions between the different points of view (Uprimny and Saffon, 2006: 361). Truth commissions can also lead to irresponsible accusations, and public hearings can stigmatize the accused (Osiel, 2005: 68).

Transitional justice and the victims in Colombia

The tradition of informal arrangements in Colombia

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Colombia, multiple rounds of negotiation between armed adversaries or between the state and rebel groups were held. During these processes, the representatives of the government and the parties involved in the conflict deliberated over the content of the peace agreements without the interference of other state institutions such as the judiciary. According to Gutiérrez (2006), the repeated celebration of agreements between the state, the armed groups and the different sectors of society resulted in an indiscriminate use of amnesties and pardons. These amnesties and pardons had nothing to do with transitioning to peace. They became the manifestation of a social habit that accepts and reproduces this behavior. In the nineteenth century, for example, there were seventeen amnesties and forty-nine pardons; and in the twentieth century, nine and fourteen, respectively (Gutiérrez, 2006: 397).

However, in the 1990s the Colombian state, following the international tendency of reinforcing human rights protection after the end of the Cold War, initiated a process of constitutional reform. In 1991, the newly created Constitutional Court introduced changes regarding the reform of military institutions (to make them more accountable to civilian authorities and avoid human rights violations) and constraining the prerogatives of the executive to make definitive decisions on matters of war and peace. The state could only offer amnesties or pardons for political offenses (Botero and Restrepo, 2005: 27). Even the illegal armed groups’ members demobilized in the peace negotiation of 1990 had to face trial for crimes such as kidnapping.

The Constitution of 1991 led to the progressive disuse of the discretionary powers of the executive to manage situations of waging war and negotiating peace inside of the territory of the country, as well as to the suppression of individual rights by claiming an emergency situation. The government and its supporters had to look for alternatives that could provide them with room to maneuver in the negotiations. It can be observed, for example, that the Congress, during the previous twenty years, “normalized” all the exceptional legislation elaborated and accumulated over decades through the permanent use of the image of the

state of siege, the concept under which the state of exception was conjured in the Constitution of 1886.⁵

In 2003, one year after his rise to power, President Alvaro Uribe decided to confront the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the guerrilla group active in the country since the late 1960s, by denying them any kind of political legitimacy. Within the context of the discourses about the global war on terror, he declared that contemporary Colombia was not at civil war nor subjected to any kind of insurgent activity. Instead, his country was a “democracy” under attack by narco-terrorist groups called FARC (Ministerio de Defensa Nacional, 2003: 24). However, during the same year (2003), the government, represented by the High Commissioner for Peace Luis Carlos Restrepo, conducted secret negotiations with a paramilitary group called United Self-Defenses of Colombia (AUC) in Santa Fe de Ralito. During these negotiations, it guaranteed a good measure of impunity to the rebels in exchange for the deposition of their weapons and reintegration from their ranks into civilian life. When the negotiations took place, the strategy of the government was to grant the paramilitaries the status of political criminals (which was denied to the guerrillas under the rhetoric of “anti-terrorism”) in order to justify the concessions the government intended to make.

The High Commissioner promoted the creation of the “Decree 128 of 2003” about the normative foundations for the application of the offense of “sedition,” supposedly applicable to the AUC. According to this document, their actions were to be characterized as “political offenses” by a group whose behavior affected regular functioning of the legal constitutional regime, but did not resort to acts of terrorism (Restrepo, 2005: 85-87).

However, by issuing this document, the executive was claiming autonomy in the matters of war and peace it did not have since the promulgation of the 1991 Constitution. It was in this context that the Congress and the Constitutional Court (mainly the latter) decided to intervene in the matter and undermine the efforts of the Executive by limiting its capacity to negotiate and deliver on its promises. This is when groups within the Colombian civil society saw the opportunity to try to enforce an agenda focused on the rights of the victims in the debates concerning the conflict in the country.

The Constitutional Court started to create barriers to the negotiation, and a series of debates took place about the legality of the agreement. Since then, the paramilitary leaders who participated in the negotiations in Santa Fe de Ralito claimed to have been betrayed by the government who failed to offer the guarantees it had promised (Orozco, 2009: 170). Many of them rebelled and revealed the links between their operations and the influential politicians in Congress. At that point, the government started to extradite some of the high ranking AUC members

⁵ The recent attempt of the Uribe government to use of the notion of “State of Internal Commotion” to disperse a prolonged strike of the judicial branch, a situation that has little or nothing to do with the war itself or the political violence (the classical referents of the state of exception) indicates that these practices can be reactivated (Orozco, 2009: 3).

to the U.S. for the crime of drug-trafficking⁶ while trying to protect some of the politicians involved in their activities. This was the start of a fierce battle between the Executive and the Constitutional and Supreme Courts of Justice in Colombia (Valencia, 2009: 205). The extradition of fourteen paramilitary leaders obliged the government to expose publicly the disagreements between their position and those of the AUC in the negotiation process, in a clear sign that it was not going as smoothly as claimed by the government propaganda.

After the contestation of the Santa Fe de Ralito agreement and the legal and political disputes that followed, the Law 975 of 2005 (El Congreso de Colombia, 2005) was passed. It became a singular experiment in TJ when there was no regime change or power transition of any sort. TJ, which is commonly associated with mechanisms implemented in the post-conflict scenario (Pizarro, 2009; Valencia, 2009), was being articulated as an instrument of conflict resolution within an ongoing conflict. It framed Colombia as a “transitional society” and called for an application of a transitional legal framework to regulate it, including an alternative penalty system for those willing to demobilize and a specific set of procedures to guarantee the rights of the victims to justice and reparation. Individuals condemned through an alternative system using JPL for atrocious crimes or crimes against humanity became subject to two simultaneous penalties: a regular sentence from forty to sixty years, and an alternative one from five to eight years, subject to the requirements of the JPL.

Collective memory, confession and victimhood

In theory, following the JPL, to obtain the benefit of the alternative penalty, the defendant must meet five requirements: contribute to the demobilization of his armed group, confess the truth, return what was acquired illegally, ask for forgiveness, and avoid repeating the offense charged against him (Pizarro, 2009: 85). The introduction of the idea of confession as a legal requirement indicates some of the transformations that have resulted from the internalization of the TJ framework.

As noted earlier, amnesties and pardons have been an integral part of conflict resolution in Colombia for a long time. The processes associated with conflict resolution were informal, and no legal instruments were used. This tradition promotes an strategic forgetting of violence, leaving it in the past so that society could move on to the future. The groups were expected to deal privately with their grievances, adjust to the status quo and “erase” the violent events from collective memory.

⁶ There is a treaty regulating the extradition of individuals arrested for the crime of international drug trafficking from Colombia to the United States that dates back to the early 1990s. The possibility of extradition was exactly what the paramilitaries wanted to avoid in the first place, being the whole agreement with the government centered on the promise that they would not face extradition.

The introduction of the idea of confession as a legal requirement in the JPL has an important normative role in the internalization of the TJ framework because it forces the groups that are expected to benefit from it to acknowledge the existence of the victim. The law described the necessity of confession and asking for forgiveness as a pre-requisite for accessing the alternative penalty system. It foresaw that, in order for a demobilized combatant to have access to the alternative sentence, he or she must first give an unrehearsed account of his or her crimes to the authorities. In the following days, the Attorney General's Office would investigate all atrocious crimes that the alleged perpetrator could have committed, and formulated charges against him or her, which could be accepted or rejected by the demobilized individual (Uprimny and Saffon, 2006: 365). This procedure did not have the symbolic dimension of a public ritual, but it did reinforce the idea that the individual has to confess his or her crimes before he or she could be "re-admitted" into society.

In addition to the confession, the JPL has other provisions regarding the rights of the victims to truth, justice and reparation. However, how adequate the strategies of JPL regarding the victims have been is a matter of dispute. Eduardo Pizarro, a researcher who later became the head of The National Commission for Reparation and Reconciliation (CNRR), claimed that the JPL was an achievement within the TJ framework. He argued that due to this legislation for the first time in contemporary history an armed group that had not been militarily defeated agreed to demobilize and even answered before a jury for its crimes (Pizarro, 2009: 85). Pizarro also pointed out that in order to shape historical memory, the Council hired researchers and investigators to publish books that would retell the story of emblematic and tragic events, like the Massacre of Trujillo (CNRR, 2008).⁷ The search for historical truth was complemented with legal attempts to restore justice, as AUC members were investigated for their alleged involvement in atrocious crimes.

The group of experts brought together by the government to produce official documents about the historical memory of the country was the way devised by the JPL to build a narrative of the conflict and its victims. However, this did not mean that the instruments set up by the government took into account the *perspective* of the victims, or incorporated their narratives about their condition, their own accounts of their victimhood. As argued by Maria Tereza Uribe, nowhere in the JPL it was foreseen that the victims should speak, tell their stories, or present publicly their suffering (Uribe, 2006: 343). The narration of their victimhood is always mediated through the state. On the one hand, there is a strong emphasis on the judicial truth (reaching a verdict is more important

⁷ Massacre of Trujillo is the name attributed to a series of assassinations perpetrated by paramilitaries and the Cali Cartel in the town of Trujillo from 1989 to 1994. In 1997 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights accepted the case and found the Colombian State guilty of negligence, arguing that the Armed Forces and the Police were accomplices in the assassination of at least 250 people, and thousands of victims among those killed and tortured. Since then it became an emblematic case about the responsibility of the government in the political violence in the country.

than telling the story), and on the other, the government selects experts to serve on the state-supported historical commission instead of setting public hearings or installing a truth commission.⁸

The critique of Maria Tereza Uribe is very pertinent because it identifies what is at stake in the different ways of dealing with the problem of the victim, and then highlights the singularity of the Colombian context within the genealogy of TJ. In *History, Memory, Forgetting*, Paul Ricoeur (2006: 314-32) established a distinction between the truth of the judge and the truth of the historian. The function of the truth of the judge is to assign responsibility: to decide who is guilty and innocent, and to what extent. The truth of the historian does not make moral judgements: it re-tells the story through an objective and de-personalized reconstruction of the facts.

Ricoeur's distinction can be correlated with the role of judicial procedures and truth commissions in TJ. Judicial procedures are designed to assign responsibility and judge those who committed severe violations, while truth commissions usually serve the process of bringing the facts that are not of public knowledge to light and allowing that hidden chapters of the history of a given society are revealed. Let us consider South Africa's TRC. On one hand, a new principle of justice was incorporated into the framework, but on the other, the fundamental principle behind this institution remained the same: historical reconstruction (by the TRC) was not accompanied by legal responsibility.

Within the framework of the JPL in Colombia, the government tried to control the narrative of the victims by avoiding the creation of a truth commission and imposing the expertise on a group of researchers in charge of investigating the facts. Thus, it created a new opposition between the truth finding and judicial procedures that was not present in the South African case: that between the truth of the historian and the truth of the victim. The truth of the historian was concerned with an objective reconstruction of the facts. The truth of the victim consisted of narratives that were necessarily partial and emotional, but were validated as an important truth about the conflict by the processes through which they were suppressed by the government in the past.

The legacy of the JPL

The analysis of the JPL reflected the struggle between the different forces that were part of the debate about TJ in Colombia. Pushed into accepting a legal framework, the government still managed to design a legal arrangement with strong incentives for the AUC to demobilize. The law applied only to the crimes

⁸ It is noteworthy that the establishment of the Truth Commission, an extra-judicial mechanism, while the conflict is still ongoing and the groups involved were still in process of demobilization might be dangerous, exposing the victims to retaliation from the AUC or even other armed actors (Uprimny and Saffon, 2006: 358).

the individual voluntarily confessed to the judge, and little time was given for further investigation of the crimes. Except for those who confessed or whose crimes fit into a certain category of what was considered to be a “serious” crime, such as torture or kidnapping, the remaining perpetrators stayed outside of the reach of the justice system. This means that the great majority of those who demobilized did not and will not face trial.

As illustrated in the analysis above, the JPL accommodated both retributive and restorative justice, but it pursued them only partially. Considering retributive justice, only a few individuals faced trial; the incentive for them to confess the unknown crimes was small, and the penalties for these crimes were greatly reduced. Considering restorative justice, there has been an effort to acknowledge the victims. This effort can be described as unprecedented in the history of the conflict and compensatory measures. Paramilitaries confess their crimes, and this gives credibility to the story of the victims. In addition, the government engages in symbolic acts of public recognition and builds monuments in honor of the victims.⁹ But without a real truth commission, the victims are not being heard, and an official narrative is a poor replacement for the stories of victims as it allows the government to control the public expressions of their suffering.

The judiciary and the civil society organizations engaged in this case did not get exactly what they wanted (which was a TJ system focused on retributive justice and material reparations for the victims), but their engagement built a powerful precedent that empowered them in the matters concerning the construction of a normative framework regarding the victims and the violence perpetrated by illegal armed groups and state agents in Colombia. As they brought, through TJ, the figure of the victim to the center of the stage, the experiment of the JPL led to the other initiatives to internalize the TJ framework in Colombian domestic politics on a more permanent basis. In addition, TJ norms are playing a major role in the current dialogues between the government and FARC, and this makes these norms even more embedded in Colombia.

Admittedly, demobilization of the armed groups is a limit to the application of the JPL. In 2009, still under Uribe’s government, some human rights groups proposed that the rights identified in this law were extended to all victims of the

⁹ One of the significant symbolic measures representing “the new era of reconciliation” in Colombian society was the use of the arms seized during the demobilization process by recommendation of the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of American States (OAS). In the recent past, there were sophisticated programs available that could record not only the serial numbers, but also “digital signatures” of the weapons (in case of an investigation into the crimes of the past). However, there was no need to keep the weapons any longer. That is why the UN Conference on the Illegal Trafficking of Small and Light Weapons and the OAS Mission for Colombia recommended these weapons be destroyed, and the steel be used for works of art paying tribute to the victims of the conflict. These works of art were also to be, preferably, inaugurated with a public act including the participation of the victims, as a symbolic measure of reparation (Pizarro, 2009: 146)

conflict, thus aiming to internalize this mechanism in the Colombian domestic law. However, President Alvaro Uribe sabotaged the initiative. First of all, Uribe argued that Colombia was not living in an armed conflict. Instead, he asserted that it was a consolidated democratic country facing the threat of a specific terrorist organization (FARC). Besides, creating such a law would open the possibility for an individual to accuse the government forces of human rights violations and require reparations.

In 2010, upon his assuming his duties as the President, Santos signaled that he would develop a different approach to these issues. He immediately declared publicly that an armed conflict was still going on in Colombia. Then he incorporated TJ mechanisms into domestic law in a permanent basis using two instruments: the Legal Framework for Peace and the Law of Victims, and Land Restitution. The latter extends to all victims of conflict, past and present, the rights to truth, justice and reparation. The land issue has generated great controversy and gained prominence in the drafting of the Law because segments of society feared losing control over lands appropriated through the violation of human rights, the use of threat, and forced removal (Dario, 2014).

The Legal Framework for Peace consists of a constitutional amendment that aims to create legal mechanisms to regulate the demobilization of armed groups by establishing favorable conditions for their crimes to be presented and judged, and for their reintegration into society. The Law generated a lot of controversy because the government was accused of being negligent regarding the severity of the crimes committed and was criticized for offering the members of armed groups a type of amnesty. The Colombian government insisted that the Framework did not neglect the rights of victims and that it was a guarantee that victims would have access to justice.

The victims are now a central part of any negotiation between the government and armed groups. In the ongoing peace talks with FARC, the rights of the victims are one of the key topics. In February 2015, a new cycle of talks on the issues of TJ and the rights to truth, justice and reparation started in Havana. In May 2015, the participants of these talks announced that a truth commission with a mandate to investigate the facts relevant in the trajectory of the conflict will be created. However, so far, no details about the roles of the victims or other details about the functioning of this committee were released.

At the end of September 2015 the negotiators reached a partial agreement. According to the publicly available information, there will be an alternative penalty system where sentences can range from 5 to 8 years of imprisonment for the most serious crimes. But this time, there will be a special tribunal for peace. Its composition is still disputed. Another key announcement was made on 18 October 2015. The government reached an agreement with FARC regarding the individuals who “disappeared” during the conflict. FARC promised to return the remains of those who died in their captivity to the families of the deceased.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to propose a genealogical analysis of the transformations in the frameworks of TJ and analyze their contemporary applications to the Colombian conflict. The notion of TJ was developed by the victorious powers of World War II to impose normative legal standards on the processes of transition from war to peace and dictatorship to democracy. TJ instruments were conceptualized as legal practices operating in a political vacuum. As a legal normative framework, TJ was designed to associate justice with assigning responsibility and imposing reparations on the guilty parties.

But when forced to deal with societies divided by war where resentment between the groups was a key obstacle to stabilization, TJ had to be reformulated in a way that helped to rebuild the social fabric rather than undermine it. This shift involved a new understanding of justice as restoration (in opposition to reparation). Rituals and practices of memory (re)construction and collective reconciliation became a key part of a transnational normative framework of TJ.

The internalization of this framework within the Colombian conflict sets a new shift in this genealogy as it expands the use of these instruments to scenarios of consolidated political authority where there is no democratic transition. TJ is displaced from its usual role in post-conflict scenario and becomes an instrument of conflict resolution while the conflict is ongoing. The government tries to “manage” the narratives of the victims and build its own version of the “historical truth.” The Colombian conflict therefore can be interpreted as a crucial case in understanding the current transformations within this normative framework.

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Pereinamojo laikotarpio teisingumas ir Kolumbijos konfliktas: nuo universalios jurisdikcijos prie konflikto sprendimo?

Diogo Monteiro Dario

FEDERALINIS BAIJOS UNIVERSITETAS (UFBA)

AV. ADHEMAR DE BARROS. NÚMERO: S/N. ONDINA, SALVADORAS, CEP: 40170-110, BRAZILIJĄ

EL. PAŠTAS: DIOGOMDARIO@GMAIL.COM

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SANTRAUKA: Šio straipsnio tikslas yra aptarti svarbiausius pereinamojo laikotarpio teisingumo naratyvus ir būdus, kuriais šie naratyvai buvo interpretuoti Kolumbijoje. Analizuojamas Teisingumo ir taikos įstatymas, priimtas 2005 m., ir po to pradėtas normų sistemos formavimas, kurio centre atsидūrė aukos samprata. Teorinėje straipsnio dalyje aptariama, kaip skirtingi tarptautiniai veikėjai keitė pereinamojo laikotarpio teisingumo (PLT) sąvoką ir kokią įtaką šie pokyčiai turėjo Kolumbijai. Ši atvejo studija atskleidžia, kaip skirtingi veikėjai naudojo skirtingus PLT naratyvus esminiame simboliniame ginče dėl aukos sampratos.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: Kolumbijos konfliktas, pereinamojo laikotarpio teisingumas, teisingumo ir taikos įstatymas.

The *retornados*: trauma and displacement in post-revolution Portugal

Isabel David

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF LISBON
RUA ALMERINDO LESSA, 1300-663 LISBOA, PORTUGAL
E-MAIL: ISABEL.DAVID4@GMAIL.COM

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to shed light on the traumatic experiences of the *retornados* and their strategies to cope with loss and displacement, by focusing on the cases of *retornados* from Angola and Mozambique, the territories that hosted the largest percentage (94%) of Portuguese settlers. *Retornados* is the word used to refer to the white Portuguese living in the African colonies who were repatriated to Portugal in the months leading to their independences, between the Spring and Autumn of 1975. Their exact numbers are unknown, varying between 500,000 and one million. 40% of them had been born in the colonies. The findings of this paper are based on semi-structured interviews conducted with six *retornados*, all with different professional and personal trajectories. The paper argues that the Portuguese case presents unique features that place it in a special category in the context of traumatic memory and displacement literature. First, by blurring the distinction between victim and oppressor – when colonists become the victims of a political power that used them as agents of an imperialistic power project. Second, by showing how the post-revolution Portuguese elites chose not to use the *retornados* to further the country's foreign policy goals, but rather *forgot them*, to further those goals, namely European Economic Community membership. Third, by demonstrating that the plight of the *retornados* has not been used for the sake of domestic political purposes in forty-one years of democracy.

Keywords: *retornados*, trauma, displacement, colonialism, Portugal.

Introduction

Retornados are the white Portuguese living in the African colonies who were repatriated to Portugal in the months leading to their independence¹ between the Spring and Fall of 1975. Their exact numbers are unknown; estimates vary between 500,000 and one million (Pires, 2003; Rocha-Trindade, 1995). According to the 1981 census (the only census with relevant data available), their number was totalled 505,078, which accounted for more than 5% of the Portuguese population

¹ Angola became independent on 11 November 1975, Mozambique on 25 June 1975, Cape Verde on 5 July 1975, Guinea Bissau on 24 September 1973 (recognised on 10 September 1974) and São Tomé and Príncipe on 12 July 1975.

at that time (Pires et al., 1987). 40% of them had been born in the colonies (ibid). The word “retornados” literally means *returnees* and is frequently seen as having a pejorative connotation. The *retornados* are a heterogeneous group composed of people from all walks of life and professions: from civil servants, to businessmen, to lottery ticket sellers, to shoe polishers, farmers, white-collar and blue-collar employees (Pires et al., 1987: 133-143, 225-228).

The integration of these people in a post-revolutionary Portuguese society was a complex and painful process. On the one hand, they left behind most of their possessions in the newly independent African states. On the other, Portugal was not prepared to cope with a massive influx of population, as it was undergoing political and economic turmoil in the wake of the Carnation Revolution.

This article attempts to shed light on the divergent ways in which the Portuguese state and the *retornados* dealt with the traumatic memory of forced displacement. Specifically, it has five main aims: to explain the *retornados*' perception of the reasons which led them to abandon the lands where they had settled; to assess how traumatic the processes of abandonment were; to analyse their integration in a post-revolutionary, agitated country; the reasons for their marginalisation by the Portuguese society and their strategies of coping with that marginalisation; and the usage of memory and traumatic displacement by Portuguese political elites. The article focuses on the cases of *retornados* from Angola and Mozambique, as these territories hosted by far the largest percentage (94%) of white settlers: 309,058 and 164,065 residents, respectively (Pires et al., 1987: 38).

The findings of this article are based on semi-structured interviews conducted with six *retornados* from Angola and Mozambique, all with different professional and personal trajectories. My goal was to find individuals who represent different socio-economic classes and were interested in sharing their stories. Perhaps it is not surprising that two community leaders (the presidents of the *Associação de Espoliados de Angola* (AEANG)² and of the *Associação de Espoliados de Moçambique* (AEMO)³; Manuel Reis and Clara Norton de Brandão, respectively), were among those who agreed to talk about their experiences. The two official associations represent the claims of settlers who lost their possessions during the decolonisation period. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and a half and were transcribed by the author. As requested by the interviewees, two names referenced in the article are pseudonyms: Ana and Marisa. Four interviewees were in their 60s during the time of the interview; one interviewee (Marisa) was in her 40s, and one (Mr. Ângelo Soares) was 93. I acknowledge that *retornados* have very different stories to tell about their experiences. Given the scarcity of research about this group, my hope is that this article, drawing on the literature on memory and trauma, will help to identify some dominant themes in their narratives and thus help to identify trajectories for future research.

² Association of Expropriated of Angola.

³ Association of Expropriated of Mozambique.

I have also analysed three websites and a Facebook page, authored by *retornados*. These websites are the official websites of the aforementioned associations: www.aeang.com, and www.aemo.org, respectively, and the personal blog of Mr. Soares that he runs with the help of his family: www.espoliadosultramar.com. All contain documentation, interviews and newspaper articles pertaining to their claims. The Facebook page, entitled “Os retornados, espoliados de Angola e Moçambique e a descolonização” is a group page composed of 162 *retornados*, including one of my interviewees, Ângelo Soares, and António Reis, the brother of the president of AEANG. Both the websites and the Facebook page are public.

The article starts with a theoretical discussion on the links between memory, trauma and displacement. This helps to relate my case study, presented in the next several sections, to a broader body of literature. The first section traces the settlement of the Portuguese in both colonies, their motivations and explains the causes of their displacement from the African territories. The second section presents the main findings through an analysis of their traumatic memories of displacement and integration in Portugal.

Memory, trauma and displacement: a theoretical framework

Memory can be defined as the process through which events or impressions from the past are recollected and preserved (Bell, 2006: 2). In the same manner, collective memory involves shared perceptions of the past and the ways these shape the present and future, influencing the process through which groups of people perceive themselves (ibid). Maurice Halbwachs (1968) states that people acquire their memories and localize them in society, given the intersubjective nature of their content.

What one remembers and what one forgets is a political process. Though related to history, this process does not always necessary entail historic truth. Often, in fact, policy-makers and the wider public do not possess enough historical knowledge of the events that generate memory and identity. As Novick (2001) argues, present concerns determine what is remembered and when.

The past is constantly interpreted and reinterpreted to shape collective identities. In fact, memory of historical events influences and is influenced by identities, norms and interests. Although identities can be viewed as the stable perception of the self through time, they are subject to challenge and may be negotiable and flexible. A collective identity implies a shared understanding of history and its meaning and a construction of a narrative that connects past and present, locating both the individual and the community in time (Bell, 2003: 5). Different generations interpret historical memories according to their respective frame of reference, which changes from one generation to the next.

According to Edkins (2003), trauma involves political menace, betrayal and relations of power. Trauma betrays our faith in a social order seen as immutable:

“trauma takes place when the very powers that we are convinced will protect us and give us security become our tormentors” (p. 4). Our existence, she argues, relies on the continuance of the social order. A potential menace can easily destroy the sense of safety or security. This is the moment when one realizes that social reality is nothing but a construct. The state, as the product of force and violence (whether in the shape of war, revolution or civil conflict) and as the possessor of the legitimate monopoly on violence, is able to define and exert violence upon those it deems as the excluded ones. Elsewhere, Edkins (2006) contends that traumatic memory may reinforce state power and the sovereign political order.

The nation can be conceptualized as a “mnemonic community” (Mannheim, 1959). The relationship between memory, trauma and identity plays a significant and sometimes fundamental role in shaping political perceptions, affiliations and political action, in order to justify political projects, legitimacy and foreign policy. As Edkins (2006: 101) argues, “memory [...] is central to the production and reproduction of the forms of political authority that constitute the modern world.” Memory produces certain power relations. These political projects, in turn, justify the flexible nature of the historical memory and its fabrication. Memory and trauma help mould political perceptions and policy choices. The role of national elites in shaping national interests is closely related to this. Memory influences the role of political actors and particularly the role of elites. Memories may be used to further certain political aims (Edkins, 2006). The position of a state in world events is affected both by how the past continues to shape the present and by how states see themselves. In this sense, the nation is what Benedict Anderson (1991) terms as “imagined communities.”

As Becker (2014: 57) contends, traumas provide fertile ground for the instrumentalist manipulation of memory to serve a specific foreign policy purpose. In a constructivist approach, identities dictate states’ foreign policies. As such, states that experience trauma tend to adopt either one of these approaches: a more aggressive foreign policy or a more pacifist one. Thus, political leaders may make use of trauma either to engage or withdraw from international interaction. Subsequently, the memory of traumatic events is intimately linked to a state’s perception of its own security. This, in turn, requires a measure of forgetting, i.e., to rewrite history, namely to remove any trace of indigenous people from the country. Becker states that this is a common practice among settler-colonial historical memories and cites the examples of Israel and the United States (Ibid.).

Displacement necessarily produces trauma, especially massive displacement. As Edward Said (2000: 137) rightfully claims, modern Western culture is, to a great extent, the product of exiles, émigrés and refugees. War, civil war, revolution, terrorism, human rights violations, oppressive regimes, all contribute to involuntary migration. The dissolution of colonial empires also fits into this category: the British, the French, or the Portuguese, among others. These set of events make our era, in Said’s (2000: 138) words, the age of the refugee, of the displaced person and of mass immigration.

Richmond (1994) speaks of reactive migrants – people who have little control of the environment which surrounds them and whose choice concerning when and where to leave is greatly hampered. This is the case of people who have been expelled from their homes, of stateless people, of slaves and of forced labourers. Weiner (1995) places displacement in the context of the underlying political motivations of the sending countries, namely: achieving cultural homogeneity or state control over certain social groups. These policies are intimately linked to processes of state and identity building and nationalism (Soguk, 1999).

Said (2000: 137) describes exile as the “unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home.” Even if the exiled is able to prosper in his new location, the sorrow of estrangement never leaves him/her. The exile, according to Said (2000: 140), experiences a kind of solitude outside a group and therefore is immersed in the “perilous territory of not-belonging.” It is a discontinuous state of being, setting the exile apart both from where he once lived and from where he now lives. They are estranged from their roots and from their past. The challenge lies thus in the (painful) adoption of a new identity. Voutira (2006) describes how the processes of displacement, dispossession and resettlement help incorporate new elements into those groups affected, to an extent to which their identity becomes a hybrid mix of old and new experiences. As place is an integral part of one’s culture, the memory associated with it never leaves the group’s imaginary.

Zweig (1947) captures the sense of security that stems from the stability provided by the state and from having a homeland. The collapse of this feeling emerges when that homeland turns against an individual or community of individuals and, with it, the sense of rootlessness that comes from the collapse of a known world. The author conveys the despair of not belonging anywhere that comes with displacement and which turns citizens into immigrants, refugees and even criminals. Displacement thus demonstrates the precariousness and frailty of all things once taken for granted: life, possessions, lifestyle. All of them can be extinguished almost without a trace, a process that cannot easily be grasped by the individuals affected by it. In this respect, Agamben’s work on the state of exception (1998) and how it can deprive individuals of their citizenship rights turning them into *homo sacer* comes to mind. However traumatic forced displacement and migration are, they prove, nonetheless, as Chatty (2010: 10) argues, “the unique adaptive quality of human social life and its resilience.”

It is my contention in this article that literature can learn from the case of *retornados*, which has not been explored as it should, given the number of settlers involved and the fact that Portugal was the last colonial power. Lubkemann’s (2002) study, with a focus on moral economy, continues to be one of the few pieces on the subject on an international level, while, from the viewpoint of traumatic memory of forced displacement nothing has been written. In many features, the experiences of the *retornados* confirm the insights from the existing literature summarised above, but at the same time present fascinating aspects that place the Portuguese case in a unique category. In fact, Portugal provides an example of how a state decided to

forget its colonial past and the visible remnants of that past – its settlers. Contrary to literature, the new political elites that took power after the revolution did not *use them* to further the country's foreign policy goals, but rather *forgot them*, to further those goals, namely European Economic Community membership. And neither were they used by elites for domestic political purposes in the forty-one years of democracy. Those elites decided to bury a colonialist past seen as shameful and also because it was tied to dictatorship.

From colonisation to repatriation

The origins of the Portuguese presence in Africa can be traced to the 15th century. Slave trade⁴ would become Portugal's main goal throughout the colonies until the complete abolition of slavery in 1869. The Portuguese authorities started investing in the colonies in the late 19th century, as a response to a crisis in metropolitan agricultural exports and to the weak dimension of the internal market (Rosas, 1994: 129). Concomitantly, the 1884-85 Berlin Conference launched the colonial powers' partition of Africa. Effective occupation thus became the official Portuguese policy. The exploration of minerals and agriculture in both Angola (diamonds, oil, coffee, rubber, sugar, cotton) and Mozambique (sugar, cashew, copra, cotton) would become the main activities.

Investment in the colonies increased after the 1929 crisis. The 1930 Colonial Act materialised this interest in the colonies by affirming the historical mission of the Portuguese state to “possess, civilise and colonise” overseas territories. Mass emigration to the colonies started after the 1930's and accelerated after the 1951 constitutional changes, which revoked the Colonial Act. These changes, in particular, transformed the legal status of the colonies. Instead of colonies, they were to be called “overseas provinces.” Assimilation was thus transformed into the national policy for these territories, in a response to mounting international pressure against colonialism (Rosas, 1994: 486).

From 1961, as other colonial powers decolonised, the influx of Portuguese white settlers increased, as the war of independence started in Angola. The settlement of white people was promoted by the regime through subsidies to those who wanted to establish themselves permanently in the colonies. In this sense, apart from colonial civil servants, who enjoyed seasonal paid trips, those who left Portugal knew they would not be returning (Pires, 2003; Lubkemann, 2002: 8). The power project of the Portuguese state included a stimulus package (introduced in the 1950's) to the emigration of white farmers to the African territories, particularly Angola and Mozambique.

On the other hand, the start of the hostilities by the UPA (Union of the Peoples of Angola, *União das Populações de Angola*), later designated as FNLA (Angola

⁴ Slave trade from Angola began in 1575 and in Mozambique since the late 18th century (Alexandre, 1993: 54).

National Liberation Front, *Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola*), had contributed to a greater will to invest in the colonies and reinforce the regime's view of national unity. In this sense, the regime started to bet on the development of the colonies by promoting public and private investment through foment plans, launching the construction of major infrastructure such as roads, railways, hydroelectric power plants, ports and airports. As a result, Angola's GDP grew at an average of 7% between 1963 and 1973 (Rosas, 1994: 489).

Mozambique's growth rates were more modest. The territory's relations with Portugal took place in a different scenario. Geographically more distant from Portugal, it had always had less white settlers than Angola, counting also with Indian and Arab-origin populations. Turned mainly to the Indian Ocean, it enjoyed British and South-African influence – the presence of Mozambicans in the Rand mines in South Africa was an example of this preferential relation. As in Angola, the start of the independence war, in 1964, stimulated the investments of the Portuguese authorities in infrastructure (e.g., roads and ports). The greater proximity of Angolan territory to Portugal and the higher growth rates may help explain why intermarriage was more common in Angola than in Mozambique (cf. Mata, 2007).

The first white settlers were mainly civil servants, sent by the Portuguese authorities, however, as the population and the economy grew, other professions became necessary. The settlers consisted of people from all walks of life and professions: from businessmen to farmers, white-collar and blue-collar employees (cf. Pires et al., 1987: 133-143, 225-228).

Those who chose to settle in the African territories did not necessarily share the motivations of the Portuguese state. Economic reasons were paramount, as the growth rates of Angola and Mozambique soon attracted the hopes of those who wanted to build a better life. Another motivation lay in the hope for greater freedom from the shackles of the Portuguese dictatorship (cf. Pires, 2003). Some were also motivated by a spirit of adventure associated with the African landscapes (ibid.).

This migration process to the colonies was suddenly put to a halt by the 25 April 1974 coup in Portugal.⁵ After the revolution, the military started negotiating peace with the national liberation movements – FNLA, MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola, *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola*) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*), PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, *Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*), FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) – with the aiming of granting independence to the colonies.

The relations of the military with the white settlers were tense: the settlers accused the military of incompetence and opportunism and of not protecting them against

⁵ The coup put an end to 48 years of dictatorship and it was led by the intermediate officers of the military – the captains – unsatisfied with the course of the colonial war and also highly politicised and with links to the opposition. As they saw it, democratisation was the only way to terminate the war. Democratisation and decolonisation were to be simultaneous processes. For details, see Loff and Pereira (2006).

the violence perpetrated against them by the black guerrillas (Dacosta, 2013). In fact, as the influence of the guerrillas spread, intimidation, psychological pressure, violence, destruction of property and looting became increasingly used against the white settlers, particularly as the date of the independence approached. Because of this, the white settlers who had initially planned on staying changed their minds. Dissatisfaction with the military only increased amid rumours that some radicals within the army wanted to abandon the white population, so that the “blacks could throw them into the sea” (Dacosta, 2013: 18).

In 1974, Angola was home to the second largest white population in Africa after South Africa – 324,000 residents (Pires, 2003: 337). In Mozambique, there were about 190,000 residents (*ibid*). Faced with the need to absorb these people, the Portuguese government put into practice, in just a few months, a repatriation scheme, between the spring and the autumn of 1975. 61% of the *retornados*, 309,058, came from Angola. From Mozambique, 164,065 people arrived in Portugal (33% of the *retornados*). According to the 1981 census, 505,078 people arrived in Portugal (Pires et al., 1987), over 5% of the Portuguese population at the time. Many arrived by their own means, including in small fishing boats (Dacosta, 2013). This was the second largest repatriation of white settlers in history, in proportional terms. The exact numbers remain unknown, varying between 500,000 and one million (Pires, 2003; Rocha-Trindade, 1995). Not more than 60,000 emigrated to other countries (Pires, 2003: 198), particularly South Africa and Brazil.

The *retornados* benefited from economic assistance to integration, from the Portuguese authorities and from international donations and loans from the US, the Council of Europe and the Swedish government (Almeida, 2014). The Portuguese government did not concede the *retornados* any indemnities, given the economic and political turmoil in the wake of the revolution. This meant that most *retornados* lost their possessions. Many arrived in Portugal just with the clothes they were wearing.

In the early 1980s, they founded two associations in order to fight for their right to indemnities – AEANG and AEMO – but to no avail. These associations are still active, petitioning courts and even EU institutions. 81,000 asked for indemnities from the Portuguese state for the loss of their property (Lusa, 2014). These properties include, according to my interviews with Mr. Reis and Mrs. Brandão, houses, land, bank deposits, or companies. The total worth of the assets still has to be determined. In 1975, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a registry of the individual claims. The issue, however, was left unattended until 2005, when the Parliament created a working group to study it but this group never convened. Still according to the presidents of AEANG and AEMO, all political parties represented at Parliament have agreed, in 2014, to reconvene that working group in 2015. When I asked my interviewees why the matter has not been solved, they stated that there was a lack of political will from the part of the rulers. AEANG and AEMO claim that Portugal is the only colonial power that did not compensate the losses of their citizens. Mrs. Brandão told me that in 1977 the Portuguese authorities passed law 80/77, which transferred all responsibility for indemnities to the former colonies.

Another issue the Portuguese government had to deal with was the attribution of nationality to the incoming flux of population. As Pires (2003: 227) mentions, the term *retornados* had a racial connotation, referring exclusively to the white population. The law passed by the Portuguese authorities reflected this understanding: according to government decree No. 308-A/75, of 24 June 1975, the word *retornado* pertains to those who, maintaining their Portuguese nationality and having resided in the former colonies, were born in Portugal or have great-grandparents who were born in Portugal (ibid). All those who did not fit the category were considered immigrants. Minister António de Almeida Santos, who was responsible for the decree, aimed at avoiding flooding the country by an estimated number of one million *retornados*, a figure the impoverished country simply could not absorb. According to Baganha (1999), between 25,000 and 35,000 *retornados* were of mixed (African and white) descent.

Memory of the return

The *retornados* were seen with suspicion by the Portuguese population and were not well accepted at first upon their repatriation to Portugal. One of the main reasons lies in the fact that they were seen as a symbol of a dictatorial regime that had to be forgotten – especially in a country where, at that particular moment, the left dominated the political sphere. They were accused of being colonialists and reactionary. This was one of the reasons why many did not want to go to Portugal after the decolonisation process, instead choosing South Africa and Brazil, the cases of Mr. Soares and of Ana (pseudonym), a white woman born in Angola, respectively. This burden they carried involuntarily was particularly heavy as Portugal was in a transition: abandoning 500 years of a colonial past and turning to European integration, as ascertained by the bid to become a member of the then European Economic Community in 1977. Another reason why they were discriminated against – the main reason, according to my interviewees Mr. Reis and Mrs. Brandão – was that, in a country facing economic recession, the financial help they received was seen as unjust, other than the fear they would steal people's jobs, given their better qualifications (Almeida, 2014).

Despite this hostility, they managed to integrate into and be accepted by the Portuguese society, and the word “retornado” disappeared from public usage. They became entrepreneurs, founding several businesses (small shops, restaurants, cafes), helping revitalise the Portuguese economy in the wake of the revolution, benefitting from the experience of the more modern and managerial methods they had acquired in Africa. As Mr. Reis told me, as they had fought nature to build a new country in Africa, so they also managed to overcome difficulties in a Portugal burdened by a faltering state apparatus and by the lack of money. They quickly became the best in their field of work (Dacosta, 2013). Their better qualifications helped integration and facilitated social mobility: 11% of them had a university degree, compared to only 2.3% of the Portuguese; only 7% of the *retornados* were

illiterate, while that percentage was 30% for those residing in Portugal (Pires, 2003: 200). These qualifications were instrumental in helping develop the welfare state in Portugal in the early 1980's. In effect, according to the 1981 census, of the *retornados* employed, 10.8% were teachers or professors, 9.54% were doctors and 9.66% were high-level officials (Pires et al., 1987: 133-135). Discrimination (and racism) however, continued for those of African descent, as skin tone continues to determine their negative labelling by the white population.

Despite the relatively fast integration and the official narratives describing the integration of the *retornados* as a success and an example (a narrative also shared by a number of researchers, e.g. Pires et al., 1987; Pires, 2003; Dacosta, 2013), this account is strongly rebuked by those who endured the whole process. Instead of *retornados*, they prefer to designate themselves as “refugees,” “homeless,” and “expropriated,” as Mr. Reis, Mrs. Brandão and Mr. Soares told me. The general perception among the *retornados* is that the decolonisation process was hastily and poorly conducted, and that they were not treated fairly, nor were they protected by the Portuguese authorities.

Mrs. Brandão told me that the decolonisation was certainly not exemplary, as voiced by Portuguese politicians at the time: “They were in a hurry to decolonise. Why? I think the will to become a member of the European Economic Community can explain that hurry.” As she mentioned, the white settlers had no idea they would have to abandon Mozambique, especially in hasty and chaotic conditions. Although realising that the independence had become, at some point, inevitable, they believed they could stay there, as all people, regardless of colour or religion,⁶ got along very well.

Many blame the Portuguese politicians for the shattering of their lives. Claiming that the Portuguese government did not protect the property or the lives of the Portuguese settlers (as stipulated by the Alvor Agreements, which recognised the independence of Angola), Mr. Reis is convinced that politicians had no intention of doing so, particularly the Minister of Foreign Affairs who negotiated the independence of the colonies, Mário Soares: “the vast majority of the expropriated blame him for everything. He knew the agreements would not be kept and he never intended for that to happen. It was politically motivated. He was pressured into signing the agreement. The West and the USSR wanted the independence of Angola in order to exploit the country. The main motivation of the 25 April Revolution was to give independence to the colonies” (this is what the interviewee said).

Mrs. Brandão also stated that the Portuguese government did not protect the people and their property. My interviewee Ângelo Soares also blamed Mário Soares for the shattering of his world, mentioning the politician's declarations throughout the years⁷ and the absence of references to the property of the Portuguese in Mozambique in the Lusaka Agreements (which recognised the country's independence) as evidence.

⁶ As mentioned before, Mozambique had Indian and Muslim populations.

⁷ The statement “blacks could throw the whites into the sea” mentioned above is attributed to Mário Soares in an interview he gave to *Der Spiegel* in the 1970s.

Another argument that contradicts the successful integration of the *retornados* was the change in their status: many of the *retornados* were at the top of the social ladder while in the colonies. Upon their return, the money, property and privileges they enjoyed were replaced by a situation in which they depended heavily on the help of others to survive. In 1981, the unemployment rate among the *retornados* was double of that of the Portuguese (Pires, 2000: 194), forcing about 10,000 to emigrate (ibid: 184).

Ana explained that the economic difficulties of the *retornados* in Portugal led her to choose Brazil when she decided to leave Angola: "Some of my relatives had gone to Portugal by then. They were living in pensions, depending on alms from IARN. I was not born to be a beggar. I wanted to build a new life." She and her husband found poorly paid jobs within weeks. Ana stated that for two years, due to their low salaries and the need to take care of their daughters, her grandmother and her parents, her lunch was bread with butter, while for the family dinner she invariably cooked meat that was usually used to feed the dogs.

More excruciating than the loss of their property was the emotional trauma. Only when the independence dates approached did many realise that staying in Africa would be impossible. Needless to say, they had no idea what to expect when arriving as an uncertain future awaited them. A profound feeling of victimhood was thus one of the first forms of trauma associated with the hasty, unprepared departure from their homes, lives and friends. Many had lived in Africa for decades or were born there and realised those were not their homelands anymore. For these reasons, a sense of humiliation, fear, discrimination and injustice prevailed in those early years following their repatriation and can still be ascertained.

Ana's story embodies much of what has been said above. She stated that a large part of the white community was in favour of the independence of Angola. They felt the Portuguese dictatorship was holding back progress in the territory. When they heard of the 25 April Revolution, her family and many others rejoiced. When I asked her if she wanted to return to Angola, she said no: "Angola will never again be that Angola that I knew – simple, beautiful, pleasant to live in, where we could go to Baleizão [an ice cream shop], where there was time to enjoy life."

Mrs. Brandão told me that at the time of repatriation, she was studying at a university in Lisbon. Her parents, who left Mozambique at the last minute, went to live at her house in Portugal. As she stated, Mozambique was a magical land and people would not have built what they built (entire cities, with schools, hospitals, the Cabora Bassa dam) or eradicated all tropical diseases in the colonies if they did not love that land, considering it theirs. She further stressed that "historical truth must be told." Mr. Reis has a similar opinion: the Portuguese were building a country and not exploiting Angola, as other countries. According to him, no other colonising power had built universities in Africa. Hence, he added, colonialism does not have to be a pejorative term. Mr. Soares also told me he and his acquaintances were building a second homeland, which they loved. Mr. Joaquim Pereira de Almeida, born in Mozambique and living in Angola since the age of 9, shares these opinions as well: "the Portuguese colonisation was more humane than the others and culturally different," citing secular intermarriage in Angola as proof.

Some white settlers stayed in the former colonies,⁸ to help rebuild the new countries after the colonial war. Many were politically motivated: they thought that Portuguese colonisation had not helped native populations and thus looked to the Portuguese revolution and decolonisation with enthusiasm (Dacosta, 2013). Some even joined the independence movements. This was the case of Ana's uncle (born in Portugal), who was a member of the opposition to Salazar and a member of MPLA. However, many of the whites that stayed were caught up in the fight between political factions in the new countries and thus returned to Portugal disillusioned. These also came to the conclusion that the land in which they had lived did not exist anymore. Mr. Almeida, who became a journalist and worked with Agostinho Neto [Angola's first President] is one such case. He left Angola in 1985 disillusioned with the pressures and blackmail of the authoritarian government. When I asked him if he would like to return to Angola, he said no: "I do not recognise that country anymore. It has nothing to do with what it was, even after the independence. Those days, there were no people living in the streets."

Upon arriving in Portugal, the general perception among the *retornados* was that Portugal was a retrograde country, economically and in terms of mentality (Dacosta, 2013). This was mentioned to me by Mr. Almeida: "Portugal was less developed than I thought. I could see it in the quality of journalistic equipment. Also in my resume; it was better than those of my colleagues in Portugal." The *retornados*, as mentioned above, were more liberal and open-minded, something which reflected in the way they dressed: colourful and less conservative clothing. All my interviewees mentioned these different traits, stressing that the white settlers were more open and relaxed, a characteristic they adopted from the African populations. As Mr. Almeida explained, black people have a *joie de vivre* that became ingrained in the white population.⁹ This suggests that *retornados* created a specific identity, differentiating them from the Portuguese.

For these reasons, it is not hard to understand that the *retornados* felt and still feel they do not belong anywhere. Many still feel that Portugal is not their homeland, while those who left Africa as children live in a limbo (Almeida, 2014). Ana told me she feels Angolan and also Portuguese, but not in the same way as she feels Angolan. Mrs. Brandão told me the same – she feels Mozambican and Portuguese adding that one never forgets the place where one was born. Mr. Almeida feels more African than Portuguese: "I talk to people very easily and I like the mixture of cultures." It has also been noted that there is a hereditary trauma, as memories are transmitted from parents to children. Marisa (pseudonym), Ana's daughter, mentioned to me she does not wish to return to Angola. When I asked her why, she told me she remembers the stories her grandmother told her about how wonderful life was in Angola and she therefore does not wish to see how all of that was shattered.

⁸ About 20,000 to 30,000 in Angola alone, according to Mr. Almeida.

⁹ This does not mean there was no racism in the colonies. As all my interviewees told me, they knew of stances of mistreatment of black people by whites.

When analysing their websites and testimonies, a profound feeling of *saudade* emerges. It is a Portuguese word that may be translated as “homesickness,” a nostalgia for their homeland – of the landscape, of the happiness, of the human touch, of the warm weather – and, for some, the will and the hope to return to Africa. Ana, Mr. Almeida and Mrs. Brandão also mentioned these aspects, stressing the difficult adaptation to the weather, the lack of space (compared to the vast spaces of Africa), and the coldness of the Portuguese. Mrs. Brandão stressed for several times that her father died with grief and never overcame the loss. Mr. Soares told me he was several times near the border with Mozambique since abandoning the country, but always refused to go back and “visit what cost him so much to build only to be destroyed.”

Conclusions

Individuals and groups are, by definition, powerless in their relations vis-à-vis political power held by governments. The case of the *retornados* provides a clear example of this predicament. The Portuguese settlers were sent to the African colonies as pawns at the service of the power project of the Portuguese dictatorship, a project that aimed at reinforcing the regime and a nationalistic cultural homogeneity, in the line of Weiner’s (1995) and Soguk’s (1999) understandings. In the process, they became the victims of the ambitions and power projects of not only the Portuguese state but also of the African politicians and the superpowers US and USSR. As my findings suggest, the majority of those *retornados* were ordinary people whose motivations had little or nothing to do with those of the Portuguese authorities. While colonisation certainly presupposes, on the part of the coloniser state, a notion of supremacy, most of the settlers left in search of a better life, some to escape dictatorship, all or nearly all permanently and made Africa their new home, truly falling in love with the land, as my interviewees told me. Upon departure from Portugal, the Portuguese government encouraged them to settle permanently and to invest in their new homelands, thus making the settlers believe they would enjoy a stable and possibly prosperous life.

As the independence dates approached, though, they realised the promises of the Portuguese state were of little value as they hastily abandoned their homes and, especially lost the feeling of security they felt was permanent, shattering their trust in the world, as Zweig (1947) rightfully noticed. According to the accounts of some of my interviewees, the feeling of insecurity was artificially fuelled by foreign powers and the settlers could have remained in the territories, as was the case of some thousands who did so. This discrepancy between perception and factual existence of a menace points to the creation of a power project that looked to the white settlers as disposable “objects.” Regardless of these power projects of foreign powers or of the new African rulers, the traumatic experience of the hasty abandonment can be mainly attributed, as interviewees explained, to a betrayal (one of the main traits pointed out by Edkins (2003), in the case of traumatic events) by the new Portuguese

political elites, whom they see as having abandoned them and failing to protect their lives and properties, as Portuguese citizens which they in fact were. That they were treated as second-class citizens by the Portuguese authorities, the very state that had the obligation to protect them can be attested by the lack of indemnities for the loss of their property. In this sense, the Portuguese state decided to forget – in what was a political decision designed to have fruits in its foreign policy (as Becker, 2014, contends) – its colonial past, focusing on its European future.

Upon arrival in Portugal, they soon found out how their fellow Portuguese citizens also betrayed them, by marginalising, labelling and defaming them as “colonialists” or “fascists” as my interviewees explained. This article has no intention of whitewashing the mistreatment, exploitation or the massacres of many blacks at the hands of the Portuguese, nor does it intend to deny the colonial and racist project of the Portuguese authorities, or contest the legitimacy of the independence wars. What the findings show, however, is that the coloniser-colonised, victim-aggressor dichotomies are quite simplistic in explaining the case of the Portuguese *retornados*. As the findings show, the settlers created a different, unique identity, dissimilar from the Portuguese, as a result of migration to the colonies, incorporating specific traits (perceptions, behaviour, customs, ideas and habits) from black people. This certainly helps explain why they found adaptation to Portugal so difficult. Simplistic narratives cannot equally capture why many white settlers were in favour of independence of the colonies, why some joined the black liberation movements, why they married blacks or why they repeatedly claim to love Africa. In this sense, we might say the trauma they endured was triple fold, not only because of the way they left the African lands, but also because of the way they were received by their fellow citizens and how they could not fit in society because of their different identity. That that identity continues to be revisited and constructed can be seen in the way memories are passed from generation to generation, as Ana’s daughter, Marisa, exemplifies.

We might say that the way they found to overcome stigmatisation and discrimination was to prove their worthiness by means of hard work and economic success in Portugal. The *retornados*’ contribution to building a new country after the revolution confirms Said’s (2000) contention that migrants are instrumental in shaping modern societies. The need to start anew and ensure survival in those first years after repatriation to Portugal (or emigration to other countries) meant that many had no time to mourn their unexpected displacement and loss. What my findings show is that it was the older people – as Mrs. Brandão’s father – who were most affected by the trauma and who did not heal, as Said (2000) referred, as younger people had to rebuild their lives and were more susceptible of adapting faster. The way the *retornados* managed to rebuild their lives, with great difficulties, in some cases, as my findings demonstrate, provides thus proof that the resilient and adaptive capacity of human beings prevails, as Chatty (2010) has pointed out.

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Grižusieji (*retornados*): trauma ir vietos netektis porevoliucinėje Portugalijoje

Isabel David

SOCIALINIŲ IR POLITIKOS MOKSLŲ INSTITUTAS, LISABONOS UNIVERSITETAS
RUA ALMERINDO LESSA, 1300-663, LISABONA, PORTUGALIJA
EL. PAŠTAS: ISABEL.DAVID@JSCSP.U LISBOA.PT

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SANTRAUKA: Šio straipsnio tikslas – atkreipti dėmesį į trauminę grįžusiųjų (*retornados*) patirtį ir jų naudotas strategijas įveikiant netektį ir išstūmimą. Analizuojama patirtis asmenų, kurie grįžo iš Angolos ir Mozambiko – iš šalių, kuriose gyveno daugiausia (94 proc.) portugalų persikėlėlių. Terminas *retornados* Portugalijoje vartojamas apibūdinti baltiesiems portugalų tautybės asmenims, kurie gyveno Afrikos kolonijose, o paskelbus šių šalių nepriklausomybę 1975 m. pavasarį–rudenį buvo repatrijuoti į Portugaliją. Tikslus grįžusiųjų skaičius nėra žinomas, tačiau manoma, kad jis svyruoja nuo 500 000 iki milijono. Apie 40 proc. grįžusiųjų buvo gimę kolonijose. Šiame straipsnyje aptariami duomenys yra gauti atlikus pusiau struktūruotus interviu su šešiais grįžusiaisiais. Straipsnyje teigiama, kad Portugalijos atvejui būdingi išskirtiniai bruožai, leidžiantys jį išskirti trauminės atminties ir vietos netekties literatūroje. Pirmas išskirtinumas – tai ribos tarp aukos ir engėjo išnykimas, kai kolonistai tapo tos politinės galios, kuri juos naudojo kaip imperialistinės ekspansijos agentus, aukomis. Antras išskirtinumas – tai Portugalijos elito pasirinkimas nesinaudoti grįžusiųjų ištekliais įgyvendinant užsienio politikos tikslus, juos tiesiog *užmirštant*, ypač siekiant Europos ekonominės bendrijos narystės. Trečia – grįžusiųjų padėtis per pastaruosius 41 demokratijos metus netapo vidaus politikos objektu.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: grįžusieji (*retornados*), trauma, vietos netektis, kolonializmas, Portugalija.

Multidirectional memory and the deportation of Lithuanian Jews

Violeta Davoliūtė

LITHUANIAN CULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
SALTONIŠKIŲ STR. 58, VILNIUS, LT-08105
E-MAIL: VIOLETA.DAVOLIUTE@LKTL.LT

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ABSTRACT: Although Jewish Lithuanians were deported in June 1941 in numbers that were fully proportional to their share of the population at the time, their experience has been largely excluded from the collective memory of this historical trauma. Drawing on a series of in-depth interviews with Lithuanian Jewish deportees, memoirs and archival documents this article seeks to restore their experience to its rightful place, and using the framework of “multi-directional memory”, explores the reasons why their unique perspective was “forgotten” for so many years, only to be recovered in recent public discourse.

Keywords: displacement, deportation, memory, Jewish-Lithuanian relations.

A quarter-century after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Stalinist Gulag is still recalled in Lithuania through the prism of what Michael Rothberg (2009: 5) calls “competitive memory,” where “the boundaries of memory parallel the boundaries of group identity”. The trauma of forced migration, notably the mass deportation to the distant reaches of Siberia of about 17,500 Lithuanian citizens in June 14-18, 1941 is quite often perceived as the “property” of ethnic Lithuanians, a national trauma whose value in terms of symbolic capital is seen to rise or decrease through comparison with the historical traumas of “other” groups, notably the Holocaust of the Jews, which began in Lithuania in the weeks and months that followed the deportations, eliminating over 90% of the Jewish population of the country. The resulting “competition” between the Gulag and the Holocaust in the discourse of the past is one of the obstacles to historical reconciliation between Lithuanians and Jews to this day.

This competition between memories is not, however, inevitable, and can be addressed through what Jasmina Husanović has formulated elsewhere in this volume as “an affirmative politics of witnessing to trauma,” one that navigates between the poles of “ethnopolitist mobilization” on the one hand, and the “aesthetic liberal management of affect” on the other (Husanović, this issue). Indeed, one can point to several initiatives in this direction on the part of the political authorities and its public institutions of memory and education since the early 1990s, which commemorate the traumas of the Holocaust and the Gulag as

crimes committed by the totalitarian occupational regimes, and recognizing the role of local collaborators in each (Davoliūtė, 2011).

However, the inertia of prejudices instilled during the Nazi occupation of Lithuania, such as the notion of “double genocide,” which frames the killing of Jews in the Holocaust as some sort of revenge for the deportation of Lithuanians, remains in place. To address this problem, this article begins by recalling that Lithuanian Jews were targeted by the deportations of June 1941 and suffered in numbers entirely proportional to their share of the population at the time. It then proceeds to trace the evolution of the memory of the Jewish deportation, how the experience of Lithuanian Jewish deportees was initially “forgotten” and belatedly “remembered” through memoirs, commemorative activities and historical studies.

The factors shaping this memory over several decades and continents are complex and controversial, and this paper will only scratch the surface of this issue before proceeding to describe the key features of the experience of deportation for the Lithuanian Jews. It does so on the basis of a series of in-depth interviews conducted with several Jewish deportees, all but one of whom now live in Israel, referring as well to the available archival sources relating to their arrest and deportation, as well as written memoirs of other Jews and Lithuanians deported from Lithuania.

By focussing in this manner on the “real voices and real bodies” of Lithuanian Jews deported to the Gulag, this article concludes that an affirmative politics of witnessing has the potential to overcome the paradigm of “competitive memory” and restore a genuinely multidirectional memory of the traumas of WWII in Lithuania.

The deportation in fact and memory

Liuba Segal (b. 1927) was almost 14 years old when uniformed men took her from her home in the town of Utena, Lithuania. Her family was given thirty minutes to pack their things, and then were loaded into a lorry and driven to an unknown destination. Liuba had just completed her third and last year of progymnasium (junior high school), but was not present to receive her diploma at the graduation ceremony that took place later that day on Saturday, 14 June 1941 (Liuba Segal, 24 April 2014).

That same night another girl of about the same age, Dalia Grinkevičiūtė (1928-1989), was taken from her home in Kaunas along with her brother, mother and father. Dalia and Liuba were put on different trains, but after a long and excruciating journey through the vast Siberian expanse, they ended up at the same camp in Trofimovsk, an uninhabited island on the icy shores of the Laptev Sea. It was one of the harshest settlements in the entire system of Soviet special settlements, north of the Arctic Circle. One third of those banished to this place died during the winter of 1942. Dalia and Liuba survived the hunger and the cold and became friends.¹

¹ Liuba's father died in 1942 and Dalia's father in 1943, both of starvation.

Liuba's family was Jewish, and Dalia's family Lithuanian, but the Soviet deportations from the Western borderlands of 1941 did not distinguish among the victims on the basis of creed or ethnic origin. Nonetheless, the arrest, transport and arrival to the Soviet camp or special settlement were only the beginning of the story of displacement that would continue through exile of varying duration and location, followed by the return to Lithuania and, as was typically more common with Jewish deportees, onward emigration to Israel or other destinations outside the USSR.

Upon her return to Lithuania, Grinkevičiūtė became a dissident, and versions of her memoirs on her deportation and survival in Trofimovsk were smuggled abroad and published as *samizdat* in the 1970s. They were the first account of the deportation to be published openly in Lithuania, at the peak of the popular movement against Soviet rule in the late 1980s.² Through her memoirs, and those of other Lithuanian deportees, the deadly winter of 1942 in Trofimovsk became part of a shared national memory, a key building block of the new post-Soviet Lithuanian identity (Davoliūtė, 2012).

For Liuba Segal, however, the murder of two of her sisters – those who were not deported – in the Holocaust, along with her grandparents, friends, relatives and the entire Jewish community in her native Utena, radically conditioned her experience of return to Lithuania, and indeed her entire apprehension of the experience of deportation. By the time Lithuanian independence was restored, she had already immigrated to Israel, as had many other Jewish Lithuanians who were deported in June 1941.

The Segal and Grinkevičius families were deported in accordance with the long-established Soviet practice of using forced population transfers as a tool of social engineering.³ In this case, the objective was to secure the western borderlands of the USSR by “cleansing” the newly occupied territories of potentially non-loyal elements. The Soviet Union had invaded the Baltic States and Poland in line with the terms of the secret protocol to the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 23 August 1939, which divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence and paved the way for the partition of the region by these two totalitarian regimes.

Over the next year, the Soviets consolidated their sphere of influence. When the Baltic States were occupied in June 1940, the secret police drew up lists of potential enemies. Shortly before Germany attacked the USSR on 22 June 1941, the Soviets launched an operation to deport these hostile elements along the frontier. The NKVD had orders to arrest members of various nationalist parties, police officers, gendarmes, landowners, manufacturers, and former state officials. In effect, entire families were arrested and deported on the basis of

² The first published reference to Grinkevičiūtė's experience of deportation was in 1988, in an article written by a popular Soviet Lithuanian writer and public figure Justinas Marcinkevičius. This publication opened the public debate about deportations in Lithuania (Marcinkevičius, 1988).

³ For a concise survey of the history and literature on this subject, see Martin (1998).

a “partially imagined relationship between social origin, on the one side, and intention and loyalty on the other” (Blum and Koustova, 2016).

In total, the deportations that took place from 22 May until 22 June 1941 in Western Ukraine, Moldova, the Baltic States and Western Belarus affected about 106,000 persons (Gurjanovas, 1997); including 17,500 from Lithuania, of whom 4,700 were sent to prison camps (i.e., the male heads of families), and 12,800 family members (mostly their wives and children) were moved to special settlements (Burauskaitė, 1999). Among those deported were more than 5,000 children, including 965 children less than four years of age; 1,918 between five and ten; and 2,276 between eleven and eighteen (Balkelis and Davoliūtė, 2016).

The number of Jews among those deported, about 1,700, was roughly proportionate to the percentage of Jews in the general population: 70 per cent of the 17,500 deportees were ethnic Lithuanians, 17.7 per cent were Poles, 9.2 per cent were Jews, and 2 per cent Russians (Anušauskas, 1999: 141). More detailed statistics concerning the repression of Lithuanian Jews during the first Soviet occupation of Lithuania in 1941 can be summarized as follows:

- of the 29,250 Lithuanians repressed by Soviets between 1939–1941 through imprisonment and/or deportation, 2,613 were Lithuanian Jews;
- of the 17,500 Lithuanians deported on 14–18 June 1941, 8.9 per cent were Lithuanian Jews;
- in raw figures, 334 Lithuanian Jews were arrested before 14 June 1941; 385 were deported on 14–18 June to camps (mostly men), 1,660 deported to special settlements (mostly women/children/elderly); and the destination of 234 is not clear (Lietuvos gyventojų genocidas, 1992: 62).

Such are the facts of the deportation, but the memory of the trauma evolved in its own way, under various pressures. Within the Soviet Union, the experience of Lithuanian Jewish deportees (or other Jewish deportees) was repressed for decades. Not only was there a taboo on any memorialization of the deportations and all other forms of Soviet repression, but the Holocaust itself could hardly be mentioned as a distinct tragedy of the Jewish community. Virtually all of the “work of memory” was focused on the sufferings of the “Soviet people” at the hands of the Nazis. Indeed, in Soviet Lithuania it was neither the deportations nor the Holocaust as such, but one particular atrocity committed by German forces that served as the key site of the memory of WWII.

The memorial constructed near the village of Pirčiupiai provides one good example of this perspective. On 3 June 1944, a German punishment squadron burned 119 inhabitants of this village to death, including 49 children under the age of 16, in response to a partisan attack on German forces in the area. A statue was erected near the site in 1960, and it soon came to serve as a regular destination for school outings and an obligatory stop on the route of foreign dignitaries visiting the LSSR. A poem called “Fire and Ashes” was taught in schools and had to be memorized by virtually every Soviet Lithuanian schoolchild (Marcinkevičius, 1997).

Meanwhile, although a few monuments to the deportations were erected from time to time in a clandestine manner, they were always quickly removed, and were seen by very few people. And while a limited number of monuments to mass killings were established at key sites of the Holocaust in Lithuania, such as the 9th Fort in Kaunas or at Paneriai, near Vilnius, the accompanying explanations did not refer explicitly to Jews but to the “Soviet people” as the victims of Nazi crimes (Levin, 2010: 53).

Censorship, the suppression of testimony and open discussion of the deportation led not only to the “forgetting” of the events in public discourse, but prevented any efforts to remediate the distorted narratives of Nazi propaganda, imposed by the German occupation that lasted from 1941 to 1944. Nazi-controlled newspapers introduced and perpetuated the myth of the “double genocide,” which implied that the Jews were responsible for the deportation of the Lithuanians, even though, as noted above, ethnic Jews and ethnic Lithuanians were to be found in roughly proportionate measure among the victims of the deportations.⁴ The myth of “double genocide” was not dismantled during Soviet times and remained in the distant recesses of Soviet Lithuanian collective memory until open discussion of the deportations became possible in the late 1980s.⁵

In the late 1980s, the open publication of deportee memoirs in Soviet Lithuania was a major part of the “return of memory” that coincided with the de-legitimization of Soviet rule. By 1988 such texts were circulating widely, including the series called *Tremties archyvas* [Archives of Deportation] in *Pergalė*, the official journal of the Soviet Lithuanian Writers Union. The initial serial publication of Grinkevičiūtė’s memoirs, starting in 1988, was followed by other important works, including *Amžino įšalo žemėje* (1989), *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (1989), Jūratė Bičiūnaitė-Masiulienė’s *Jaunystė prie Laptevų jūros* (1990), Arvydas Vilkaitis’ *Tremtinio dalia* (1990), Romualdas Staugaitis’ *Lietuviai Šiaurėje* (1991) and others.

The publication of deportee memoirs and the broader campaign to record the history of Soviet repression emphasizing the suffering of the Lithuanian nation was inseparable from a conscious political strategy of construction of a new, national Lithuanian identity during the popular movement against Soviet rule. The canvassing of data on the repressions was part of an effort of social consolidation and political mobilization. Activists distributed questionnaires to people across the country, to come up with an accurate list of those deported, killed or otherwise repressed during the initial Sovietisation of Lithuania. Special questionnaires about deportation were distributed to former deportees during political rallies, at the *Sajūdis* centres, in Catholic parishes and so on (Birutė Burauskaitė, personal communication, 13 May 2014).

⁴ See, for example, the two major newspapers allowed under the Nazi occupation: *Į laisvę*, published in Kaunas, along with *Naujoji Lietuva*, published in Vilnius.

⁵ On the initial publication of deportee memoirs in Soviet Lithuania under conditions of Gorbachev’s *glasnost’* and the shaping of this memory by the popular movement against Soviet rule (*Sajūdis*, see Davoliūtė 2012). For more on the participation of the Lithuanian Jewish community in the activities of *Sajūdis*, see Sirutavičius, Staliūnas and Šiaučiūnaitė-Verbickienė (2012: 485-509).

This effort led to the publication in 1992 of a relatively complete list of all those who were deported and otherwise suppressed by the Soviets in 1941 (Burauskaitė, 1999). The list did not include the ethnic or religious identity of the victims, since the intent was to present the nation as a unified whole, and not to emphasize ethnic, confessional or other differences. Hence, the introductory articles penned by the leaders of the initiative, which preceded the list of names of those deported, gave a specific colour to the description of this experience, saying that “the genocide of the Lithuanian nation is a uniquely programmed process of the 20th century,” and describing the collected testimonies as having a “universal” feature, that of “connecting one’s fate with the fate of Lithuania.” Indeed, Birutė Burauskaitė, the head of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, says the initial inclusion of the word “genocide” in the title of her organization reflected a strong emotional impulse to signal the suffering of the Lithuanian nation at the hands of the Soviet occupying power (personal communication, 13 May 2014).

It is also worth noting that the “return” of deportee memory in Lithuania had a strong religious aspect. This might be partially explained by the fact that the Catholic Church played such a prominent role in the anti-Soviet underground resistance. The narrative of the repression of the Catholic Church and the imagery of Christian martyrdom were closely intertwined with that of the deportation. For example, during the popular movement, the retrieval from Siberia and the reburial of the remains of deportees in Lithuania was overlain with Catholic rites and ceremonies, crosses and icons – all of which reinforced the ethnic Lithuanian and Catholic dimensions of the identity of the deportees and their experience.

It also reflects the strength of religious practice among those Lithuanians who were deported after 1945. After the elimination of the Lithuanian Jews in the Holocaust and the depopulation of the cities by war and displacement, the communities that survived were predominantly rural, ethnic Lithuanian and Catholic in faith. And while the deportations of June 1941 have an iconic significance in Lithuanian memory as the first mass deportation, they affected “only” 17,500 people, while subsequent waves of deportations beginning in 1935 affected well over 200,000.

As a result, the population of former deportees engaged in the “return of memory” in the late Soviet period probably included a significant number of relatively devout Catholic Lithuanians with rural origins.⁶ In their memory, the experience of deportation was closely intertwined with the Catholic faith and their representations of the deportation were infused with images of Christ-like suffering.

Outside the Soviet Union, the first accounts of the deportation of Soviet Jews were collected by scholars and Jewish relief agencies in displaced persons camps in Germany. However, in spite of the fact that the majority of surviving Jews in these camps had returned from the Soviet Union, efforts to document and record

⁶ Arūnas Streikus (2016: 212) notes that religion was an extremely important element of the self-identity of Lithuanians deported after 1945: “religion was kept as the most reliable element of their lost world that helped them to deal with the trauma of displacement.”

their experience were focussed almost exclusively on those who had survived Nazi concentration camps. As noted by Laura Jockusch and Tamar Lewinsky:

Although the majority of Jewish DPs who passed through occupied Germany were Polish Jews who had survived in Soviet exile, this distinctive wartime experience did not play a central role in the public memory of the Jewish DPs. The horrific Holocaust experiences of *direct survivors* outweighed and muffled the experiences of Soviet exiles. For both *direct survivors* and *refugees*, early Holocaust commemoration centred on loss and destruction rather than on survival (Jockusch and Lewinsky, 2010).

The marginalization of Jewish refugee history in Europe and America was also the result of the Zionist political orientation of scholars and Jewish relief organizations at the time. According to Atina Grossmann (2012), “the central frame of reference is the DP universe as an autonomous Jewish space, which is narrated simultaneously as the prologue to emigration to the Land of Israel.” She says there was a sense of gratitude towards the Soviet Union for having in effect saved the lives of so many Jews, combined with a sense of *realpolitik* in that they needed the on-going cooperation of the Soviet Union to allow the emigration of more Jews, so criticism of the deportations was kept to a minimum (Grossmann, 2012).

The recent revival of interest in the distinct fate of the relatively small number of Lithuanian Jewish deportees must also be understood in a transnational or multidirectional perspective. One rather diffuse source of this interest can be traced to the gradual expansion of the scope of studies of the Soviet deportations in the Baltic States and the rise of scholarly interest in the dynamics of population displacement in twentieth century Europe.⁷

Another reason is a renewed interest in the history of the Lithuanian Jewish community, partly stimulated by programmes supporting Lithuania’s integration into the cultural space of the European Union and also through spontaneous grass roots initiatives. For example, while the wave of the “return” of the Lithuanian memory of deportations took place during the popular movement and shortly after, the published memoirs conveying the experience of the Lithuanian Jewish deportees started appearing only recently with the publication of David Zak’s *Žvilgsnis praeitin* (2012), Rachel and Israel Rachlins’ *Šešiolika metų Sibire* (2012), Levas Feigelovičius’ *Saulėtas šaltas pavasaris* (2009), fragments of Sana Levin’s (Meller) diary (2010) and several others.

Indeed, it was only recently, during the research and preparations for a special exhibition on Lithuanian Jews during the Soviet period in 2014, that a group of researchers from the Vilnius Gaon State Jewish Museum combed through this general list of deportees to identify probable Jewish deportees, based on a visual inspection of the family names of those on the lists of repressed persons. A parallel effort was conducted by researchers working for the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes Committed by the Nazi and Soviet Occupational

⁷ For a comprehensive survey of recent works, see Ferrara (2011).

Regimes in Lithuania, and their calculations of the total number of deported Jews differed only slightly (The staff of the Vilnius Gaon State Jewish Museum, personal communication, 23 May 2014). In this manner, researchers were able to establish the percentages of ethnic Jews among Lithuanians deported on 14-18 June 1941, as noted above.

In the end, one could argue that the specific memory of the Lithuanian Jewish deportation was not so much forgotten as significantly belated in its public emergence and circulation, prompted by the maturation of the institutions of commemoration within Lithuania as well as the efforts of individual survivors to record their memoirs and convey their experience to subsequent generations, to which this article now turns.

The experience of deportation

The interviews conducted for this article took place in 2013-2015, with witnesses who were, at the time of our meetings, between 73 and 91 years of age. As such, even the oldest, Bencel Segal, was only 17 when initially deported, while the youngest, Pesia Einhorn (Kovalevsky), was born in 1941, during the final leg of her family's long journey to the camp in Yakutsk. As such, their experience and recollections differ in many ways from those who were adults at the time.⁸

Nonetheless, their testimony also encapsulates fragments of the experience of their parents, relatives and neighbours. In each testimony the story of the individual and that of the family and broader community of deportees is often woven together. In this manner, the oral testimony they provide is an important complement to what can be gleaned from the archives on the deportations. Indeed, most of the archival materials focus on the adult, usually male head of the family, while documents concerning the spouse and children are included, if at all, as "supplementary" documentation to the case.⁹

The interviewees come from all parts of Lithuania: Anykščiai, Rokiškis, Vilkaviškis, Lazdijai, Utena, Raseiniai. Israel Mey-Tal Montviliski is something of an exception insofar as he came from Druskininkai, which would be incorporated into Lithuania in 1939 but which was part of Poland during the interwar period. The group is representative of all major targets of deportation, from relatively humble small business owners like the Segals to wealthy estate owners like the Montviliskis, Mellers or Aprils. Some families were apolitical while others were members of Lithuanian patriotic organizations, like Daniel Einhorn, a deputy head of the Anykščiai branch of the Lithuanian Jewish War Veteran Society.

⁸ The list of people interviewed is presented in references.

⁹ References to the Soviet police and secret service files of the interviewees were examined at the Lithuanian State Archives, the Special Archives section, and are listed in the references below.

In all cases, their displacement was accompanied by significant shifts in identity. For example, Golda Einhornaitė, spoke Yiddish and Lithuanian as a child, and almost no Russian, but this changed with her exile at age six. Immersed in a Russian-speaking environment, she began to speak Russian with her family and the broader community. No longer addressed as Golda, she became Olga Einhorn, received her education in Russian and was formed as an adult in a Soviet cultural environment. She knew Lithuanian well enough to converse upon her return, but she lacked a professional knowledge of the language, which restricted her ability to teach in a Lithuanian school. By the time I met her in Israel, she was speaking in Hebrew in public, in Russian with her sister, and in a mixture of Lithuanian and Russian with me. This model of linguistic and personal transformations applies to all of the interviewed deportees.

Initially, the experience of deportation was no different for Jewish Lithuanians than for any other Lithuanians. Almost half of those deported, or 7,232 people, arrived in the summer of 1941 to the Altai region of Siberia. In June 1942, a large group was sent to the Far North, to the mouth of the Lena River at the Laptev Sea, to develop the local fishing industry. In total, 2,785 people were exiled from Lithuania to Trofimovsk, on the island of Tit-Ary, at the mouth of the Lena, and at various other sites along the banks of the Laptev Sea. Only 1,157 would return to Lithuania. More than half would die, mostly during the winter they spent there in 1942–1943.

Sara Prusakaitė, who was deported and forced to work in different settlements in the Olekminsk area, vividly recalls the extreme conditions of the first winters (although this area was much less harsh than Trofimovsk). She highlights the specific predicament faced by women deportees; namely, their relations with the male representatives of the administration of the special settlements. This issue is rarely addressed in the memoirs of Lithuanian deportees with such exceptions as the above mentioned Dalia Grinkevičiūtė's account.

Like Grinkevičiūtė in her memoirs, she points out that submitting to sexual liaisons with administrators was one of the strategies of survival. "This Laptev, the chief accountant of the Olekminsk district, a married man, had intimate relations with several of his subordinates: my Jewish friend from Marijampolė whose Lithuanian fiancée was sent to another location to work, one Russian girl and one Yakutian employee," Sara recalls. She recounts how the very same Jewish girlfriend Judita (not her real name), confided to her that the intimacy between her and her married and much older supervisor was forced upon her when they were on the way to check the accountant's work in the neighbouring sub-district. She continued having intimate relations with her supervisor, and thanks to this liaison she was able to get extra food rations and help out her family. She was also not forced to perform the back breaking work of cutting wood, and was allowed to remain in the office until her fiancée came back, by which time she had given birth to a daughter. The fiancée, his Lithuanian family (also deportees who travelled in the same train car) and the Jewish family members of Judita accepted the

illegitimate daughter as their own since this was seen by all as the form of survival through the hardest time of war (Sara Prusakaitė, 10 November 2013).

Sara emphasized that such strategies saved a number of women from perishing in the camps. The primary targets of camp administrators were young widows whose husbands were either murdered or separated from them, or young women who did not have a boyfriend nearby. Those who were in a relationship with the partner who was around in the same settlement were spared open advances by the male authorities.¹⁰ The illegitimate children from camp administrators usually were brought back into the families from the earlier relationships as these liaisons were not seen as voluntary but forced. Such narratives of survival are usually only mentioned in passing, as in the memoirs of Grinkevičiūtė, and generally avoided altogether in the written memoirs of Lithuanian deportees, or presented in an elusive and romanticized way, as in the account of the Lithuanian deportee Elena Červinskienė (1995), who was in the same settlement as Sara Prusakaitė's family.¹¹

Another notable motif in the interviews is the relatively marginal role played by religion in the experience of deportation. None of the fathers of those interviewed was religious, aside from the father of Pesia and Golda Einhornaitė, who, as already mentioned, was deported for being a member of a Lithuanian patriotic organization. In the accounts and interviews collected for this study, religion does not stand out as an essential factor for coping with the traumatic experience. This stands in contrast to studies pointing to the relatively strong role of religion among Lithuanians deported after 1945, when deportation was directed primarily against the rural population that was resisting collectivization (see Streikus, 2016: 212).

The absence of a strong role for religion in these accounts may be explained by the fact that those families deported in 1941 were primarily from the urban, educated elites. Several interviewees pointed out that while their families preserved Jewish traditions, the last truly religious members of their families were their grandparents. For example, Aviva Ziv's grandmother was "a holy woman who prayed a lot", while her father "did not care about religion or going to synagogue" (Aviva Ziv, 28 November 2013). Similar generational split was pointed out by Aharon April, the Segals, Sana Levin, and Prusakaitė sisters. All of them noted that they celebrated traditional holidays and some rituals (for example, lit Sabbath candles) but were not strictly observing religious practices, Sara and Perla Prusakaitė noted that, in general, ethnic Lithuanian deportees relied on religion more, although she and her family were always invited to share whatever little there was to share among deportees during such events as Christmas and Easter.

In general, all of those interviewed mention the unity of deportees as one of the comforting and rewarding aspects of this traumatising experience. This motif is also reinforced in the written memoirs of Jewish deportees; for example, in those of Rachel and Israel Rachlin or David Zak who point out that

¹⁰ This dynamic is also mentioned by Ann Applebaum (2003: 307-333).

¹¹ Červinskienė (1995: 23) obliquely refers to her liaison with an "aristocrat" of the camp, the district head, and how she was helped by him and her relative, a high party official in Lithuania, to leave the deportation very early, in 1947, and eventually to study in Moscow.

solidarity and mutual support of deportees were one of the few comforts of this harsh experience. This points to the development of a community of experience, a community of those formed by the displacement (Rachlin and Rachlin, 2012: 25; Zak, 2012: 134, 138, 146).

The motif of closeness among deportees of different ethnicities is strong, running through all the narratives of this experience. “We were like one family”, claims Perla Prusakaitė. “Even after many years when we met people from the same places of deportation, we were extremely close” (24 April 2015). “We shared everything, down to the last bits”, recall Golda and Pesia Einhorn (26 April 2015). Liuba Segal (24 April 2015) points out that even after her return to Lithuania and difficult encounter with the aftermath of the Holocaust and unease over the extent of participation of her Lithuanian neighbours; it did not affect her attitude towards her fellow Lithuanian deportees. “After many years when I would meet anybody from there, it was still like my family—that’s how close we all were.”

From these testimonies one might infer that ethnic difference did not play an overriding role in the formation of community among the deportees, and the only real “outsiders” to this community of experience were those who actively cooperated with the authorities and denounced their fellows. Such people could be found in all ethnic groups. “We usually knew who they were and we all tried to avoid them as much as possible”, recalls Sara Prusakaitė (10 November 2013).

The experience of return

The biographical trajectories of Lithuanian Jewish deportees would diverge from those of other Lithuanian deportees with the process of return to Lithuania. Most obviously, the fact of the Holocaust, which began just days after they were deported, radically conditioned their sense of “homeland.” Moreover, once they were back from exile, the possibility of immigrating to Israel was another factor that conditioned the Jewish experience of “return.”

The mass release of exiles from the Gulag began after Stalin’s death. In 1954 the number of Baltic deportees fell from 170,000 to just over 130,000. There were 48,000 Baltic deportees in 1956, 41,000 in 1957 and 34,000 in 1958. On 1 January 1959, the number of deportees from the Baltics was just over 7,000 people (Blum and Koustova, 2016: 67). The other Jewish deportees interviewed for this study spent well over ten years in deportation, and in some cases close to 20 (Sana Levin, Pesia Einhorn).

When the deportees began to return to Lithuania the communities to which they returned were not the same as before. The Holocaust, post-war Sovietisation, and the successive waves of deportation and repression drastically changed the texture of society. The same applied equally to the Jewish and ethnic Lithuanian deportees. For example, already in 1946 Algimantas Indriūnas, who returned illegally to Lithuania even before the death of Stalin, wrote: “Having returned to Lithuania, I felt that life here moved a couple decades ahead, while I did not even stay in the same spot but moved some decades back” (Indriūnas, 2005: 133).

Deportees were generally met with suspicion by members of society and were seen as a source of unnecessary trouble. People were afraid that the returnees would lay claims to their former property, thus disrupting the stability that had recently been established. There was also fear of the criminal ways that the deportees had allegedly adopted during their incarceration; in some cases they were seen as no better than the criminals whose company they had kept. The *propiska* (registration) system of local residence permits was another challenge and some deportees saw it as yet another means of keeping them marginalized.¹²

Aviva Ziv returned to Lithuania in 1956 with her Russian husband, twenty years senior to her, whom she met in Ust Lekchim. He was a decorated soldier who fought and was wounded four times at the front. “Lithuania seemed totally different than before the war. We wanted to return so much. We would all get together – ethnic Lithuanian and Jewish deportees, and sing ‘Let us go back to our homeland, let us go back to our own people...’”

“But when we came back,” she recalls, “it was not the same... Those who were already in the administration or power positions had no compassion for us.” Moreover, they had nowhere to live, and so Aviva, her husband and their three young children, all born in Ust Lekchim, continued on to Dubno, in the RSFSR, where his family lived. There Aviva stayed for 16 years until they were able to acquire a house in Lithuania and move there in 1972 to live closer to her sister who survived the Holocaust in Lithuania in hiding but was deeply traumatized by this experience. Aviva lived in Kaunas until she finally departed for Israel in 1990.

Many Lithuanian returnees of all ethnic groups felt disillusioned by the way they were treated in their homeland, but for the Jewish returnees the situation was nonetheless unique. By the end of war, news of the murder of the Jewish population of Lithuania and the role of some local collaborators had reached even the most remote deportation settlements, sharply affecting attitudes towards the homeland and the prospect of returning to Lithuania. Indeed, even before the actual opportunity to return was anywhere in sight, some Jewish deportees felt a strong reluctance and ambivalence about going back.

Golda Einhorn was in Trofimovsk when she found out about what had happened in her hometown of Anykščiai. Until then, she like the other Lithuanian deportees had been singing songs like the famous deportee song “Let us back to our Homeland.” But having heard how the entire community in her hometown had been murdered, she did not want to go back. “And then something happened to me, something changed,” recalls Golda, “I just did not want to return anymore. People were asking, what? It is still your home. But I did not want to go there anymore. But then this somehow slowly passed...” (26 April 2015). She never returned to her native Anykščiai but eventually found a job in Belarus, and then got a position in Lithuania, in the newly built industrial town of Naujoji Akmenė, as a mathematics teacher.

¹² For an excellent overview of their return, see Dobson (2011).

Liuba Segal (24 April 2015) also conveys this sense of estrangement on hearing the news of the Holocaust:

We had always been friends with Lithuanians. The Lithuanian language was always with us as well. My best friend was a Lithuanian girl, Rūta Sadūnaitė, the niece of Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona. She managed to avoid deportation by hiding. We lived together, we were friends. When I came back from deportation I met some of my friends, some of my former classmates, and as we talked I could not get the question out of my mind ‘Could he have done that? Did he take part in this? How is this possible?’ You know, I must say that when we were deported on 14 June 1941 we did not feel any kind of anti-Semitism coming. There were no signs of anything, really. And in one week such horrible things happened ... how is this possible?

Segal left Trofimovsk in 1947 for the regional capital of Yakutsk. The town attracted deportees from many special settlements in the area. Yakutsk had a sizable Jewish community, and Jewish youth socialized together, going to the cinema together.

Segal returned to Lithuania in 1952, even before the death of Stalin and soon travelled to see her native Utena. The town seemed uncannily unchanged and yet completely different than before. She did not recognize any residents in the town or in the neighbourhood where her family used to live. The population at the centre of Utena was mostly Jewish before the war, but now none were there. She saw none of her former acquaintances who had been evacuated to Russia during the war.

She eventually found a Lithuanian family that had rented an apartment from her family before the war. They now lived in a different house and they invited her to visit. Upon entry she noticed some pieces of furniture that her family had owned before they were taken away. “I asked no questions and they did not volunteer to say anything. We talked a bit and then before leaving I asked if they would let me take a small table, the one where her father taught my brother to read and write, as a relict. I said calmly: ‘Madam Gražina, can I take this table please for memory?’ She agreed and so I walked out of their house with that little table in my hands. The atmosphere was grim.”

The fact of the Holocaust made every return to the native location, including a visit to the mass graves of the Jewish community of Utena, into an extremely traumatic experience for the survivors. “It was not my native town anymore. This new Utena seemed hostile to me and evoked fear mixed with hatred,” writes another child deportee David Zak (2012: 347). “It seemed to me there with every step that blood is soaking from under the ground,” describes Liuba Segal. That same year, she started to file applications to immigrate to Israel and finally was permitted to leave after almost 13 years in Lithuania, in 1966.

Sara Prusakaitė too recalls the shock when she returned to her hometown of Lazdijai. “It seemed horrible. There was nothing. No electricity. The entire town seemed to be in ruins. It was not safe, not even the cemetery was safe due to crime. There was no question of ever settling there.” So she made use of some connections that she maintained in Vilnius and through these contacts she was

able to obtain permission to settle in the nearby settlement of Nemenčinė, where she worked once again as an accountant for a logging company.

The difficult process of reintegration in Soviet Lithuania was determined in large part by the proximity of surviving family members, the networks established with the community of deportees, and close personal relationships. Thus, several Jewish families, including both of the Prusakaitė sisters and the Kushner family settled in Nemenčinė, a large lumber plant near Vilnius. Others, like the Segals, ended up in Vilnius and lived there until their departure for Israel. Sana Levin used Vilnius as a transitional stop to go to Israel as well. One of the latest arrivals in Israel, Golda Einhorn, worked in Naujoji Vilnia as a teacher until she travelled to her new home in 1988.

Most, but not all of the Jewish deportees ended up immigrating to Israel. The ease with which they integrated there depended in large part on how soon they arrived. Israel Montviliski, released in 1942 thanks to his Polish citizenship, arrived in Israel the day after the State of Israel was established in 1948. He adopted the Hebrew name Mey-Tal, made a point of socializing with locals, not fellow immigrants, married a sixth-generation Israeli, and started a successful business (25 November 2013).

The others, who had only Soviet (Lithuanian) citizenship, remained in exile until the late 1940s or even early 1960s, returning to settle in Lithuania or other parts of the Soviet Union and only then making an application to emigrate. The process was usually quite tortuous with many rejected applications, fragmentary and interrupted relations with family members in Israel, along with fear and anxiety over the prospect of never seeing them again.

Upon arrival, the success of their integration depended not only on the time of the arrival but also on how much prior knowledge they had of the new society and levels of family support. For example, Aviva Ziv recalls how initially her life in Israel was not as she had imagined it would be: "I had no idea what it would really be like. My sister had been there one time before and described it as paradise on earth. So I imagined that finally I would be able not to work as hard as I had all my life, that I would finally be "Madame Ziv", but nothing like that. I had to work 15 hours per day as a nanny and cleaning lady, and other hard jobs, just to help my family and myself" (28 November 2013). Perla Prusakaitė also points out to no previous in depth knowledge of her new country and how her late husband, also a Jewish deportee, had to work incredibly long hours as a driver, just to sustain his family while she had to take care of the three children and all of the family chores (24 April 2015).

Their current relationship with their country of birth, Lithuania, also differs, depending on their ability to cope with the memory of the Holocaust, connection with friends or any remaining relatives left behind. For example, Mey-Tal Montviliski has a keen interest in his native Druskininkai, wishes to contribute to the opening of a Jewish museum there, and has travelled several times to the region, together with his family. He is convinced that none of his former neighbours in Druskininkai took part in the massacre and this conviction makes

his attitude towards his native region more positive. Aharon April, on the other hand, was never able to force himself to return to his native *audini kiai* estate, which he remembers so vividly from his childhood. “I travelled there twice, by taxi from Vilnius, but I turned back halfway both times, and I don’t think I’ll ever try that again” (26 November 2013).

Liuba Segal’s brother Bencel Segal travelled to his native town in 2013 upon the request of his children but left the country after two or three days because “it was difficult” (24 April 2014). Sana Levin, on the other hand, returned to her native *Roki kis* at the request of her sons at the age of 80, wrote one set of memoirs and is in the process of writing an account of her return. Perla Prusakaitė visited independent Lithuania several times and maintains a rather positive attitude towards her country of birth. “I am proud to be from Lithuania and, in fact, I consider that I have two homelands, Lithuania and Israel. We even arranged all the documents and got Lithuanian citizenship. Initially, here in Israel, not many knew that we are not Russians or Poles, but *Litvaks*, so I would always correct people, that I am not a Russian, I am a Lithuanian” (25 April 2015). Pesia Einhorn, who was born in exile and had no memories of Lithuania as a child, travels to Lithuania almost every summer, maintains close friendships with former Lithuanian deportees, and participates in the commemorative activities of the deportee association “*Lapteviečiai*” although, as already mentioned, she does not speak Lithuanian.

Sara Prusakaitė is quite unique among the interviewees in that she decided to return to Lithuania and to remain there till the present day. Her fate seems to have been determined when she fell in love at the age of 17 with a fellow Lithuanian deportee from *Lazdijai* named *Mečislovas Stanislovas Radžiūnas* with whom she travelled to the final place of her exile, in the same cattle train. Their relationship was undisturbed by the difference of ethnicity, hardship of deportation and integration in Lithuanian society after the Holocaust. Such stories of intermarriage among deportees seemed to be quite common, especially those coming from the same region and sharing common acquaintances. For example, the parents of Sara’s Lithuanian husband knew the *Prusaks* from before the war. Her brother also married Lithuanian deportee, and so did several of her Jewish friends and acquaintances. None of their parents were against their marriage, but she recalls that some deportees warned that it would be difficult for them, as a mixed couple, to integrate socially upon their return to Lithuania.

Sara visited Israel in 1986 but never thought of moving there because she felt that her husband would not find his place in life in Israel. Even after his death, when her family members insisted that she moves to Israel, she refused to go, saying that she wants to be buried in Lithuania in the same grave as her spouse. Sara emphasized that she agreed to be interviewed and share her experiences and documents for this research, first of all, because she wished to preserve the memory of her deceased husband.

Conclusion

Although Jews were not specifically targeted by the Soviet deportations of June 1941, and the overall number of Lithuanian Jews deported in June 1941 is quite small - about 1,700 - the study of their distinct experience is important in several aspects.

If nothing else, their unique “subject position” places the mainstream Lithuanian narrative of the deportation as a national trauma in a new light. When we look at the events of WWII from the perspective of Lithuanian Jewish deportees, we are simply forced to see the historical atrocities committed by the Nazi and Soviet occupations during this short period of time in relation to one another, through the biographical threads that entangle one with the other, the Gulag with the Holocaust.

The distinct nature of the deportation of Lithuanian Jews conditioned the belated emergence of its memory. This belatedness has many aspects, starting with the interest that scholars have shown in the topic. By this point in time, the interviewees, who were all children or teenagers at the time of deportation (some were born *en route* to Siberia or in exile), were already well advanced in age. The age of the interviewees at the time of the events recalled and their advanced age at the time of the interview are important considerations when interpreting their testimonies. Their perspective on the events as children is distinct. It complements other perspectives and needs to be seen in that context.

The belated emergence of the deportation memory of Lithuanian Jews stems from two main factors: first of all, from the priority given to the Holocaust in the collective memory of the Jewish community within Europe, and commemorative focus on the Holocaust within Israel. Within the Lithuanian national context, the emergence of deportee memory during the popular movement against Soviet rule tended to project a narrative of national martyrdom, which did not distinguish among the range of different subjectivities among the deportees, from women to children to people of different ethnicities and faiths, and was portrayed as an essentially “Lithuanian” experience.

The people interviewed for this project had relatively clear and shared views on questions of inter-ethnic relations among the deportees. While my data is of necessity limited, I was impressed by their recollection of cooperative and friendly relations among ethnic Jews and Lithuanians in deportation. This needs to be seen in the context of their young age at the time, and perhaps even the context of the interviews, conducted by an ethnic Lithuanian accepted as a guest in their homes in Israel today, so many years after the events.

But even keeping these limitations in mind, I was struck by the cosmopolitan nature of the memory of the interviewees. And this, I believe, reflects more than a sense of politeness or political correctness regarding the interview process itself. It stems from three main sources. First, it recalls how the June 1941 deportations targeted the elites of interwar Lithuanian society. The families that were deported, be they Jewish, Lithuanian or Polish, were all relatively well educated, established and integrated in a modern, secular and urban environment.

The cosmopolitanism of the former deportees also reflects their biographical trajectories after release from the Gulag, which generally followed a path through several different societies across Europe and Asia before reaching their final destination, typically in Israel or America. The third and perhaps most striking source of this cosmopolitanism stems from the *community of experience* among the former deportees, regardless of creed or ethnic origin.

The recovery of the experience of Lithuanian Jewish deportees provides an opening for the reframing of established narratives of WWII and the post-war era in Lithuanian historiography. Indeed, one of recurring issues of the process of historical reconciliation between Lithuanians and Jews concerns the gap between the collective memory of each community of the war and post-war era. For example, the crude myth of “double genocide” could be effectively countered through greater public awareness of the fact that the Lithuanian Jewish elites, like the ethnic Lithuanian elites, were targeted and suffered in equal proportion by Soviet repressions, including the iconic mass deportations of June 1941.

In this respect, the experience of Jewish deportees is essential to bringing back the multidirectionality of the memory of the Soviet deportations, and breaking down the paradigm of “competitive memory” that would draw a firm line around the deportations as the “property” of the Lithuanian nation. Indeed, the distinct narrative shape of their life trajectories – childhood in interwar Lithuania, survival of the Holocaust and the Gulag, return to Soviet Lithuania and onward emigration to Israel – offers clear evidence of what Michael Rothberg described as the “jagged” borders between memory and identity (2009: 5).

Through the recovery and popularization of their narratives of the war and post-war years, historians will not only establish a more nuanced and accurate account of this unprecedentedly complex and traumatic period of European history, but will demonstrate how collective memory does not simply articulate a pre-existing past but comes into being through its dialogical interaction with other memories.

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Daugiakryptė atmintis ir 1941 m. Lietuvos žydai tremtiniai

Violeta Davoliūtė

LIETUVOS KULTŪROS TYRIMŲ INSTITUTAS
SALTONIŠKIŲ G. 58, LT-08105 VILNIUS
EL. PAŠTAS: VIOLETA.DAVOLIUTE@LKTI.LT

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SANTRAUKA: Straipsnyje apžvelgiamos 1941 m. birželį ištremtų Lietuvos žydų patirtys. Remiantis pusiau struktūruotais giluminiais pokalbiais su tremtiniais Izraelyje ir Lietuvoje, memuarais ir archyviniais dokumentais, siekiama bent iš dalies rekonstruoti šią menkai reprezentuotą sovietmečio tremčių istorijos dalį. Naudojant „daugiakryptės atminties“ perspektyvą siūloma esmingai papildyti lietuviškąjį sovietmečio tremčių naratyvą.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: išvietinimas, deportacija, atmintis, lietuvių ir žydų santykiai.

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Etniškumo studijos – Lietuvoje leidžiamas tęstinis recenzuojamas mokslinis leidinys, skirtas etniškumo problematikai ir tyrimų metodologijai. Nuo 2003 m. leidžiamame leidinyje nuosekliai analizuojami teoriniai nacionalizmo, etniškumo tarpetninių santykių ir jų tyrimų aspektai, pateikiamos aktualios konkretaus laikotarpio realiųjų mokslinės interpretacijos.

Šiame specialiame Etniškumo studijų numeryje spausdinami straipsniai apie atminties politiką ir trauminės patirtis, paremti feministinėmis, konstruktyvistinėmis, pereinamojo laikotarpio teisingumo ir kitomis tarptautinių studijų teorijomis. Tokiu būdu mėginama išsiveržti iš tradicinio mąstymo apie tautiškumą bei etniškumą varžtų ir vadovautis jungiamosiomis, o ne skiriamosiomis kategorijomis. Straipsnių autoriai analizuoja feministinę politiką Bosnijoje ir Hercegovinoje, tarptautinę Rugsėjo 11-osios atmintį, žydų, ištremtų iš Lietuvos 1941 m., prisiminimus, armėnų genocido įtaką tarptautinių normų formavimuisi ir kitus klausimus, kai trauminės patirtys gali sujungti žmonių grupes.

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Dizainerė Regina Banevičienė

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Išleido UAB „Vaibra“

Tel./faks. (8 5) 233 11 34, info@vaibra.lt

Raugyklos g. 15, LT-01140 Vilnius