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EDITOR'S NOTE

INTRODUCTION

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In our unstable world of permanent movement, migration, banishment or genocide, in the world which is "out of joint" and seems to immerse itself ever deeper in crisis, nostalgia has become a very common experience. Turning back towards "the olden days" looks like a tempting form of escape from the here and now, and it can have both healing and destructive effects. No wonder then that scientists and researchers representing a variety of disciplines pay increasing attention to the phenomenon of nostalgia. Especially interesting seems to be the collective level of experiencing nostalgia, when a society or a great part of it reveals shared feelings of longing for the past. A good example of such feelings can be nostalgia for the time of the communist regime in Poland and in other post-communist countries.

But nostalgia can also mean longing for something vague, indefinite or never existent. Nostalgic mood is therefore intertwined with melancholy. This term, most popular in the 19th

century, at the time of Romanticism, nowadays experiences a revival. Philosophers, writers, scientists, therapists and many others more and more often talk about melancholy instead of depression or sadness, not only to avoid medicalised or unequivocally pejorative terms, but also to stress the complexity of the human psyche. Melancholy, as well as nostalgia, is being described as an extremely complex and ambivalent state of mind, one that can be perceived as pleasant and unpleasant, desirable and intrusive, beneficial and harmful at the same time.

I am sure that the articles contained in the current issue of "Books Now" will shed important light on the phenomena of melancholy and nostalgia – in real life, in literature and in the arts.

JEDNAK KSIĄŻKI
GDAŃSKIE CZASOPISMO HUMANISTYCZNE
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STUDIES

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"IT'S A WAR I STILL WOULD GO TO": THE AMERICAN WAR IN VIETNAM AND NOSTALGIC RE-IMAGININGS OF WORLD WAR II

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One of my favourite quotations concerning World War II (WWII), and one that I find myself using the most often when talking about the myths of that conflict, comes from a book titled *Wartime. Understanding and Behavior in the Second World War*, written by Paul Fussell, a veteran of the Normandy landings in 1944 and later a professor of English. Writing in 1989, Fussell complained that

> The damage the [war] visited upon bodies and buildings, planes and tanks and ships, is obvious. Less obvious is the damage it did to intellect, discrimination, honesty, individuality, complexity, ambiguity, and irony, not to

> mention privacy and wit. For the past fifty years the Allied war has been sanitized and romanticized almost beyond recognition by the sentimental, the loony patriotic, the ignorant, and the bloodthirsty. (Fussell 1989: ix)

Fussell's book was a comprehensive deconstruction of the various myths that had accumulated around the war. He used historical facts, memoirs and other contemporary sources to, for example, point out that it was a miracle that the Allies had won at all, considering the staggering number, range, and sometimes nature of military mistakes, miscalculations and blunders on their side; or that the wastage of the war in terms of costs and destruction, but also of human life and suffering, was far beyond what is usually imagined; or that morale among American troops was in constant need of boosting, since the conditions on the frontlines were atrocious, and before the end of the war the reasons for their ordeal were rarely clear or passionately important to these soldiers. (Fussell's volume was followed in 1993 by Michael C.C. Adam's cult *The Best War Ever*, also a thesis meant to debunk the mythical, largely ahistorical images and notions associated with WWII.)

Fussell was protesting the image of WWII in popular culture and memory, an image that dominated not only representations and ways of thinking of the conflict, but coloured also the very notion of what war and warfare are and should be. In effect, that image turned out to have perhaps the most profound impact on the American war culture and the expectations towards the country's own foreign policy: it influenced tremendously not only both the initial and continued U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War, but also the people's—the young soldiers among them—reception of and response to the conflict.

Indeed, the American involvement in Indochina took place in a mythological framework, which is today perhaps the most evident in the aftermath of the war, in the many books, memoirs and other texts dealing with the war, where the point of reference against which personal and national experience of Vietnam, the sense of failure, disappointment and disillusionment came to be measured—was precisely WWII. Importantly, the Vietnam generation followed the "Great Generation" of WWII immediately—which meant that the boys and men who would soon depart to Indochina to fight America's first "bad war" had been raised by fathers celebrated by the nation's culture almost uniformly as heroes and defenders of the free world. In fact, media scholar Daniel Hallin enumerated the major, exceptionally pervasive assumptions about war in general, engendered by WWII, that fostered the early nationwide support for military involvement in Vietnam, as: "war is a national endeavor," "war is an American tradition," "war is manly," "winning is what counts," and "war is rational"; he added that this brand of representing armed conflict had the effect of "'purging' the war of political and moral implications"' (Hallin 1986: 142-145). What Hallin meant was that the mentality borne out of the triumphalism of the

victory in WWII ultimately resulted in an enthusiasm for overseas military intervention that overreached the actual interests and capabilities of the U.S., culminating in the Vietnamese jungles; as one veteran of the earlier conflict said

> World War II has warped our view of how we look at things today. We see things in terms of that war, which in a sense was a good war. But the twisted memory of it encourages the men of my generation to be willing, almost eager, to use military force anywhere in the world (qtd. in Terkel 1984: 11).

There was a number of public figures with whom this ideal warriors were associated: John Kennedy, for example, a decorated war hero; actor Audie Murphy, but, above all—John Wayne. Wayne had never been a soldier, but his film career turned him into a WWII icon: most importantly, in 1949 he appeared in the classic *Sands of Iwo Jima*, in which as a Marine sergeant he witnessed the iconic raising of the flag on Mount Suribachi, a slightly controversial event that defined the common memory of American valour and provided an everlasting image of the American experience in WWII.

In fact, it is difficult to find *any* Vietnam book, memoir, oral story, that does not mention Wayne, and often *Sands of Iwo Jima* specifically. The name and the title could be, and were, brought up when describing all stages of a soldier's Vietnam experience. For example, writing about his decision to join the Marine Corps in the early '60s, the soon-to-be Vietnam vet and author Philip Caputo recalled: "[a]lready I saw myself charging up some distant beachhead, like John Wayne in *Sands of Iwo Jima*, and then coming home a suntanned warrior with medals on my chest" (Caputo 1985: 6). Recounting his maniac, enraged fighting at Hue in *Vietnam-Perkasie*, W.D. Ehrhart listed all the things he felt he was "fighting at," and included among them "the movies of John Wayne and Audie Murphy" (qtd. in Rollins 1984: 423). In hindsight, another ex-soldier wrote that "[t]here was no doubt that they had tricked us, deceived us—them with their John Wayne charging up Mount Suribachi . . . . We had imagined a movie; we had envisioned a feast. What we got was a reality removed from all other realities; what we got was garbage pail" (qtd. in Pratt 1999: 648).

This continuous tendency to evoke John Wayne—what one Vietnam scholar called the "John Wayne Syndrome" (Herzog 2005: 17-24)—reveals just how prevalent and profoundly internalized the man's myth had been among the Vietnam generation; moreover, it underlines the scope of the demands and requisites made of the young men departing for Indochina, thus foreshadowing the scope of the future disappointment and frustration. John Wayne symbolized, to the general public but above all to the actual young veterans, the sharp contrast between the Good World War II in which their fathers had fought, and their own bad war; what is often brought up in these veterans' recollections, for example, is the sharp contrast between the alleged

WWII victory parades, where the homecoming troops were greeted by thousands and celebrated as heroes and saviours, and their own lonely returns. Then, rather than successors to John Wayne and his ilk—their own fathers, who had defeated the Nazis and kissed nurses in Time Square on victory parades—these ex-soldiers were viewed in pop culture and popular imagination through the much maligned figure of the Vietnam veteran (on the reception of Vietnam veterans, see: Anderegg 1991: 19-28; Beattie 1998; Hagopian 2001; Katzmann 2000; Lembcke 1998; MacPherson 1988; Sturken 2000; I have previously discussed some of the issues raised in this part of the chapter elsewhere; see: Musial 2013).

The infatuation with John Wayne, and his status as model American warrior, on the eve of Vietnam was sentimentalized and mythologized; but if the war in Indochina checked so many assumptions Americans could have had previously, concerning their government, military, foreign policy and fighting men, the myth of WWII as the Good War, though de-sentimentalized, continued to be cherished and cultivated in contrast to the bad war, only to be resurrected fully in the 1990s—now in *nostalgic* forms—and just in time for the assumptions listed by Hallin to be dusted off and put to good use in the War on Terror rhetoric. Indeed, it may be argued that WWII could turn into a fully nostalgic point of historical reference only *after* something like Vietnam and then the American conflicts that followed in the 1980s and '90s—covert, remote, minor, and somehow impersonal, like the technowar that was Desert Storm. In retrospect, WWII stood out from the mists of history as an epic, morally unambiguous and decidedly triumphant event of American past.

In 1992, Stephen Ambrose published *Band of Brothers*, a bestseller which told the story of a single airborne company ("Easy" Company), from their training, through D-Day and the subsequent operations in Europe, until the end of war. Ambrose's work was more of the traditional stock: it celebrated the heroism of the paratroopers, their patriotism and honour, their superb training and exceptional bond of brotherhood. The kind of tradition that Ambrose was perpetuating was obviously not a new thing; it was precisely the understanding of WWII which Fussell protested against. This heroic and often sentimentalized version of the conflict came eventually to be designated by some scholars and commentators as the myth of the "good war": the name is borrowed from the title of a monumental non-fiction book by Studs Terkel, an oral history of the conflict that hit the shelves in the U.S. in 1984, and was itself in some ways a testament to the mythic image. In the introduction, having conducted over a hundred interviews with veterans and those who had experienced the war on the U.S. home front, Terkel lists all the ways in which the war had been good to America (such as the economic boom and opportunity, "liberation" of women, improvement of the employment condition for the black

population, the societal blessings of the G.I. Bill, etc.), and mentions, though more in passing, the ways in which it had been bad, or at least *not* good (the deaths of American families' sons, and the somewhat ambiguously presented gung-ho enthusiasm for military solutions in foreign policy, culminating in Vietnam). He picks several poignant quotations summarizing the U.S. experience in the conflict: "I got one eye. My feet hangs down. I got a joint mashed down in my back. I got a shoulder been broke. … I'd go fight for my country right today. You're darn right. I'd go right now, boy" (Terkel 1984: 5-6); "World War Two was just an innocent time in America" (Terkel 1984: 13); "[reaching out to the rest of the world with help] was an act of such faith. … World War Two? It's a war I still would go to" (Terkel 1984: 14). Terkel finally chose the following quotation from an ex-soldier to conclude the introduction:

> World War Two had affected me in many ways ever since. In a short period of time, I had the most tremendous experiences of all of life: of fear, of jubilance, of misery, of hope, of comradeship, and of endless excitement. I honestly feel grateful for having been a witness to an event as monumental as anything in history and, in a very small way, a participant. (Terkel 1984: 14)

Terkel's introduction, and these quotations, encapsulate well the kind of sentimentalized view of the war, in which the positive aspects and outcomes, and the pride which the event generated, balance out the hardships, and in the long run make it "worth it." This view of the war is the sentiment that underlies and fuels the myth. Also, it is overtly nostalgic, as it speaks of "a better time" in a nation's history": of the pre-Vietnam time. Indeed, Vietnam is a dark spectre ever present in the interviews, an obvious glitch of American military history, and perhaps even an event that threw an even sharper light on the glorious endeavour that was WWII. The interviewees in Terkel's book make such comparisons often: "People here fell that we should have gone into Vietnam and finished it instead of backing off as we did. I suppose it's a feeling that carried over from World War Two when we finished Hitler" (Terkel 1984: 11); "[WWII] had been a different kind of war. 'It was not like your other wars.' … It was not fratricidal. It was not, most of us profoundly believed, 'imperialistic.' Our enemy was, patently, obscene: the Holocaust maker. It was one war that many who would have resisted 'your other wars' supported enthusiastically. It was a 'just' war, if there is any such animal" (Terkel 1984: 13); "[on Okinawa] I heard of no fragging of unpopular officers, as in Vietnam. ... Unlike Vietnam, it wasn't just working-class kids doing the fighting" (Terkel 1984: 64); "That war was different from Vietnam. Definitely" (Terkel 1984: 93). And so it goes on and on (see also Hynes 1992: 99).

In 1998, came Tom Brokaw's bestselling The Greatest Generation, a book of personal stories of Americans who lived and fought during the 1940s; the titular designation—"the greatest generation"—quickly became a household term: Brokaw's thesis was that the lives of

those people had been the most special, and they, having grown up during the Depression, then proved their uniquely strong and patriotic spirit during WWII. They were, in Brokaw's view, a nation of heroes. Here, too, Vietnam loomed large as the counterpoint to the good war, and was presented almost exclusively as the conflict that produced a deep divide not only between the "greatest generation" and the generation of their children, but also among the "greatest" themselves. Mostly, the WWII veterans Brokaw portrays in his book were initially pro-war, but came to change their minds: "He supported [the Vietnam War] in the beginning, but when he saw it was poorly planned and executed, a terrible waste of young American lives, he turned against it" (Brokaw 1998: 384).

Incidentally that same year, in 1998, Steven Spielberg Saving Private Ryan was released, a film that not only became a smashing success and rejuvenated great interest in the war (Basinger 2003: xi-xiii), but one that also proved perhaps the man most influential in how we today imagine WWII, D-Day, and the European theatre of war, to have been; its gruesome, almost naturalistic opening half-hour on Omaha Beach has become notorious.

Stephen Ambrose was the historical consultant on the set of Ryan, where he met the movie's hero, Tom Hanks, who then himself got interested in the history of the American paratroopers in Europe. Hanks decided to pursue the subject further, and when Spielberg's studio, DreamWorks, contributed some serious money, the aforementioned Band of Brothers was created (Schatz 2008: 127-128). The TV series was if anything a better picture still, meticulously researched and produced, and arguably even more realistic, not only in its portrayal of combat but in its storylines, too. Following the scenes on the beach, the film returns to more -or-less traditional, epic mode of American combat film (Suid 2002: 634-636; Torgovnick 2005: 31-32). But the TV show never strays an inch too far from the realistic and the historically-viable, and is even more effective in endearing its audience, over ten hours of watching, to the characters, a number of which are given episode-long focus. From episode to episode, the circumstances in which the troopers find themselves deteriorate, the series thus ever more emphatically highlighting the scope of suffering and sacrifice among these soldiers; that is, of course, until the final episode in which the Germans, and then the Japanese, are defeated, and the remaining men of Easy Company indulge in an all-American game of baseball, moving in gooey slo-mo, bathed in sepia-golden light, even as the voiceover informs the viewer what became of each real-life man the camera alights on.

The show's objective of realism and its affective quality do not shy away from depicting the horror of the battlefield and the front. Terkel's interviewees spoke, too, of being wounded and maimed, of death, grief, pain, the terror of combat. But—as Janine Basinger observed concerning

the WWII Hollywood film—there are certain elements to all war stories that may be re-assembled and re-configured to create war narratives. What ultimately matters to what the narrative will end up saying, is the framing (Basinger 2003: 15). After Vietnam, notoriously the "living-room war" whose uncensored images of destruction and suffering were widely disseminated in contemporary media and which ended up disillusioning the nation as to the very nature of warfare, it would perhaps be impossible to offer viewers the super-heroic, but essentially clean portrayal of combat and the battlefield known from the post-war movies of John Wayne; the realism of Ryan and Band of Brothers is very likely a result. But crucially, in the case of these titles and generally WWII, the American casualties and the suffering of the American soldiers are located within a framework of a Manichean struggle and triumph over evil, of a nation's being subjected to the ultimate test of endurance and heroism, and its coming out the victor: the dead or wounded soldier is not so much victimized, as his life and health are given in sacrifice for the common good of his nation; he is wounded, he grieves, he dies—but the more he does so, the greater the dimension of his war and of his nation's conduct in it (see also: Moeller 1989: 241-244).

Following the attacks on World Trade Center in 2001, the nature of the Good War myth changed. Now that America was actually attacked—for the first time since Pearl Harbor, no less—and the War on Terror was soon to be launched, the myth and its imagery became useful in political rhetoric and military recruitment campaigns. And while the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are currently being worked through in American culture, the myth of WWII is paradoxically strengthened, for in a military culture such as the American one, with deep societal identification with the nation's troops, war must remain central to the national imagination; and so that imagination naturally gravitates toward the one truly good war, fought by the greatest generation of Americans. It is thus a curious case of nostalgia: it is difficult to long for armed conflict, but, on the other hand, since armed conflicts "must happen," one thinks warmly of the war where the cause was uncontentious, the fighting men—volunteers spurned by patriotic sentiment—noble and heroic, and the public at home not only enthusiastically supportive of the enterprise, but also actively engaged—through work in factories, weathering the rationing, buying bonds—in the war effort. As one commentator observed, one of the reasons

> why Americans never tire of stories about World War II [is that] they make us feel virtuous. Our role in World War II was to destroy brutal regimes and liberate nations. That is what we like to think the United States does in the world. When we celebrate World War II, we celebrate ourselves: our unselfishness, our dedication to the cause of freedom, and our essential goodness. […] We all enjoy being reminded of how righteous we are. Since that story is available to Americans, in the form of World War II, we grab it and won't

> let go. Nations, like individuals, nurture positive memories and forget or blot out those that don't show us as we imagine ourselves to be (Kinzer 2014).

Of course, something akin to nostalgia is readily used in rhetoric and propaganda; one critic, writing about this subject, wrote about "strategic mobilisation of the past rather than nostalgia" (O'Shaughnessy 2014: 43). In this context nostalgia plays two roles: it is the underlying emotional plane of a society recipient of the rhetoric, and also the emotional ground on which a certain myth rests, to which, in turn, the rhetoric or propaganda may appeal; in the case of WWII the feeling of nostalgia for what pre-Vietnam America was like feeds the myths that continue to define the image of the conflict; it is a cyclical relation.

It should also be pointed out that while personal nostalgia does usually have an actual referent in one's past—the implication is rooted in the word's etymology, after all—the object cultural nostalgia is far more vague, general, ephemeral, less clearly defined, referring to an imagined past that reflects the ills, lacks and desires of the present, and is therefore eagerly employed in such spheres of aggressive persuasion as advertising or political marketing. Nostalgia for WWII as a good war is a nostalgia for a myth. One way of dispelling it is to do away with its broader components, certain misconceptions, oversimplifications, that have seeped into popular culture and mainstream imagination, ever more successfully obscuring the "real war" among Americans, especially the younger generations; another veteran of the European theatre and author, Edward Wood, Jr. (Wood 2006; Wood 2011: 3-4; see also Adams 1993; Hynes 1992; Pauwels 2002; Weber 2008), writing in the past decade, listed these stereotypes as the pervasive notion of the Greatest Generation and:

1. The impression that the U.S. had won the war largely by itself (see also Kirsch).
2. The conviction that the war was a Manichean struggle between good and evil, that the good triumphed, and that the lesson to take home is that evil should never be appeased, but hit with all military might
3. And finally the belief that a war like the Good War is beneficial for a nation, as it bolsters national spirit and unity, boosts economy, ensures power and influence on the international area etc.

The Third Reich *did* turn out to be perhaps the closest in our history to what we consider evil, but what should be remembered is that the Allies in vast majority were not aware of the extent of Nazi crimes until 1945 and the opening of the concentration camps; as Paul Fussell wrote in another book on WWII, the Holocaust is what made the war ultimately "worth" fighting, but that what should not be at the same time forgotten is the price (the monumentality of destruction, the millions killed in combat or as "collateral damage") and the fact that the

Holocaust was *not the reason* the Americans went to war in the first place (Fussell 2005: 157-158; see also Hynes 1992: 103-104). All of this is especially important as the apparent "do not appease evil" platitude was woven into the rhetoric of George W. Bush that led the United States to the invasion of Iraq in 2003; for example, very soon after the World Trade Center attacks, the president said, in a speech to the UN: "In the Second World War, we learnt there is no isolation from evil… That evil has returned and that cause is renewed" (qtd. in Rachman 2007; see also Kirsch 2011 on examples of Barrack Obama's use of WWII in his rhetoric justifying U.S. involvement in the civil war in Libya). To further stir up the desired national ferment, the bizarre rhetorical concept of the Axis of Evil was concocted a few months later, using the two magic formulas—Axis, as in the Axis powers of WWII, Evil, as in America's natural enemies—and while Iraq was the intended destination of the U.S. armed forces, Iran and North Korea, known for their nuclear programmes, were co-opted to make the axis a intuitively-satisfying trio. A commentator, writing years later about the post-9/11 saturation of public language and thinking with World War II mentality, argued that "… in evoking the memory of the Second World War, Mr Bush was tapping into a wave of nostalgia for the heroism of 1939-45 that had been building up for a decade. … Memories of the Second World War helped to form the mental map for those pushing for the invasion of Iraq" (Rachman 2007; see also Torgovnick 2005: ix-xxi).

As of this writing, the public mood in the U.S. concerning the country's overseas military engagement seems wane. But what the nostalgic re-imaginings of World War II—on the eve of the Vietnam War, and in the War on Terror three decades later—can teach us is that the myth of the Good War is never too far gone, and when skilfully evoked it can be manipulated and used to justify any military intervention. To continue to dispel something of the myth of American World War II might be, therefore, with a benefit for the future of the world's peace.

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SUMMARY

„It's a War I Still Would Go To": The American War in Vietnam and Nostalgic Re-Imaginings of World War II

In this article, I trace the process through which World War II (WWII) has become the „good war" in American culture. Drawing on a range of books and articles published on the subject —and often written by the war's veterans—I summarize their findings considering the essentially mythical nature of the conflict' common memory. The well-known aspects of this myth include the view that WWII was a straightforward struggle between good and evil, that the U.S. soldiers who fought it belonged to "the greatest generation," and that it was ultimately an expression and activization of American honor, heroism, and gallantry. Further on, I argue that beginning in the 1980s, a resurgence of cultural interest in WWII becomes evident, but now tinged not only with the emerging image of "the good war," but also with nostalgia—and that the "nostalgization" of the conflict was caused directly by, and indeed possible only because of, the U.S. experience in Vietnam. I trace the multifaceted and multiple references to WWII in Vietnam War narratives —but also to Vietnam in some nostalgic representations of WWII.

KEYWORDS

World War II, Vietnam War, myth, nostalgia, American culture

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INTO THAT DARKNESS – NOSTALGIA FOR A LOST WORLD

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Introduction

The subject of the Holocaust is an extremely sensitive issue today. This applies especially to such controversial figures as the "commandant of two death camps and a person jointly responsible for the Action T-4" – Franz Stangl (Młynarczyk 2013: 84). The aim of the study is to show the unusual personality of Franz Stangl through an interpretation of historical facts. The main research material is the book by Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder*. The method used by the author to the "most effective commander of concentration camps" was a series of interviews, which were given by Stangl at II trial of Treblinka in 1971 (Sereny 1995: 21). The basis for the analysis will be a kind of "melancholy

returns to the past of the camp", by Stangl, which creates a sentimental image of the "lost world" different from what is described in archival materials – the mass extermination of the Jewish population and the functioning of the death camps emerge as something distant, and return to those memories is a nostalgia for the lost control over "life and death" (Sereny 1995: 177–178). But it is worth considering whether this nostalgia is an attempt to produce in the audience a sense that his actions resulted from deep and sincere belief, or on the contrary – they provide a colourful veil for the true intentions directing his behaviour and another manipulation of memories? But is it really realised and deliberate?

Functions of Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a universal experience of every human being, perceived by a given individual in a different way, but having some archetypal background. By definition, it is a kind of sentimental longing for the past and is understood as a positive symptom of trying to recreate one's own past, return to the roots and make an insight into the 'I' of an individual (Arndt, Routledge, Sedikides, Wildschut 2006: 975–976). The concept of emotional state representing the said longing for the past events can be observed in antiquity, i.a. in the Bible or Homer's *Odyssey* (Arndt, Routledge, Sedikides, Wildschut 2006: 975). The term of "nostalgia" was officially used only in the seventeenth century, by a Swiss doctor, Johannes Hofer, who used it to describe symptoms of a disease including: fit of crying, loss of appetite, irregular heartbeat and insomnia (McCann 1941: 166–168).

In the twentieth century, there was a distinction between longing for a family home, childhood, sometimes treated as a form of nostalgia, and negative emotions connected with it (Arndt, Routledge, Sedikides, Wildschut 2006: 976). However, above all, nostalgia ceased to be seen as a medical condition, which paved the way for new readings and interpretations of these conditions. Feeling nostalgic may even improve the mood, help to make an insight into oneself, revise some of views, discover mysteries of the past or rebuild one's own identity, based on a return to the stage when the consciousness of a given individual was developing (Davis 1977: 415–417). Moreover, despite the stereotypical view that nostalgia is an emotional state specific only to the elderly, studies suggest that it is experienced by people of any age (Arndt, Routledge, Sedikides, Wildschut 2006: 976).

It is worth considering when people are more likely to be nostalgic and what are the psychological functions of nostalgia. On one hand, the feeling of loneliness, negative emotional states, encourages weaving nostalgic narratives (Andersson 2010: 15–16). It should be noted,

however, that the stories of this nature arise also if one wants to mask or conceal certain events of the past, where they are aimed at manipulation, constructed in such a way that the recipient does not realise at which point the threads are untrue (Andersson 2010: 16–19). The narrative of nostalgic features is able to clothe very negative events in sentimental frames, neutralising their original connotation and meaning. This process often uses colourful metaphors or stories about very personal experiences in order to reduce the emotional gap between the narrator and the recipient (Andersson 2010: 26, 32, 36). This is because human nature has a tendency to identify with personal experiences of other individuals to a greater extent than with overall historical events. Looking at the above issue from a different perspective, the narrator may not be aware of the nostalgic nature of the story, unwittingly creating an alternative version of events that is different from the official, documented record or accounts of other witnesses to the event. This can happen because of the actual feeling of longing or some kind of sentimentalism, although sometimes these conditions occur in relation to people, phenomena or events of which the average person would not say that someone can feel similar emotions (Arndt, Routledge, Sedikides, Wildschut 2006: 976–977). The period of World War II and the feelings of Germans in relation to Hitler or the idea of the supremacy of the German nation are a good example.

Memory and Narration

According to Harald Welzer, the narration of one's own story, is aimed at dealing with the past and serves to create a coherent sense of identity (Welzer 2009: 42). The autobiographical memory involves these elements of reality that seem to be relevant for the entity in its present position with respect to the past. The dispersion of various aspects of past events connected with the period of the war and fragmentation of their perception reveal shaking the certainty and stability of one's own self, as well as the impossibility of semantic recognition of one's own experiences and giving them a new meaning, significance. On this basis, there may be shown the variability of perspectives of memories as a characteristic of individuals involved in the war and the way in which this variability influences the perception of one's own biography and its presentation (Welzer 2009: 43–44).

Paul Ricoeur in the concept of "narrative identity" shows that the process of talking about one's own self helps to keep the continuity of history as a result of balance between all time orders within which the person functioned (Ricoeur 2008: 294–296). In the context of the process of individualisation of history, there crystallises a strong influence of fear, especially the fear of losing one's own subjectivity and control over the possibility of making choices, also in

the context of the past (Ricoeur 2008: 310–313). It is worth noting that this phenomenon is of general nature, as well as of individual nature. It is characterised by irreversibility and constitution of a kind of emptiness, as well as going beyond accepted time orders. This affects the difficulty in finding not only one's own identity but also the distinction between what is a real experience and what is the product of imagination acting under specific conditions (Ricoeur 2007: 78–81). This becomes clear when having strong sense of nostalgia for what is past, though it is not certain whether these events actually took the form for which one feels the longing.

Narrative can fulfil also transgressive functions – of discovering, correcting or creating the individual's own self and his or her image (Trzebiński 2001: 90–96). The man has the ability to be self-aware and experience himself or herself as an individual who has his or her own world. The individual, himself or herself, can be the listener, the recipient. And the internal dialogue can support the change, working out the attitudes and behaviours. It is also a way to give meanings to reality and experiences. Another function of narrative is highlighting what is important for a person. Through verbalization, the events are more likely to impact the individual narrative can perform the following functions: making reassessments, giving the meaning, introducing changes, self-criticism, self-improvement, making internal integration (Trzebiński 2001: 109–112).

The events during the war often implied a desire to erase the memories as soon as possible and to conceal them from others. Therefore, the category of forgetting tends to correlate experiences presented in the form of "traces" and not full "images" (Neumann 2009: 252–253). Due to the inability to cope with difficult experiences within the psyche, the human mind cannot recall exact images of a given event; it keeps them only in a fragmentary form (Bielik-Robson 2004: 28).

The process of closing the memory also affects the delay of the memories' return. A peculiarity that is explicit at this point, is that in fact the lived events become clear for awareness only when combined with other time or spatial structures and they provide an incentive to create a new relational model. Blurring the boundaries between the present and the affecting it past makes it extremely difficult to locate and determine the dimension of the experience.

The memory cannot revive that what is passed, but gives the memories a structural framework. Therefore, the process of recovering the past creates an image that is false to some extent (Neumann 2009: 250–254). On the other hand, it is an indispensable element of learning the truth about oneself, finding one's own subjectivity. There is also the problem of selective choice of memories, which leads to recognising them as authentic elements of mind, affecting the individual narration and identity. At this point, it is also worth noting that the task of memory is

not the storage and accumulation of past experiences. It constitutes the significance of past events, giving them a current sense, and creating a sense of their authenticity (Neumann 2009: 260–265). A process of linking current and past experiences presented in the form of fragmentary memories in order to achieve full continuity of identity of the individual.

"Inner Monster"

Is it possible for "inner monster" to activate and be seen in the behaviour of a given person only in certain social conditions, historical situation in which his existence was possible? There may be also considered whether the change of these conditions affects the sudden withdrawal from the earlier attitude and the ability to separate one's own identity, and thus the memories, from what actually took place? These questions have become extremely important in the context of the attitudes of people involved in the operation of the "Nazi death machine" during World War II. Since Nazi torturers often could deal with the post-war realities and start a new life as blameless citizens. Most of them did not speak even to their relatives about what they experienced and what actions they made during the war, as if closing this phase from others, but also erasing it from one's own consciousness and memory (Assmann 2009: 341–342). But is it even possible? If a given person decided to share his or her memories, a kind of "nostalgic return to a lost world" became apparent. This perspective of remembering and talking about the experiences is affected by many factors. The desire to diminish one's own role e.g. in the mass extermination of Jews, attempt to partially rehabilitate himself or herself in the eyes of receivers are purposeful reasons for which a given person takes a nostalgic form of narration (Moller, Tschuggnall, Welzer 2009: 410–411). But there also must be taken into account the fact that some differentiate themselves as the executioners from the victims in their consciousness. Their memories are characterised by nostalgia for the time of youth, good financial situation, having power, and above all, being "masters of life and death", when the existence of people depended on their decisions (Assmann 2009: 352–354). Does every man hide this "monster" that allows the transformation of an exemplary citizen into an executioner?

Not all people are the same, as they are individuals and differ from each other. These characteristics are not innate; they are dependent on the possibility of free development of a given individual. It is difficult to determine the components and functioning of "individual self" which forms the awareness of existence. However, it conceptualises the moral aspect of human behaviour and development. Therefore, the aforementioned "inner monster" is not born, but it arises as a result of interfering in the process of shaping human being. From this self

-consciousness, the social morality stems, dependent on the ability to make responsible decisions by individuals and choices between good and evil. Who a man becomes and how he or she acts is strictly dependent on the quality of life, and especially on freedom understood as freedom of development in the family, community, among peoples and of all humanity (Sereny 1995: 367). It also shows a certain interdependence and mutual responsibility of all the people against each other.

Transformation into an Executioner

The author of the *Into That Darkness* book, Gitta Sereny driven by the need to find a person who would be able to explain how it could be that seemingly ordinary people might have committed criminal acts of the Second World War, decided to analyse the personality of at least one of the executioners who were directly involved in wrongdoing. Learning the past of such a man, his childhood, motives of his conduct and his perception of certain specified behaviours would improve understanding of the extent to which evil in men is genetic, and how much it depends on their social environment (Sereny 1995: 10). Most of Nazi torturers did not have the courage to share memories of the war years and not verified their relationship to the past. After many efforts, Franz Stangl, one of the main wielders of the Holocaust, the commander of German concentration camps in Treblinka and Sobibór, agreed to take part in the conversation (Sereny 1995: 12–14).

Franz Stangl – born in 1908 in Austria – joined the Austrian police in 1931, and soon after, to the local Nazi party (Heberer 2004: 70). He was also a member of the SS. His career in the Nazi terror apparatus began after the Anschluss of Austria by the Third Reich. He initially worked on a structured process of killing the mentally ill and disabled (Action T-4) in the Hartheim Castle (Heberer 2004: 71–72). In March 1942, he took the post of the commandant of Sobibór, where he served until September 1942 (Młynarczyk 2013: 85). Then he moved to Treblinka and served as the commandant of the camp. Always dressed in a white equestrian uniform, he had a reputation of the "best commandant of the Nazi concentration camps in Poland", which was repeatedly underlined by his superior, Otto Globocnik (Sereny 1995: 11–12). Stangl was responsible for the deaths of approximately 900,000 Polish Jews, of whom more than 700,000 were killed during his governing at Treblinka (Młynarczyk 2013: 85). When he arrived in the latter camp, he was believed to make an obfuscation of the process of extermination and increase in its performance. For this purpose, he turned the station at Treblinka into an elegant facility so that the future victims could not have expected what awaited them. He also built a new

gas chambers, which could accommodate up to 3,000 people (Młynarczyk 2013: 88–89). He streamlined the entire organisation of the camp, making the process of extermination run without interference. Stangl did not treat future victims as people, but as a "commodity" that has to be eliminated.

After the war, he managed to conceal his identity and, unrecognised, he escaped from his Austrian prison in 1947 (Sereny 1995: 11). Through Italy and Syria, he penetrated to Brazil, where he lived under his own name, unrecognised. It was only in 1967 when he was arrested and extradited to Germany (Sereny 1995: 11–12). Criminal process ended on October 22, 1970, when he was sentenced to a lifelong seclusion. Stangl died of a heart attack in prison in 1971 (Młynarczyk 2013: 85).

Two Nostalgias

Describing the personality of Franz Stangl, his intelligence should be underlined. He claimed that he had agreed to talk about his experiences because of an inner need to penetrate into the past and understand the role he had played in it (Sereny 1995: 23, 25, 327). In the process of narrating, he revealed moral qualms, but often there were visible manifestations of a double personality. He was giving two versions of the same event (Sereny 1995: 98, 101). From a psychological point of view, this is an important observation as there were gradually revealing resigning from excuses, embellishments, presenting himself in a favourable light.

In this context, there are visible two types of nostalgic returns to the past, which were mentioned in the introduction. In the narration, Stangl is learnt as a sensitive person, sentient strong longing for the lost time of youth, which he described as "the happiest time of his life" (Sereny 1995: 27, 280, 354). For many people, the return to "the land of childhood" becomes an opportunity to reconstruct the time when their identity and personality were shaping; however, for Stangl, it is a peculiar form of seeking the balance between what is "clear" in his life and what brought him "into that darkness". Describing his youth, he shows typical symptoms of an unconscious nostalgic return:

> There were tears in his eyes before we even began to speak of his childhood [...] I had taught myself to play the zither and I joined the zither club [...] On Sundays I built myself a Taunus – a sailboat [...] It was my happiest time. (Sereny 1995: 25–27)

There should also be noticed the language layer of the narratives. Stangl had a habit of switching from a half-formal German language, which he had usually used, to the provincial

Austrian dialect – a colloquial form of communication of his childhood – when he had to answer questions that were difficult for him (Sereny 1995: 29, 31, 96, 302). He did not do this knowingly, and this did not mean that in such moments, he lied. When he had to tell about some shocking truth, then he sought refuge in the "cosy" language and definitions from his childhood (Sereny 1995: 29). Thus, he somehow tried to separate "work" that he carried out during the war, from being a husband, father, citizen and just a man. He attached a great importance to the inviolacy and non-permeability of both orders. There might be stated that these acts of nostalgic return to the past are to somehow neutralise the effects of actions of Stangl during his service in the camps of Sobibór and Treblinka.

"Everything I did out of my own free will [...] I had to do as best as I could. That is how I am" – he was instilled with this "deadly perfectionism" in the police academy in Vienna, along with the conviction that around him, there are only enemies, and all men are corrupted to the bone (Sereny 1995: 347). When he was speaking about his later life, he fell into a police jargon. He called the Schutzpolizei School the first step on the road to disaster (Sereny 1995: 29).

"I hate... I hate the Germans [...] For what they pulled me into." (Sereny 1995: 39–40) He pleaded guilty to a minor offence, because he felt an inner need to say three words: "I am guilty." He was unable to pronounce them, when the talking was about the murder of 400,000 to 900,000 Jews (Młynarczyk 2013: 85). In this way, he was seeking an acceptable substitute. With the exception of a monster, no man who participated in these activities was able to plead guilty and live with it. With respect to the man whose vision of the world was so disfigured that he could tell the story in this way, a relatively simple concepts of guilt or innocence, good and evil could not be applied.

An another kind of nostalgic narrative used in the course of the story by Stangl is also worth noting. It is noticeable that "the most effective commander of concentration camps" consciously constructed convincing accounts of his actions during the war. However, it should be pointed out that Stangl manipulated the events in order to justify his own behaviour or escape from the responsibility (Sereny 1995: 70, 93, 157–161). When talking about "work" at Sobibór and Treblinka, he used a strong, confident tone, typical for an impartial observer who is able to emotionally describe gruesome and horrifying scenes, but, at the same time, he does this smoothly and objectively: "It was important not to adapt completely to it. Complete adaptation, you see, meant acceptance. And the moment one accepted, one was morally and physically lost." (Sereny 1995: 173)

Everything he was talking about was in part a product of his imagination, and in part, an attempt to treat these events rationally. He somehow deliberately used means that are specific to

a nostalgic coverage of past events, such as the mentioned in the introduction colourful metaphors or peculiar descriptions of personal experiences (Andersson 2010: 26–27). These activities were aimed at bridging the gap between the narrator and the audience, and above all, at creating their sense of confidence in the Stangl. A perfect example of these actions is switching from the following statement: "It was [just] a freight", as a term for Jews transported to death camps, and comparing their annihilation to a truly picturesque image of death of lemmings going to die into the sea (Sereny 1995: 91, 112, 138, 231). Stangl very often stressed the need to domesticate the evil to which he was forced to do: "Would it not have been possible [...] to show some evidence of your inner conflict? [...] But that would have been the end. That is precisely why I was so alone." (Sereny 1995: 229)

Conclusion

> Throughout the three days of this part of his story he manifested and intense desire to seek and tell the truth [...] He was telling the truth as he had seen it twenty-nine years ago and still saw it in 1971, and in so doing he voluntarily but unwittingly told me more than truth: he revealed the two men he had become in order to survive. (Sereny 1995: 157)

In doing the last remark, it is worth noting that this duality of the personality of Franz Stangl, expressed in his various narratives of a nostalgic nature (unconscious and conscious), could also result from an unconscious desire to construct his own personality, that is, a man he could have become, in opposition to a man he became. However, the juvenile intentions remained available only during nostalgic returns to the land of childhood – the land of happiness.

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SUMMARY

Into That Darkness – Nostalgia for a Lost World

The subject of the Holocaust is an extremely sensitive issue today. This applies especially to such controversial figures as Franz Stangl. The aim of the article is to show the unusual personality of Franz Stangl through an interpretation of historical facts. The main research material is the book by Gitta Sereny, *Into That Darkness: From Mercy Killing to Mass Murder*. The method used by the author was a series of interviews, which were given by Stangl at II trial of Treblinka in 1971. The basis for the analysis is a kind of melancholy returns to the past of the camp, by Stangl, which created a sentimental image of the lost world different from what is described in archival materials. Everything he was talking about was in part a product of his imagination, and in part, an attempt to treat these events rationally. He somehow deliberately used means that are specific to a nostalgic coverage of past events, such as colourful metaphors or peculiar descriptions of personal experiences. Stangl manipulated the events in order to justify his own behaviour or escape from the responsibility.

KEYWORDS
Holocaust, Franz Stangl, nostalgia, memory, narration

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MEMORY AND CONFLICT: INTERVIEWS WITH YOUTH OF THE BOSNIAN WAR

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Introduction

For the past two months, I have been based in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), conducting interviews with the generation of children and teens affected by the Bosnian War of the 1990s. The purpose of this research is to determine patterns, if any, in existing and nonexistent dialogue in regards to past memories of childhood interrupted by war, how those memories affect personal identity and current views on the social, political, and economic conditions of BiH, and future outlook with particular attention focused on reconciliation. What I will be presenting today is related specifically to the first section regarding memory, but these themes, patterns, and clips are part of a larger and ongoing untitled "Bosnia Project," in which post-conflict development is given particular focus. Interviews are conducted

with a voice recorder, the purpose of which is not only for transcription but also to create a multi-media project in which this dialogue literally has a voice.

History

With Tito's death and the fall of communism in the 1980s came the rise of nationalism and palpable ethnic tension throughout the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Multiparty elections were held in 1990 across republics, and Slovenia and Croatia declared independence in 1991, shortly followed by the more ethnically mixed and geographically more vulnerable Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 1992. Competing goals in this war varied; Serbia, under Slobodan Milošević, working to create a "Greater Serbia," flexed his power behind the scenes, supplying the Bosnian Serbs, led by Radovan Karadžić and his general Ratko Mladić, with financial and military support before and after Bosnian Serbs declared an independent Serbian republic (Republika Srpska). Croatia, under Franjo Tuđman, in its own war for independence, attempted to annex the parts of Bosnia mainly populated by Bosnian Croats. Alija Izetbegović, representing the Bosnian Muslim party in BiH, strove to keep Bosnia a united but independent country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina officially went to war in April 1992; what resulted in the next three and a half years was widespread ethnic cleansing, mass rape, and genocide, the majority of which was committed against Bosnian Muslims; after the war, it was also revealed that atrocities, including concentration camps, were committed on all three sides (Smajić, 2010). The end to the war came in the form of the Dayton Accords, signed in December of 1995. While Dayton brought an end to the violence, it came at the price of an excessively complex governmental system, which essentially stalemated the war and divided the country into two highly independent entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. Ethnic divisions were legitimized and remain in place politically and socially. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in the Hague, established during the war, has slowly been distributing sentences for war crimes; however, opinions vary as to the bias and efficacy of such trials, particularly considering the UN and the international community's disastrous failure to prevent such atrocities. According to World Bank data, BiH currently has the highest youth unemployment rate and one of the highest general unemployment rates in the world. Despite receiving more aid per capita than any other European country under the Marshall Plan post-war (Pasic, 2011), corruption is widespread and well known.

Methodology

The interview structure is broken into four sections: creating a profile, past memories, present views, and future outlook. All names have been changed, but they reflect the cultural practice of naming one's children related to heritage, for example, Fatima is changed to Yasira or Aleksander is changed to Dušan.

Age & Gender: Four participants were female and four were male. The age range is from (at the start of the war) 6 years old to 17 years old. I purposely did not define an age limit; the primary restriction was that the participants had to be conscious and aware of the situation but be unable to take any action to change their circumstances. This of course is subjective, hence my hesitation to automatically limit the participant pool. For example, one participant was recruited into the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) during the war, but in his interview talks about his personal struggle with being a pacifist and essentially a pawn in a war out of his control.

Marital Status, Occupation, & Language: Most participants were unmarried without children. Occupations varied in industry, but all participants were university educated, many with post-graduate degrees. The language is in English. I would like to continue this research and gather a wider participant pool as I am aware that it lacks diversity in this area.

Place of Origin & Current Location: I interviewed people originally from Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Konjic. Emina, Dželila, and Haris remained in Sarajevo throughout the siege. Jovan remained in Banja Luka until deployment in the VRS. Tomislav left Banja Luka for Belgrade very early in the war but returned after a year. Branka left Sarajevo as a refugee in Croatia but returned several years after the war ended. Lastly, Zehra and Damir left during the war and remained abroad, making them members of the Bosnian Diaspora.

Ethnicity & Religion: When asked to identify their ethnicity, some participants answered with exactness, for example "Bosnian Muslim," or "Serbian," while others gave much broader answers.

> That's kind of the toughest question you can ask someone... By the law, you must be either Serbian, Croat, or Bosniak, or others. So during the, I don't know, when I'm working or whatever I need to cross Bosniak, but I declare myself as Bosnian... By the constitution, I must be one of those three. (Haris)

> I know that this may be the problem that some people would say Bosnian or something like that. I do not have problem with that category "Bosnian," but I really avoid to do that because I always have a feeling that one group manipulated that nationality, so I do not like that term "Other." I think that's just term as a term is terrible, but I always use it... I really have a totally different background in my family, but that is not the only one reason why I choose to do that. I really do not want to be in one category... If you are not a constituent,

> you must be one national minority. I am not national minority. I am not constitutive. I am—I just do not feel like I belong to some ethnics group. (Dželila)

> I would say my background is mixed ethnicity, Serbian and Croatian, and there is a thing here in Bosnia that one group of people who don't want to be put in a box, so they want to say that we are all Bosnian and Herzegovinians. But I think that's wrong, because that is like citizenship and not the ethnicity, and the need to just put us all under the same name is kind of fascist. Because it presumes that if we are not the same, we cannot get along. So I don't feel a special correlation to my ethnicity. (Branka)

Identity is a common and recurring theme in these interviews, unsurprisingly because of the role ethnicity played in the war. Even this seemingly simple profiling question revealed the complexity and the insight into which one's identity in a political atmosphere is taken into account.

Past: Memories of War

In this section, I asked participants about pre-war childhood and nostalgia, wartime memory, becoming aware, and identifying the enemy. All of the participants had what they considered good and normal childhoods, many speaking of the former SFRY as providing economic stability and a certain level of comfortable living. Jovan's answer best summed up the general opinion of childhood in the former communist state:

> I don't know. Maybe we were living in a dream. Maybe we were told lies. But, you know, I really loved that kind of dream. You know, I enjoyed it… In other words I enjoyed that kind of lie.

Like Jovan, this realistic nostalgia of sorts was commonly felt among participants who felt, either through past recognition or present reflection, that life was not actually as perfect as it seemed, but continued to look fondly back at that past anyway. Dželila even felt nostalgia when reflecting on her experience through the siege of Sarajevo. She explained that despite the horrible living conditions, there was an emphasis on maintaining normalcy. As a young teenager, this meant hanging out with her friends, going to school (when she could), and occasionally lying to her parents. For some participants, memory is divided into two periods: before the war and after the war. Certainly, this phrasing is commonly heard among older generations. However, for Dželila, the war was something that happened around her, something she lived through but that did not stop her from living. She wondered aloud if her normalcy was best maintained because of her age, or also perhaps because she did not experience any particularly personal trauma.

Emina, on the other hand, clearly remembers the day her father was killed as the day she realized the nature of war. She was able to describe the flowery skirt she was wearing, what the weather was like that day, and how she remembers catching a dandelion and making a wish:

> I remember catching that, and making a wish, you know, of course there was this boy that I liked, so I'm thinking I want to be his girlfriend. And then the second wish was so that nobody gets killed in my family. Well obviously that wish came too late for that day anyway.

Not only does she remember very specific details about the entire course of the day, which she considers to be a result of the stark difference between the hours before she found out her father had been killed and after, but she also exemplifies the contrast between the innocence of childhood and the violence of war. Her first priority when making the wish is for this young crush, and only as an afterthought does she wish for her family's safety. The very idea that something bad could happen to her, that war could enter her life beyond the lack of electricity, food, and warm clothing, was simply unfathomable.

Haris' first interaction with war came when he narrowly escaped deportation and possible execution as Serb soldiers neared his apartment building:

> I mean, the first moment when I was kind of really scared, it was when I saw two tanks at the angles of our building, and who started out to taking people out and leaving with them. So it was like two buildings before us, and then the next one was our building, and fortunately—fortunately—we had time to escape.

After moving to a safer location in the center of town, Haris, like Dželila and even to some extent Emina, lived as close to a normal life as possible under the circumstances. All three lived under constant threat during the siege, however, all spoke of needing this normalcy; indeed, Haris spoke with pride about the resilience of the city in continuing cultural events, such as the Sarajevo Film Festival, which began during the war. This normalcy was not only necessary to maintain one's sanity but also an act of defiance in the face of aggression.

Participants also became aware of their identity or discovered its significance just before or during the war, although not typically because of one specific event. More commonly, this discovery of identity was included in the early stages of the war. For example, Zehra became aware that she had a Muslim name, Haris realized that only his Serb friends were leaving Sarajevo, and Jovan found that Croats began leaving his neighborhood, followed by Muslims, including eventually his friend, Damir. Interestingly, it was Damir who expressed how he felt the anti-Muslim attitude came only after the war started. Jovan wondered in our interview, however, if this was in fact the reality or if this was because they had a very close-knit group of friends who protected each other from the ethnic tension that he sensed had been a growing concern. In any case, Damir's family did eventually flee Banja Luka as the situation became too dangerous. He

spoke about seeing the effects of being exposed to violence, especially violence committed by one's own army:

> If you watch people get slaughtered and killed or tortured, if you're like 18, 19, you just go crazy. And that made my life, like, very scary because then you have a bunch of crazy people also walking around, and with guns, you know? And then you don't know what's going to happen.

Unlike Damir, who was rejected from recruitment because of his ethnicity, Jovan was recruited by the VRS when he turned 18 and ultimately served 16 months before the war's end. His story involved serious reflection into his own views as a pacifist:

> You see we didn't try to find a justification, you know? "Our friends are gone, so we can play war." No. Knowing that you can shoot someone, take someone's life—purposefully or un-purposefully—It's awful. That was my opinion. That is my opinion now.

From his perspective, the knowledge that he may eventually be forced to take a life in a kill-or-be-killed situation was haunting. He resisted the suggestion that not knowing the enemy made it easier to kill; rather, he emphasized how lucky he was for never being in a situation that necessitated using his gun.

While I hesitate to apply the relationship between Damir and Jovan beyond their individual experiences, their interviews—conducted separately—did reveal commonalities across participants. For example, nearly every participant stressed early on in the interview that they had friends of all ethnicities and religions when they were children. When later discussing the memory of war and its impact on identity, several still maintained that beyond not holding any prejudice, they simply did not care about identifying each other by the basis of ethnicity. But this was not met without contradiction. Tomislav, who firmly declared himself Serb in the beginning of our interview and quite often reverted to a collective identity as "We Serbs," explained that he was unaware of his ethnicity before the war, that friendships between different religions were the norm, and insisted that Muslims should feel welcome to live in Banja Luka today. However, he also maintained that the separation of people was beneficial for all because, as he saw it, clearly they could not live together peacefully. Conversely, Zehra, who said she was born to Islam but does not identify further than that, regularly struggled with contradiction. One particular moment of reflection came on the third day of Marš Mira, an annual peace march commemorating the genocide at Srebrenica, in which she contemplated her feelings when passing through Republika Srspka:

> I have to admit that for me the third day also was a bit of, I guess, my own aggression coming out, of "I'm here, I'm here," and it was a kind of satisfaction of being there, and then I felt ashamed of that feeling because I identify that to be aggressive… And I didn't take pride in that.

For Zehra, who left very early in the war and remained abroad in the Diaspora, finding answers to questions related to her past was an integral part of her identity. She acknowledged that much of her struggle was related to coping with the guilt at not being present for a war she felt wholly a part of and affected by. Haris, like Zehra and most of the other participants, maintains his apathy about his own ethnicity, feeling forced to declare one over another for political reasons, but he did feel a sense of pride at being from Sarajevo and surviving the siege. Jovan, who is technically half-Serbian, formally declared his father's ethnicity as Slovenian after the war, putting him in the minority "Other" category. While he did not have an exact answer as to his motivation, he too maintained that being in one box or another was unnecessary, polarizing, and essentially a way for the politicians to maintain their power with the status quo. Branka, who struggled with her identity as an outsider and a refugee while living in Zagreb after escaping Sarajevo, continued to struggle with her identity even after returning. For Zehra and Branka, leaving during the war put them in a limbo of questioning their identity. This was not the case for Damir, however, who acknowledged his ethnicity but was just as quick to say that he is not practicing any religion. For Branka, Dželila, and Jovan who all declared themselves as "Other," identity was a personal choice made upon reflection of their experience during the war.

Concluding Remarks

Participants experienced a wide range of exposure to the war. Indeed, some shared similar experiences, e.g. living through the siege of Sarajevo, growing up together in Banja Luka, or being a part of the Bosnian Diaspora. Many were forced to flee, even more lost friends or relatives. Certain patterns did arise, particularly in how memory of war shaped personal identity. All were either unaware of their identity or did not consider it to be an important facet in their everyday lives before the war. All believed that, regardless of how apathetic towards or attached to their ethnicity they personally were, maintaining politically set identities were a manipulation by an unspecified governmental force to keep politicians in power by pitting people against each other. Most pined for their nostalgic pre-war, idealistic Yugoslav ("brotherhood and unity") childhood, although war made these memories biting with realism. Maintaining normalcy was a common theme, but most especially for those who lived under constant threat of harm. And finally, interethnic friendships were stressed amongst most participants.

While I do not have time today to go into much detail as to the later parts of this project—that is, the present and future views and outlooks—I would like to briefly touch upon these topics. Participants across the board were not optimistic about reconciliation, the exact

definition of which was left open to interpretation. Although most stressed their interethnic friendships before the war and maintain their lack of bias today, they overwhelmingly believe that reconciliation is at worst not possible and at best possible only with major, systemic change. This change came at different suggestions; however, it became clear very quickly that there are fundamentally different beliefs present that are currently inhibiting proactive solutions. Namely, those in the Federation did not believe that Republika Srpska as an independent entity should exist as it is currently, which to most is considered land rewarded for genocide in a war of aggression. Further, although it is roundly acknowledged as responsible for stopping the war, the Dayton Accords were heavily problematic at the time of signature and remain untouched, essentially resulting in a shaky stalemate within the politically and ethnically divided country. Tomislav, and others I did not formally interview in Republika Srpska, were against this argument, maintaining that their legal status as an entity was a result of civil war, not aggression, and generally insisted in a conflation of numbers of victims. This last point is especially problematic because, returning to the theme of contradiction, although it was agreed that genocide and other atrocities occurred, this was acknowledged in the same breath of atrocities committed against Serbs, too. This juxtaposition of "yes, but," although perhaps unintentional, reads as justification for violence.

More pressing to participants than memory of war was the poor health of the economy and severe lack of jobs. Most were not optimistic about Bosnia's application to the EU, and many were not optimistic about the status of the EU on its own. Generally, participants were not actively engaged in Bosnian politics or acts of change; heavy protesting last year gave a brief spark of hope, and even the cross-ethnic assistance following the floods that devastated the country later on similarly gave rise in a belief that fundamental changes could be on the horizon. However, both failed to take permanent hold, and participants overwhelming felt a sense of hopelessness when it came to the future of their country.

Despite the pessimism, people do still care, with many expressing regret at the droves of educated youth leaving the country, the seemingly endless corruption in government, and the political battleground their ruggedly beautiful and naturally resourceful country has become. Their culture, as vibrant and varied as it is, is extremely important. In spite of everything—their childhoods being cut short, the distrust in and disillusionment with the international community, living through trauma—participants carried a dark but quick sense of humor, a deep-rooted social structure based in family, and a surprisingly sustained level of steadiness despite the numerous cups of coffee.

After the war's end, Jovan recalled checking on the statuses of his friends. Too afraid to hear bad news over the phone, he took his chances wandering the streets:

> I went walking and I think it was... that guy, he has the same name. And I think, you know, he says something, "Hi!"
>
> I said, "Hi! You are alive."
>
> "Yes, and you are alive, too."
>
> "Great! Let's have a beer."
>
> "Perfect." You know?... And you knew that everything started to become normal again.

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SUMMARY

Memory and Conflict: Interviews with Youth of the Bosnian War

This paper was part of a multi-media project presented at the University of Gdańsk in September 2015. It examines the preliminary findings of interviews conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and over Skype in July and August of 2015. Eight participants—ranging in age, gender, religion, ethnicity, place of origin, and other profiling components—answered questions regarding past memories of childhood interrupted by the 1992-1995 war, how those memories affect personal identity and current views on the social, political, and economic conditions of BiH, and future outlook with particular attention focused on reconciliation. All names have been changed. For reference purposes, the list of abbreviations and bibliography is included at the end.

KEYWORDS

Conflict, war, Bosnia and Herzegovina, memory, interviews, reconciliation, identity, religion, ethnicity

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Bosna i Hercegovina* (BiH)

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY)

Army of Republika Srpska, *Vojska Republika Srpska* (VRS)

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)

Jugoslav People's Army, *Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija* (JNA)

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THE REGIME OF MEMORY IN "THE MUSEUM OF INNOCENCE": THE PAST AS AN AGE OF INNOCENCE

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Introduction

In this paper, the regime of memory that *The Museum of Innocence* -a museum created and curated by Orhan Pamuk in 2012 in line with his 2008 novel of the same title- produces will be discussed. In the manifesto that appears in the museum catalogue, a new form of museum is called for in place of the conventional museums and whether this objective is fulfilled in this museum will be examined here. The process of modernization in Turkey is criticized in the novel/museum for being imposed from above; for having created a society that is an imitation of the West and for the commodity fetishism that it produced. This paper tries to answer the question whether the museum that criticizes the process of modernization in Turkey on many

levels generates a productive and transformative memory regime that questions the modern understandings of man, time, space and reality and creates an awareness of multiple perspectives on history.

The employment of the term novel/museum referring to *The Museum of Innocence* in this paper results from the idea that although the novel *The Museum of Innocence* and the museum of the same title are two distinct products, there is a close relationship between them. In the novel, the protagonist Kemal Basmacı collects the belongings of the woman that he loves and the objects that remind him of her and he speaks of constructing a museum in order to exhibit his collection which fill in for the lack of his beloved and he wants the author Orhan Pamuk to write their story. As a matter of fact, the novel was first designed by Orhan Pamuk as a museum catalogue. But later Pamuk wrote the novel, opened the museum in which the collection of Kemal Basmacı, the protagonist of the novel is exhibited and wrote a catalogue for the museum titled *The Innocence of Objects* (2012). Although the museum was opened four years after the publication of the book, the idea of constructing a museum was an important part of this design from the very beginning (Pamuk 2012: 11).

The Museum of Innocence designating at once a novel and a museum reinforces ambiguity regarding the distinction between reality and fiction since both in the novel and in the museum, the fictional and the real are interwoven and it is nearly impossible to separate them from each other. Intertextuality is pushed to its limits through the positioning of different texts upon each other and the idea of absolute reality is problematized. Through the positioning of the author Orhan Pamuk in the novel, the novel reveals its constructedness, its fictive nature; and through the positioning of Kemal Basmacı, a fictive character as the creator of the museum and fictive characters such as Füsun and Celal Salik -a character both in this novel and another novel by Orhan Pamuk titled *The Black Book* (1990)- in the creative team of the museum, the line between fiction and reality is once more disturbed.

There is a cyclical referential relationship between the novel and the museum which eliminates the question regarding the original and which renders both the novel and the museum open-ended. According to Jacques Derrida (1976: 145), the place of the supplement "as substitute" "is assigned in the structure by the mark of an emptiness", but it is also "exterior, outside of the positivity to which it is super-added, alien to that which, in order to be replaced by it, must be other than it". The idea of the original is put in danger in the relationship between the museum and the novel as supplements.

The Museum of Innocence materializes the journey/experience of the reader making way for the questioning of the position of the reader/visitor. Reader turning the pages of the novel is put

in a concretized world of the novel, but always with a degree of excess, in the museum. In the entrance of the museum, there is a quotation from Celal Salik; in the 68th glass box Bozacı Mevlut, another character from one of Pamuk's novels, *A Strangeness in My Mind* (2014) which in fact was published later than *The Museum of Innocence* appears; in the 19th glass box the death announcements of real people such as the journalist Abdi ipekçi who was murdered in 1979 are mixed together with the death announcements of fictional characters such as Cevdet Işıkçı and Celal Salik from Pamuk's novels. The reader/visitor floating between different narratives gains awareness about her own position as a reader/visitor and about the textuality of the "real" world.

Conventional forms of novel and museum have been products of the individualistic desire to conquer the world in all its aspects through the composition of a closed and a controllable world:

> (…) museums and novels share a lot in common. Each affords us the pleasures that come from entering complete and self-contained worlds, and what's more, worlds that have been reduced to a miniature scale, at least in comparison with the universe that they reflect" (Morris 2012: p.6).

Mikhail Bakhtin addresses two competing stylistic lines that have been prevalent throughout the process of the development of the novel in his article titled "Discourse in the Novel": the first one that has been the dominant style in the novel genre "knows only single language and single style" (Bakhtin 1934-5: 375); the key features of the second style which is more productive, questioning and transformative is "heteroglossia" (polyphony) and "the auto -criticism of discourse" (Bakhtin 1934-5: 412). In Bakhtinian terms, *dialogical* novels which enable a democratic dialogue between the voices in the novel (the voice of the author, the voices of the characters and the voices of the socio-ideological groups represented in the novel) and between the author and the reader belong to this second stylistic line. These novels, besides leading the reader to question the novel in terms of form, content and discourse, lead her to question the social, cultural, historical and ideological structures that she herself is a part of. In the following chapters, the regime of memory reproduced in *The Museum of Innocence* will be analyzed and whether the formal technics used to establish the novel and the museum as metafictional works help to create an awareness about history will be discussed.

The Museum of the Individual: A New Museum?

The Museum of Innocence -both the novel and the museum- tells the story of the modern individual and everyday life in a modernizing non-western society. Nevertheless, every museum puts forth a claim about history:

> Whether we like it or not, every acquisition (and indeed disposal), every juxtaposition or arrangement of an object or work of art, together with other objects or works of art, within the context of a temporary exhibition or museum display means placing a certain construction upon history, be it the history of the distant or more recent past, of our own culture or someone else's, of mankind in general or a particular aspect of human endeavor (Vergo 2006: 2-3).

In the manifesto titled "A Modest Manifesto for Museums" that appears in the museum catalogue, the principles that shape *The Museum of Innocence* are introduced. This manifesto puts forth an individualistic understanding of museums and *The Museum of Innocence* is the embodiment of the principles of this new museum.

Pamuk criticizes the state-sponsored museums that represent the state and he praises the museums that can speak for individuals just as the novels. According to him, large national museums such as the Louvre and the Hermitage "present the story of the nation -history, in a word- as being far more important than the stories of individuals", but "the stories of the individuals are much better suited to displaying the depths of our humanity" (Pamuk 2012: 55). Interestingly, nationalism and individualism spring from a common worldview since both of them are products of the modern way of seeing: both of them reproduce a romantic, triumphant and a humanist self-image and indeed romanticism is a movement that praises nationalism to the skies as much as individualism; both construct their subjects (the individual and the nation) as absolute and essential concepts; both produce and depend on an illusion of grandiosity that is constructed not in relation to, but against others. It is ironic that although Pamuk introduces the nation as a problematic issue, he takes the notion of the individual for granted. Althusser places the concept of the subject at the heart of ideology; according to him, "the existence of ideology and the hailing or interpellation of individuals as subjects are one and the same thing" (Althusser 1975: 175). The distinction between the stories of individuals and the story of the nation causes one to ignore the fact that both produce a unified, homogeneous and a limited perspective. The national museums telling the story of the nation support individualism by constructing the visitor as a subject who takes pride in his ancestry and thus, in his very own self. *The Museum of Innocence* reflects Pamuk's unitary vision about Turkey, Istanbul, modernity and the process of

modernization in Turkey and thus fails to present multiple perspectives on history just like the national museums he criticized for reproducing official history.

The Museum of Innocence is a novel/museum of objects and the objects are qualified by innocence in the novel/museum because it is the individuals who give them their meanings, not the nations and cultures. The use of ordinary and everyday objects in the museum displaces the question of authenticity and originality prevalent in conventional museums and this seems to be the aim of Orhan Pamuk considering his manifesto for museums. As a result of the association of authenticity with *constructed* institutional meanings which are imposed upon the individual from above, the ordinary is seen most suitable to tell the story of the individual. But it is questionable whether the unique arrangement of ordinary objects in an artfully constructed museum do not attain the so-called aura that is associated with the elitist art objects found in the sanctioned museums. Individual is positioned in contrast to the structures, community, institutions and the state in Pamuk's manifesto. But if the problem with national museums is that they produce and impose a unitary ideology, can Pamuk's museum escape the production and imposition of a unitary vision of its own making?

The Voices in "The Museum of Innocence": Singularity Reinforced

The Museum of Innocence claims to be the museum of the individual in opposition to national museums which produce a unitary vision regarding history. Based on the Bakhtinian idea that dialogical narratives could produce multiple perspectives on history, the dialogue between the different voices in *The Museum of Innocence* will be discussed here. The entrance of Orhan Pamuk into the novel is a reflexive technique causing the reader to gain awareness about the constructedness of the novel, but it also reinforces realism since the character of Orhan Pamuk in the novel tells that he has written the story that Kemal has told him in the first-person singular: "In the book you are telling your own story, and saying 'I,' Kemal Bey. I am speaking in your voice. Right now I am trying very hard to put myself in your place, to be you" (Pamuk 2009: 707). After Pamuk settles into the position of the subject that was filled by Kemal until that point, Kemal turns into an object of the story told. Kemal as the collector also becomes the object of his own collection when he moves into the museum: "He to whom the collection belongs, belongs also to the collection" (Maleuvre 1999: 97). Pamuk, being the mirror-image of Kemal, rather than considering Kemal's perspective from an ironic distance, identifies with him and this lack of distance between the two characters prevents a shift in perspective. The shift of narrators becomes meaningless in the end and it turns into a technique that plays into the hands

of the critiques of postmodern literature who evaluated it as play; however, if an ironic perspective had been adopted and Pamuk had reserved his own voice, it would have led the reader to problematize the perspective presented in the novel. The proliferation of the narrating voices in the novel rather than producing multiplicity, ends up reproducing a strengthening of singularity.

The Museum of Innocence creates a multi-layered experience for the museum visitor. The first layer consists of the experience of the museum visitor with regards to his relationship with the single objects in the museum based on his own memories. The visitor who is familiar with the Istanbul of that period will be able to relate with the objects in the museum personally. The second layer consists of the museum visitor's experience of the design of the whole museum which could itself be seen as an artwork. The third layer consists of him experiencing the museum through the remembrance of the place, role and function of the objects in the novel. And the fourth layer consists of an experience resulting from the consciousness about how the objects in the novel are pieced together in the museum. In a museum designed as such, the experience of the visitor who has read the novel is expected to be a complex one involving the dialogue, congruity and conflict of these four levels. This heterogeneity has the capacity to create a rich experience generating multiplicity of meanings. But the nostalgic memory regime prevalent in the museum undermines the multiplicity of meanings created by these different layers of experience because even though the past is brought to the present time in *The Museum of Innocence*, this is a unitary past captured dead.

The architecture of the museum is constructed in a way that shapes the visitor as the subject-object: "wherever one stands inside it, it should be possible to see the entire collection, all the display cases, and everything else" (Pamuk 2009: 712). Kemal says that "Because all the objects in my museum -and with them, my entire story- can be seen at the same time from any perspective, visitors will lose all sense of Time" (Pamuk 2009: 712). Although presented as a cubist technique, this form of architecture puts the individual in the center of the miniature world created in the museum and reproduces the belief that the visitor subject who can see everything is the sole ruler and controller of that world while he is actually captured and objectified by the discourse of the museum. So rather than losing sense of Time, the visitors lose sense of their own historical existence. The architecture of the museum resembles the architectural form of the Panopticon. Foucault argues that discipline is reproduced through surveillance and he discusses Bentham's Panopticon as an architectural representation of a disciplinary society:

> The Panopticon is a machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen. It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and disindividualizes power (Foucault 1995: 201-202).

Power is constituted through seeing without being seen in disciplinary societies. The ideology of perspective also constructs the subject as the subject-object: while the all-seeing individual put in a subject position thinks that he has control over the seen, he is actually objectified by the discourse. The architecture of the museum reproduces panoptic power relations by turning the museum visitor into a subject-object.

The museum avoids using the white-cube aesthetics which is the dominant form of display in the twentieth century where the museum space with its "plain white walls and neutral decoration" "aimed to focus attention on the individual work of art" suggesting "the art work's independence from the outside world" (Giebelhausen 2006: 55). Although *The Museum of Innocence*, being a home -a space where the protagonist of the novel lives in- destructs the illusion of the distance of the exhibited works from the lives of the visitors, the glass-boxes that the objects are exhibited in reproduce the distance between the objects and the visitors.

In his manifesto, Pamuk says "We can see that the transitions from palaces to national museums and from epics to novels are parallel processes. Epics are like palaces and speak of the heroic exploits of the old kings who lived in them. National museums, then, should be like novels; but they are not" (Pamuk 2012: 55). According to Pamuk (2012: 55), museums should tell "the ordinary, everyday stories of the individuals" and no more try to "construct the historical narratives of a society, community, team, nation, state, tribe, company, or species" like the big national museums. But the problem with the national museums is not that they try to construct historical narratives of a society, community or nation, but rather that they construct an absolute historical narrative that is produced through the elimination of differences, exclusion of others' stories and the concealment of the constructedness of the narrative. As for *The Museum of Innocence* it monumentalizes not the nation but the individual and thus a unitary and single perspective is imposed upon the reader/visitor.

Nostalgia, Progress and Rationality: The Absolutization of the Past

The way of seeing that the conventional museums produce is problematized in *The Museum of Innocence*, but still it cannot escape absolutizing the past. It absolutizes the past by embracing the modern ideology of progress and rationalism both in its form and discourse and by reproducing nostalgia.

The glass boxes in the museum are designed to form a narrative simulating the chronological order of the novel's chapters; each box that has the identical title and number in the book corresponding to a chapter, representing the themes and events of the chapter. Thus, the museum visitor is dominated by the ordering structure of the novel/museum. The visitor who has not read the novel is more likely to create a different story if he avoids listening to the audio guide in which quotations from the novel are pieced together with quotations from the catalogue since the audio guide provides a summary of the novel that results in the recreation of the same story in the novel by the visitor.

The museum/novel's discourse also reproduces progressivism through the qualification of Turkish society by lack in means of modernization in relation with its Western model. The problem with modernity for Pamuk is not that it creates unequal and hierarchical relationships, but its lack. This is a historicist understanding that defines Turkish society as in the childhood stage of modernity.

This progressivist narrative style of the museum/novel prevents it from escaping rationalism. Each glass box is like an illustration of a chapter although the objects are not organized according to this chronology. In the second glass box titled "The Şanzelize Boutique", Kemal's first encounter after years with his distant relative Füsun in the Şanzelize Boutique where she has been working is represented through objects such as the sign of the boutique, Füsun's yellow shoes and belt that she wore on that day, the camel bell that jingled when Kemal walked into the store and the Jenny Colon bag that Kemal wanted to buy for his fiancee Sibel from that boutique. In the 7th glass box titled "The Merhamet Apartments" the apartment is represented as a memory-space through objects that were put into that flat by Kemal's mother because they were outmoded and that remind Kemal of his childhood and of Füsun because she has touched these objects when she came to that flat. In the glass box titled "Fuaye" a photograph of this European style restaurant most loved by the wealthy people of İstanbul is coupled with the matches of these kinds of restaurants that are mentioned in the chapter and the relationship between the original and its copy is discussed through these restaurants which try to imitate the European ones although with a lack. Even though Pamuk argues for expression against representation in his manifesto, each box turns out to be a representation of the identically titled chapters in the novel and thus imposes an absolutized perspective of time upon the visitors preventing them to make their own connections between objects and create their own story. The museum visitor, rather than being in the subject position, turns into an object who collects the pieces of the puzzle together. The imaginative capacities of the museum visitor is suppressed by the rationalistic form and discourse of the museum/novel.

The conception of the past in the novel/museum is purely nostalgic. Although Kemal's problematization of the values and ideals of his own class -the class that embraced modernity - enables him to criticize the process of modernization in Turkey, he reproduces that very same way of seeing. "Nostalgia (from *nostos*- return home, and *algia*- longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed" (Boym 2001: xiv). Since modernity is qualified by homelessness, nostalgia is a modern response to that situation, but in nostalgia the past is idealized and aestheticized by the elimination of its discomforting aspects and thus, it is turned into an absolute category. Svetlana Boym (2001: xiv) defines nostalgia as "an abdication of personal responsibility, a guilt-free homecoming, an ethical and aesthetic failure". The nostalgic past does not constitute a threat to the present, but rather it helps to forget the problems regarding the present time. Thus, nostalgia reproduces the modern way of seeing that depends on forgetting the past. This is reflected in Kemal's words regarding the construction of a museum; he says that when his story is told in the museum it becomes a story to "take a pride in" rather than a story to be ashamed of (Pamuk 2009: 711). Together with Kemal, the reader/visitor returns home -the museum- exempted from guilt and responsibility.

Conclusion

Although Pamuk's museum focuses on the ordinary, everyday story of an individual, it can't escape absolutism through the absolutization of the story of the individual. The museum chooses to tell the stories of the individuals because individual is thought to be innocent in opposition to groups, communities and nations. Thereby the individual is emancipated from responsibility and guilt and the past is absolutized. The idea of innocence (being yourself, innocence of individuals, innocence of objects) creates "timelessness" -which is praised in the novel/museum- by eliminating history. The guilt and responsibility is attributed to institutions, companies, nations etc. and the individual's life is represented as made up of a set of neutral commodities, places, landscapes, cultural products and objects in the museum. But within the opposition between the structures and the individual, it is overlooked that all of these components are also value-laden and ideologically charged. They are not neutral objects.

Through the objects in the museum/novel an integrated, a coherent and a unified past is composed and thus, the past is absolutized. By the exhibition of the past as an exotic object, its capacity to make the reader/museum visitor to problematize the present time is drained from it and thus, the reader/museum visitor sees the objects and the past composed through them as a tourist. Elena Prus argues that "the touristic cultural pattern becomes dominant in the

postmodern society, causing muzealization of both institutions and of everyday life, viewed as a work of art and as a total Museum" (Prus 2014: 51). The musealization of everyday life reproduces the touristic gaze that reduces the past into a category that can be conquered. The cabinets of curiosities of the 15th and 16th centuries exhibited extraordinary objects and images of a distant culture and besides constructing the collector as the powerful self, established dominance over that culture through them. In the same fashion, Pamuk's museum absolutizes society through ordinary objects rather than extraordinary ones and with an anthropological perspective represents Turkish society as the "other". Yin Xing argues that Kemal "brings the past into the present" (Xing 2013: 209) which he actually does, but only as a dead object which is disconnected from the present time preventing the reader/visitor from questioning it.

The distinction made by Pamuk between the individual and society is also misleading since while the social is constructed by the individual, the individual is shaped by society. Pamuk conceptualizes his understanding around binary oppositions: he sets novels against epics; expression against representation; homes against monuments; stories against histories; persons against nations; individuals against groups and teams; and lastly small and cheap against large and expensive (Pamuk 2012: 57). The supported sides of these oppositions seem to reflect a postmodern understanding at first sight but the logic of dualities that also qualify modern thought depend on the attribution of stable, fixed and unified qualities to each side of the opposition and thus reproduce absolutism. A more democratic and open narrative would result not from setting these categories against each other, but by presenting them as interrelated ones. Then the museum/novel would put the visitor/reader in a more ambiguous position providing her the power to problematize the process of modernization, the classes in Turkish society and their roles.

Although *The Museum of Innocence* -both the novel and the museum- blurs the distinction between fiction and reality, because it creates a coherent past for a coherent self, constructs unified and integrated identities for its characters from different classes; absolutizes the category of the individual; and produces a unified historical discourse by absolutizing the past as an age of innocence, it cannot escape absolutism and essentialism and cannot become a "historiographic metafiction" (Hutcheon 1988: 4) in which history turns into a category that is questionable. In *The Museum of Innocence*, formal consciousness does not cause the reader/visitor to question his own position in the world and thus, does not give way to historical and historiographic consciousness. The museum reproduces a historicist, nostalgic understanding of the past by accepting the main principles of modernity such as progressivism, individualism and rationalism

unquestioningly and it fails to represent multiple perspectives on history just like the national museums that it criticizes.

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SUMMARY

The Regime of Memory in "The Museum of Innocence": The Past as an Age of Innocence

In this paper, the regime of memory produced in *The Museum of Innocence*, a museum created and curated by the author Orhan Pamuk is discussed. The museum was opened in 2012 in Istanbul and it was based on Pamuk's novel of the same title published in 2008. The intertextual novel -museum and the museum-novel blur the distinctions between fiction and reality, as well as the distinctions between individual and social memories and focus on everyday life and personal objects rather than the "monumental" national history. The regime of memory produced in this museum is discussed in this paper in relation with the process of modernization in Turkey. The understanding of time, space, reality and individual prevailing in the museum are evaluated in order to understand whether the museum produces a creative remembering that problematized the process of remembering or a regime of remembering that is based on absolutizing the past.

KEYWORDS

Modernization, Turkey, museum, history, nostalgia

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STUDIES

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WRITING (IN) MELANCHOLY. LOSS AND REMEMBRANCE IN THE WORKS OF TWO CONTEMPORARY HINDI WRITERS

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The aim of my paper is to analyse the question of melancholy and remembering in relation to love and loss. I will base my study on chosen works by two contemporary Hindi writers, Teji Grover (Tejī Grovar, b. 1955) and Udayan Vajpeyi (Udayan Vājpeyī, b. 1960). Both writers come from the same generation, and – being a part a new literary movement, Bhopal School[1] – they represent a similar approach to literature, treating it as means

[1] It is worth stating that Hindi literature entered into a modern era in the 20th century and developed its modern idiom (and introduced previously unknown genres like novel) in a relatively short time, comparing to Western literature in general. Modern literature reflects primarily the writers' inclination towards experiment and their openness to all sorts of new artistic ideas (both Indian and foreign). The literary dialect changes to the modern, colloquial Hindi Khari Boli, making it easier to express feelings and dilemmas of modern man. In this way, in the

of all sorts of experiments (with genres, syntax, composition, narration, subject etc.). In the works of the members of the School, the author (narrator, subject) speaks most often in the first person. This change of the subject's perspective – from third person's objectivity to first person's subjectivity – brings about a change in the repertoire of undertaken topics, where searching for own identity, for the lost self, and metatextuality gain the highest importance.

The issues connected to the creative process can also be found in the works of these two chosen authors. There are two main motifs present in Grover's and Vajpeyi's writing: love (pyār) and loss (a-bhāv), closely linked with each other as well as with the writing process. By analysing them, I will attempt to prove that in the modern Hindi writing melancholy is a consequence of loss, mourning, and remembering/recalling, and as such becomes a productive and creative force, inducing the author (narrator, subject) to write. Literature (be it prose or poetry), or even writing itself, would be the only possible means for the subject to remember the lost object of love, to re-call him/her, but also to re-gain his/her own lost form/structure.

Furthermore, my aim is to show that the subject – immersed in despair and mourning, but also in love for/with the lost object – extends his sorrow and mourning to be able to write. Consequently, remembering the lost object, longing for it, desiring it, become possible only in separation.

1.

Melancholy has been defined by many disciplines, in many terms. Therefore, before turning to Hindi texts, I would refer to a couple of concepts on melancholy, which will be the starting point of this paper.

In her book on Polish modernist poetry, Alina Świeściak made few observations about the development of melancholy as an aesthetic and literary category, defining a specific mood of a text or a subject. Świeściak points out that melancholy evolved from an unequivocal concept (understood as an irrecoverable loss indicated by a set of certain symptoms) into an ambiguous (equivocal) idea, in reference to which it is difficult to delineate the object of the loss (Świeściak 2010: 6). Thus it may not refer to a defined loss but shall be seen as an overall melancholic mood,

second half of the 20th century, we have a kind of artistic polyphony in Hindi literature. Both writers chosen for this analysis represent a new literary movement – the so-called Bhopal School, which is merely an artistic community of audio-visual artists gathered around Bharat Bhavan, a multi-art complex in Bhopal. The movement emerged in the late 70s, making Bhopal one of the most important centres of innovative creativity in India, in 1980s. Bhopal School artists perceive their creative work in terms of an experiment, act of free and unrestrained imagination, a search for new means and forms of expression. Junik-Łuniewska 2015: 49-69.

a sense of loss, unclear, indefinite, or as a possibility, a challenge, a mission. According to Świeściak, a melancholic writer is a writer of a specific psyche, tuned on experiencing a loss, perceiving the reality and language through this loss, but also recognizing the melancholic bond between the living and the dead, hinting on a romantic relation between the real and the lost world (Świeściak 2010:14-15). A melancholic subject experiences this loss (caused by death, separation) as a lack, a breakage in his/her own identity, an empty space which he/she tends to re-fill by remembering the lost object, conceptualizing/visualizing it, to, finally, fill it with narration, with writing (Świeściak 2010:19).

Sanja Bahun introduced another interesting concept, focusing "on the mutual implication of mourning and melancholia", "two phenomena that celebrate incompleteness and rupture" (Bahun 2014: 2). In her opinion, melancholia associated with creativity may be seen as a modernist *performing* melancholia, and mourning the lost object may have a more anthropological, consoling meaning. Bahun perceives modernist literature as "an alternative mourning rite directed at a specific 'climate of loss'", one distinguished by "the unusual tendency to give form to the very impossibility to mourn" (Bahun 2014: 8). Such a loss/rupture influences the structure and construction of a literary work, which lingers towards open, undetermined form (as defined e.g. by U. Eco).

2.

The feeling of nostalgia, of longing for something undefined, lost and not to be regained, is a concept which can be found in works of contemporary Hindi authors, also of the writers I chose for my analysis. In case of these writers, melancholy, sadness, and nostalgia originate from a real loss, death, however, in a more philosophical sense, it might be interpreted as a loss of love, of the self, as a longing for the very idea of love.

The nostalgic search for own identity, for the feeling of the lost 'wholeness', for the lost self, is clearly visible in Teji Grover's novel *Blue* (*Nila*). The book's literary genre is unclear – it meets the criteria of a few genres, e.g. *nouveau roman*, autobiographical fiction, auto-fiction. There are traces of similarities between the narrator/subject of the text and the author (especially in the mother and father figures) – I use the term "traces" intentionally because the autobiographical facts are hidden, fictionalized, metaphorized[2]. It can be assumed that the *Blue*'s subject functions

[2] As an example I shall quote two fragments depicting the father: „He used to live in nineteenth century Russia. His home was nowhere else. Because of nineteenth century Russia he used to visit with oceans of snow and sand." (Grover 2000:55) „…father was always where Nastasya used to flee from blue to brown to blue. (…) In any case,

on three levels: it is the text's narrator, one of the characters, but it may also be seen as the "inner" author, the writing persona, textual *alter ego* of the actual author who fictionalizes her own experiences. The subject's identity is unstable; it reveals a breakage, a rupture caused by a loss/lack. It may be the lack of a father, a beloved, but also of the own firm "I-dentity", of knowledge about the self and the world. The story opens with the following fragment:

> I know nothing, I know nothing about the blue in *Blue Eyes Black Hair*. And you will call your eyes blue eyes?
>
> Yes, my eyes are blue.
>
> I know nothing about blue.
>
> Neither about brown. But not like I don't know about blue. The relation this has with not writing, not being able to write – that is an old story about my business with blue. But at the moment I'm very tired.
>
> My hair, too, is blue these days. Some of my books. In the empty air of the street, replicas of Blue are streaming toward me one after the other. (…)
>
> I am blue in the coils of this day. I will continue to be blue. One day I will cease to be. Continuing to appear blue even then, I will cease to be. I breathe only to organize blue. At the very last minute I surface from the water to breathe. My hands burn on the stove. I save my hands from turning to ashes. (…)
>
> In this blue, in this invisibility, he weaves me for himself in such way that I don't have an age, a form. In this blue, I could be anything from his writer's block to his twelfth century Russian princess sister. (Grover 2000: 54)

The first lines of the book introduce us to a love triangle between the narrator (subject), Blue, and Brown. All relations in the novel are based primarily on love: paternal, platonic, physical, spiritual. Love is, on the one hand, a metaphor, the first impulse ordering the characters to write (all of them, beside the mother, are writers). On the other hand, love refers to want and desire. As Wiktor Werner stated, love exists only as a metaphor, so it belongs to the symbolic order, to language (Werner 2008: 67). Since love may be expressed through a metaphor, it needs to be written in order to be experienced – just like it happens in the novel. The love-relations of the subject – no matter what kind of love we speak of – become present in the text, become part of reality through the text. In this way love – like Blue, who is a character, but also a colour, prevailing in the text, overwhelming the text and occupying the mind of the narrator/subject – is necessary for the writing to happen, but at the same time this writing becomes the only way for this love to be expressed and experienced. The narrator is madly in love with Blue – her lover,

father used to bury his writing in wooden chests. Father used to write for the termites. (…) I used to weep in Nastasya's blue to Nastasya's brown to Nastasya's blue, and father used to meet me there sometimes. (Grover 2000: 60-61).I quote from an English translation of the novel, published in fragments in 2000 by Meena Arora Nayak. All translations from Udayan Vajpeyi's work are mine and were not previously published.

who becomes Blue in the novel. She desires to unite with him; she sees the world through love – through the blue colour. There is no other colour in her life: Blue/blue (love, desire) has overtaken her view, has become her obsession. The moments of separation with the beloved make her weep for him, long for him in despair. Psychoanalysts Kakar and Ross compare such mad love with hunger, with pain, which is difficult to extinguish. Referring to mythology – both European and Indian – they remind us of the fact, that it is impossible to unite with the object of our love, that it is natural for humans to long for their complimentary part, and that dualism – and the lack – are attributed to humanity, just like longing is to love[3].

There is, however, a paradox between desire and longing: desire can be satisfied by (physical) dominance over the object, longing makes the object immortal, indestructible. Longing is associated with the absence of the object: one desires what does not exist, which is not present, whose lack one perceives. Kakar and Ross relate this lack with loss and mourning: "inevitably, however, all passionate love is built on a trembling foundation of loss and depression" (Kakar, Ross 1999: 213). Lovers want to unite, they grieve for each other, but in reality, the spiritual connection is impossible because of the carnality dimension. Yet, as Elżbieta Neyman claims, lovers do not desire a union with the object of their love, but they desire to keep the beloved at a distance and to enjoy the state of separation:

> For it is love what they need, not women. Is not love the strongest stimulus of expression, therefore, the greatest source of inspiration? Especially when it takes the form of passion – of love forever inexhaustible, eternally unfulfilled (Neyman 2001: 57).

The absent beloved, for whom the narrator of Blue longs, becomes an impulse to act, to write. He is an idealized image, a mirage, attainable (loveable) in writing, through writing. His absence becomes non-existence/non-presence – *abhāv* (in Hindi: *a-bhāv* is the antonym of *bhāv* – existence, being). Thus it may be metaphorically seen as a trace of an absent presence, as an empty space left after someone else's existence. And this empty space fills with writing. In the words of Maurice Blanchot:

> the desire that carries Orpheus forward, and that compels Tristan, is not an impetus able to clear the interval and pass over absence, even the absence of death. Desire is separation itself become that which attracts: an interval become *sensible*, an absence that turns back into presence. Desire is this turning back when in the depth of night, when everything has disappeared, disappearance becomes the density of the shadow that makes flesh more present, and makes this presence more heavy and more strange, without name and without

[3] Kakar and Ross refer to the Plato's myth about the two-headed man with eight limbs, who split into a man and a women, but also to the lonely Purusha from the *Upanishads* who divided himself into two, guided by the desire. Cf. Kakar, Ross 1999: 201-202.

> form; a presence one cannot then call either living or dead, but out of which everything equivocal about desire draws its truth (Blanchot 2003: 188).

In *Blue*, however, the desire (want and longing) is not directed exclusively toward the lover. Alongside the beloved there is also the figure of the father: lost, absent, and re-presented in the text. The father is the lost object, whose loss at an early age affects the narrator's (author's?) relationships in her adulthood. As Fromm puts it, "Father is the one who teaches the child, who shows him the road into the world" (Fromm 2008: 39). In case of the *Blue*'s narrator, this road was largely the literature, which forms the link between the daughter and the father. Now, through writing, the narrator tries to deal with the mourning for her father, but also to get closer to him. In writing, she brings back to life her own image of the father, her memories of him – since, as Bogna Choińska stated, we "'love' only ideas, our own fantasies, not the other person" (Choińska 2011: 150). The subject/narrator – rethinking and remembering what no longer exists – grasps its image, a memory of the loved one. This is when, borrowing the metaphor of Łukasz Mokrosiński, "her life loses the variety of colors" (Mokrosiński 2009: 2) and her story takes only one colour – blue.

3.

The subject in the poems of Udayan Vajpeyi also has a multi-dimensional construction – it refers to the textual as well as to the real world, through biographical connotations. The poet's mourning for his dead wife is not only fictionally present in his own works, but it is also metaphorically interwoven in Grover's novel – creating a link between these two authors and their work in the context of melancholy. In *Blue*, Udayan, one of the protagonists, always appears in the context of weeping. These fragments can be interpreted in two ways: firstly, as an obvious allusion to the mythological story about king Udayan who lost his beloved queen, Vasavadatta[4], and secondly – as a reference to the poet Udayan Vajpeyi, who lost his beloved.

The first interpretation alludes to the story of Vasavadatta, who decides to abandon her beloved king allowing him to make the necessary political move and marry someone else. She is officially said to have died in a fire, but in reality, she is still around, living as a maid. King Udayan, although he is married for the second time, still recalls his absent beloved, dreams of her. He sinks in despair and in the desire to see her again. Once, Vasavadatta – driven by longing

[4] The story of Udayan and Vasavadatta appears in a classical Sanskrit drama *Svapnavāsavadattā* (*The Dream of Vasavadatta*) composed around 300 BC by Bhāsa.

– approaches him while he is asleep and he, without waking up, talks with her, but later considers it only a dream.

The second way of reading allows for an association of Udayan from Grover's *Blue* with the poet Udayan Vajpeyi who tries to re-capture the lost presence of his beloved in/through writing. Udayan – in the novel, but also in his own writing – appears as a person immersed in despair, but also in the very idea of love, the object of which he has lost. On the one hand, he is quiet, almost stoic, his weeping is silent, as he would be somehow separate from desire, from carnality. On the other hand, he is suffering his loss by remembering it, as if he would sustain his mourning and sorrow to be able to write: write (about) this sadness, this desperation, this loss. As Freud stated,

> serious mourning, the reaction to the loss of a loved one, contains the same (as melancholy – KJŁ) painful mood, the loss of interest in the outside world – except as it recalls the deceased – the loss of ability to choose any new love-object – which would mean replacing the mourned one – turning away from any task that is not related to the memory of the deceased. (…) it (melancholy - KJŁ) too may be a reaction to the loss of a beloved object; when other causes are present, it may be possible to recognize that the loss is more notional in nature. The object may not really have died, for example, but may instead have been lost as a love -object (Freud 2008: 74, 76).

The loss of the object of love does not cause the loss of love. Both being in love and/or suffering (crying, weeping, mourning) result in longing for the absent and the desire to re-present it in the language, through writing.

Udayan Vajpeyi dedicated a series of poems by the name *Kuch Vāky* (*Some phrases*) to his dead wife. But the shadows of the dead – his wife, his father – appear in many of his poems, not just in those from this particular series. The poetry is accompanied by abstract pictures – black and white visualisations that increase the dark atmosphere of the poems. The textual space is fragmentary, scrappy. Just like the attached photographs – showing their objects only partially, cut out from the wider context – they give an impression of peeping through a keyhole into the abyss of memory, where imaginary objects become seemingly real. As in this prose poem:

> She dwells in my non-presence (a-bhāv). A blind man, crossing the street, walks into darkness dispersed in front of him like sand. In a hospital's room a young girl stands beside her dying father's bed, she covers her mother's head with her *sari*, trying to save her beloved. She bends towards me and says: "Keep sitting at the window. I'll be watching you while wandering in the sky. Have you been watching it today?" Mild blueness is pouring off the sky, cascading down through the subtle fibres.
>
> Death hesitates a moment at her dressing room's door, then settles down in her body (Vājpeyī 1995: 119).

For the writer/subject, his peeping would be in some ways equal to staring into a mirror: in an attempt to see one's own shape or the shape of the lost beloved. In the introduction to the volume the author writes: "Some phrases, I do not know why, cling to each other. My role in this process is not to refrain them from it" (Vājpeyī 1995: 7). Earlier in the same passage, he confides:

> When I read again these structures (...), I see my own form emerging from them, slightly different, stranger, as something I certainly did not mean while writing (...) Perhaps poetry is just an observation of a different kind (Vājpeyī 1995: 7).

The author himself defines his writing process as "indisputable proof (...) of love" (Vājpeyī 1995: 7).

In his poems, Udayan Vajpeyi creates a world in which she – the lost love – exists, where his dead father lives, where it is possible to talk with them, be with them. Mourning and despair are being worked through in a creative way. The oneiric and illusory nature of this world is being indicated by the recurring motif of bed, sleep. Structurally the poems, as the one already quoted, are mainly fragments of prose, with dialogues interwoven into them. Very often she is the subject, she speaks in them – in this way the poet revives her, remembers her. This dialogue between the writer and his beloved may remind us of the dream-like conversation of mythical Udayan and Vasavadatta, which happens not in a half-dream but in the textual space:

> She speaks
>
> plucking grammatical errors
>
> from his phrases
>
> she's arranging them into a strange collection
>
> in silence
>
> Now – nobody knows when – the sun will rise
>
> Now – nobody knows when – through invisible fibers of sleep
>
> She will peep out and read
>
> Uttering in the sky's solitude
>
> A love-phrase! (Vājpeyī 1995: 68)

Lost forever, she returns in the creative process – and for the poet, the writing becomes an exchange of letters with his beloved. She reads them very carefully, sometimes adding an answer. In the poet's words,

I give her a phrase to appear

She gives me a space to disappear (Vājpeyī 1995: 120)

This writing is like the journey of Orpheus tracing his beloved. In the words of Maurice Blanchot, "writing begins with the gaze of Orpheus" (Blanchot 1989: 176) – it becomes the only way to keep the loved one close, at the same time condemning her to eternal oblivion. The desire for seizing the other, for fulfilment in love (or writing), is deeply connected with a lack, the loss of the desired object. The object remains desired only when it is elusive, unfeasible:

Dissolving gradually in the sky

The moon

Disappears entirely

In the darkness

In an empty house, for an unknown stretch of time

A child remains hidden behind a table

Hoping to be found

She stands on a rooftop, watching

A glowing window of a distant house

And thinks:

Love is eternal separation (Vājpeyī 1995: 73)

And this "eternal separation" is where the need for writing arises.

4.

In my analysis of the question of melancholy and remembering in relation to love and loss, two motifs present in the writing of the two chosen Hindi authors, I tried to show, how the mourning for the lost object of love – which drives the subject into despair, depression, and melancholy – becomes a creative force. In contemporary literature, in which the subject's identity is unstable, changeable, writing might be the only constant thing, giving the subject a shelter, a place to be. In a way, melancholia can have a therapeutic meaning, allowing the subject to self-integrate[5]. A rupture, which in the case of the analyzed writers should be seen as a twofold lack, causes the instability of the subject and its melancholy: as a result of the absence of the Lacanian mother, but also as the absence of the beloved. Such absence results from a real loss (death), but also from the inability to be with another person, impossibility to unite with the object of love who always remains a separate being. Thus, love (desire) *per se* inspires the subject to write, moves him/her into the textual space where the distance between him/her and the lost object decreases. At the same time, this distance is never to be diminished, but in this way, it remains the ultimate condition for the writing to happen.

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SUMMARY

Writing (in) melancholy. Loss and remembrance in the works of two contemporary Hindi writers

The paper aims at analysing the question of melancholy and memory in contemporary Hindi literature. The author selected works by two Hindi writers (T. Grover and U. Vajpeyi), who

[5] Kristeva 1992: 19-20, Świeściak 2010: 17.

represent similar approach towards literature and use similar means of expression. The two main motifs characteristic for their writing – love (pyār) and loss (a-bhāv) – are closely related to the creative process: the loved one is the lost object, the one subjugated to melancholy, who can be remembered through writing. In the light of A. Świeściak's idea of "melancholic subject" and S. Bahun's concept of "*performing* melancholia", the author discusses ways in which both the writers construct their literary world, inhabit it with loved/absent objects (beloved, father), and mourn their loss. The subject in their writing is both fictional and biographical, so the loss relates to literary as well as real events, becomes multidimensional. In Grover's *Blue*, the subject's separation with the beloved leads her to realise the loss of her father in childhood, and thus unveils the mourning and melancholy (symbolically represented by blue/Blue). U. Vajpeyi's poems create a space for meeting his lost love, for weeping and remembrance, for exchanging letters (and writing). The results of the present study show that melancholy – as a consequence of loss, mourning, and remembering - becomes a creative force, inducing the author (narrator, subject) to write.

KEYWORDS

Melancholy, loss, mourning, Teji Grover, Udayan Vajpeyi, Hindi literature

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THE EXPERIENCE OF MELANCHOLY IN "DOMESTIC COMEDIES" BY HANOCH LEVIN

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Introduction

Among Israeli contemporary playwrights and theatre directors Hanoch Levin is undoubtedly one of the most renowned and prominent artists. His impressive legacy includes 56 dramas, as well as poems, songs, satirical cabarets and books for children. Before the author's death in 1999 Israeli theatres displayed 33 of his plays. He himself directed 22 of them. According to Freddie Rokem "a whole generation of Israeli theatregoers has grown up on Levin's performances, with of their paradoxical complexities" (Rokem 2003). On the one hand he was a radical political critic, on the other hand his dramas explored a variety of universal existential issues. Levin has received huge acknowledgement, but he has also been fiercely

criticised. He was assailed by critics due to both his extremely left wing orientation and the use of earthy and vulgar language in his dramas.

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of Hanoch Levin has quickly spread to other countries. His dramas have been translated into more than a dozen languages and have been presented on many European and American stages. As an author he also became very popular in Poland – his dramas have been staged by numerous Polish theatre directors, including Krzysztof Warlikowski, Iwona Kempa, Jan Englert, Agnieszka Olsten and Małgorzata Bogajewska.

Dramaturgy of Hanoch Levin is entrenched in Jewish tradition and literature, however Israeli theatrologist Shimon Levy claims that it should not be the main perspective when interpreting his texts (Levy 2003). He writes that in Levin's plays the Israeli nature of the characters function only as a thin external layer. Comparing Levin's texts to Samuel Beckett's plays he underlines a universal purport of this dramaturgy. The topics which appear to be the most interesting for Levin are those which are fundamental for our existence: birth, love, suffering, loneliness, illness and death.

Nurit Yaari, the author of the article *Life as a Lost Battle: The Theatre of Hanoch Levin*, divides Levin's plays into three general categories:

1) Satirical cabarets: early political pieces which "are composed of a series of sketches interspersed with songs" (Yaari 1996: 153).
2) Domestic comedies: plays focused on familiar and neighbourly relationships, where "the dramatic space of these plays extends between the home, as the smallest unit, and the neighbourhood" (Yaari 1996: 157).
3) Spectacles of doom: plays which are based on ancient myths and biblical texts showing the anatomy of human condition determined by suffering and death.

Domestic comedies constitute the majority of Levin's dramatical works. Within this group Nurit Yaari identifies three subcategories of dramas with regard to their themes and protagonists: dramas of 'lonely hearts' (*Ya'akobi and Leidental*, *The Rubber Merchants*), 'family connections' (*Shitz*, *Winter Funeral*, *The labour of Life*) and 'neighborhood' (*Krum*, *Suitcase Packers*). The characters of these plays usually represent the lower middle class – they are occupants of the same district or even the same street. Their monotonous life is presented in a cyclical way: from birth, throughout marriage and then disease, death and funeral. These moments inform us about the passage of time and indicate the changes in relationships between protagonists.

Melancholic Condition in Levin's Domestic Comedies

The depicted world in Levin's domestic comedies consists of the same constant elements and is determined by the general outline of a locale (usually a house, room or street) and the presence of repetitive motives, situations, and the same types of dramatis personae. In fact, it can be argued that Levin uses limited character templates which he complements with variable details (such as name, age or profession) in particular dramas. The characters' identities are usually defined by their relations with others and their place in the family/social structure. They are always situated in a specific hierarchy, which portrays the bonds between them and illustrates their mutual dependence.

> The existential frameworks of Levin's characters are defined in terms of fundamental bourgeois needs, in a well-structures hierarchical system: a man needs a woman, a woman needs a man. A mother wants to dandle a grandchild before she dies. A couple need a baby. A child is raised to fulfill his parents expectations by following in their precious footsteps, before, in, turn, finding himself a wife and repeating the process – ad infinitum (Yaari 1996: 160).

An inability to meet expectations; peer and public pressure; and one's awareness of his dependence on another person very often evoke frustration, dejection and 'eternal' suffering. Levin's dramatis personae still dream about a better life, about a different "here and now", but this is an all too distant reality. The author intentionally shows the contrast between their high spiritual aspirations and their struggles with daily and trivial reality. Agnieszka Olek finds that

> the character's spirituality – their dreams, fears and feelings – is often covered with their corporeality (…) Body's problems, illnesses, weakness, defecation, urination are these elements which largely constitute their existence (Olek 2009: 18, translated from Polish – M. Figzal).

Levin describes this reality using a grotesque and absurd convention but nevertheless it is still a very sad and cruel view of life.

In Levin's domestic comedies we can find a gallery of the same type of people: lonely men and women who regularly miss their "last chance" for love; overprotective mothers, for whom their children's wedding is the main purpose of life; eternal dreamers who passively wait for a better future; and hypochondriacs constantly awaiting sickness and death. Common to all of them is a passive attitude towards the present. They usually participate in reality only in a physical way – their real feelings are located in the past and in memories or in idealistic visions of the future. This kind of condition which is based on withdrawal, resignation and permanent dissatisfaction with life is similar to melancholic way of experiencing reality.

In Levin's domestic comedies melancholy can be considered in two contexts. Firstly, melancholy appears to be a general condition of the depicted world; secondly, it is deeply related to the individual experiences of the characters – their embodiment and their perception of the world. Commonly found in all these comedies is a melancholic figure – a depressed, detached subject, deprived of any possibility of symbolization. The condition of male and female characters in Levin's domestic comedies is usually determined by the longing for the past and the sadness of passive existence.

Though the idea of melancholy is very comprehensive and also polysemic, in this paper I will consider it in the context of psychoanalytical readings, especially Sigmund Freud's as well Julia Kristeva's works.

In the article Mourning and Melancholy Freud writes:

> The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly mental dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment. (Freud 1957: 244).

In *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholy* Kristeva proposes a definition of melancholy which strictly corresponds with Freud's conclusions:

> I shall call *melancholia* the institutional symptomatology of inhibition and asymbolia that becomes established now and then or chronically in a person, alternating more often than not with the so-called manic phase of exaltation (Kristeva 1989: 9).

Both definitions are concerned with the individual subject and its experiences. In the context of psychoanalytical theories melancholy always appears as a reaction for the loss of a loved object (Kristeva uses the word *thing*); where the subject is not able to accept the loss.

According to Freud the experience of melancholy is fairly similar to the experience of mourning. Nevertheless, the main difference between these two psychical conditions is the level of consciousness of the loss – in mourning the subject is always aware of the object-loss; and in melancholy the loss is often withdrawn form consciousness and is unknown to the subject. A melancholic suffers but simultaneously he is not able to state an adequate reason for his condition. Farther Freud indicates another important difference between melancholy and mourning:

> The melancholic displays something else besides which is lacking in mourning – an extraordinary diminution of his self-regard, an impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale. In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself (Freud 1957: 246).

In the context of psychoanalytical reading, melancholy means a disability of symbolic relation with the external world, which arises as a consequence of one's inability to accept the loss. Another perspective also considers melancholy as a general weakness of human existence. It refers to the state of spiritual exhaustion and emptiness. This view was presented several centuries ago in the comprehensive work of Robert Burton – *The Anatomy and Melancholy* from 1621 (Burton 2001).

In Hanoch Levin's dramas these two concepts of melancholy coexist together. Individual experiences and the mental states of the characters are usually portrayed against the collectivity, which includes relatives, friends, neighbours and random inhabitants of the town. In plays such as *Krum* and *Suitcase Packers* these people become both witnesses and participants in daily miseries. Levin situates his *dramatis personae* in a closed, stuffy and bereft of hope world, in which all days look the same – they are full of prosaic concerns and trivial conversations. Even especial moments such as weddings, funerals or new-born births become a cyclical part of the mundanity and are devoid of rightful celebration. *Krum* and *Suitcase Packers* is comprised of a few short scenes, which show the local community submerged in melancholic lethargy. This community is dominated by lonely men and women, unhappy spouses, widows and eternal hypochondrics. Their dreams and longings never materialise but instead remain in the sphere of imagination, becoming an idealized and unattainable desirable object.

This passive attitude to life and melancholic disposition have been directly expressed in one of Krum's monologues which took place in a cinema:

> Projectionist, turn the lights off
> So we do not need to see each other
> And look each other in the face.
>
> Show us something exciting
> Something light and frothy
> With beautiful happy well-dressed people (…)
>
> We will sit in the dark and gaze at the light.
> For two next hours we will drown our sorrows and indignities in it (…)
>
> Oh movie, quivering strip of light

> Our hopes depend on you (…) (Levin 2009a: 206, translated from Polish – M. Figzal[1])

Krum and *Suitcase Packers* are thematically and structurally similar to each other – both dramas present the daily life of neighbours and both consist of a few independent grotesque scenes. The *dramatis personae* in these plays dream about a better life "somewhere else", but their fantasies are usually harshly contrasted with cruel reality. The title character of *Krum* says:

> … and most of all I am waiting to miraculously get myself out from this shithole one day. Out of this town. Into a white house with a garden, far from the buses and the smoke. With a beautiful sexy woman and two kids (Levin 2009a: 180)

Elhanan, a character from *Suitcase Packers*, also expresses his longing for a different and idealistic place to live, Switzerland. Every day he packs his suitcase with the intention of traveling, but sadly he makes it no further than the local bus stop.

> ELHANAN: I will come and knock in the autumn evening, she will open the door looking incredibly happy, and then we will hug each other (…)
>
> *(he begins silently crying)*
>
> Give me at least one day without the longing. Only one day without the longing. I do not have any more strength. I am only human. I deserve a small parcel of peace and happiness (Levin 2009b: 490).

In these two dramas melancholy appears to express the mental condition of the characters and is depicted through constant dissatisfaction, the feeling of emptiness, relentless longing, malaise, the inability to act and a passive waiting for a change in fortunes. This melancholic disposition of Krum, Elhanan and other characters from these plays strongly influences their relations with the outside world. It can therefore be assumed that melancholy is strictly related to the way in which one perceives and experiences reality.

Longing for the Past

The melancholic mood in Levin's domestic comedies is often induced by the awareness of evanescence and uncertainty of life as well as by the sense of the irretrievable past. This is especially visible in two "plays with songs": *The Rubber Merchants* and *Ya'akobi & Leidental*. Both plays comprise three middle-aged characters – two men and one woman. In *The Rubber Merchant,* Tsingerboy and Sprawl make amorous advances towards a chemist, Bella Berlo. Although all

[1] All English translations of Hanoch Levin's dramas are based on Polish edition of his works (Levin Hanoch. 2009. *Ja i Ty i następna wojna. Teatr życia i śmierci.* Amiel Irit & others, trans. Warszawa-Kraków.) and have been made by the author of this article.

characters dream about true love and a peaceful life with another person they are unable to build a lasting relationship. The main obstacles are their weaknesses – egotism and materialism but also a fear of rejection. They all conclude that remaining in the sphere of own dreams is safer. When they meet each other again after twenty years they only despair and make no attempt to change their situation and fortunes:

> TSINGERBOY: I am almost 65 years old and I am frightened. Since the moment of my birth till the day of my death there has been an open and dark chasm. What have I done with my best years? (Levin 2009c: 288)

The characters in *Ya'akobi & Leidental* admittedly try to take their last chance but it does not make them happy – on the contrary, common life brings them more disenchantment. The two friends, Ya'akobi and Leidental, remain desolate and dejected. Their melancholic mood is expressed in the final song which they sing together:

> You will not buy the piano
>
> Oh my dear
>
> You will not buy the piano
>
> You will stay in the same dress
>
> And in the evening, when the last sunbeams leave
>
> You will have only a sad smile (Levin 2009d: 103)

The "sad smile" oxymoron and the phrase "the last sunbeams" evoke an association with the "black sun" metaphor from Gérard de Nerval's poem, which Kristeva used to describe melancholy:

> The metaphor of the 'black Sun' for melancholy admirably evokes the blinding intensity of an affect eluding conscious elaboration. A powerful attraction, less than a sentiment, more intense than any word or idea: the narcissistic ambivalence of the melancholic affect alone finds, in order to represent itself, the image of death as the ultimate site of desire (Kristeva 1987: 10).

Leidental succumbs to the same "black sun" power and this is evidenced in his words:

> And so time passes, spring, summer, autumn and winter, bloom and fall, and every season is so good to live in (…). But there you stand like a stone, doing nothing, plunged in sorrow, putting off everything till tomorrow, while time passes by and you feel your loss. And with a bitter sense of waste and regret, you stand and stare, and stare – and do nothing (Levin 2009d: 30).

When considering Freud's definition of melancholy which as previously mentioned is "profoundly mental dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to

love", Levin's domestic comedies present a classic type of melancholic. Among these distinguishing features of melancholy, Freud also mentions diminution and impoverishment of the ego:

> The patient represents his ego to us as worthless, incapable of any achievement and morally despicable; he reproaches himself, vilifies himself and expects to be cast out and punished. He abases himself before everyone and commiserates with his own relatives for being connected with anyone so unworthy (Freud 1957: 246).

The characters in Levin's comedies very often blame themselves for their failures, whilst at the same time expressing a deep disapprobation of their ego. An example of this subjection are the words of Tachteech, one of the characters in *Krum*, who has been left by his beloved woman: "Living is no good… Especially for someone who doesn't deserve it". Subsequently in the dialogue with Krum – his purported rival – he abased himself:

> TACHTEECH: It is me – Tachteech. I am standing here half the night and waiting while you are upstairs with Truda. I saw. First there was light, then you turn it off for a while, and then there was light again.
>
> KRUM: What do you want?
>
> TACHTEECH: I want to know who owns the woman I love. (…)
>
> KRUM: Why do you humiliate yourself like that? You reportedly graduated from technical university.
>
> TACHTEECH: I did not graduate from anything. I am only a technician. (…)
>
> KRUM: You make me feel big. Get the fuck out of here.
>
> TACHTEECH: Your wish is my command. You are the master. You have got Truda. And remember: even if you are so small I will be smaller (Levin 2009a: 186-187).

According to Freud, this tendency to self-deprecate is related to the loss of beloved object, which has been relocated into an interior space of the subject. "In this way – Freud states – an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification" (Freud 1957: 249). Moreover, Kristeva claims that this disenchantment which is associated with a definite loss may awake the echoes of old traumas (Kristeva 1989: 4-5).

Conclusion: The Possible Source of Melancholic Disposition

In Levin's dramas women are usually much stronger than men. Their perception of reality is more practical, therefore, the tendency to fall into a melancholic mood is much lower for them. Among various female characters in Levin's comedies an overprotective and apodictic mother holds a dominant position. Levin usually focusses on the relationship between mother and son, that can be treated both, realistically and symbolically. Here the father figure doesn't exist at all or appears only in the middle distance. The Woman-Mother is the one who plays a paramount role in the family hierarchy. The degradation of the Father or his absence has a destructive impact on the son and strongly influences the formation of the son's subjectivity.

In Levin's dramas the relationship between mother and son returns as a classic leitmotif. Treated in a symbolic way it may indicate the main source of the melancholy among male characters. To explain this connotation we should reconsider the main thesis of *Black sun*…, where melancholy appears to be a disability of the symbolic relation with the outside world. According to psychoanalytical theories, the subject needs to convert from the semiotic (what is connected to appetences, emotions and libido) towards the symbolic interpretation of the world. This is the main condition to establish subjectivity. The Mother embodies everything what is semiotic, meaning the son's relinquishment of the Mother is necessary to convert into a symbolic order and obtain subjective self-reliance. A melancholic's main problem is that he is unable to accept this interposition and the consequent loss. Relations between mother and son in Levin's comedies perfectly exemplify this type of psychoanalytical thesis. An ambivalent attitude towards the lost object can also be observed.

This difficult love full of detestation and mutual grievances is portrayed in *Krum* and *Suitcase Packers*. In both dramas the crucial moment to recognize the identity of the lost object is the real mother's death. Krum comments on this as follows:

> Return to life, my dear. Reawaken my childhood belief in your invincible powers. (…) Get up, Mother. Come inside and make me lunch, because I will not accept it any other way. Never. Never. No, not yet. I am not ready for this kind of crying. No, there is still time for this kind of sorrow. I am not ready yet. Later (Levin 2009a: 240-241).

The consequence of the inability to accept the loss is incessant postponed mourning. In *Suitcase Packers* Elhanan is also not able to accept his significant loss:

> We still have not explained anything to each other, what is there to explain. We have not considered any important topics of conversation. We have not said anything to each other yet. We need to talk mum, we still need to talk (Levin 2009b: 499).

Both scenes are situated at the end of the dramas and provide the reader with an explanation of Krum and Elhanan's melancholic disposition. Both characters have experienced unattributable loss in the past and this has evoked feelings of emptiness and sense deprivation. Their mothers' deaths allow them to realise the identity of the lost object but this does not necessarily mean they need to accept the loss.

The depicted world in Levin's comedies is full of sadness, suffering and truculence, but simultaneously its absurd and grotesque character is presented. The melancholy appears to be a part of characters' daily lives, becoming a natural and immanent aspect of their existence. This melancholic mood influences both the way in which they perceive reality and how they experience it.

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SUMMARY

The Experience of Melancholy in "Domestic Comedies" by Hanoch Levin

The article attempts to depict the experience of melancholy in family dramas by an Israeli playwright Hanoch Levin. With regard to their themes Levin's domestic comedies can be divided into dramas of 'lonely hearts', 'family relationships', and 'neighborhood'. What is common to these three groups of dramas is the gallery of the same personae – melancholy men: depressed, detached subjects, deprived of any possibility of symbolization.

Firstly, melancholy appears to be a general condition of the depicted world; secondly, it is deeply related to the inner dramas of personae of the drama – their embodiment and their perception of the world. The condition of male and female characters in Levin's domestic comedies is determined by the longing for the past and the sadness of passive existence.

The basic purpose of the article is to provide an analysis of the selected issues in the context of psychoanalytical readings of melancholy, especially Sigmund Freud's as well Julia Kristeva's works. This perspective allows to elucidate the melancholic condition of dramatis personae, and also to describe some complicated relationships between them (especially the relation between mother-figure and the son).

KEYWORDS

Hanoch Levin; melancholy; Israeli drama; domestic comedy

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YEARNING FOR BEAUTY. THE EXPRESSION OF MELANCHOLY IN TONI MORRISON'S "THE BLUEST EYE"

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Published in 1970 (Klotman 123), *The Bluest Eye* is the first novel by Toni Morrison. It has introduced the theme of African American trauma, which remains prevalent in all the author's texts. Nevertheless, the writer does not provide solutions to social problems. She attempts to clarify them and present the depth of human mind that suffers continually. What is more, in spite of dealing mainly with one specific group, Toni Morrison renders universal messages. Conner (XXII) claims that "her position is double-voiced: it has a cultural specificity that resists interpretation outside of African American culture and yet it has a universality that speaks to all people." *The Bluest Eye* revolves around traumatic melancholy, which results from the feeling of absence that is common to all cultures (LaCapra 700). The

universality of absence, however, seems to be combined with the situation specific to the black population. The novel starts in 1940s in Lorain, Ohio and it represents the lives of two African American families, i.e. the McTeers and the Breedloves, but the author focuses on the children. Claudia McTeer, who is the narrator of the novel, and her sister Frieda do not experience parental love directly. The girl, for example, assumes that "when they trip and fall down the parents glance at them; if they cut or bruise themselves, the parents ask them are they crazy; when they catch colds, the parents shake their heads in disgust at the lack of consideration" (Morrison 10). Although they are often scolded and subordinated as the narrator hints that "adults do not talk to them – they just give directions and issue orders" (Morrison 10), the McTeer girls soon realize that it may be the way in which the parents express concern. In addition, they struggle not to pay attention to racial discrimination that African American people have to face on everyday basis. It may be admitted that both factors give them much strength to survive. The situation is different in case of Pecola Breedlove. Unable to cope with the reality, the heroine immerses into her imagination and begins to dream of acquiring unattainable blue eyes, which symbolize white features as well as the prevailing beauty model.

In his article entitled *Trauma, Absence, Loss,* LaCapra analyzes the differences between absence and loss. Although the distinction is not binary and it tends to collapse, one can distinguish a few features (LaCapra 699-700). Loss can be located at one particular point in time and it refers to one specific event. The examples include the death of a close relative or the loss caused by Holocaust. Moreover, loss involves certain objects that the individual wants to regain. Absence, in contrast, does not result from one particular event and it does not refer to specific objects. This is the reason why the narratives dealing with absence are often fragmented, chaotic and abstract (LaCapra 701). Loss, unlike absence, can be mourned and, thus, worked through. The nature of loss makes it possible to learn how to distinguish between the reality and imagination, which constitutes the fundamental element of the treatment. Absence leads to acting-out and melancholy rather than working-through. Since there is no object to mourn and no particular event, one may lose the ability to cope with the reality. LaCapra (713) claims that absence results in "melancholy that is characteristic of an arrested process in which the depressed, self-berating and traumatized person, locked in compulsive repetition, remains possessed by the imagination." The scholar also suggests that absence might be worked through only if converted into loss. The same happens with anxiety, which can be defined as a fear that does not refer to any object (LaCapra 707). In both cases, one must find the object in order to overcome the negative emotions.

The main difference between absence and loss refers to the sources. In case of Pecola, the U.S. education system aimed at promoting white Americans contributes substantially to her feeling of absence and, gradually, melancholy. The novel opens with the three versions of "Dick and Jane" primer, which was common in American schools then:

> Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy. See Jane. She has a red dress. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane? See the cat. It goes meow-meow. Come and play. Come play with Jane. The kitten will not play. See Mother. Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, Mother, laugh. See Father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling. Smile, Father, smile. See the dog. Bowwow goes the dog. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run. Look, look. Here comes a friend. The friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play (Morrison 3).

The versions of the textbook repeat the same message, but they look differently. The original one is written in Standard English. The second version does not include capital letters and punctuation, whereas the third one ignores even the spaces between the words. According to Klotman (123), the author uses the technique in order to juxtapose the promoted model of white American families with the harsh reality of African Americans. The version rendered in Standard English symbolizes white Americans that lead the so-called *exemplary* lifestyle. The text without capital letters and punctuation stands for the McTeers, who are poor and discriminated, but they struggle to survive and provide for the children. The third version represents the Breedloves and Pecola that "lives in a misshapen world which destroys her" (Klotman 123). What is more, the primer seems to ignore the history of racial persecution, which suggests that the U.S. education system avoids such subjects as conquest or slavery. It is preferred to "treat American childhood as an abstraction that excludes all but white middle-class children" (Werrlein 58). The image presented in "Dick and Jane" textbook influences the teachers as well as the pupils in *The Bluest Eye*. As the result, Pecola, whose family does not have much in common with the promoted model, becomes stigmatized. The heroine is contrasted with Maureen Peal, i.e. a white girl who "is rich and swaddles in comfort or care" (Morrison 62). The narrator emphasizes discrimination that Pecola has to face at school by presenting Maureen in the following way:

> She enchanted the entire school. When teachers called on her, they smiled encouragingly. Black boys didn't trip her in the halls; white boys didn't stone her, white girls didn't suck their teeth when she was assigned to be their work partners; black girls stepped aside when she wanted to use the sink in the girls' toilet and their eyes genuflected under sliding lids. She never had to search for anybody to eat with in the cafeteria – they flocked to the table of her choice, where she opened fastidious lunches (Morrison 62-63).

Apart from the lack of acceptance at school, the girl is abandoned by the mother. Pauline Breedlove starts to serve the Fishers, who are a typical white American family, and she soon realizes that "a servant wields far more power than a black mother" (Werrlein 61). The woman spends all her time and energy on housekeeping. It makes Pauline "neglect the house and the children more and more – they are like afterthoughts one has before sleep, the early-morning and late-evening edges of her day, the dark edges that make the daily life with the Fishers lighter, delicate, more lovely" (Morrison 127). Such an approach teaches the child that blackness prevents her even from feeling parental concern. The deteriorating relationship between Pecola and her mother is hinted by the fact that the girl's name comes from a popular movie entitled *Imitation of Life* (Rosenberg 440). Maureen Peal explains to the heroine that "in the picture show, there is a mulatto teenager who hates her mother because she is black and ugly" (Morrison 67). In *The Bluest Eye*, the situation is rather reversed. One may assume that Pauline expresses hatred toward Pecola. Since the daughter does not fit the white beauty model, which the woman admires, she refuses to focus on her needs. The only relative who seems to care about the heroine is her father, i.e. Cholly Breedlove. Nevertheless, the man suffered from oppression in the past and he "reproduces degradation within the family unit" (Werrlein 61). Cholly rapes the girl one Sunday afternoon and leaves her unconscious on the kitchen floor. The death of the infant who is born as the result of this crime emphasizes the tragic consequences of slavery and racial discrimination.

Pecola's peers are fascinated with the white beauty model as well. Not only are they taught at school that African Americans should be ignored, but also they receive a similar message from the mass culture. The promotion of white features is suggested by "the endless reproduction of the images of feminine beauty in everyday objects and consumer goods: white baby dolls with their inhumanly hard bodies and uncanny blue eyes, Shirley Temple cups and Mary Jane candies" (Kuenz 422). The heroine, who does not meet the expectations of the community, begins to be ostracized. One may claim that the girl's exclusion is hinted by the behavior of the whores, who live in the same house as the Breedloves. The women "do not acknowledge Pecola's presence and talk over and around her, which, in the Black English oral tradition, signifies the *otherness*" (Atkinson 17). As the result, Pecola starts to see herself in the body of a white teenager. She dreams of becoming similar to the white baby dolls with blue eyes. The narrator states that the heroine "each night, without fail, prays for blue eyes; fervently, for a year she has prayed; although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope" (Morrison 46). Since it seems impossible for an African American person to acquire blue eyes, the readers can observe the growing contrast between the reality and the girl's imagination. According to Stern (86), there is

one more character who loses the ability to differentiate between the external and the imagined effect. One of the whores, i.e. China, creates numerous odd hairstyles and make-ups. The woman, however, believes that she looks attractively. Both cases present the detrimental impact that the society has on the citizens who do not fit the prevailing beauty model or the social roles.

Assured by the education system that white people are better, abandoned by the mother and stigmatized by the peers, Pecola cannot endure the absence of white features, which are symbolized by blue eyes. Mourning and, thus, working-through does not seem possible in this case because the absence might not be converted into loss. The blue eyes do not stand for one particular object, but a whole range of features that constitute the *exemplary* appearance. One could even admit that the heroine's dream concerns much more than the acquisition of white characteristics. The girl strives to become loved or accepted and she believes that whiteness will lead her to happiness. What is more, Pecola's plight does not result from one particular event. Since the heroine is the victim of repetitive persecution, it may be impossible to point the situation which has traumatized her. In the course of the novel, the girl begins to suffer from melancholy. She compulsively repeats the desire and cannot distinguish between the reality and imagination. Mentioning white features and unnaturally blue eyes emphasizes the fact that imagination has possessed Pecola. Even God is presented as a typical white person. The narrator claims that "God is a nice old white men, with long white hair, flowing white beard and little blue eyes that looked sad when people died and mean when they were bad" (Morrison 134). Focused on her primary desire, the girl meets Soaphead Church, i.e. a faithhealer, who promises the blue eyes to Pecola, but the price is mental health. The heroine loses the ability to cope with the reality completely. She wanders around the neighborhood and talks about her blue eyes that nobody else can notice. Finally, overwhelmed by insanity, "Pecola spends her days, her tendril, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear; elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal effort to fly" (Morrison 204). Apart from proving that absence may not be converted into mental toughness, *The Bluest Eye* includes a tragic message for all African American people. It suggests that passing as white may not be enough because it does not compensate for blackness. By presenting the girl, who becomes gradually excluded by the community, the author leaves hardly any hope for African Americans.

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SUMMARY

Yearning for Beauty. The Expression of Melancholy in Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye"

The purpose of the paper is to discuss the sources and results of melancholy in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* with reference to Dominick LaCapra's theory based on a distinction between loss and absence. LaCapra claims that the former concept refers to a particular event, while the latter cannot be identified with any specific point in time or object. What is more, LaCapra admits that absence may result in melancholy, i.e. the state in which the individual remains possessed by a negative emotion because there is no possibility of working it through. The idea of absence causing melancholy is exemplified by the protagonist of *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove. The girl dreams about acquiring blue eyes that belong to the prevailing white model of beauty which excludes African-American features. The feeling of absence is intensified by the U.S. education system aimed at promoting the lifestyle and characteristics of white Americans, her own mother who prefers serving white people to taking care of her own children, and the peers that constantly stigmatize Pecola for ugliness. Consequently, she becomes obsessed with the unattainable blue eyes. Since there is no chance for her to be accepted and thus cope with the absence of white features, the girl suffers from melancholy which leads her to insanity and exclusion from society.

KEYWORDS

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, trauma studies, absence, loss, melancholy

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NOSTALGIA AS A MEANS TO OVERCOME TRAUMA: THE CASE OF YOSHIMOTO BANANA'S "SWEET HEREAFTER"

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Author, Style, Main Themes

The popular writer Yoshimoto Banana (nickname of Yoshimoto Mahoko, 吉本真秀子, Tōkyō, born in 1964) is considered to be a representative of the new generation of Japanese writers interested in depicting the modern age and its changes, rather than

taking into consideration the aesthetic value of their own literary works.

The writer, a passionate fan of manga, drama and pop music to which Yoshimoto pays frequently homage in her novels (Amitrano 2007), adopted the nickname "BANANA" in the late 1980s and immediately became well-known among teenagers all over the world: as a symbol of androgyny, this fruit also represents something consumable and short-lived as her literature. Actually, the critic Treat applied the term *tsukaisute* (**使い捨て**, Treat 1993) to Yoshimoto's literary production as a label to describe the quality of disposable or "use and throw away," totally anew literary work in a ever-changing era.

Yoshimoto, very prolific in her genre, has already published more than 40 novels until now and a considerable number of essays and *taidan*, a genre very popular in Japan which consists in crossover interview between authors or literary critics and journalists. Starting from her first novel *Kitchin* (**「キッチン」**, "Kitchen"), published in 1987, she rapidly gained success and got favourable comments from critics to such an extent as to talk about the *Banana Genshō* (**ばなな現象**, "BANANA phenomena"; Amitrano 2007 : 44).

The recurring themes in Yoshimoto's works represent a cross section of modern Japanese society and the recent trend of changing the traditional family's stereotype in new nonconformist models like the "extended family" in which blood ties are no more considered as a compulsory requirement. Young Japanese people are then introduced by Yoshimoto to gender matters such as homosexuality and transsexuality, incest and feelings of abandonment and isolation, all of which are typical factors of a social disintegration:

> The protagonists of these novels are on the thresholds of a transformation to which one can give the name of "hope": all of the sudden they realize that something brings back to life their feelings, almost forgotten, and also discover the urgency to spring into action as they have not ever done before. Their unease and distress to get to grips with their spiritual burdens and their relief after the liberation are some of the otherthemes. (Yoshimoto 2002: Afterwords)

The author explained in these terms the common denominator of her literary production, in the postface of a short-novel collection published in Italy under the title of *Lucertola* (2002).Yoshimoto always exhibits an interest in the possibility of recovery from trauma and in the healing process itself; hence the typical development of Yoshimoto's novel: the protagonist at a certain moment (due to a traumatic event) rediscovered lost feelings (nostalgia) and felt the need to redeem oneself (thorough new gender model) until the complete recovery which consists in re-discovering one own true identity.Her writing style, defined as subtle and straightforward like a "baby talk, uninterrupted by humor, emotion, idea, not to say irony or intelligence," (Treat

1993: 365) does not spare her readers from being involved in the violent and painful accidents that eventually shake protagonists's life. An everlasting message is transmitted with extreme efficacy: the protagonist's growth, possibile only after a traumatic encounter, is encouraged by the research of one's identity; the first step is to reflect on the past, always perceived as nostalgic, and get familiar with trauma itself. This is not a simple and rapid process but a painful and hard path to cover instead; a demanding challenge, a major toll on the protagonist's emotional development but necessary in order to take over the reins of one life again.

Yoshimoto's Shōjo: Consumerism as a Symptom, Trauma as Diagnosis and Nostalgia as Therapy

The protagonist of Yoshimoto's writing is always a *shōjo* (**少女**), a young woman in her twenties, skinny and not very busty, strong-willed, sometimes aggressive; "kirei de wagamama"—pretty but willfull," (Treat 1993: 367) the *shōjo* keeps her innocency unaltered, as well as the candour attributed to childhood. With no doubt *shōjo* is the emblem of the "aesthetic of cuteness" (Treat 1993: 367) associated to some attributes like *kawaisa* (**可愛さ**), the particular characteristic of being cute in both physical and psychological terms. Ann Sherif (1999) recognises as features of Yoshimoto's *shōjo* some "feminine values such as cuteness, innocence, naïveté, nostalgia, consumerism" (282–283).

Actually, the last attribute can be considered as a feature of contemporary society whose *shōjo* serves only as the umpteenth commercial product: "the role of the *shōjo* [is] to *symbolize* their consumption" (Treat 19993 : 362). The link between *shōjo* and consumerism can be found in the traumatic experience of been commercialised: women used by men as exchangeable objects or as units of currency (Murakami 2005) for sexual trade ever since are the protagonists of warped love affairs, cases of incest, transsexuality and homosexuality themes, very frequent in Yoshimoto's novels. They represent a particular trauma, the one of the corrupted body of the society as a whole. The consumeristic approach to *shōjo* is actually underlined by a male counterpart deprived of his masculinity or any other distinctive stereotypical male features. The binomial *shōjo*-consumism is then just the tip of the iceberg that covered the trauma of the (social/individual) identity crisis: "Banana exhibits an interest in troubled people (*komatta hito*), individuals whose lives have been nearly devastated by acts of random violence, loss, illness, and troubled family" (Sherif 1999 : 278–279).

The background in which Yoshimoto' story set up is a domestic environment of everyday life shocked by a traumatic event of misfortune, abandonment, isolation. The daily routine is

considered by the protagonists as boring and tiresome in itself: the frenetic rhythm of the great metropolis that does not allow to take even a breath to focus on private matters, is filled with a feeling of nanimo nasa (何もなさ), a loss of stimulus and interests towards life and a sentiment of indolence felt by Yoshimoto's protagonists. The consideration that the routine is empty and vacue leads to a particular condition summarised by Treat (1993) in "the desire for desire" (376 –377): the lack of faith in the future, often connected to a loss of hope in the possibility of a social change and the quest for happiness at present time, provokes a self-destructive rage spiral. Hence the impulse to review the past, via nostalgia. Susan Stewart recognises a indissoluble link between desire and nostalgic feeling for something lost in terms that "the point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire" (Treat 1993 : 376–377).

One of the main feature of the shōjo came out: the nostalgia. This feeling of natsukashisa (懐かしさ)reveals itself in Yoshimoto's novels in different ways: thorough a faraway house, a lost person, a feeling perceived and then missed; dreams, hallucinations, images and paintings: everything is transformed by Yoshimoto in a vehicle to allow the reader to sympathize with the protagonists and share the same nostalgic feeling; it can be seen as an exhortation to her young readers to keep on seeking the lost self in the past in order to not betray one's identity. The natsukashisa is so common in Yoshimoto's novels that the critic KamataKōjiconsiders it as a keyword:

> The word 'natsukashii' evokes in many Japanese native speakers a deep emotional response. (...) 'natsukashii' derives from the verb 'natsuku' which means to get use to be with or to become attached to something/someone. Thus, in its original meaning, a 'natsukashii' person was someone with whom one felt comfortable. (Murakami 2005: 77)

But happiness resides in the past: brief moment of joy which are un-reproducible, sometimes idealized whose nostalgic value increases bit by bit as time goes by. Murakami (2005) Fuminobu pointed out that Yoshimoto's protagonists need that feeling of nostalgia: "what is desired is not the rebirth itself, but the sense of nostalgia" (77). This feeling of *natsukashisa* can be seen as the solution the protagonists find to fill up the emptiness and solitude of everyday life by the recalling of memories and flesh-backs.

Treat (1993) also proposed a new paradigm of reflection about the role of nostalgia in Yoshimoto's novels when he stated that "[t]he nostalgic relationship of Banana's characters to their everyday lives is replicated in the relationship that each Banana book constructs between the text and its audience" (380). Her literature, considered as perishable as her nickname, becomes an

addiction to which her loyal readers cannot be apart. When a story ends, a nostalgic taste left in mouth puts pressure to look for the same flavour in the next Yoshimoto's novel.

The Daishinasai and Suiito Hiiaafutaa

This is the literary background in which the novel *Suiito hiaafutaa* (「スウィート・ヒアアフター」) ("Sweet hereafter," 2011) is set. Even though the novelist admitted that the *Daishinsai*(the*Higashi Nihon Daishinsai*東日本大震災or simply *Daishinsai*大震災) does not stand for the genesis of the story, already setup before 11th March, it is in the *atogaki* (後書き), a postface usually addressed directly to her public, where Yoshimoto explained how this event influenced drastically her writing:

> The earthquake occurred on 11th March 2011 has changed considerably not only the life of people who are living in the stricken areas but also my life, in Tōkyō. I think it is really hard to understand but I wrote this novel addressing it to the people who experienced this *Daishinsai*, dead or alive. (Yoshimoto 2011: Afterwords)

There are no factual and clear reference to the Daishinsai that may help the reader to pinpoint a possible connection between the story of the protagonists in Suiito hiaafutaa and the three-fold tragedy that shocked Japan on 11th March 2011. Although, at a first glance, this choice can be interpreted as a form of omertà, the allusions are suggested by Yoshimoto under the lines thorough the technical and stylistic aid of rhetoric figures such as analogies and metaphors. In an interview the author released to me in 2013, she confessed that this particular choice finds explanations in the fact that she wrote the novel "to make it read by dead people" (De Pieri 2014: 207–210). Metaphors, as other rhetoric figures, create an illusionary bridge of communication between the survivors and the gone.

On 24th March 2011, an official comment about the Higashi Nihon Daishinsai appeared on Yoshimoto's official website, both in Japanese and English. This comment is dated 16th March and consists in a brief note about what the author was doing at the time of the earthquake and her first impressions about the tsunami and the nuclear fallout at the Fukushima Daichi Nuclear Power Plant. Even though Yoshimoto (2012) did not clearly express her opinions about nuclear energy issue, a critical observation is reserved to the media, responsible for creating a state of scaremongering and desperation among the population (160). The adoption of a metaphorical language can also be interpreted as the choice to balance the horrifying images

shown by media by replacing them with soft images that only allude to the trauma suffered by the victims, preserving, at the same time, those days of mourning with the respects they deserved.

The novel presents a classical "BANANA plot": the story begins with a car accident on the road to Kawaberi Town, in which the fiancee of the protagonist lost his life and the young girl, Ishiyama Sayako, was seriously injured. The convalescence and rehabilitation of Sayako corresponds to a "journey from life," a sort of sabbatical year until her total recovery: the overcoming of the traumatic experience of the accident and the loss of her beloved Youichi.

The protagonist too, has to be considered as the typical young woman to whom Yoshimoto is used to give a leading role in her novels: Sayako actually portrays the typical shōjo who lost any interests in life together with her fiancee:

> Move, move!, life told me. There is no lacuna, no goal to achieve. Only the stream, the motion. There is no solution that can make you feel better when a beloved person died. Without having the chance to meet him, you just feel bad for a while, everything become plumber, like when you wriggle in the mud, you just live in silence. Until when colours come to the world again. (Yoshimoto 2011: Afterwords)

A sense of apathy manifests itself as an auto-defensive response to pain: it reminds the muyokuganbō (**無欲願望**) described by the hibakusha author Ōta Yōkoand defined as a physical condition of inappetence and total passivity of victims exposed to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (De Pieri 2014 : 47–57). A similar traumatic experience is witnessed by Sayako, whose apathetic and indolent state is unequivocally linked to the loss of Youichi: the interest toward life seems to have disappeared along with her beloved fiancee; Sayako shows no strength to struggle (hence the metaphor with the mud) because what actually lack is the desire and the willpower to live. The protagonist is then dragged by the stream, the inexorable impulse of daily routine: she is frozen in a jumpy rhythm-world where she acts only as an indifferent passive puppet. Sayako is actually "a dead in life," a zombie, who is not able, or simply unconsciously refuses to, accept her new condition in order to start the recovery process looking for a new sense of life (Yoshimoto, Wataya 2013). In Suiito hiaafutaa, the emotional debate of the protagonist and the dreamscape atmosphere out of time give voice to the trauma in a universal language: "Are there people in this world, wrapped by the chance that life could become a white paper, like this?" (Yoshimoto 2011: Afterwords).

The description of the traumatic shock is realized by the choice of the world "white paper" (shirogami **白紙**) which does not represent only a figure of speech rather an implicit reference to author's activity: the writer used the metaphor of a white paper, untouched, empty, to describe theTōhōkuarea devastation. What is remarkable is also the choice of the term kikai (**機会**) to express the "possibility." In Japanese it deserves a positive connotation of chance: the writer

seems to revolutionise one more time the normal logic of thought and language by transforming the catatrasophe in an opportunity to start over again. This is the denaturalisation of trauma: it is not a tragic insurmountable event but a favourable situation to a better change, instead. The metaphor of the "white paper" is just one of the many rhetoric figures that appear in text. An other thought-provoking image is the one of a rusty iron rod (tetsu no bou **鉄の棒**) stuck in Sayako's abdomen due to the car accident: it does not represent only a dramatic and unexpected event but also an example of denaturation of a familiar object into an element of alienation. Eventually, that iron rod was a common support used by the fiancee Youichi as a decorative component of the installations in his atelier; it is transformed by Yoshimoto in a no more neutral element ables to take away Sayako's life instead. The author makes the reader implicitly think about the role of nuclear power used for civic purposes: by setting up a metaphor between the iron rod and the nuclear power plants scattered all over the country, Yoshimoto tries to sensitise her readers about the destructive potential of this "supporting element" whose undeniable utility turn into a dangerous weapon on 11th March 2011. In the same way, the long-term hospitalization of the protagonist and her rehabilitation from the accident can be considered as an analogy for the efforts Japan must put into the recovery to overcome 11th March crisis: to train oneself in the rehabilitation is to reconstruct the socio-political texture of the country; to look for new friends able to help this recovering process can be interpreted as the attempt to find new source of energy in order to respond the demand for it. Yoshimoto's protagonists suddenly—due to a traumatic event—rediscover feelings almost forgotten and now perceived with nostalgia; they feel the urgent need to release themselves thorough new models of gender in order to achieve a complete recovery: this healing process means to re-discover, to re-search the lost true self rather than re-inventing one self in a new way.

And that is exactly what happens in Suiito hiaafutaa to the protagonist Sayako. According to a conversation with a barman in the last few pages of the novel, it is clear that a part of Sayako's soul is still on that road to Kawaberi: to fully recover and overcome the trauma it is necessary to defeat it, going back to that road to symbolically recoup the lost soul of Sayako. Yoshimoto's literary production can, without exaggeration, be defined as a "therapeutic" and "healing" narrative: a literary production in which writer's sensitivity meetsthesmall or bigtrauma suffered by the reader in his daily routine; the simple reading of Yoshimoto's novels acts as a therapeutic means to overcome the struggle of life. Thorough the reconstruction of a new microcosm based on new moral values, Yoshimoto encourages her young readers to release themselves recognising in new social examples without ever loosing one true self; her curative writing does not suggest utopian models far away from reality but spontaneously set up in a daily

life background in which everyone may suffer from pain and violence. "I believe that the profession of writer stands for cherishing hope no matter what situation" (Yoshimoto 2011).

Therefore, the author teaches how to "go on" despite the fear for the radiation sickness: Suiito hiaafutaa represents Yoshimoto's response, in a perfect BANANA's style, to the Daishinsai that stroke Japan on 11th March 2011; by proposing the authorial beloved themes in a simple but incisive language very close to her audience, the writer cherishes hope for a recovery to come:

> I thought I cannot do nothing else but writing tightly for the few readers who, even though I do not know why, are helped and feel good thanks to my novels. (Yoshimoto 2011: Afterwords)

In these terms the author expresses her feelings once again in the postface of Suiito hiaafutaa: as a "nostalgic exercise" (Treat 1993: 380) Yoshimoto reflects about her literary production and along with the usual heartfelt thanks she adds comments and critiques to the novel. Yoshimoto's efforts to help the victims of the Daishinsai to work thorough that traumatic experience, were then translated into a novel that will no more be labeled as a tsukaisute literary work but an everlasting nostalgic memory of that traumatic 11th March 2011, instead.

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SUMMARY

Nostalgia as a means to overcome trauma: the case of Yoshimoto Banana's "Sweet Hereafter"

The natsukashisa (nostalgia) is a common key to interpretation of novels written by the Japanese author Yoshimoto Banana. Considered as the desire for a replay of life, nostalgia is evaluated as a solution for the sensation of emptiness and solitude attributed to modern life; a gap that can be bridged by memory, recollection and flash-backs of the protagonists in Yoshimoto's novels. As a representation for something gone, the objects of this nostalgic feeling assume different forms in Yoshimoto's works: a faraway house, a lost person, a feeling perceived and then missed; dreams, hallucinations, images and paintings: everything is transformed by the author in a vehicle to allow the reader to sympathize with the protagonists and share the same nostalgic feeling. Author's attempt is to encourage the young readers to keep on seeking the lost self in the past in order to not betray one's identity. This is the main topic one can also recognise in her novel called Sweet Hereafter, a publication in which nostalgia for a self lost in a car accident is compared to the one felt by the hisaisha of Tōhoku region who lost everything after the earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan on 11th March 2011. Here Yoshimoto suggests natsukashisa as the possible way to overcome the traumatic experience of witnessing Japanese Daishinsai. This brief investigation proposes a literary case study that highlights the relation between trauma and memory, with a particular focus on nostalgia considered as a positive means for overcoming traumatic experience.

KEYWORDS

Yoshimoto Banana, nostalgia, 11th March 2011, Sweet Hereafter

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NOSTALGIA FOR THE LOST HOMELAND AS PART OF IDENTITY IN ALĖ RŪTA'S WORKS

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Introduction

Alė Rūta (Elena Nakaitė-Arbienė (1915-2011) is a famous Lithuanian diaspora writer, the author of thirty novels and collections of essays and short stories. In her works, she combined the traditional realistic story-telling techniques, ethnographic information, historical data, lyric and idealistic mode, and dramatic inner monologues. During her literary career she became one of the most prominent Lithuanian diaspora authors in the U.S.A. In Lithuania, she studied literature at Vytautas Magnus University before World War Two, and continued her studies at Vilnius University, from which she graduated in 1943. In 1944, with many other Lithuanians, she fled from the Soviet occupation, and spent four years in Germany.

In 1948, she moved to the United States of America, where she lived in Santa Monica, California, until the last days of her life (Sužiedėlis and Jakštas 1975: 566). As Alė Rūta had once confessed, reading in German and French languages had a great influence on her own writing style (Egzodo rašytojai 1994: 654). She liked mentioning Gustave Flaubert, from which she obviously borrowed the realistic style. In most of her works she expressed love for her homeland and the Lithuanian countryside, and a wish to disclose and share the history of the country, especially focusing on the tragic periods. However, one specific issue remained the most important one in her works: she sensitively described the feeling of loneliness in a foreign land, disclosing the feelings of nostalgia for one's own country, its people, language, culture and traditions – feelings and emotions well-known to many immigrants. Alė Rūta had acknowledged many times that all her works were inspired by the feelings of nostalgia for her country, Lithuania. It would be difficult to find another Lithuanian author, who would have expressed such great suffering over the lost homeland and a deep sense of nostalgia for it. However, the author was sometimes criticized for a high degree of sentimentality, which most naturally had arisen from the nostalgic feelings, so typical of many people, who were forced to leave their country. Although her novels contain elements of historic or romance stories, the memories of her homeland are present in most of her works.

Moreover, Alė Rūta's novels present valuable information about the life of Lithuanian immigrants during different periods: for example, the first novel of the trilogy describes the life of the first waves of Lithuanian immigration in the U.S. Therefore, it is possible to state that the author records the national memory, especially that part which had been rather vague and full of gaps for many years. During the years of Soviet occupation of Lithuania (1944-1990) her works were not accessible to Lithuanian readers: all of them being published in the U.S.A., they were considered a "threat" to the Soviet political (and "moral"!) system. In addition, many of her works tell, in a way, a story of the road to the American Dream; however, based on the preservation of national values – an opposite to the so-called Soviet symbolism. Thus, only after 1990, when Lithuania finally regained its independence, her works became known to Lithuanian readers. In fact, with her novels, especially the ones, the theme of which is immigration, the author crosses literary boundaries of one country: the novels become extraordinary examples of cross-cultural issues, problems of adaptation, preservation of one's own national identity, or acquisition of another identity in a host country. Mainly, these issues make her works not only significant sources of historic information, but may also provide recent immigrants with sensitive insights into the ways of maintaining the bond with the homeland. Interestingly, the author's style and plot structure of the novels (at least the ones of the immigration topic) are like American

bestsellers – urgent themes, intriguing actions, multiplicity of events, vividly created and easily recognizable characters and their lives, everyday family communication and adaptation to the norms of the host country. In the novels, which are the object of this article, two literary traditions, Lithuanian and American, seem to merge; therefore, the readers encounter American reality at different time periods, situation in the host country and relations in Lithuanian communities there, their effort in preserving national identity or regret over its decline or extinction. Thus, it is not surprising that Alė Rūta's novels were well-received by Lithuanian diaspora in the U.S. and Canada. Lithuanian immigrants found the description of the immigrants' lives and problems very similar to their own; they were able to recognize examples of their own stories of immigration and search for the American Dream, social and generational conflicts, nostalgia for the lost homeland and other problems, generally very well-known to immigrants. Mainly these issues also make Alė Rūta's works a part of multifold American literature.

The Role of Nostalgia in Preservation of National Identity

Nostalgia, a feeling of longing and affection for a period of the past, is also described as a special desire to and a process of return in thought to a former time/period/place in one's life, to one's home or homeland, or to one's family and friends, etc. Janelle L. Wilson rightly observes a certain degree of sadness implied in the word "nostalgia": "the fact that the individual is removed from that ideal situation can trigger sadness and a sense of loss" (Wilson 2005: 2). In general, nostalgia is often defined as a sentimental (!?) yearning for the happiness of a former place or time. Alė Rūta's trilogy on the life of Lithuanian immigrants seems to fall into the categories, outlined by Stuart Tannock, who identifies three key ideas: a prelapsian world of the past, a lapse (separation or fall), and a postlapsarian world (the present, which is lacking, deficient or oppressive) (Tannock in Wilson 2005: 4; my emphasis). Although Janelle L. Wilson agrees that "nostalgia is a form of ideologizing or mystifying the past," she determines the fact that "nostalgia serves the purpose of bonding" (Wilson 2005: xxi). The trilogy by Alė Rūta is based on the fundamental bonding of immigrants: in their memories of the past (which is always based on the memories of the homeland), they construct their new identity. Wilson agrees with Fred Davis (1979: 51) and defines such nostalgia "as facilitating the continuity of identity" (Wilson 2005: 13). Describing the life of the immigrants, Alė Rūta demonstrates that nostalgia for the homeland is a part of preservation of national identity. To use Wilson's term, "nostalgia that is linked to a group […] is collective nostalgia" (Wilson 2005: 66). In fact, Alė Rūta's trilogy on the life of the immigrants

("The Destiny of the Exiled") can be called the trilogy of collective nostalgia, because in these three novels (Pirmieji Svetur (1984; Eng. - The First Abroad), Daigynas (1987; Eng. – The Seedling Plot), and Skamba tolumoj (1997; Eng. Echoes from Afar)), the author describes different levels of nostalgia and its relationship to national identity.

Fred Davis determines "collective and private nostalgia" and states that collective nostalgia can "forge a national identity" (Davis 1979: 37; 51). Both forms, collective and private, exist in the texts by Alė Rūta: in the trilogy, collective nostalgia is embedded in the private one, and the private nostalgia is nourished by the collective one. Svetlana Boym outlines two other types of nostalgia: "restorative and reflective" and explains that "they are about the ways in which we make sense of our seemingly ineffable homesickness and how we view our relationship to a collective home" (Boym 2001: 41). Boym specifies these two types of nostalgia as follows: "Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym 2001: 41; italic in the original). Boym rightly notices that "restorative nostalgia evokes national past and future; reflective nostalgia is more about individual and cultural memory" (Boym 2001: 49). These two types of nostalgia appear on different levels and scope and become intertwined throughout the text in Alė Rūta's trilogy; however, the third part contains a much stronger reflective nostalgia than the first two novels.

Immigration of Lithuanians into the United States of America: A Short Overview and Its Representation in Alė Rūta's Trilogy

Alė Rūta's trilogy "The Destiny of the Exiled" discloses the history of Lithuanian immigrants in the United States. Until the 20th century, when quotas of immigration were issued for different countries, the record of Lithuanian immigrants, entering the U.S.A. is not exact, as Lithuania was annexed to the Czarist Russia at that time. Simas Sužiedėlis observes that "isolated Lithuanians are known to have reached the shores of what is now the United States as early as the 17th century. […] However, not until the eighth decade of the 19th century did Lithuanians begin settling in the United States massively." (Sužiedėlis 1972: 149).

Lithuanian researchers determine four major waves of Lithuanian immigration into the U.S.A. The first wave of immigration started after the rebellions of 1831 and of 1863-1864 against the Russian empire, when participants of the anti-Russian rebellion and their supporters flew from Lithuania. Thus, in the 19th century, occupation by Czarist Russia and persistent

persecutions drove numerous Lithuanians to emigrate to the U.S. The first wave of immigration (300,000-600,000) continued until approximately the start of World War One, in 1914. The total number of immigrants entering the United States varies in different sources, as the exit country for some immigrants was considered Russia. The second wave of immigration (100,000) happened in the period of 1920-1940, a period of independent Lithuania. At that time immigration quotas were established; thus, the record of immigrants from European countries (especially Eastern and Central Europe) became more exact. The third wave of Lithuanian immigration, the so-called "political immigration" happened in 1944, at the end of World War Two, when more than 60,000 of Lithuanians moved to Western Europe in fear of Soviet occupation and repressions. Many of these immigrants or their family members had experienced Soviet repressions of 1940-1941 or had participated in the resistance against the Soviet regime; thus, they were well-aware of the oncoming disaster in the country and, therefore, chose political exile. Immigrants of this third wave of immigration did not call themselves "immigrants", but "exiled" or "displaced persons."

The fourth wave consists of contemporary emigration from Lithuania into the U.S.A. The Lithuanian diaspora in the U.S. is one of the 36 Lithuanian diaspora groups across the world. Chicago, Illinois, is home to the second largest Lithuanian communities in the world. The coal region of northeastern Pennsylvania (the setting of the first part of Alė Rūta's trilogy) has the largest percentage of Lithuanian Americans in the United States.

The period of the first and second waves of immigration is portrayed in Alė Rūta's Pirmieji svetur (The First Abroad, 1984), in which the author scrupulously discloses different aspects of immigrants' life: first days in the unknown country, acquisition of the language, hard work at the coal mines, success and failure, publication of first English-Lithuanian dictionary (1875) or first Lithuanian newspaper in the U.S. (1879), family relationship, sense of community and many other issues. In the period of 1879-1914, 100 periodicals were published in the Lithuanian language across the United States – a fact, which is also observed in the first novel of the trilogy. It is important to notice that alongside discussion of the life of immigrants, in the trilogy the author discusses social and political events in the United States. She places the characters of the novels in different periods and, thus, describes the overall aspects of life in the host country. From this perspective, Alė Rūta's works contain an "informative approach", intermingled with the empathic one, grounded in the bonding sense of nostalgia (Vickroy 2002: 21).

In the first novel, The First Abroad, the main character, Kazys, an immigrant from Lithuania, views everything through comparison: "[the sun] is the same as in Klaipėda or their village" (Alė Rūta, Pirmieji svetur, The First Abroad, 1984: 51-52; here and further my translation

from Lithuanian into English). He deeply longs for the homeland, waits for the letters from the family members, reads the Lithuanian newspaper (published in the U.S.) and later writes articles for the newspaper, becomes engaged in patriotic activities of the Lithuanian community, and fights for the preservation of the Lithuanian language in the Lithuanian communities and families. In his own family, he preserves love for the homeland and the language. Kazys likes talking about Lithuania with his family members, sharing the emotional feeling of nostalgia with them. His home contains national attributes: the family pursues Lithuanian traditions, family members use only the Lithuanian language at home; they celebrate Lithuanian holidays, sing Lithuanian songs, attend Lithuanian mass, support Lithuanian church and bury their countrymen in Lithuanian cemeteries. Unable to return to the homeland, they recreate or restore the homeland in their thoughts or immediate surroundings. A special "diasporic intimacy", to use Boym's (2001: 252) term is built, that nourishes restorative nostalgia, which "gravitates toward collective pictorial symbols and oral culture" (Boym 2001: 49). However, as Boym notices, "diasporic intimacy does not promise a comforting recovery of identity through shared nostalgia for the lost home and homeland" (Boym 2001: 254). Instead of recovery of identity it only helps to build and maintain the links to national identity.

In the second novel of the trilogy (Daigynas (The Seedling Plot)), the author discusses life of the second and third generation immigrants and describes people of the second and third waves of immigration into the U.S.A. Nostalgia, which was a natural, deeply nourished and bonding feeling, characteristic of the first generation, becomes an exotic feeling, but still a recognizable one: "[My father] would always tell a tale… About Lithuania, about his parents' garden, with white blossoms of cherry-trees and apple-trees; and where in summer busy bees were flying all around" (Alė Rūta, Daigynas, 1987: 539). In the second part of the trilogy, restorative nostalgia becomes quite minimal and is replaced by gradually weakening reflective nostalgia. Svetlana Boym explains that "if restorative nostalgia ends up reconstructing emblems and rituals of home and homeland to conquer and spatialize time, reflective nostalgia cherishes shattered fragments of memory and temporalizes space" (Boym 2001: 49). Those shattered fragments of memory become explicit in the second part of Alė Rūta's trilogy. It seems that the main character, a third-generation immigrant, contemplates these remaining pieces of memory, trying to reconstruct his parents' and grand-parents' link to the homeland. However, the author is quite pessimistic about recreating the bond from very small fragments and demonstrates that this link is too fragile to continue. In addition, the author discusses different levels of relationship between the earlier immigrants and later ones. These issues make the second novel a significant

source of information on the mutual mis/understanding among different immigrant groups and generations.

The third part is structurally grounded in reflective nostalgia, which is the leading motif of the narrative. It is important to notice that in the Preface to the third novel (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj; Eng. Echoes from Afar), the author admits of her own inability to adjust to American life style and expresses a wish to disclose the emotional changes in different generations and groups of immigrants. The author describes that the special "flow of nostalgia, so typical of the parents' or grand-parents' generation, like Ariadne's thread, is the only link that joins the immigrants to their roots, at least in their minds or hearts" (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj, Echoes from Afar, 1997: 5). Therefore, the author explicitly points at the significance of nostalgia and its role in the life of immigrants. Different from the first two novels, the third part of the trilogy focuses on the new generation of immigrant families and describes their adaptation to the American lifestyle. The point of view of the second or third generation immigrants becomes different – to them, most probably, the homeland becomes the U.S., and the far-away country, Lithuania, is just something their parents keep remembering. The exoticism of this parental longing, which was so typical of immigrants in the second novel, now becomes even stronger. Moreover, the new generation becomes critical of their parents' nostalgic attachment to that "perfect country" where "everything was better and nicer" (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj, Echoes from Afar, 1997: 19). The main character, a second-generation immigrant, Ginas, thinks that Lithuania is "a different world – his parents' past, their roots. Relatives, tribe, historical ancestors" (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj, Echoes from Afar, 1997: 22; my emphasis). Although being able to visit Lithuania, the country remains foreign to him - something totally different and hardly understandable. A special narrative structure in the novel (two plot lines) helps the author focus on the nostalgic feelings for the homeland. The main character, Ginas, dates Asta (also a second-generation immigrant), who gives him her mother's old letters written to a friend in Lithuanian. As Ginas is better in understanding the written Lithuanian language, Asta wants him to retell and explain the texts of these letters to her. Mainly, through these letters the relationship between them becomes closer. In this way, the author creates an imaginative bond, built on nostalgic feelings, which brings these two people together and, therefore, creates the necessary bond between generations. In fact, this second plot line, consisting of old letters, discloses the author's nostalgic attitude towards her lost homeland: here the reader encounters nostalgic description of cozy country houses, the smell of the lime-trees, a walk through narrow roads in the moonlight at night, the glistering of dew drops at night, or the weeping sounds of harmonica afar" (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj, Echoes from Afar, 1997: 95-96). Obviously, the author

involves the reader in the reminiscences of her and their homeland and shares her wish to get closer to it, at least in thoughts. These reminiscences form a platform of reflective nostalgia, the essence of the narrative in the third novel.

Thus, those two plot lines become tightly intertwined, so that Ginas better understands his father, who is crying over the hardships destined for his homeland. In addition, the letters he reads to his girlfriend make him acknowledge and comprehend nostalgia prevailing at his parents' home. These old letters reveal to him a whole new world or a whole new attitude to the understanding of his own roots. The author describes different forms of nostalgia, singling out "black longing – comprehension that everything has been lost forever" (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj, Echoes from Afar, 1997: 189). This "black longing" is echoed in the poems and songs inserted in the novel. For example, Ginas remembers a hymn heard at a Lithuanian church in Chicago during a national holiday: "God take care of our land, /our brothers there – working and creating, -/take care of Lithuania, where our national roots and soul remain. /In the way our minds always travel, / let our works and creation return there-/ to one nation, to that cherished land" (Alė Rūta, Skamba tolumoj, Echoes from Afar, 1997: 199). The romanticized and idealized description of the beauty of the lost homeland, the smells and sounds, the sights of the stars in the sky at night, words of Lithuanian songs continue until the end of the novel and create perception of collective nostalgia, and can be summarized, to quote Boym, as "poethics of reflective nostalgia", grounded in the poetic form of the nostalgic ethics (Boym 2001: 337; italic in the original).

Arthur G. Neal discusses the issue of "the collective sadness of a national trauma", which is permeated in the lives of the traumatized (Neal 2005: 5). Similarly, collective nostalgia, which follows the traumatic loss of the homeland, becomes a leading trait of the life of the immigrants in Alė Rūta's novels. Moreover, as Neal observes, "The traumas of the past become ingrained in collective memories and provide reference points to draw upon when need arises" (Neal 2005: 7). Nostalgia, as Wilson states, "requires a supply of memories"; memories become important aspects of posttraumatic period and the means of shaping nostalgia (Wilson 2005: 2). As if signaling the loss of national identity, Alė Rūta invites her readers (first, members of Lithuanian diaspora) to engage themselves in nostalgic reminiscences, pointing at the need and significance of such process. Wilson rightly notices that "expressing and experiencing nostalgia require active reconstruction of the past – active selection of what to remember and how to remember it" (Wilson 2005: 5). Therefore, it is possible to consider selective nostalgia as a most significant issue in the process of remembering the past. Christine R. Kovach observes that reminiscing "may help the person maintain his or her self-concept through the life span" (Kovach in Wilson

2005: 128). Similarly, J. A. Meacham identifies three reasons why reminiscences are valued: they reflect the remembering of individual's membership in and identification with significant groups; they arouse similar feelings in others and incite them to cooperative action; the constructed meaning of memories can be validated through dialogue with others (Meacham in Wilson 2005: 128). Thus, in the third novel of the trilogy, those three aspects of reminiscences become significant, because through them a special nostalgic bonding is built and maintained. Contrary to Boym's (2001: 44) idea that "nostalgia is an ache of temporal distance and displacement", it is possible to view nostalgia in Alė Rūta's works as a cure and bonding.

To sum up, the trilogy is based on the great sense and different levels of nostalgia over the lost homeland. The author wants to share this loss with the readers and to remind them of things that should not be forgotten. In a way, she uses that thread (Ariadne's thread) of nostalgia to link different generations and to build a firm bond of collective memory. The traumatic experience of flight from the homeland, horrors of the past, emigration and settling in another country are grounded in nostalgic narrative tone of Alė Rūta's novels. Thus, nostalgia becomes a special bond which unites immigrants and generations. Wilson (2005: 66) rightly observes that nostalgia can be viewed "as means of recreating a sense of community"; therefore, nostalgia becomes one of the central issues in the life of immigrants. The trauma of losing one's own country is shifted onto next generations by means of nostalgic reminiscences. Nostalgia also helps to deal with this trauma of loss, so that these novels represent, to use Cathy Caruth's words, "the transformation of trauma into a narrative memory" (Caruth 1995: 153). In his book Writing History, Writing Trauma, Dominick LaCapra discusses the trauma of historical loss and absence, which becomes a "constitutive feature of existence" (LaCapra 2001: 65). The trauma of losing the homeland is present in Alė Rūta's works; however, this sort of nostalgia is a constituent part of immigrant identity and becomes an identity-forming trait recognized in different groups of immigrants. Such nostalgia is also a part of the "postmemory (the acquired memory of experiences one did not oneself live through)" (LaCapra 2004: 88). It is possible to view Alė Rūta's novels as testimonial narratives of traumatic nostalgia. Laurie Vickroy questions the role of transgenerational transfer: she analyses issues that are passed from one generation to another (Vickroy 2002: xiii). From this perspective, it can be stated that Alė Rūta passes on a great sense of nostalgia, which turns into a special code or a bond linking immigrants of different generations. Thus, the author uses the lost country as a framework and employs nostalgia in the structure of immigrant and national identity.

Conclusion

All three novels in the trilogy by Alė Rūta provide the reader with valuable information about American society and immigration, and raise problems of assimilation or integration of immigrants and their adaptation to the societal norms of another country. The author describes spread of the cities, growth of industry, improvement of health care, functioning and organization of companies, the system of education, types of leisure activities, people's hobbies, family relationship and communication styles. The novels also tell the history of Lithuanian immigration in the U.S.: hard labor in Pennsylvanian coal mines, settling in big cities, organization and activities of Lithuanian communities, their events, different forms of maintaining links with their family members and friends back in the homeland, and ways of preservation of Lithuanian identity. Thus, the trilogy is significant from the sociological point of view: relationship within Lithuanian diaspora, sharing nostalgic emotions, rejecting nostalgia or representation of different forms of nostalgia. Therefore, it can be stated that nostalgia, in general, remains an issue which shapes the national identity in Lithuania. Moreover, it shapes the identity of Lithuanian immigrants in the U.S. The traumatic loss of a country (different forms of exile) has become embedded in the culture of the Lithuanian nation.

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SUMMARY

Nostalgia for the Lost Homeland as Part of Identity in Alė Rūta's Works

The article examines the representation of nostalgic memory of the lost homeland, Lithuania, in the Lithuanian diaspora writer's, Alė Rūta's (1915-2011), trilogy called "The Destiny of the

Exiled", which consists of the novels *Pirmieji svetur* (1984; Eng. - *The First Abroad*), *Daigynas* (1987; Eng. – *The Seedling Plot*), and *Skamba tolumoj* (1997; Eng. *Echoes from Afar*). These novels describe the multilayered problems of Lithuanian immigration into the U.S.A. and life of the immigrants there. Alė Rūta (Elena Nakaitė-Arbienė) is a well-known Lithuanian author, most of whose works (novels and collections of short stories and poems, all written in the Lithuanian language) have been published by the publishers of Lithuanian diaspora in the United States of America. The trauma of the loss of the native land results in the transmitted nostalgia in her novels. The author both mourns over the lost homeland and shares with the readers her grief over this loss and longing for seeing it again. In doing this, Alė Rūta echoes the nostalgic voices of many immigrants, who left their native country at different periods. The article also discusses the issue of preservation of ethnic identity, which is constructed on nostalgic and often melancholic memories of the past, and explores different types of nostalgia, which forms a core of Alė Rūta's trilogy.

KEYWORDS

Immigration, traumatic experience, loss and longing, transmitted nostalgia

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"OUR FLAME, THE WILL-O'-THE-WISP THAT DANCES IN A FEW EYES, IS SOON TO BE BLOWN OUT AND ALL WILL FADE" – MODERN LITERARY NOSTALGIA AS DEATH MOOD

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As the protagonists in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) grow older and become more concerned with the fading of life, the narrative tends to expose more and more images of universal grief. Close to the end Bernard likens life to a dream, a common metaphor for the denial of the realities of life, which he brilliantly formulates in the next sentence: "Our flame, the will-o'-the-wisp that dances in a few eyes, is soon to be blown out and all will fade"(Woolf 2000: 155). If Bernard's horror against time seems utterly personal, Louis's cry against the inexorable passage of time anticipates the end of everything:

> 'But listen," said Louis, 'to the world moving through abysses of infinite space. It roars; the lighted strip of history is past and our kings and queens; we are gone; our civilization; the Nile; and all life. Our separate drops are dissolved; we are extinct, lost in the abysses of time, in the darkness.'(Woolf 2000: 127)

The separate drops that dissolve isolated through the unusual use of the semicolon, is a brilliant image of our brief history in the universe before its end. This, let us call it *universal grief* (that we shall all face annihilation), is in fact intimately bound to the nostalgic experience. The nostalgic strains against modernity and progress may very well be an indication of the way nostalgia's project of halting time originates in this universal grief that emancipates from teleology. James G. Hart writes that, even though death is not considered part of nostalgia it is nevertheless related "to times recalled by nostalgia, because it is the most complete expression that these golden times are irretrievably lost to us" (Hart 1973: 407). Nostalgic imagery that evokes this sense of meaninglessness or death, and at the same time celebrates life, is not uncommon in literature. Often there is resonance of the astronomical images or temporal indicators that contrasts our personal death with how life goes on without us. More so, death can be envisioned as something peaceful, utopian, a return to the origins of the world or childhood. In this essay I will argue that in order to fully comprehend nostalgia, and literary nostalgia, we must investigate one of its basic mechanisms: how nostalgia is triggered by our universal grief and resistance to death. A second premise is that it is useful to separate between nostalgic emotion, a complex set of emotions that are perceived and reflected upon in a cognitive manner, and nostalgic mood that is a less cognitive and less spatiotemporal form of nostalgia. It is in the latter form that the notion of universal grief has a paramount position. I will start with a definition of nostalgic mood and then move on to discuss literary nostalgia, and its corresponding nostalgic tropes, from the modernist period, and how the particular literary nostalgic mood in modern fiction in fact is a result of our teleological and entropic concerns.

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In comparison to nostalgic emotion, nostalgic mood can be regarded as less cognitive, less biographical and thus impersonal, and a more subtle state of mind, which means that we experience sensations rather than perceiving them. These might very well be complex and physical, but the actual chain of emotional and cognitive events, such as nostalgia usually is perceived in cognitive psychology, is incomplete. There will be a motivator of some sort, but in the nostalgic emotion this motivator can be either voluntary or involuntary whereas the motivator in the nostalgic mood is undeniably involuntary. In the nostalgic mood there is more

of a sense of flow or gradual awareness of a state of affection. The most important difference is the lack of an obvious *nostalgia,* an object for the nostalgic experience which makes these moods less biographical in the sense that we do not recall a particular, personal event in the past. During a nostalgic emotion we often quite clearly can specify what we are nostalgic about. This appears more diffuse in the event of nostalgic mood, probably due to the lower cognitive aspect of the experience. However, there is great deal of overlap between emotion and mood. The most common definition is that mood usually implies a longer time than an emotion and is of a lower intensity. A typical example is that of feeling fear (emotion) when seeing a dog rapidly approaching and being in a state of anxiety (mood) for a while after the dog has disappeared.

The affective content of the nostalgic mood is very similar to what is gained from the dualism of nostalgic emotions: the bittersweet mixture of joy and sadness with an emphasis on one of them that constitutes whether the mood is positive or negative. This might seem to contrast research that shows that we often speak of mood as being either "good" or "bad" as in being in a good or bad mood. If we connect this to the positive or negative general interpretation of the mood this opinion still seems valid, but what about the two contrasting emotions? One of Robert E. Thayer's main theories about moods is that they are indeed built up of a combination and interaction of two separate moods, what he names energetic and tense moods (Thayer 1989: 110-36). Overtly simplified, the energetic mood (positive/high arousal) tends to activate the person and the tense mood (negative/low arousal) to calm him. The multidimensional arousal model, as presented by Thayer, allows for a complex interaction of these apparent contrasting emotional states. One of Thayer's examples accounts for exactly this: "A continuing state of high anxiety would certainly characterize high arousal, and yet the fatigue and tiredness that usually reflect low arousal states is also found in these cases"(Thayer 1989: 115). Although nostalgia is not an anxiety, it seems probable that we can apply Thayer's model also on that of nostalgic mood.

The dualism of emotions in nostalgia corresponds well with Freud's polarities between life instincts and death instincts as he expresses them in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (Freud 1955: 53). The play between pleasure, Eros, and death, Thanatos, harmonizes with the two last phases of the nostalgic reaction. The joyfulness (defeating the irreversibility of time, the idealized or selected memory, the life strengthening aspects of the nostalgia) seems to parallel that of the Freudian pleasure principle. Simultaneously, the return to origins can also be integrated in the death drive. Freud writes, backing his observation with the biological science of the times that "the aim of all life is death" and that "organic life [strives] to restore an earlier state of things"

(Freud 1955: 38, 36). He continues by quoting Schopenhauer's famous remark that death is the "true result and to that extent the purpose of life" (qtd. in Freud 1955: 50).

The nostalgic dualism between death and life is also observed by Ann C. Colley in Nostalgia and Recollection in Victorian Culture (1998) where she connects it to the myth of Orpheus:

> It is as if nostalgia roams between the tenor of death and the vehicle of life. Like Orpheus, nostalgia attempts to recover what darkness imprisons so that it might lead what is lost back towards the light of the living present. Nostalgia charms death with its bitter-sweet melodies […]. (Colley 1998: 209)

In the nostalgic experience it is the knowledge of our short time, in combination with the strong notion of extinction that initiates the stout sadness of lost time. It can only be regained in our subjective minds, but that is not satisfactory.

The strange sadness of nostalgic mood is also seen in Freud's distinction between mourning and melancholia: mourning is the loss of something real, a person, a place or something equivalent, and it heals in course of time – melancholia is the loss of something abstract and time won't heal it. In a contradictory way, the abstraction of death embraces life in the nostalgic mood experience.

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In a strict sense, there are two crucial definitions of nostalgia: one, the nostalgic emotion, has to do with the dichotomy of *now and then* (and more spatially *here and there*), and the other, nostalgic mood, is concerned with universal grief, the fear of death and progress. The nostalgic efforts from fiction are all based on either one of these or on a set of variations and combinations of them, but it is where it focuses on universal grief literary nostalgia become less spatiotemporal (as the nostalgic emotion requires) and propels nostalgic moods instead. This section investigates how nostalgic moods fuelled by nostalgia's inherent relation to death operate in modern fiction.

The conventions of modern nostalgic tropes evolve out of the idealized spaces and the nostalgic dichotomies from romantic nostalgic poetry, as Aaron Santesso convincingly displays in his very insightful A Careful Longing: The Poetics and Problems of Nostalgia (2006). The most common tropes are the tropes of idyllic, innocent childhood; the nostalgic childhood tropes, therefore, will then be everything associated with childhood such as children, children's games, and toys. Santesso writes that Schiller argued that children are also associated with nature because

"children were emblematic of a lost relationship with nature" (Santesso 2006: 70). Nostalgic childhood tropes, then, come to symbolize nature as well.

In addition, several tropes function as a reminder of passing times such as the use of astronomical imagery in some of Dryden's elegies which are associated with "the ideas of decay, collapse, and change […]" (Santesso 2006: 34) or the potent symbol of the ruin as a metaphor for change. The ruin becomes symptomatic for the time arrow in that everything inevitably will decay and die.

Santesso concludes that "[m]odern nostalgic tropes might be different—white picket fences rather than village squares—but certain tropes still act as triggers that cause us to engage in nostalgic reflection" (Santesso 2006: 188). Many of the romantic nostalgic tropes can be identified in modern fiction.

Thus, in modernist fiction and beyond the romantic tropes of decay, ruins, time, childhood all came to relate to universal grief and were explored further due to the contexts of late industrialization, capitalism and the horrors of the First World War. Nostalgic imagery in modern fiction evokes this sense of meaninglessness or death, and at the same time celebrates life. Often there is resonance of the astronomical images (as seen in romantic poetry) or temporal indicators that contrasts our personal death with how life goes on without us. Yvonne, in Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano (1947), has such a revelation:

> And the earth itself still turning on its axis and revolving around that sun, the sun revolving around the luminous wheel of this galaxy, the countless unmeasured jeweled wheels of countless unmeasured galaxies turning, turning, majestically, into infinity, into eternity, through all of which all life ran on – all this, long after she herself was dead, men would still be reading in the night sky, and as the earth turned through those distant seasons, and they watched the constellations still rising, culminating, setting, to rise again […] (Lowry 1963: 323)

The concept of individual annihilation is greatly contrasted with life, the universe, and the ever changing cycle of life. Within the cyclic motifs, this concept of personal death becomes a radical contrast. At first glance, Yvonne's real death might not seem to communicate this idea since it is almost celebratory:

> And leaving the burning dream Yvonne felt herself suddenly gathered upwards and borne towards the stars, through eddies of stars scattering aloft with ever wider circlings like rings on water, among which now appeared, like a flock of diamond birds flying softly and steadily towards Orion, the Pleiades… (Lowry 1963: 337)

This passage is highly nostalgic. First, of course, because of the way the paragraph embraces many of the images of nostalgia: references to the astronomic and mythological, the

idea of time passing, and the sense of idealization. More so, death here, as envisioned by Yvonne (or Lowry) as something peaceful, is a return to the origins of the world. This sentiment does echo Freud's ideas about the death wish as some suspect longing for a natural state, or becoming once again part of the zodiac of the universe. The word "envision" is crucial since we have to separate Yvonne's factual death from her emotions about her own.

One crucial element of nostalgia and nostalgic mood is undeniably the time arrow: the irreversibility of time and the fading of all stable molecules around us, whether that is a sand castle, a human life, or the universe. Most of the nostalgic tropes owe something to the teleological aspect of time, a matter which fundamentally causes the pain and melancholia of the nostalgia.

The famous dichotomy of clock time and inner time (Bergsonian duration) has proven a common strategy to exploit the teleological aspects of nostalgia. The occurrence of time markers, flagging clock time as an impatient but steady beat towards decay and death, are common enough. The most famous example is the use of clock time in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) where the recurring sound from Big Ben constantly reminds the reader of the time arrow, and this, in turn, becomes a huge contrast to the subjective Bergsonian time of the characters which enables a temporality that fights against clock time. Time markers can thus be as simple as a reminder of clocks, as in *Mrs Dalloway*, or time experienced by its characters such as Dick Diver "listening to time" while "listening to the buzz of the electric clock […]" (Fitzgerald 1955: 213). Time markers can also be more grammatical as an extended use of time indicators such as tense inflections and time adverbials.

Likewise, the idea of the ruin as a prime symbol of decay and past time is a potent one. Nowhere is this stronger than in the notion of the sand castle that so quickly deteriorates into a sand ruin. A fine example of the use of ruin imagery can be found in the first chapter of *Under the Volcano* where we are thrown into an atmosphere of decay and ruins, a chapter which forms the spring board for past times since it is the last segment of the story with feelings of remembrance and forgetfulness for a day exactly one year before. M. Laurelle walks around "deserted swimming pools", "dead tennis courts", a sleeping platform, "a faded blue Ford, a total wreck". The desolation is further enhanced by "small, black, ugly birds", "[w]indy shadows [that] swept the pavements" and a "crash of thunder" which twitches off the street lights (Lowry 1963: 10, 11, 13, 19, 19, 29, 30). These ruins, gloomy images, and sounds contain the sentiment of change and something lost but they also illustrate metaphorically the havoc of a man, Geoffrey Firmin. The perception of this angst reaches a climax in two images: a deserted plough and an abandoned palace. The image of the plough, more emblematic in its presentation as a silhouette,

clearly indicates the decayed spirit of the consul through its allusion to a human form: "there was a row of dead trees. An abandoned plough, silhouetted against the sky, raised its arms to heaven in mute supplication […]" (Lowry 1963: 15). The abandoned palace creates an ever stronger sense of decay through the heavy use of negative adjectives and a prose stimulating primarily the olfactory senses:

> The broken pink pillars, in the half-light, might have been waiting to fall down on him: the pool, covered with green scum, its steps torn away and hanging by one rotting clamp, to close over his head. The shattered evil -smelling chapel, overgrown with weeds, the crumbling walls, splashed with urine, on which scorpions lurked – wrecked entablature, sad archivolt, slippery stones covered with excreta – this place, where love had once brooded, seemed part of a nightmare. (Lowry 1963: 20)

The insertion of the positive, past love, is an effective juxtaposition and accentuation to the decay which becomes a more pleasant alternative to the present. It reinforces the nostalgia in creating alternatives to the unpleasant present. The use of binaries once more focuses on the decay and makes it darker and stronger. Throughout the first chapter of Under the Volcano, we find numerous openings to idealized and mythological places that work in contradiction to the abashed present. There are direct allusions to the "Earthly Paradise" (Lowry 1963: 16) or more implicit references to biblical events, identified by Chris Ackerley and Lawrence J. Clipper (Ackerley 1984: 52), such as the allusion to psalm 8:3-5: "What, after all, was a Consul that one was mindful of him?" (Lowry 1963: 35) Further biblical allusions are the etymology of the consul's name, Geoffrey ("God's peace" or "beloved of God") (Ackerley 1984: 32), and the constant references to him as Adam, the connections to Swedenborg, and Doré's painting of Dante's paradise (Lowry 1963: 11). Hints of more mythological places are also found in the references to the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione, the old Aztec myths, in the sentence "Nights of the Culmination of the Pleiades!" (Lowry 1963: 35), and references to Atlantis through a film (Lowry 1963: 21). The consul's high regard for William Blackstone, a man who left the Puritans in Massachusetts in 1635 to live close to the Indians and nature, seems to represent this general idea of the simplicity of life and man's return to nature, "away from the people with ideas" (Lowry 1963: 96). Together with a multitude of references to the Earthly Paradise or other mythological spaces, as well as more historical nostalgias prior to the age of modernity, these idealized spaces provide both a sense of longing and a contrast to the present tensions of a looming world war.

Nostalgia evoked through the use of childhood is generally achieved by addressing the world of childhood as an alternative to the present. This is done either through the use of an

idealized space or time, by reinforcing its past character, or by using common symbols or representations of childhood that force the reader into the sensations of his own past childhood.

We can observe how the notion of an idealized childhood is conveyed through the enhanced, imaginative places and narration of the children's books of the first half of the 1900s, something Fay Sampson acknowledges in "Childhood and Twentieth-Century Children's Literature" (2000). Literary childhood is always a memory, always constructed, and perhaps idealized. Childhood itself is an idealized space, reflected upon with nostalgia that affects the narration and the style of the prose. Sampson primarily studies the way another type of rhapsodized places exists *within* these already highly idealized settings, such as Peter Pan's Never -Never Land, the Secret Garden in the novel of the same name, or the top of the forest in the Pooh stories (Sampson 2000: 62).

Sometimes childhood seems to be an excuse for a resistance to progress and modernity. "*Wind in the Willows*," writes Sampson, "is not really a children's book, but a middle class adult's nostalgia for a rural idyll, a flight from the industrial and proletarian present" (Sampson 2000: 62). The concept of idealized childhood seems, thus, closely related to that of the entropic time in which childhood is the golden age that is bound to be destroyed by time.

The impossibility for these spaces to exist in real life, or the impossibility of a return to childhood, is cleverly communicated through the name of this space in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911), "Never Never Land." The first line in *Peter Pan,* "All children, except one, grow up" (Barrie 2007: 9) confirms this where the "one" is an imaginary hope, a nostalgic force against progress – a hope in vain since the reality is so firmly described by the simplicity of "grow up." The nostalgic entropy is further enforced on the first page when Mrs. Darling exclaims why the children cannot remain the same forever and through Wendy's introspective thought "Two is the beginning of the end" (Barrie 2007: 9). The sadness of lost childhood, as represented by Neverland, is forcefully explained by the narrator: "On these magic shores children at play are for ever beaching their coracles. We too have been there; we can still hear the sound of the surf, though we shall land no more" (Barrie 2007: 14). The idealized Neverland is not only rosy in its description of childhood, but also in the typical manner its gaming qualities of "savages and lonely lairs" (Barrie 2007: 13) are contrasted with "chocolate-pudding day" and "three-pence for pulling out your tooth yourself […]" (Barrie 2007: 14). For the adult these childhood memories, although not that attractive at the time, is now part of the idealization of childhood.

Returning once again to *Under the Volcano*, we confront our childhood, together with the protagonist, through an image used as a symbol for childhood: The Ferris wheel. The Ferris wheel as a traditional symbol tends to illustrate, based on its circular shape and its movement, the

human heart, the circle of life with its ups and downs. A Ferris wheel is something that we associate mainly with childhood or a childhood experience of awe and fascination. It is not only the actual image of the Ferris wheel that comes to mind, but also other senses associated with it such as the blinking lights, the noise of the people in it, and perhaps a melody being played. In a wider sense it has become the main staple of the amusement park with all those associations. It carries both the fascination for our own past childhood and the magic we have lost with it.

In *Under the Volcano* we first encounter the Ferris wheel through the focalization of M. Laurelle:

> […] the slowly revolving Ferris wheel, already lit up, in the square of Quauhnahuac; he thought he could distinguish the sound of human laughter rising from its bright gondolas and, again, that faint intoxication of voices singing, diminishing, dying in the wind, inaudible finally. (Lowry 1963: 16)

It is important to note how crucial the sounds are in this image, and it is basically the sounds of the dying voices that represent, or enhance, the sense of lost childhood. In the end of chapter one, commencing the long analepsis which will be the body of the text, the Ferris wheel becomes the emblem of recreating the past through its reversed motion: "Over the town, in the dark tempestuous night, backwards revolved the luminous wheel" (Lowry 1963: 47).

For the consul the Ferris wheel will more explicitly come to represent that lost childhood through his comparison of it to that of "an enormously magnified child's structure of girders and angle brackets, nuts and bolts, in Meccano […]" (Lowry 1963: 221).

Somewhat later he experiences something of a moment of truth when he enters, what he refers to as "a little confession box" in the "huge looping-the-loop machine […]" (Lowry 1963: 224-25). There seems to be a kind of desperation, not only to clear the mind of his spinning associations but also to regain possession of his own past, a project doomed to fail in this "monster" (Lowry 1963: 225). But the encounter with the fair and all its air of nostalgia definitely charges him with revelations of the essence of nostalgia. The merriment of the first stage of nostalgia suddenly alters into the later tragic sense of having lost something; a process that simulates that of the nostalgic experience:

> At the same time, as though a cloud had come over the sun, the aspect of the fair had completely altered for him. The merry grinding of the roller skates, the cheerful if ironic music, the cries of the little children on their goose-necked steeds, the procession of queer pictures – all this had suddenly become transcendentally awful and tragic, distant, transmuted, as it were some final impression on the senses of what the earth was like, carried over into an obscure region of death, a gathering thunder of immediatable sorrow […] (Lowry 1963: 218)

The tragic aspect of nostalgia and the stages of the nostalgic reaction are forcefully transported into the reader through the brilliant metaphor of the cloud obscuring the sun, and this creates a strong sensual experience connected to that of the "goose-necked steeds" later. It is a scene that carries both the remembrance and its representation through the enumeration of what the fair actually displays. The melancholia, or in this case the tragedy, arise out of the awareness of this lostness.

It is not only the contexts of childhood that carry nostalgic possibilities but also the general appreciation of youth as a stage of physical perfection and opportunities. Nostalgia is evoked when youthfulness is contrasted with indications of aging and human decay, either explicitly through the narrative or implicitly through the private awareness of this decay.

Fitzgerald's Tender is the Night (1934/1951) is a book that predominantly uses the idea of youth as a nostalgia for its main characters. Dick Diver's fascination for Nicole is primarily her air of youth: "She smiled, a moving childish smile that was like all the lost youth in the world" (Fitzgerald 1955: 28). The structure of the novel becomes a celebration of youth that changes into a loss of youth, a progress intensified by the imagery of the book and how the characters are scourged by the idea of youth.1 Youth not only equals strength, but also female beauty, and the loss of youth is clearly signified by how the characters experience this loss of beauty. Nicole's years slip "away by clock and calendar and birthday, with the added poignance of her perishable beauty" (Fitzgerald 1955: 228). In reality, the human body equals that of any other fabric and will inevitably become a ruin.

The arresting image of youth, and the world through youth, makes identification between the reader's own youth and the fictive youth possible. The descriptions of youth, especially in Fitzgerald's works, tend toward an idealization of youth, as in the description of young Judy Jones in "Winter Dreams" (1922):

> She was arrestingly beautiful. The color in her cheeks was centered like the color in a picture—it was not a "high" color, but a sort of fluctuating and feverish warmth, so shaded that it seemed at any moment it would recede and disappear. This color and the mobility of her mouth gave a continual impression of flux, of intense life, of passionate vitality—balanced only partially by the sad luxury of her eyes. (Fitzgerald and West 2007: 49)

It is not only the beauty in Judy Jones, but more so the celebration of her youthfulness in the use of words associated with main characteristics of youth such as "flux," "intense life," and "passionate vitality." Not only does Judy Jones embrace the ideal of youth in her physical appearance, but also in her activities. She is later spotted by Dexter as she is driving a racing

[1] This refers to the structure of the 1951 edition.

motor boat, a potent image of "white streamers of cleft water [that] rolled themselves out behind it" before it "was sweeping in an immense and purposeless circle of spray round and round in the middle of the lake" (Fitzgerald and West 2007: 50). Judy Jones then, after acquainting herself with Dexter, jumps into the water swimming "with a sinuous crawl" where her arms "burned to butternut, moved sinuously among the dull platinum ripples, elbow appearing first, casting the forearm back with a cadence of falling water, then reaching out and down, stabbing a path ahead" (Fitzgerald and West 2007: 51). The detail of the crawl, an almost microscopic study of her decisive "stabbing," creates the impression of watching her in slow-motion. No wonder Dexter has something of a nervous breakdown in the end when he realizes that Judy Jones is no longer representing the potent beauty of his youth, for when he is describing her he is, in fact, describing his own youth:

> The dream was gone. Something had been taken from him. In a sort of panic he pushed the palms of his hands into his eyes and tried to bring up a picture of the waters lapping on Sherry Island and the moonlit verandah, and gingham on the golf links and the dry sun and the gold color of her neck's soft down. And her mouth damp to his kisses and her eyes plaintive with melancholy and her freshness like new fine linen in the morning. Why, these things were no longer in the world! They had existed and they existed no longer. (Fitzgerald and West 2007: 65)

Dexter's realization of time's absolute progress forward necessitates a creation of nostalgic episodes that come to represent his own youth. These images are tied together with repeated "and" in order to emphasize the breath-taking character they possess. Youth is juxtaposed with decay and death.

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Nostalgia is inevitably tied to a personal teleological, entropic idea that the progress of our lives must end in death. The sense of the nostalgic death mood is much the one of *carpe diem*. Nostalgia is not fear of the present: it is fear of death. Our longing back into the past corresponds with our futile endeavours to slow down the life process or retard our eschatology. Linda Hutcheon clearly distinguishes this aspect of nostalgia as "an attempt to defy the end, to evade teleology" (Hutcheon 2000: 196). To travel back into our subjective time is an uprising against mechanical clock time. Of course, the futility of the project unfolds when we discover that it does not help; this is the bitter pill of the nostalgic experience.

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SUMMARY

"Our flame, the will-o'-the-wisp that dances in a few eyes, is soon to be blown out and all will fade" – Modern Literary Nostalgia as Death Mood

This article argues that there is a difference between nostalgic emotion and nostalgic mood and that the latter one often is a result of nostalgia's inevitable link to death, entropy and teleology. It examines how nostalgic tropes, such as ruins, childhood, youth, astronomical representations, and subjective time (duration), inherited from the romantic poetry function as, and create, nostalgic death moods and retardations of eschatology in modernist fiction.

KEYWORDS

Nostalgia, modernist fiction, modernism, death, emotions, mood, entropy, teleology, childhood, youth, duration, Bergson, ruins, astronomy

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FORMS OF NOSTALGIA IN HENRY JAMES'S "THE AMERICAN SCENE"

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Henry James was not a nostalgic writer. Also, he didn't like to confess things. He was rather official, reserved and withdrawn, infinitely penetrating as far as the psychological motives of his characters were concerned but tight-lipped about himself. Throughout much of his career he managed to keep the pose of an impartial spectator and commentator who stands aside and takes notes. As his letters as well as reminiscences of the people who knew him demonstrate, this was not only a pose but a temperamental and even emotional feature. Leon Edel gives us the following sketch of the "Master at sixty" (around 1903): "Distinctly a figure of the elite, his private life unknown, his rare public appearances always portentous and unsmiling, he could be pointed to in the clubs and be sought after by hostesses, and still remain aloof and oracular" (169). This and other descriptions almost always

portray the novelist as an actor of sorts, sporting a theatrical look, extravagant clothes, and a cultivated if conspicuously impersonal code of behaviour.

Yet James seems to have realized there was a price he had to pay for his reserve and reticence. And there is no doubt that in the last ten or fifteen years of his life he became more inward-looking. Sooner or later, the mask had to be dropped. Or at least lowered. And this is what we see when we read his texts after, say, 1903 – a man trying to come to terms with the burden of memories. Some of the most perceptive insights may be found in his late short stories, for example in "The Beast in the Jungle" or "The Jolly Corner," semi-autobiographical narratives which tell us more about the writer than thousands of his letters or even most observant recollections from those who had met him. Also, and rather surprisingly, the old master turned towards the autobiographical convention, giving us essays and volumes of personal recollections of childhood and youth, particularly in *A Small Boy and Others*, 1913, and *Notes of a Son and Brother*, 1914 (the third autobiographical volume entitled *The Middle Years* was left half-done). It is worth noting as well that his last and unfinished novel, *The Ivory Tower*, contains a number of veiled autobiographical references, its main character a figure of a young American returning to America after many years of absence. The American writer was more and more introspective, apparently despite himself, and the readers of his late texts have the opportunity to catch sight of the man behind the self-imposed pose of an unconcerned writer.

In this context, it might prove interesting to refer to a much earlier and a rather exceptional entry in his otherwise formal (sometimes torturously formal) notebooks, the one which shows how great the pressure of the buried emotions and memories was. The fragment, written in January 1879, was prophetic in that it anticipated James's later attempts to revive his past and integrate it with his present:

> Imagine a door – either walled-up, or that has been long locked – at which there is an occasional knocking – a knocking which – as the other side of the door is inaccessible – can only be ghostly. The occupant of the house or room, containing the door, has long been familiar with the sound; and, regarding it as ghostly, has ceased to heed it particularly – as the ghostly presence remains on the other side of the door, and never reveals itself in other ways. But this person may be imagined to have some great and constant trouble; and it may be observed by another person, relating the story, that the knocking increases with each fresh manifestation of the trouble. He breaks open the door and the trouble ceases – as if the spirit had desired to be admitted, that it might interpose, redeem and protect. (James 1987: 10)

The passage is a significant clue to our understanding of how James approached his past. It definitely helps us see why it won't do to call him a nostalgic writer. The past was for him something more than a memory. It was an existential challenge, an ordeal of the mind, a semi

-private code to be broken. The novelist's later intimations into things remembered and things forgotten yet rememorized can be viewed as serious psychological and emotional interventions.

One of the strongest impulses lying behind James's shift to the autobiographical mode was his journey to the United States, undertaken in August 1904, after a twenty-years absence. The American trip lasted one year (until June 1905) and took James as far as Florida and California, both of great interest to him. His main preoccupation, though, was with the places where he had spent his childhood and youth: New York, Albany, Newport and Boston. In one sense, it might have been a nostalgic and sentimental journey informed by the writer's memories and recollections of people and places – towns and cities rather than natural landscapes as James always preferred the cultivated and the urbane to the wild and the savage. Very quickly, though, romanticism gave way to consternation and alarm at what James saw and felt. The America of 1904 became a locus of the novelist's uneasy dealings with the specters of his own past.

Fortunately, we have a first-rate chronicle of the trip. *The American Scene*, published in 1907 (two years after James's return to England), is a truly fascinating record of his American travels and experiences. It is also an exceptional document with its author trying to surpass the autobiographical mode but ultimately failing to do so. From a purely formal point of view, this collection of fourteen essays is without doubt a crowning achievement of James's travel writings (including similar collections of travel sketches devoted to France, England and Italy). It is witty, responsive, written in the resplendent and somewhat intimidating style typical of the late James. In many respects, it is a book about one person's discovery of the American continent – the novelist had never been to California or the South so in a way he was also discovering the United States for himself. Upon subsequent readings, though, it turns out to be much more than just another brilliant collection of observations and meditations. All in all, *The American Scene* is also an intriguing document of the painstaking process of coming to terms with one's past as well as a treatise on memory and nostalgia as forms of human life. The essays collected in the book tell about remembrance of things past and how it is transformed in the human mind. They demonstrate James's uneasy and complex feelings towards his own personal past, disclosing the tricks played by memory.

Not that the 1904-1905 journey made James a confessional writer. Far from this: he was still inclined to be secretive and evasive. Inevitably, however, confronting numerous scenes of his past made him realize to what extent it influenced and shaped his present self. James wouldn't have been himself if he didn't work out a theory out of this. In a critical commentary to *The Aspern Papers*, written after 1905 and in my opinion discreetly informed by the American journey,

he proposed an interesting notion of the "visitable past." The idea was illustrated in the following way:

> I delight in a palpable imaginable *visitable* past – in the nearer distances and the clearer mysteries, the marks and signs of a world we may reach over to as by making a long arm we grasp an object at the other end of our own table ... the poetry of the thing outlived and lost and gone, and yet in which the precious element of closeness, telling so of connections but tasting so of differences, remains appreciable. (James 1984: 1177; original italics).

This statement is crucial for our understanding of how James might have perceived his American memories. It points to the past as something which is not very distant and constitutes a part of one's lifetime. It is detached from the present but at the same time frames and modifies it. Also, it is detached from ourselves – note that according to James you pay a visit to the past rather than relive it – but at the same time it is a part of ourselves. Such a double perspective was important for James because it enabled him both to observe his own past from a distance and find in it an understanding of his own present life.

Incidentally, this may be why at the turn of the century the novelist felt that the "old Europe" no longer provided him with interesting material that could have been artistically capitalized on in his novels and short stories. As a matter of fact, after completing The Ambassadors, The Wings of the Dove and The Golden Bowl James was perceptibly tired with European themes. In his next novel, The Ivory Tower, he wanted to give his readers a broad panorama of American life. The point is he was too familiar with the Old World, and it was getting more and more difficult for him to find a necessary distance which would let him take a position of the indifferent observer of people and situations. This is for instance flatly stated in the essay "Richmond" which opens with a strong statement to the effect that the "European complexity, working clearer to one's vision, had grown usual and calculable, presenting itself, to the discouragement of wasteful emotion and of 'intensity' in general, as the very stuff, the common texture, of the real world" (James 1993: 654). Nothing "could be of a simpler and straighter logic," adds the American novelist, than the fact that "Europe had been romantic years before, because she was different from America; wherefore America would now be romantic because she was different from Europe" (James 1993: 655).

Unexpectedly, then, it was his native America which by 1904 became for him a relatively distant memory that might be recollected and utilized. The word "relatively" needs to be stressed, though. James's American past was distant but not distant enough. It was, so to speak, in the middle distance, which meant that it was sufficiently familiar to be personal yet exotic enough to be treated in an artistic fashion. It became a visitable phenomenon, to use James's own word.

Maybe this was what the novelist hoped it would be. We know that his decision to go to America was neither hasty nor casual. He realized, even if not fully consciously, that this might be a necessary step for him as writer but also as man. Let me repeat: James was not only a sentimental tourist returning to the places of his childhood and youth. He was also determined to go on his way to re-discover his old self and try to integrate it with his present one. No wonder at one moment he calls himself a "revisiting spirit" (James 1993: 428. Note that the adjective "revisiting," like "visitable," has "visit" as its root).

James's plan was founded on certain misapprehensions. For one thing, he certainly underestimated the intensity of his American memories. They were not at all so faded as he believed them to be. In fact, one of the problematic issues that James had to face in the America he visited after twenty years was the surprisingly alarming closeness and familiarity of what he saw there. His favorite stance of a detached and indifferent observer who describes and records his impressions was almost irrelevant and failed him. He hoped that after twenty years America would become an object of observation, something put into perspective and made manageable, and that he might see his native place "with much of the freshness of the eye, outward and inward," as he puts in in a short preface to The American Scene (James 1993: 353). In fact, it was the other way round. He was overwhelmed with the past and had to submit to its spectral radiation.

This is conspicuous in the book's opening essays (the ones devoted to New York and New England) in which James, while visiting the places of his childhood and youth, seems to complain that his memories are so strong that he cannot put them in perspective and depict them from the point of view of a distant viewer. Finding himself in Newport, one of the magical places of his teenage years, James noted the "felt condition of having known it too well and loved it too much for description or definition" (James 1993: 528). Similarly in Boston where the writer remarked:

> It sometimes uncomfortably happens for a writer, consulting his remembrance, that he remembers too much and finds himself knowing his subject too well; which is but the case of the bottle too full for the wine to start. There has to be room for the air to circulate between one's impressions, between the parts of one's knowledge, since it is the air … that sets these floating fragments into motion. (James 1993: 541)

Already in these fragments, and they are by no means exceptional, James refers to a sense of pressure he feels when confronted with his past.

The second misunderstanding involved James not taking into account the fact that one's memories are dynamic – they have their own lives and keep on influencing the present. This is especially true of the time of childhood and teenage years which in their intensity shape not only the conscious mind but also the unconsciousness of the human being. James was genuinely

surprised that in America he would have to confront his spectral (repressed or forgotten) ego. A few years later he would describe such an experience in "The Jolly Corner," generally acknowledged as his masterpiece, a story of a middle-aged man returning to New York after a thirty-years absence and confronting there a spectral presence of the man he would be had he stayed in America:

> Rigid and conscious, spectral yet human, a man of his own substance and stature waited there to measure himself with his power to dismay ... he could gape at his other self in this other anguish, gape as a proof that *he*, standing there for the achieved, the enjoyed, the triumphant life, couldn't be faced in his triumph ... the presence before him was a presence, the horror within him a horror. ... Such an identity fitted his at *no* point, made its alternative monstrous ... the face was the face of a stranger. It came upon him nearer now, quite as one of those expanding fantastic images projected by the magic lantern of childhood; for the stranger, whoever he might be, evil, odious, blatant, vulgar, had advanced as for aggression." (James 1996: 724-725; original italics)

We can say without exaggeration that going to America became for James a terrifying existential challenge. What he believed was pure nostalgia for his early years turned out to be, as he called it, the "trap to memory."

This is evident almost everywhere in *The American Scene*. James's first impressions upon arriving at New York after twenty years were permeated with disgust and repulsion. The city, with its newly-erected sky-scrapers ("grossly tall and grossly ugly," James 1993: 428), is most often referred to by James as hideous. At one moment he describes it as an "enormous system" and a "monstrous organism" with "scattered members" (James 1993: 418). Just a few sentences later he returns to the metaphor, adding the image of the spider-web: "the monster grows and grows, flinging abroad its loose limbs even as some unmannered young giant at his 'larks,' and that the binding stitches must for ever fly further and faster and draw harder; the future complexity of the web, all under the sky and over the sea, becoming thus that of some colossal set of clockworks, some steel-souled machine-room of brandished arms and hammering fists and opening and closing jaws" (James 1993: 418). In another essay James laments: "Free existence and good manners, in New York, are too much brought down to a bare rigour of marginal relation to the endless electric coil, the monstrous chain that winds round the general neck and body, the general middle and legs, very much as the boa-constrictor winds round the group of the Laocoon" (James 1993: 429).

Importantly, America became for him a half-legible text, and the process of recognition of remembered places resembled, as he put it, "spelling out of foreign sentences of which one knows but half the words" (James 1993: 357). One of the most frequent phrases used in the essays is that of a meaningless text that has to be interpreted – often James speaks of the

necessity of reading one's meanings into what he thought were blank American landscapes. The American novelist felt almost like a reader in front of an indecipherable message. This was particularly true of New York which filled him with a sense of "individual loneliness" (James 1993: 487). One might add that he was capable of appreciating the variety of the American landscapes, noting their "hundred happy variations" (*James 1993:* 378). Such stances, though, were rare and immediately followed by objections and personal complaints.

The careful reader of *The American Scene* will quickly discover that James's perceptions of America open themselves to still another dimension. James admits here and there that he feels haunted by his own personal memories, and the vocabulary of ghosts, specters and mysterious presences becomes quite telling. In an important passage he writes:

> It is a convenience to be free to confess that the play of perception during those first weeks was quickened, in the oddest way, by the wonderment (which was partly also the amusement) of my finding how many corners of the general, of the local, picture had anciently never been unveiled for me at all, and how many unveiled too briefly and too scantly, with quite insufficient bravery of gesture. That might make one ask by what strange law one had lived in the other time, with gaps, to that number, in one's experience, in one's consciousness, with so many muffled spots in one's general vibration – and the answer indeed to such a question might carry with it an infinite penetration of retrospect, a penetration productive of ghostly echoes as sharp sometimes as aches or pangs. (James 1993: 398-399)

The "ghostly echoes" of remembered places are evidently due to those aspects of the past which are "veiled" and "muffled," that is, displaced from consciousness and either forgotten or repressed. James frequently contrasts the America of 1904 and the America he carries in his memory, witnessing how the former is haunted and overwhelmed by the latter. Applying the metaphor of the traveler-as-reader we can say that what James read into the obscure and blank America he faced in 1904 was often his own repressed past. The results were astounding. Like Spencer Brydon, the protagonist of "The Jolly Corner," James returned to America only to discover his alter ego in the shape of a phantom that symbolizes everything he didn't experience or live through. In *The American Scene*, which is after all not a fictional story but a collection of travel sketches, the repressed memory finds its expression in dense images, convoluted descriptions and the occasionally torturous play of language. The conclusion, however, is similar: the past cannot be dismissed. If ignored, it returns to punish us, turning a strain of nostalgia into the memory's trap.

The ghostly dimension of the past is apparent in the essay "Boston," with the novelist reminiscing the second half of the 1860s when the Jameses moved to Boston's Ashburton Place (James was in his twenties). In his memory the Boston house was a "conscious memento with old secrets to keep and old stories to witness for, a saturation of life as closed together and preserved

in it as the scent lingering in a folded pocket-handkerchief" (James 1993: 543). Now, after forty years, the place was a "gaping void, the brutal effacement, at a stroke, of every related object, of the whole precious past" (James 1993: 543). James speaks of trying to recover "some echo of ghostly footsteps – the sound as of taps on the window-pane heard in the dim dawn" (James 1993: 543) not realizing at first that by introducing the spectral element into his memories he reactivates the nightmare he tries to escape. Infected by nostalgia, the past becomes a detached and self-sufficient entity, a bit like the exotic pagoda approached by Maggie Verver in the fourth book of *The Golden Bowl*, an edifice you cannot enter because in its perfection it seems devoid of doors. In a way, this was what the novelist desired. But did he? After all, such a past becomes inhuman. No wonder the sixty-years-old novelist withdraws from his Ashburton Place memories with a sense of genuine horror: "It was as if the bottom had fallen out of one's own biography, and one plunged backward into space without meeting anything" (James 1993: 544).

In one of the sketches there is a curious anecdote of the New York Metropolitan Museum which became for James another spectral presence. Opened in 1870, the Museum was first located in Fifth Avenue 681, and then briefly at 128 West 14th Street. In 1904 James visited it at its current site, that is, on Fifth Avenue and 82nd Street. Nevertheless, he remembered the museum as situated at West 14th Street. The memory was so strong that the writer confused the places. As he himself puts it: the "consciousness of the original seat of the Museum, of where and what it had been, was one of those terrible traps to memory, about the town, which baited themselves with the cheese of association, so to speak, in order to exhibit one afterwards as 'caught,' or, otherwise expressed, as old; such being the convicted state of the unfortunate who knows the *whole* of so many of his stories" (James 1993: 512). Thus, the New York of 1904 was replaced in James's mind to the New York of vague and distorted memories, a half-fictional metropolis, a palimpsest city which sunk deep in the novelist's unconsciousness. What is quite apparent in this experience is a double play of the familiar and the alien, the distant and the near. James himself speaks of the oscillation between possession and dispossession, and he points to a sense of the latter in terms of haunting: "This sense of dispossession … haunted me so, I was to feel, in the New York streets" (James 1993: 427). This is how nostalgia turns into terror.

This and other examples one can find in *The American Scene* demonstrate that for the novelist the past was not merely the past. For one thing, it was capable of shaping the present, even when it was dismissed, ignored and forgotten. The case of James is interesting as the novelist, at least up to a certain moment, avoided writing *directly* about his past life. He never wrote a diary, and he was rather silent about his childhood and youth, eschewing the subject in his innumerable letters and changing facts in his autobiographical texts. The paradox is that this

made his work even more autobiographical, introspective and past-oriented – only, it did so in a contradictory way, with James apparently denying his past but at the same time, and with the same gesture, reinforcing its significance. As James repressed some of his memories, or at least did not want to have them exposed, they later resurfaced in a deformed and disfigured shape, appearing to the writer as terrifying, dim and ghostly presences. Having said this, we have to add that the novelist's confrontation with his past had a liberating, and even redeeming, value. As in James's prophetic notebook entry that I quoted at the beginning, once you break open the door behind which an alien presence seems to be lurking, the trouble disappears. The writer's American shadowy *Doppelgänger* needed to be released as well. His gaze is felt everywhere in *The American Scene*. After all, though, this is a mild and forgiving gaze.

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SUMMARY

Forms of Nostalgia in Henry James's "The American Scene"

Henry James was not a sentimental writer. However, in his later books we can find traces of repressed emotions and melancholy. One of the most intriguing literary documents showing the nostalgic strain in James is his collection *The American Scene* (1907), a record of the novelist's return to the USA after a twenty-years-old absence. It contains various manifestations of James's nostalgia – for example, his memories of New York and his melancholic recollections of the places connected with his youth. Also, it shows James's convoluted rhetoric of memory as a space of repression and displacement as well as his unwillingness to address these issues in a direct fashion.

KEYWORDS

Henry James, memory, nostalgia, melancholy

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OPENING THE DOOR OF THE HAUNTED HOUSE: AN INQUIRY OF THE NOSTALGIC EXPERIENCE

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"Forget the staircase. It's all about yourself."
(Sakharov 1989)

Introduction

Our knowledge is a complex mixture of various experiences heard, read, lived or imagined. As a person marks their own experiences with their encounters with material objects, persons, smells and sounds, memory gets grounded and marked with them as well. Following encounters with the markers bring back the memories associated with them. These markers, as Trubina demonstrates in more details, being inevitably shared with

others, make "personal memories a part of the social working of memory, and turn the person to a member of a certain memory community" (Trubina 2011: 27). Yet, as Trubina argued, it is an individual who remembers. This thought makes me turn primarily to the individual experiences of nostalgia as opposed to nostalgia as a collective phenomenon or a tool of mass manipulation.

For this purpose, I rely on the narrative inquiry method as a form of preserving and passing one's memory and through that making sense of one's own reality (Clandinin 2013). The departure point for my analysis combined autoethnography (Chang 2009; Denzin 2014) and fiction writing (Leavy 2013), as there are multiple elements in the data that resonate with my personal experience, all of which I bring together for my interpretations. The article explores the function of nostalgia employing interpretative analysis of the personal short stories, mainly *The Urbanisation*, selected personal journal entries and blog entries of a woman traveller and immigrant to Colombia. I also used semi-structured interviews with other female immigrants in Colombia put in the context of cultural, psychological and philosophical studies of nostalgia (Boym 2001; Casey 1987; Davis 1979) that I discussed in more details elsewhere (Golovátina -Mora 2016), memory and borderlands identity (Anzaldúa 1987), various literary and cinematic works on memory.

The Haunted House of the Mind

A house and home have a significant part in the human imaginary. First, a person would always search for a shelter and long for a secure place. Such place would become an association for the sense of belonging, Selfness, and wholeness. A house is an archetypal image: its parts may signify different levels of recognition of Self while a stairway often signifies a search of one's path and altogether exploration of one's personality (Jung 2003: Ch. VII).

Apart from that, memory itself with its complex relations between the individual and the collective can be compared to a house. A house is both private and shared with other living beings, objects and emotions. It is both a shelter (a place to enter and hide) and a place to go out from to the outer world. It is structured and to an extent organized as it always has a certain form and yet it represents an accumulation of the material and spiritual that may be in the chaotic state. Therefore, the house would always present both well-known and the unknown to be discovered. It is a unity in itself and yet a complex compound entity. Together with memory or a personality the house can be compared to a kaleidoscope – a device that combines a chance with well thought organization, the single whole and the compound structure. Even the etymology of the

word kaleidoscope reflects the nature of the memory: exploration of the beautiful shapes (of Self) or random thoughts that under certain perspective show its richness and beauty.

Another interesting analogy that was brought up by one of my interviewees is a Rubik's Cube. The interviewee used this analogy to describe new experience and life in a new place as it must be: "…not the series of disappointments but a Rubik's Cube that you find intriguing to collect. At first, you may like the system of the orange colour, and then you may decide to change it to white or green, but nonetheless you remain happy with the entire system." Developing the metaphor, I can define memory as an intellectual time consuming game of bringing together pieces that may or may not come together depending on the desire, skill and dedication of the involved player. The system consists of both the Rubik's Cube itself *and* the player.

Memories, perhaps for their spontaneous, sometimes random and persistent appearance, are often described as haunting. While the examples are quite abundant, confession of cutter Alan in *The Final Cut* (Naim 2004) would be a good illustration: "Then you know what it's like to be haunted. One memory… one single incident has made me who I am. It won't leave me be...". It is one's Self who really haunts the house, while memories only provide hints and reminders and pose the burning questions.

Memory, according to Trubina (2011: 25-27), unites cognitive and normative dimensions. This would always turn memory to a haunted house and haunting phantasms themselves and nostalgia to a cognitive and moral mechanism of securing the interest in the memory. As Colombian writer Rosero concluded in his short story "La Casa" ("A House"): "I guess it is impossible to escape my own tyranny for good as I am also inside myself" (2013: 53). If there is no escape from one's memory and from one's Self, what can ease the suffering? Immersing in the house and exploring it with acknowledgment and curiosity would allow one to move freely in, out, over and around it: "Go slowly through the house. Be polite, introduce yourself, so it can introduce itself to you." (Wells 2003).

Home, Belonging and Borderlands

Boym (2001) defines nostalgia as a shared with all human-being longing for sharing one's intimacy. It makes it a painful experience, which is reflected in the etymology of the word: a painful comeback. It is paradoxical and somewhat masochist, as blogger Vizovskaia described her nostalgia (2014). A person, a community or a culture are never static but develop as long as they live. Travelling and border-crossing are in the nature of the mind and identity of any person and not necessarily of an immigrant (Anzaldúa 1987). Yet for physiological, psychological and

cognitive reasons, limitation is also part of the nature. Therefore, longing for the new frontiers would always come together with longing for home and create, so, a feeling of dissatisfaction and unease.

Longing for sharing coincides with the definition of home provided by Hedetoft and Hjort: "Where we belong, territorially, existentially, and culturally, where own community is… where we can identify our roots, and where we long to return to… a significant determinant of identity, that elusive but still real psychological state of being in sync with oneself under given external circumstances." (2002: vii). Understood like that, longing for home is, then, an expression of human need for love and belonging (Maslow 1954). Russian poet Grebenschikov, for instance, defined love as "a method of coming back home." (1984b).

It is never an actual place, but rather a memory community (Trubina 2011). While the chances of finding home at one's birth place may be better, finding home would be always a frustrating process taking into account a complex, layered (Nussbaum 1994) or a *mestiza* (Anzaldúa 1987) nature of the individual and even collective identity. Sharing will be always a problem as one's home if found will not be home for another person.

When I asked my interviewees to what exactly they ever felt nostalgic, they described similar feelings and objects of nostalgia. They were about home. While a particular place and country were described, home was more of a temporal-spatial and relational setting. Objects of their nostalgia were their personal experiences, childhood and youth, freedom of unmarried life and people – family and friends. Overall, they were everything that the new environment lacked. I share this emotion and still struggle answering the question that people often ask me in Colombia, if I miss my homeland. The answer should be a long and complicated life story, a story of relations, joys and worries.

> It is good here. There are seasons, and the beauty of my city sparkles with different colours in different seasons. Here is my youth, my childhood, my stories, my experience, my mistakes, my festivities, my lessons. Here a lot is known and almost everything is clear. The city has its soul and I am part of it. …The fairy-tales we grew up with, the songs we listened to, beer we drank, lessons we learnt, situations we lived through – all of them are ours. And there they are different. This does not allow me to come closer to them. I understand that people that I know here won't be there. But I do not need all that to be of the other kind,

the blogger wrote in her post after visiting her hometown a year after moving to Colombia (Vizovskaia 2015). Trying to understand why I do not feel at home around the local people I came to realise that they simply are not my family or my friends. It may sound ridiculous, but as we can see, the experience is shared and confirms Boym's statement that nostalgia "goes beyond individual psychology." (2001: xv).

The memory community implies borders and a certain exclusion: as for example in the personal short story The Urbanisation, I describe it as a fairy settlement separated from the people's world. A couple of travellers I interviewed told me that the thing they missed most in their long travels is not being around their friends – people whom you do not need to explain your jokes to, your sayings or your word choice. Yet, they confirmed they do not mean their compatriots altogether: "When it happens that I meet someone, let's say an American, who makes the same type of jokes as I do, I just want to hug him." Being in a country different from one's "native" place does not automatically mean lack of understanding. One interviewee told me she does not have nostalgia but just occasional associations or memory flashes. New acquaintances, experiences and memories replace the old ones.

Nostalgia: A Denial, a Reappraisal or a Critical Affirmation?

Inability to comprehend one's own Self right away in all its totality or know completely another person's mind, cultural clashes and complex and paradoxical nature of memory and nostalgia itself make nostalgia a self-nourishing phenomenon. That life is unsatisfying is a common cliché one can find in popular culture (Allen 2011), scholarship (Tuan 1998) or in everyday talks, as several of my interviewees pointed it out. Is there any escape from nostalgia then? First, we need to clarify once again what an escape is. As I discussed elsewhere (Golovátina-Mora 2014), everything would depend on the outcome of the escape: one can get lost and never recover or one can use an escape as a form of therapy and as a source of deeper knowledge of oneself and the world around.

Is nostalgia a "denial of the painful present" as Paul declared in Midnight in Paris (Allen 2011)? In a way, yes. It is a product of the lost control, speed of changes and the changes themselves as various authors defined it (Boym 2001; Davis 1979). It is a reaction to all above -mentioned dissatisfactions but it is human as memory or emotions. The film Midnight in Paris (Allen 2011) is dedicated to nostalgia. Two characters, Gil and Adriana, dissatisfied with their presents, personify two opposite ways of dealing with nostalgia. Adriana happily stays in her Golden Age – La Belle Époque while Gil comes to realisation that "the present is always going to seem unsatisfying because life itself is unsatisfying… it's my job as a writer to try and come up with reasons why despite life being tragic and unsatisfying, it's still worth it." (Ibid.). They both have courage to immerse in the past. But Gil critically and thoughtfully revises it while enjoying it, uses it to learn more about himself, people and places around him and employs the acquired

knowledge to improve his present work and life. He does not ignore nor praises it blindly but cooperates with the past as with his equal. His initial affection to the past served as a stimulus to maintain his curiosity and interest in it. "Sometimes you have to travel back in time, skirting the obstacles, in order to love someone," Mayes wrote. (2015: 277).

Blogger Vizovskaia, who in a personal interview confessed that all her posts are about nostalgia, writes in one of her posts: "Words 'homeland' and 'home' are not meaningless for me, but I had to go far away to understand it." (Vizovskaia 2015). In her earlier post, describing her last days at home before her moving to Colombia, Vizovskaia wrote: "The same way as I was soaking images around me in with every cell of my body in my travelling before, I was trying to remember images of my dear home". (2014). The women I interviewed developed a certain affection for their homeland as a response to uncertainties, commitments they did not experience before, lack of the usual and well known, but what appeared to be especially important was the absence of the memory community that they felt separated from with their emigration. In other words, nostalgia was triggered by abrupt changes and by the lost control over the events. As experienced travellers, nevertheless, who always appreciated changes and novelty and had courage to weather them they understand that changes are inevitable and may be good and that travelling to a place is different from living there. They immerse in their nostalgic experience and learn more about their past by revisiting it and, so, by revisiting themselves. The past with its imperfectness is accepted as part of oneself: "What a fool sage said that creating ties is bad? Maybe it is. But how can one live without them? It means I am made of flesh and blood if I can feel them so strongly. Moreover, I felt I do not want to break them." (Vizovskaia 2014).

Comparing their past experiences with their absence in present they discover what they like and why, what is good and why exactly so. All the responses I got were quite elaborated with a lot of interest in the question itself. Answers were similar in their structure: "I always thought I do not like x, now I dream about it." As one interviewee told me: "I never liked the way my grandfather talked with all the proverbs and the quotes from the movies and TV programs. I noticed now I sound like my grandpa." This formula presents a revision of the norms and values the interviewees learnt somewhere before: "I hated cold," "I loved the sun," "I thought I would never put that artisan shawl on," "I valued smiles" to name a few.

Contesting these norms, they realise their relativity and start appreciating the beauty of any imperfection. During my last trip to my hometown in winter, I noticed how beautiful the mud is: snow on the road had different shades of grey and traces of the tyres had different patterns. All together they made mud look like laces on display in a fabric store. Boym (2001) described her enjoyment with mineral-water during her visit from emigration. She noted that everyone

including herself hated that brand for its terrible taste when she lived in the Soviet Union. Another example could be the windy rain, which several interviewees mentioned, which I can relate to myself and to which I even dedicated my earliest stories to (Of Golden Fairy). Rainy evenings that in such tropical country as Colombia are considered cold bring memories of the city transport stops where you could wait long enough to get cold. Cold or fresh wind for a moment takes one's breath away and makes one feel lonely and long for one's cosy apartment and tea and at the same time, as unsatisfied north wind in the movie Chocolat (Hallström 2000), feel unity with freedom and infinity of the elements.

Being outside of home my interviewees turned to tourists in their home, which provoked fits of nostalgia and yet allowed them to look from a different perspective at their home. Vizovskaia describes nostalgic experiences as tranquil happiness (2013) or happy sadness (2014), as it helps to explore different sides of one's Self, emotions and thoughts one can experience or the life one can build.

This creates nostalgia to memory itself as to a brain stimulating creative process:

> I do not want to forget all that, I do not want to forget anything at all! Fortunately, I have a good memory, but sometimes I am horrified I can forget some story, a detail from my life. This would be a disaster. Because my life will be incomplete without any of such story or to be more precise without a memory of it. I am horrified and therefore I try to do everything possible to preserve it in my memory or on paper… A photo can remind you about places and people, but it is more difficult and more important to remember emotions, worries or passions provoked by a certain moment … If only I could cast in stone of my memory those moments, meetings, songs, sights, letters, locations, emotions, beliefs in myself. In stone! Then my childhood, adolescence and youth, my joys and hopes will remain with me forever. (Vizovskaia 2014).

Inability to keep memory forever causes nostalgia. But if it stays forever it turns into that unsatisfying present: "Would we be so happy about the sun and its warmness if it was always with us?" (Vizovskaia 2014). Partial and imperfect solutions that this author, other interviewees and myself suggest are to write, take photos, talk about them, create a replacement of the memory community with those who share your way of thinking, leave the place for good, go somewhere else to satisfy, for example, the need for seasons, start cooking home food, pursue new and old dreams or revisit one's own childhood with one's own children.

Opening the Door

After moving to the environment in many aspects quite different from the one I was used to, I started experiencing spontaneous backlashes of memories, some of which I thought were long

forgotten. While being generally happy, they produced melancholic and nostalgic feelings that caused an increasing depression. Its melancholic nature, as I can better see now after analysing the interviews and my own experience, is the result of the lack of the memory community where I would be understood almost unconditionally. The same way as my interviewees, I had to embrace the memory and immerse in it. To create a correspondence between those inner backlashes and the environment, in other words, re-establish the material anchors that memory and nostalgia require (Boym 2001; Trubina 2011), I act out certain memorial moments, ask more questions about lives or the past of my friends and family, paint and write.

When time allows, I cook. It is not necessarily my grandma's food that on everyday basis could be ethnically neutral. Nor is it necessarily the taste known since my childhood. I make certain dishes for particular memories they evoke: a proud feeling of happiness of helping grandparents and a desire to hear again their voices with making *pelmeni* or to relive a moment of coming back from school with the smell of *golubtsy* in the oven or simply of that childish joy about coming meal time.

I listen to the songs and read literature I actually never have read before because of the certain associations that I thought will help me to recreate my memories at best. Sincere simple melody and thoughtful and romantic lyrics of the 1960s bard poetry, for instance, created images of wandering around in the forests and mountains or of sitting in among friends and singing songs around the bonfire. Interestingly, I cannot say I had a real experience of such wandering even though we spent a lot of time outside the city with my parents, nor was it the experience I dreamt to have. As Grebenschikov (1984a) wrote: "I hear the sound of waves that are not even there." It was a combined image based on the movies, personal life experience, stories of good friends and parents. The songs were to help me to become part of the memory and of the soul of a time or a place that I cared for.

Nostalgia became a source of inspiration that unearthed new material for creativity. It slightly changed the area of my academic endeavours and over all helped me to look differently at certain cultural and historical phenomena, pop-culture and art while deepening knowledge about myself. While quite a few stories I wrote were inspired by nostalgic experience, I want to share some excerpts from one story that grew out of the overwhelming memory flashbacks.

Clouding up for several days they finally exploded in a story that was written in an hour as a stream of thought. It brought me an emotional relief but did not make the flashbacks disappear. On the contrary, it urged me to explore my memory and past as well as why I think much about it. It was a happy painful (masochist) experience.

> For some days now, I feel the scent of the warm pine trees as soon as I start thinking about it. It may be though the other way around: I think about it when I feel it. It is warm and it is expanding. I can almost see it, see how it climbs up the trunk of the pine tree joining other smells of the forest. It flows into the warm red pine needles on the grounds that prick your bare feet while you walk on them kicking small pine cones and stumbling over the roots from time to time. Clearly, they crawled out to look at this rising red golden scent. I see the field, it is very hot – it is hotter there than on this walk, and the bright blue sky with almost no clouds. I walk through the forest, appearing simultaneously in three forests. This one is the first. …

The story is an imaginary walk in three different forests at the same time, which reflects emergence of the images: suddenly without any obvious source that could have caused them or as a long chain reaction well described by Vizovskaia (2014): "…I heard a tune, felt a scent; memories actualised and a sweet tide rolled…" All the images are dreamlike modifications of the real experiences built on the emotions, sounds and scents as a kaleidoscope that the story itself tries to organise in the patterns of a Rubik's Cube.

The story that I left as a diary entry without any edition is a search of one's place, home and the lost community. The title Urbanisation, which occurred on whims right after I finished my writing, seemed appropriate in the context of a common definition of a city as fragmentation of the space and community and as isolation of an individual (Borsdorf and Hidalgo 2009; Simmel 1903). The imagined world stipulated by that "sweet tide" of happy memories of home creates the environment that is difficult to leave.

> Suddenly I am in the different forest. It is quiet and freshly humid. Red leafage covers the entire slope. This slope is like a wall, almost vertical, strengthened with the dark tree trunks. These sudden changes of the forests look suspicious. They are too sudden even for our world of emotions. I can't understand completely if I am still there or somewhere else, and I am afraid they are just flashes of memory not even connected to make one story. It means I am human after all.

Waking up from the trance-like experience of the sweet dream that was the result of accumulated intense memory flashes, I started thinking about what it was and why. The scent of pines was a marker of nostalgia that served as a guide or Ariadne's thread to help to get in and out of the past.

> The smell of the pines is dissolved by the heated stone and asphalt that comes from the open balcony. Shouting of a street vendor breaks in pieces the last mosquito buzzing, delicate tinkling of droplets on the sisters' beads, crackling sounds of the pine needles and of the wings of dragonflies. There aren't even pines around here - they are miles and miles away. What had ever happened?

Conclusions

Nostalgia continues to be overlooked by the formal argument based on positivist rational thought as a negative or at least a useless activity. Yet, as any product of human mind nostalgia is relative. Its outcomes depend a lot on the perspective one takes and on the application. It may create a rosy mist that will not allow one to see one's present problems anymore but not necessarily to disappear in sweet oblivion, it may also mean to focus on what is good and take it as a motivation to explore more of one's life and relations. Like that nostalgia is a memory mechanism that provides more options for one's decision making and so provides conditions for critical revision of one's experience both shared and individual.

Nostalgia helps to create not a sense but the actual continuity in space, time and relations and bring together forgotten pieces of one's past in order to make more sense of one's present existence and, so, give hope for the future. In other words, nostalgia is an irreplaceable mechanism of securing fulfilment of all levels of needs in Maslow's hierarchy to be able to grow into a happy (self-actualised) person. The key to make it work is in what we do with nostalgia. Opening the door to the haunted house might do some good after all.

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SUMMARY

Opening the Door of the Haunted House: An Inquiry of the Nostalgic Experience

The article explores nostalgia as a cognitive and affective mechanism of memory aimed at the restoration and healing of one's Self and developing knowledge of one's Self by means of involving oneself in the individual or collective past. Employing method of narrative inquiry with the elements of autobiographical inquiry and fiction writing, the article focuses primarily on the

individual nostalgic experience unlike nostalgia as a collective phenomenon. The article relies on interpretative analysis of the author's short stories, selected diary entries, interviews with female immigrants in Colombia and travel blog entries in the broader context of the sociological, psychological and philosophical studies of memory and nostalgia and literary and cinematic works that explore the relevant topics.

KEYWORDS

Emigration, memory, narrative inquiry, Self-knowledge, Soviet childhood

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ESSAYS

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FACES OF NOSTALGIA. RESTORATIVE AND REFLECTIVE NOSTALGIA IN THE FINE ARTS

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Introduction

Studies about nostalgia have multiplied around the turn of the Millenium. In her enlightening volume dedicated to nostalgia, Svetlana Boym claims: 'The twentieth century began with utopia and ended with nostalgia' (Boym 2007: 7). Special moments in time – like this turn of the Millennium – have a way of making grounds for a deeper appreciation of the past and the future. Thus, they are highly convenient for the formation of nostalgia.

Svetlana Boym operates with the most concise and simple definition of nostalgia: „a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed" (Boym 2007: 7).

Nostalgia is a deceptive concept in multiple ways. Even though it carries a significant spatial element in its denomination (the home – *nostos*), it is essentially a modus of temporality:

a way to tackle time. As a tool to approach time nostalgia prima facie relates to the past, but its deeper layers speak of the present and prepare the agent for the future.

Nostalgia is often treated as the crippling insistence to the values that would become obsolete in the name of progress. But nostalgia is not necessarily the enemy of progress. Svetlana Boym shows that progress and nostalgia are both the products of modern sensibility are both tied to modernism, moreover – they are tied to each other: 'Nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress' (Boym 2001: 10).

The present of nostalgia

In the following pages I will not primarily address the psychological aspects of nostalgia, but the „historical emotion", which according to Svetlana Boym is a „symptom of our age" (Boym 2007: 8). The newer research mostly tied nostalgia to the collective memory, to its social or cultural structures.

The image of the past nostalgia uses to operate with is not an objective complete one, but a subjective pick, a selective past, in which some aspects are presented in entirety, while others are carefully hidden. The selection obviously follows some values: whatever we remember of the shared past and everything we want to get back from it is determined primarily by our present values and aims, not by the past. In this sense 'nostalgia may be an attempt to find some higher meaning in our existence' (Wilson 2005: 26). Thus, nostalgia becomes an important means and mechanism for processing the past for the future in a creative way.

The situation of nostalgia has become particularly intriguing nowadays, when it seems like the grounds for a culturally (or historically) perceived nostalgia are non-existent: firstly due to the collapse of the great narratives (Lyotard 1984), secondly because of the synchronicity of cyber -space.

Nostalgia is actually the reversely directed form of utopia and both are possible only in the frame of historical consciousness. As soon as the belief in the great narratives ceases to exist, the desire for a time we no longer believe in becomes impossible. Nostalgia, however, is not a method to logically confront the past, but a partly cognitive, partly affective way of processing it. Thus, it becomes clear why the task of opening doors for the new nostalgic vague fell upon the postmodernism by giving the opportunity to reevaluate different "pasts" with regional significance.

The digital revolution defining the turn of the century brought significant changes which could also affect the nostalgic perspective. The digital world is characterized by synchronicity, as

Svetlana Boym claims: 'computer memory (…) has no patina of history' (Boym 2001: 347). It's interesting to remark that the computer has a memory, but its memory is not temporal but quantitative and spatial: a quantity of information which is accessible to us in a synchronous way, not in a historical sequence. In the digital world every information is present virtually, they are right in front of us, we do not have to dig back for them into the past. In our "global village" (McLuhan 1962) we are all immediate neighbors, and we can take a look at our backyards from anywhere using our computers. It seems like there is no reason in desiring a locus, which was once our home (since it is there at out fingertips, just a click away), or a passed time (which is not past anymore, it appears on our monitors not as past but as present). Everything we could desire in space or time is right in front of us – but there is still space for nostalgia: we are nostalgic about the lost indirectness, a connection unmediated by computers, with other people or nature.

The internet brought nostalgia to a whole new level. We don't have to rely on our own memory or own desires anymore: thanks to audio and video reproductions nostalgia 'can be fed forever by quick access to an infinitely recyclable past' (Hutcheon 2000). The proximity of the object of nostalgia aggregates a problem that was already present: the prefabricated conserved nostalgia, the always ready and handy nostalgia which feeds off of the past (be that historical, religious, ethnic etc.). If the nostalgic object of desire can be downloaded from the internet, we face the danger of nostalgia becoming something other than a direct and creative intermediary between us and our personal past, but something that is trying to trick us into desiring a prefabricated, alas, manipulated past.

General-nostalgia is even more topical, given that our globalized society has made it possible for a great number of people – especially after the '90s – to leave their homes, their native land, and migration, especially in Europe, has become a general phenomenon. People left their homes behind in masses, they tried to fit in and adapt into new environments, while they still carried the desire for the heat of their good ol' home, for the hearth of Hestia. The globalized economy, on the other hand, has brought the unknown possibility, and sometimes even pressure, of mobility and travel for a tremendous amount of people. The „home", as a house, a residence, where one would live for decades or, more commonly, for a lifetime, is becoming a rarity, and these new circumstances make the concept of the „home" more and more problematic. Contemporary nostalgia is not simply a desire for an existent, concrete home, but more for the abstract "homeliness".

Nostalgia presupposes a comparison between an overrated past and an underachieving present. Thus, nostalgic representation beckons those forms of art, which make possible the

comparison of moments in time and the direct expression of emotions – primarily literature, music, the theatre and film.

In the following I will explore a territory where nostalgic representation is more problematic: the fine arts.

Images of nostalgia

The use of the word „nostalgic" in the context of shared visual representation is only possible within the frame of a collectively owned context. In the following I will narrow down the investigation to representations with a collective relevance, based on shared experience. Starting from these examples I will attempt to demonstrate the difference between restorative and reflective nostalgia, the way Svetlana Boym defines them (2007).

▪ The restorative face of nostalgia

Restorative nostalgia does not simply represent a desire for the past, but presumes a wish to experience it in the same form, to recreate it the way it "used to be": 'restorative nostalgia stresses *nostos* (home) and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home' (Boym 2007: 13). In this case we can observe the moment of idealization: the past appears to be the golden age, a "prelapsarian" state, characterized by such harmony, peace, happiness, maybe even virtuousness, which far exceeds the current circumstances, but would be pleasant to achieve once again. Restorative nostalgia is not conscious of the idealizing process, it identifies naively (or manipulatively) this deserted image with a realistic historic condition; it doesn't see itself as nostalgia, but 'rather as truth and tradition' (Boym 2007: 13). Restorative nostalgia is often combative, often hides a feeling of superiority, due to the comparison it presents in favor of the more valuable past against the inadequate present. This form of nostalgia can truly be seen as an enemy of progress – in the sense that it interprets progress as a distancing from the desired past, which entails a form of apparently necessary devaluation.

We can see restorative nostalgia lifted to the level of cultural policy in today's Hungary. The Hungarian artistic scenery is dominated by the right-leaning Hungarian Academy of Arts, while some alternative professional organizations exist. The Hungarian Academy of Arts, or MMA (Magyar Művészeti Akadémia) is a privileged institution, mentioned even in the 2012 Constitution (while its professional counterpart is not), it has power to decide about

governmental funds, its workspace is allocated by the government and its members receive an annual allocation from governmental funds. The new cultural and artistic course is dictated by the president of the MMA, György Fekete and by Imre Kerényi, the Prime Minister's Cultural Commissioner. Their statements and the artistic forms they promote suggest an officially endorsed restorative nostalgic vague, with the following characteristics:

A. The selective use of the past

Highlighted moments of the recaptured past are the Hungarian Settlement (the 10th century) and the Horthy-era (1919-1944). The Settlement of the Hungarians was the era of the heroic beginning: the seven Hungarian leaders' bloodpact symbolizes the unity of the Hungarians, and their power to shape the course of history. One of the main symbols of this era is the Turul (a mythic bird). Sculptures of the Turul bird were common around 1900, when seven monuments depicting it were raised on seven spots of the country. In Budapest there are currently thirteen sculptures of the bird, and there are around 200 spread all around Hungary. Many of them were built or restored in the past few years (1990 – Szikszo, 1992 – Tatabanya, 2005 – Budapest, 2008 - Munkacs). The recaptured past can be easily formed according to imagination, because documentation regarding the relevant era is quite scarce.

The latest expression of the Settlement-nostalgia is represented by the Historical Hungary Memento-Parc (2015), which was realized in a township with approximately 700 residents, where the folk-artist Pál Czupp's statue of the seven settler chiefs together with two mythic forefathers Árpád and Attila is carved in wood. The event might not even have been newsworthy if the inauguration was not held by the President of the Parliament. In case we were unsure whether this counts as restorative nostalgia or not, we can be reassured by the words of the President of Parliament during the opening of the park: 'Within the borders of the European Union and Hungary there is a huge battle between European recollection and the powers of forgetting' and 'it is a courageous act to build a memento-park as a way of fighting the zeitgeist of obliviscence'[1].

The Horthy-era nostalgia mostly refers to the period of the Second World War when Hungary's territories lost as a consequence of the Treaty of Trianon were given back with the help of Nazi Germany. This is a great example of the selective aspects of restorative nostalgia: there is no mention of an allegiance to the Nazis, the persecution of the Jewish minorities, the soldiers' lives that were lost in this period; the process concentrates discriminately on the recovery of Transylvania.

[1] http://www.hirado.hu/2015/06/07/tortenelmi-magyarorszag-emlekpark-ketpon/

One of the more controversial works about the Horthy-era is the Monument for the Victims of the German Occupation raised in Budapest. It suggests less commemoration for the individual victims of the period, but alludes to the idea that the country was actually the real victim – the atrocities, like the persecution of the Jews, were supposedly only committed by the German occupants, and the responsibility is theirs and not the Hungarians'. In contrast with other nations – for example the Germans – in this case there is no confrontation with the past in any symbolic way, nor do they try to take responsibility for the events.

B. The rejection of modernity and the abdication of progress and experiment

The Hungarian official restorative nostalgia attempts to skip the socialist era of the past, however, it was exactly this period that produced modernist experiments (e.g. abstraction or conceptualism) in an attempt to counter socialist realism. Current cultural discourse handles the question similarly to a conspiracy theory: the „mafia" of the modernist artworld (Párkányi Raab 2014) kept talented artists from entering the field for decades, while being unable to present any kind of relevant results. Péter Párkányi Raab, one of the favorite artists of the current system (the creator of the „Monument for The Victims of The German Occupation") had the following harsh words about the followers of modernism: 'theirs is the art of destruction, of nothing' (Párkányi Raab 2014). He believes that there are two separate camps in the artworld: „artists, who create objects" and those, who deny the raison d'étre of objects of art – and there is an uneven battle between the "creators of objects" and the "producers of ideology". As the closing argument for his case, he demands the restoration of a situation which is the continuation of the past: 'Let those artists back into the exhibition spaces, who believe in the art of the past two or three millennia, and those who would proceed by applying the values of the great past eras of art history, building upon these and not denying them' (Párkányi Raab 2014).

C. In form, there is a return to figurativity and to a grandiose historic style

The politically supported restorative nostalgia succeeds to implement Hegel's Aufhebung in a very proper way: it returns to the past by selectively wiping out modernistic parts of the more immediate past (the second part of the 20th century), and continues with the same figurativity („creation of objects"), which resembles socialist realism in its form and sometimes even through its patriotic theme. Endeavours open to novelty and worldly ideas are regarded with suspicion, while the local, nostalgic projects are praised and supported widely.

The same principles govern the Mucsarnok (Kunsthalle) since 2014 – the director of the institute, György Szegő, announced that the "so called" contemporary art is really a soap bubble that is about to burst – the institution to be led by him would distance itself from art forms defined by „technical mediums" with a past of only 20-25 years. He would concentrate on traditional art forms – especially focusing on painting – that have a longer, 8-10 thousand years' of tradition behind them.

Raising restorative nostalgia to the level of cultural politics is dangerous because it does not turn back to an existing or imagined past in a reflective way and treats the recent past with overall negativity and suspicion – thus, it becomes doubtful whether it could enrich the present. Since restorative nostalgia is an oversimplifying attitude, the artworks are artistically questionable.

- **Reflective nostalgia in the fine arts**

Reflective nostalgia recalls the past as well, but the desire for the past is followed by a reflexive, critical attitude. Reflective nostalgia is aware of the selective and transformative mechanisms of memory (including collective memory) and distrusts the image it produces of the past. The idealizing moment is not present in reflective nostalgia, it is much more an infusion of desire with irony and humor. According to Linda Hutcheon (2000) 'Our contemporary culture is indeed nostalgic; some parts of it–postmodern parts—are aware of the risks and lures of nostalgia, and seek to expose those through irony'. The reflective nostalgia is aware of the irreversibility of time – the past cannot be brought back. Time acts as a hopeless Heracleitic stream, which makes restauration a failing endeavor.

The subject-matter of reflective nostalgia is not the glorified historic past, but the individual resonances of the past, and the passing itself: 'reflective nostalgia is concerned with historical and individual time, with the irrevocability of the past and human finitude' (Boym 2007: 15).

The descriptions above clarify that reflective nostalgia is a more conscious, complex attitude toward the past, and in the same time, it suggests a more successful interpretation of the past as a resource. Some of the artpieces representing the past can be evaluated specifically because of this complexity.

To illustrate reflective nostalgia I have selected works from two artists, who have been born and raised in post-socialist countries: Ai Wei Wei and Mircea Cantor.

The Chinese Ai Wei Wei was incarcerated in his home country in 2011, after which he had his passport recalled – as a consequence he can only exhibit his pieces all over the world by giving orders through Skype. Though he has been famous for years, his first exhibition in Beijing

was in 2015, where he was invited by two galleries. The exhibition named Ai Wei Wei is the reconstruction of an ancient family hall, a wooden building in the two galleries. He bought the wooden building from an art dealer, he deconstructed it, numbered the more than 1500 pieces and exposed the two halves of the re-constructed building in the two galleries: a half of the whole piece each. There might probably be no better embodiment of reflective nostalgia than this piece, which represents the desire to put back together something united in the past, while knowing that the rupture cannot be mended. The piece has historic and personal roots, as well. The building was originally located near the birth town of Ai Wei Wei's father, tying the piece to the artist's family in a very personal way. He used an ancient construction technique, completing the missing pieces and repainting some elements. The reconstruction strives for complete exactity, while staying perfectly contemporary: the past is present in all the cracks on the pillars and wooden timbers, but the ready-made style painted ladder or the mirror surface "disturbed" by brushstrokes brings us back into the now. The patterns for the wooden pillars are made mostly of precisely wrought wood or stone, with only a few exceptions. One of these exceptions is a crystal cube, which, though a valuable resource, serves only foundational purposes for the wooden pillar – thus reversing the obvious and familiar order. One of the other pillars is placed on a box filled with excerptions from the book of 'The Twenty-Four Histories' – the official Chinese historiography. The idea of continuity is obvious; the present is founded on thousands of years of past – it is the intellectual processing, the cultural form of the same past itself. At the same time, the contents of the box are inaccessible – its contents are only mentioned in the inscription on the box, but we will never be able to read the stories because there was a building built on it. It is safe to guess that these inaccessible "true" historic facts are metaphors for the past which will never return.

Another complex meaning can be tied to the 10.000 spouts broken off from antique teapots, from Song to Qing dynasties. Big numbers often refer to the big population of China in Ai Wei Wei's works, and the teapots and the consumption of tea is very representative of the Eastern traditions. The idea of only using broken pieces in the installation suggests that tradition, the past and the past cultures can't be restored again. On the other hand, this installation is also seen as the metaphor for the selling off of cultural treasures (Qin 2015).

The whole installation questions the idea of 'totality' as a central principle in Chinese culture. The two halves exposed on the half-exhibitions in the two galleries makes the simultaneous appreciation impossible – this can be interpreted as a lost unity, the irreversibility of the rupture. All the broken spouts become imprinted onto your retina. The unity we crave can only be restored with the help of the viewers' imagination. The division into two parts is

a conscious rebellion against the idea of totality: 'That is the way to completely destroy the original feeling, because totality is the core idea of the Chinese culture' (Nelson 2015).

In a recent interview Ai Wei Wei distances himself from the standpoint of restorative nostalgia. His aim is : 'to be creative and use that [old culture], but at the same time not too much of it' (Nelson 2015), and this was achieved by a neither-nor state, the setting up of the impossible single unity.

Reflective nostalgia also gains voice in some works of Romanian artist, Mircea Cantor. One of his most interesting pieces is the Threshold Resigned, exhibited in 2012. The piece is a life-size wooden house Cantor saw in Maramures, where he was mesmerized by the talents of the traditional craftsmen and the fate of the houses: 'In Maramures I was impressed by the Romanian savoir faire, the woodworks. In reality these are moribund houses that are usually bought by foreigners and disassembled, making space for new palaces. This gives the title for my installation, Threshold Resigned. The dismemberment is stronger than the resisting force' – claimed the artist (Hermeziu 2012).

The house was carved by a local craftsman and is assembled similarly by local craftsmen in every location (in the Tuileries Gardens in Paris, in the marvel halls of the Casa Poporului in Bucharest, on the ground floor of an office-building in Cluj-Napoca). In a way, the house is always a ready-made, a part of Duchamp's heritage. What makes it truly interesting is the engraved rope-yarn, which is an aesthetically dominant motif and gives way for a multitude of interpretations: the house becomes a wrapped gift, but it could also symbolize the life-line in palm-reading, it could function as a belt that keeps one back. My personal interpretation was that is suggests the force necessary for the elevation, for the mobility of the house, which became engraved in the "flesh" of the house itself. The artist himself talks about the motif of the rope in the following way: 'The motif of the rope I used on the golden gate is reproduced on the wood churches of Maramures, but not only there, they were found in Bihor too, the county where I was born. The symbol is an allusion to some sort of a unity, solidarity and consolidation of a community.' (Hermeziu 2012). The wrapping of the house for the sake of moving it somewhere else is also explained by the artist: it's as if you threw a package out on the street (Pavel 2013: 4'40"). The rope-motif is nostalgic in itself, it relates to a childhood experience: he would follow the rope pattern on the local wooden church with his fingers, as if following an infinite circle. At the same time, the rope gains new meaning as well: 'the packing, the abandoned, the hidden, because things wrapped with a rope is always meant to hide something' (Ulmeanu 2015: 102).

Another characteristic is the missing roof – or rather the token of a roof with a few boards, joining in an empty triangle at the top of the building. The roof would be a necessary

element for our house-image consisting of the square and the triangle (triangle-roof). However, this is a moribund house, a no longer functional lodge, and this superfluous condition is symbolized by the lack of a roof.

Mircea Cantor does not only exhibit a traditional house as a ready-made, he recreates the atmosphere surrounding the house by reviving the Maramures cultural environment. In his „guestroom" he invites celebrities, for example chorister Ioan Opris, who, at the request of the artist, composed a psalm for the melody of a funeral song about the life and fate of the house; a photographer, who has been documenting the life of the village for twenty years; and a lady, who has introduced him to traditional Maramures folkweaves.

Cantor recalls a moment in the past, he raises a monument to the traditional talent of the Romanian craftsmen, while mobilizing a great number of contemporary associations. First of all, the 20th century ready-made conception is present – he does not pick out an everyday object of personal use from its context, but a house. As in the case of the ready-made, the title of the piece is relevant here as well: the Romanian translation for „resigned" can be deconstructed to mean „signed again". I am not certain whether this double-meaning was intended by the artist but on the side of the house we can find the name of the artist himself and the name of the craftsman (Ioan Codrea), too. This is how Mircea Cantor evokes another celebrated topic of the last half century: the questionability of authorship. On the other hand, by building a whole house in the garden of a palace, in a grandious marvel hall or the ground floor of an ultramodern office building – in other words: in completely unnatural surroundings – he raises the question of de-contextualization, he could also allude to the destructive effects of cultural consumerism, which are both very important topics in the discourse about art. I find this a great example for reflective nostalgia because the evident desire for an evocation of the past (and its evaluative conservation) meets a very conscious, clear and contemporary investigation.

Conclusions

It appears that nostalgia thrives in some periods, and ours is one of them.

The above presented examples were meant to illustrate the presence of the two types of nostalgia. The restorative nostalgia officially propagated in Hungary strives to repeat without criticizing a constructed past, while the reflective nostalgia of Ai Wei Wei and Mircea Cantor nurtures a more complex relationship towards the past. Because restorative nostalgia believes in a linear historical process and sees itself as the right path, it demands blind compliance and enthusiasm. Restorative nostalgia can be dangerous, since 'it tends to confuse the actual home

and the imaginary one' (Boym 2001: XVI). This restorative, uncritical nostalgia makes us relate emotionally to an ideal home, for which we are supposed to be ready to give up our critical attitude.

Reflective nostalgia does not suggest a universal cure, it requires more of a personal interpretation from the viewer, giving us the possibility to live the past in an emotional manner, while using this creatively in the future. It might be due to exactly this layered approach, that pieces depicting reflective nostalgia are more significant aesthetically and from the perspective of art history.

Nostalgia can be damaging and it can be useful. Since nostalgia is a determinative feature of our culture, differentiating between its forms, its analysis can be of great use to us. The unreflected nostalgia 'breeds monsters' (Boym 2001: XVI), but the reflective nostalgia can help us gather strength in a constructive way for the future, from the past.

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SUMMARY

Faces of Nostalgia. Restorative and Reflective Nostalgia in the Fine Arts

In the present article I use the terminology introduced by Svetlana Boym of restorative nostalgia and reflective nostalgia regarding works of contemporary fine art.

Restorative nostalgia implies an effort to revive the past – but without acknowledging that the desired and idealized past never existed, therefore it cannot be restored, either. I illustrate the application of this concept through the "new-academic" direction in today's contemporary Hungarian fine arts. The reflective nostalgia is aware of the idealizing momentum of the desired past, it reflects critically upon its own desires, and it highlights possibilities in the past regarding

the present – often playfully or with irony. I illustrate the latter through the works of the Chinese Ai Wei Wei and the Romanian Mircea Cantor. I argue that reflective nostalgia is not a fruitless burial into the past, but a resource for processing the passing of time in a creative manner.

KEYWORDS

Restorative nostalgia, reflective nostalgia, contemporary fine arts, Hungarian „new academism"

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ESSAYS

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NOSTALGIA AGAINST MELANCHOLY: ARTISTIC CORPOREAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ETERNAL RETURN AS A SOLUTION. A COMPARATIVE APPROACH TO THE WORK OF JON MIRANDE AND BALTHASAR KLOSSOWSKI[1]

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that 20th century human beings found in art a place in which to satiate their need of avoiding the melancholy that the idea of death and passage of concrete real time carry with them. In order to do so, I will approach the ideas of memory, melancholy and nostalgia from the point of view of art and anthropology.

Following Mircea Eliade's theories, I will show how, throughout history, by mixing memory and imagination, nostalgia has helped human beings to avoid the melancholy that the idea of death carries with it. I will then try to demonstrate that, even if during the 20th century this attitude of trying to abolish concrete real time that I will call "mythical behaviour" has no longer an hegemonic collective and homogeneous social dimension, it has still found its place in art. Finally, I will give different examples of artistic corporeal representations of the 20th century to illustrate my thesis. I will start with the examination of the National Socialists' cosmogonic view as reflected in their propaganda, probably the last collective popular artistic expression of "mythical behavior" in Western civilization, which had a great influence on many artists –such as the Parisian writer of Basque descent Jon Mirande. I will then compare artistic corporeal representations of pubescent girls in the work of Jon Mirande (1925-1972) and the Parisian painter of Polish descent Balthasar Klossowski (1908-2001). In both cases, there have been studies of their corporeal artistic representations of girls enterig puberty, especially those of Klossowski. My aim in this work, however, is to offer a new and different perspective on these representations.

Death and the passage of concrete real time as a source of melancholy

The Word 'melancholy' originated in Ancient Greece, where it was a scientific or medical term. Nowadays, it still has a scientific meaning, but it also has a place as a source of art or an artistic subject. On the basis of definitions in different dictionaries like the American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, –Ologies & -isms (2008) and the Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (2012), omitting those linked to medicine, I would define melancholy in the following terms: "Deep gloom or depression of long duration".

A human being may feel melancholic for many different reasons, but one stands out above all the others. As the anthropologists David Hicks and Margaret A. Gwinn explain in *Cultural Anthropology* (1995: 341):

> "Perhaps the greatest of all human misfortunes is death. Men and women may avoid other trials-sickness, accidents, social failures-for a long time, hoping their run of luck continues unabated, but their intellects oblige them to accept the inevitability of death. They know for certain that whether death befalls tomorrow or in 60 years' time, it is an inevitable part of life, so it may be this certainty that prompts humanity's endless speculation about what, if anything, follows death.
>
> Such universal interest suggests how earlier human beings might have come to imagine the existence of some kind of life after the death of the body, and why many contemporary people continue to believe in an afterlife. There is no evidence to suggest that modern-day people are ceasing to think about death and its possible aftermath, or that twentieth-century science is succeeding in explaining this mystery to their complete satisfaction. So human beings continue responding to what might almost be called a religious instinct. One way to interpret the universality of religion, therefore, is to view it as an attempt to deny the dismal possibility of our own permanent extinction."

Since the dawn of humanity, death and the passage of concrete real time have always been a major concern for human beings. Reacting to it in a constructive way, in order to avoid melancholy, they have developed different solutions which, taken together, consist of abolishing concrete real time. This is not a case of real solutions aimed at avoiding death and the passage of concrete real time, but rather about imaginative responses to the issue. Here is where nostalgia and memory appear, since they form an important part of these imaginative solutions.

Mythical behaviour: memory, nostalgia and imagination

David Hicks and Margaret A. Gwinn talk about a "religious instinct", yet one could say that religion is just one of the means developed by human beings in order to avoid the idea of death and the passage of concrete real time. In *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return* (1959) and *Myth and Reality* (1963)[2] Mircea Eliade talks about "mythical behaviour" as a tendency to abolish concrete real time which has its origin in archaic societies. To understand this idea it is necessary to take into account the meaning he gives to the idea of *myth* in *Myth and Reality*:

> "Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in a primordial Time, the fabled time of the "beginnings". In other words, myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence, be it the whole of reality, the Cosmos, or only a fragment of reality —an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, an institution. Myth, then, is always an account of a "creation"; it relates how something was produced, began to be. Myth tells only of that which really happened, which manifested itself completely. The actors in myths are Supernatural Beings. They are known primarily by what they did in the transcendent times of the "beginnings". (Eliade 1963: 5-6)

[2] In this work I will use the English translations for the references. In the case of quotes from works originally written in Basque, Spanish or French, the translations are mine.

According to Eliade in *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return,* the philosophy of archaic societies, based on an eternal return to idealized beginnings or *in illo tempore* (meaning the *chaos* and the cosmogonic act that follows it), repetition and archetypes, denied linear time by advocating a totally anti-historical attitude. He speaks about:

> "[…] archaic societies—societies which, although they are conscious of a certain form of "history", make every effort to disregard it. In studying these traditional societies, one characteristic has especially struck us: it is their revolt against concrete, historical time, their nostalgia for a periodical return to the mythical time of the beginning of things, to the "Great Time". (Eliade 1959:11)

By repetitions of archetypes and different rituals which updated the myth of the eternal return, archaic societies abolished concrete real time.

> "Differing in their formulas, all these instruments of regeneration tend toward the same end: to annul past time, to abolish history by a continuous return *in illo tempore*, by the repetition of the cosmogonic act." (Eliade 1959: 81)

That eternal return to an idealized *in illo tempore* of beginnings involves a mixture of memory and imagination apart from nostalgia, insofar as it is an idealized place which is located in the past memories built by imagination. As Eliade suggests, one might find this strategy childish, but it did help people to avoid falling into total despair or melancholy (Eliade 1959: 152). From the 17th century on, the idea of progress and linear time increased to the detriment of cyclical time. This abolition of concrete real time thus ceased to be a collective solution to avoiding that melancholic destructive attitude faced with death and the passage of concrete real time. However, as Eliade states, that does not mean that "mythical behaviour", the need to abolish concrete real time disappeared altogether:

> "We must wait until our own century to see the beginnings of certain new creations against this historical linearism and a certain revival of interest in the theory of cycles; so it is that, in political economy, we are witnessing the rehabilitation of the notions of cycle, fluctuation, periodic oscillation; that in philosophy the myth of eternal return is revivified by Nietzsche; or that, in the philosophy of history, a Spengler or a Toynbee concern themselves with the problem of periodicity." (Eliade, 1959:146)

Moreover, in his opinion it would not be surprising if, in the future, at a particular moment, and in order to survive, people returned to this anti-historical behaviour based on repetitions, archetypes and the idea of cyclical time. In fact, talking about his own time or era, Eliade states that even if they are not collective and homogeneous "some forms of mythical behaviour still survive in our day. This does not mean that they represent "survivals" of an archaic mentality. But certain aspects and functions of mythical thought are constituents of the human being" (Eliade 1959: 181-182).

In the 20th century it remained difficult for people to confront. One might then ask what kind of solutions where developed in order to abolish concrete real time and, thus, avoid the melancholy associated to the idea of death and the passage of concrete real time. As I will try to show, art has played an important role in offering human beings a place in which to update the nostalgic myth of the eternal return.

The myth of the eternal return as a corporeal artistic representation

"Mythical behaviour" and art have a direct relationship at different levels, two of which I am especially interested in:

1) The level of image: this refers to the direct representation of the myth of the eternal return, as often portrayed in 19th century romanticism, rebuilding the idealized *in illo tempore* of a person, country or humanity as a whole; in other words, rebuilding an idealized childhood.
2) The level of creation and reception: the time of creating and receiving an artistic work can be understood as another time, separated from concrete real time and moments which make creators and recipients part of a new creation, of the return to an *in illo tempore*. When Eliade refers to this connection between "mythical behavior" and art in *Myth and Reality* he focuses on literature:

> "But it is especially the "escape from Time" brought about by reading—most effectively by novel Reading —that connects the function of literature with that of mythologies. To be sure, the time that one "lives" when reading a novel is not the time that a member of a traditional society recovers when he listens to a myth. But in both cases alike, one "escapes" from historical and personal time and is submerged in a time that is fabulous and trans-historical. (…)" (Eliade 1963: 192-193)

In my opinion, every kind of art form offers human beings the opportunity to develop their "mythical behavior" or that need to avoid the idea of death and passage of concrete real time. Moreover, while Eliade talks only about the reception of the artistic work, I believe that the process of creation has the same value.

As this work focuses on corporeal artistic representations, one should bear in mind that, as Lourdes Méndez states in *Antropología de la producción artística* (1995: 143), western artists have devoted a considerable amount of their works to these kinds of representations and that, in this regard, the human body is a cultural construct:

> "Every society has sought to explain in its cosmogony the apparition of human beings on Earth, how and from which materials they have been created, who has given them life; all of them have made a distinction between "real" human beings –that is, themselves- and the "others"; and all of them have manipulated and

> transformed the human body. In that sense, the human body is a cultural body, a product of the wishes, beliefs and expectations of the society it belongs to." (Méndez 1995: 146)

Although identity is symbolized by corporeal representations, these representations are varied (Méndez 1995: 147). One such representation is that of the myth of the eternal return which symbolizes this return to the desired and idealized in illo tempore of chaos, the cosmogonic act or the beginnings. Such representations can be expressed through both individual and collective creations and, to give a clear example, I will start with the corporeal artistic representations constructed in 1930s Germany by National Socialist propaganda. Specifically, I will analyse corporeal artistic representations in the film Olympia (1936), directed by Leni Riefenstahl on the occasion of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.

As Joan M. Marin states in "La estética parda. El arte y la estética bajo el nacionalsocialismo" (2010: 91-105), German National Socialists made a link between "good" and "beauty" and stated that physical beauty must demonstrate the supremacy of the German people (2010: 97). The historical roots of what the Nazis regarded as good and beautiful corporeal representations are evident in Olympia: Ancient Greek civilization. At the beginning of the film there are people with chiselled athletic bodies who look like Greek sculptures among the ruins of Greek temples and other buildings. Then, a runner takes a torch and starts running to Berlin, where the torch is delivered.

That symbolizes the German National Socialists' proclamation of themselves as the inheritors of Ancient Greece's culture. Furthermore, the Ancient Greeks believed in the idea of cyclical time and this was also a philosophy embraced by National Socialists, against the ideas of linear time and progress that prevailed in most of their contemporaneous Western countries. Taking into account that all these ideas are epitomised in these artistic corporeal representations, they are a clear example of the updated myth of the eternal return insofar as it symbolizes a nostalgic return to an in illo tempore where, moreover, time was cyclical. In Marin's words (2010: 96):

> "The idea of linear time, of Judeo-Christian origin, with a beginning and an end of history, allowed enlightened thinkers to develop the notion of "progress", according to which, living conditions will improve from generation to generation if we exercise rationality. This idea, which was to be developed by both the liberal and Marxist ideologies, was dismissed by fascism (particularly by Nazism). They chose the cyclic conception of eternal time; and advocated a return to a Golden Age. From a progressive and revolutionary conception, the best is still to come and it has to be created; according to the cyclical-reactionary conception, the best is still to come and it has to be recovered. A rational conquest of the future against an emotional return to the past. The Nazis turned Ancient Greece into the cradle of their mythic past."

The reason for the inclusion of this example is that it is the closest case to us in time and arguably the most vivid illustration of these kinds of collective artistic corporeal representations of the nostalgic myth of the eternal return. Besides, the expansion of this cosmogonic view and its artistic corporeal representation implemented by the National Socialist movement influenced in different ways many artists such as Jon Mirande, who developed a revival of Basque pre -Christian mythology from a nationalist point of view, as the Irish writer W. B. Yeats (amongst others) had done so before him. In the following sections I will move on from the collective to the individual and start analysing the artistic corporeal representations created by Jon Mirande and Balthasar Klossowski, popularly known as Balthus.

Balthasar Klossowski "Balthus" and Jon Mirande

Both of them were born in Paris and they were contemporaries; the former belonged to a Polish family of painters, the latter to a Basque family of farmers. They were both sons of immigrants, although they each had a different socio-cultural status. They both started their art work very early, Balthus with his paintings and Mirande with his writings, and both refused to follow the dominant artistic trends of the time. Besides these similarities, there is an especially meaningful coincidence: both of them pictured nymphs, artistic corporeal representations of girls entering puberty and both had one called Thérèse. The symbolic meaning of these nymphs was very similar for the two of them, but these are just coincidences and there is no evidence to suggest that they ever met each other.

Balthus' girls' postures have been often wrongly interpreted as merely erotic and provocative. In most of the paintings they are reading, dreaming or completely involved in their thoughts, as in *Thérèse rêvant* (1938), *Thérèse éveillée* (1938), *Les beaux jours* (1946) and *Katia lisant* (1974).

In his own words, as revealed in his *Mémoires* (2001: 249), he only deliberately set out to be provocative on one occasion. It was with the painting *Leçon de guitare* (1934).

> "(…) we did laugh at the definition that the authors of the dictionary, the Robert I think, had given: my painting was described as *glauque*… (…) The word taken somewhat in its moral sense, that is, perverse, suspicious, and bahed in ambiguity? Of course the adjective was used towards that end. Nevertheless, that misinterpretation of my painting made me smile. I secretly noticed that it was not entirely unpleasant to me to be perceived that way. The young girls whose drawings and portraits I have often done, including that voluntarily scandalous *Leçon de guitarre*, could reveal a compulsive and excessively erotic bearing."

Mirande wrote in the Basque language and the third grammatical person the controversial *nouvelle* entitled *Haur besoetakoa* (The goddaughter (1970)), which tells a love story between a 30-year-old man and an 11-year-old girl called Theresa. The man lives with a servant in a house inherited from his parents and he is to marry a bourgeois woman called Isabela. He adopts Theresa, whose parents have died, and, suddenly, he experiences a spiritual crisis and revelation: he falls in love with Theresa, the love is requited and he realizes that he has, up to that moment, been unhappy. Everything he has done in life he has done because he was supposed to do so, because that was the right thing to do. He does not agree with the materialism or the idea of progress in his society and decides that he is not going to marry Isabela. Instead, he wants to go to a place of eternal youth and immortality called the Country of Youth. However, society does not accept this kind of love and the man is given ten days before Theresa is taken away from him. As a last resort, the couple decide to walk into the sea and let themselves drown after ritually celebrating a communion of their bodies, in the hope that they will stay together for ever in the Country of Youth, where the sea is going to take them. But at the last moment, the man gets scared and decides that it is not the right time to die. He tries to rescue Theresa but finally the ocean swallows her up. Later, he visits a painter who was their only friend and who wanted to take a portrait of the couple. The man tells the painter the whole story and leaves. At the end of the *nouvelle* the painter is happy because the couple are probably together in the Country of Youth already, but he feels sorry for himself because he feels just like the man did at the beginning of the story. Then he decides he is going to do a painting of the couple.

The structure of the *nouvelle* is totally circular, since it seems that the story is going to be repeated by the painter and, what is more, it is suggested that the *nouvelle* itself is the painting he is going to create, implying that the painter himself is the narrator of the story. Moreover, the corporeal artistic representations that Mirande pictured in his *nouvelle* have much in common with those of Balthus. As an example, at the beginning of the story, Theresa is sitting by the fireplace, reading; she seems to be fully concentrated and there is a whole paragraph that describes how the flames of the fire light up the girl's hair and face:

> "The man cast his eye from the window upon the fire. By the fireplace, Theresa was sitting in the armchair and the flames made her slender shadow dance on the wall. She was reading, her mouth a bit open and her eyes too close to the book, as young children often do. Now and then, a spark gave her hair, which was kind of a deep dark red, a golden colour, and now and then, while a longer flame caressed her face, she moved to the side with a sigh. It looked like her mind was absorbed in the thick, red covered book, (…)." (1970: 36)

This artistic corporeal representation shares similarities with both *Katia lissant* and *Les beaux jours.*

Both artists had problems as a result of misunderstandings about their artistic creations, which were often interpreted as mere pornography. In contrast, they insisted on the profound and symbolic meaning of their artistic corporeal representations of nymphs. That said, however, and here there is a considerable difference between the two, Balthus did actually exhibit most of his paintings while although Mirande finished his work in 1959, it was not published until 1970, two years before he killed himself. The language they used to express these corporeal representations is an important factor, since painting is a universal language while at that time there were very few readers in the Basque language. He could have chosen French or another language in which to publish the book, but he did not, because he was a Basque nationalist.

Balthus' Thérèses:

Whatever the case, those original misunderstandings persist to this day when it comes to Balthus too, as demonstrated in a recent review published in the digital edition of *The Guardian,* of the exhibition "Balthus: Cats and girls" that took place in the Metropolitan Museum of New York in 2013:

> "The girls are self-possessed and serious, and Balthus always denied any hint of paedophilia. But get real: these are erotic images of children. Some, especially the Thérèse portraits, show real invention and even a little humour that make them difficult to dismiss outright. Others, especially the mannered domestic scenes of his later career, are barely competent acts of voyeurism"

By paying attention to what Balthus says in his *Mémoires* (2001: 165) and Mirande in the *nouvelle* about their way of understanding art and girls entering puberty, one can grasp the real meaning of the Thérèses much easier. Otherwise, as Balthus says "c'est rester au ras des choses matérielles que de croire à l'érotisme pervers de mes jeunes filles. C'est ne rien comprendre des languissements adolescents, de leur innocence, c'est ignorer la vérite de l'infance". These girls respond to "mythical behaviour" and are nostalgic artistic corporeal representations which update the myth of the eternal return. Balthus insists over and over again on the fact that artistic creation is a way of stealing a piece of time, a means of capturing immortality and going beyond time.

> "One painting one prayer, it is the same thing: one innocence finally trapped, a piece of time ripped out of the disaster of the time that goes by. A captured immortality." (Klossowski 2001: 20)

> "The painting is what teaches me how to reject the frenetic wheel of time. It does not run behind the painting. What I try to reach is its secret. The immobility." (Klossowski 2001: 33)

> "To remember the artisanal work of the Ancients, the ritual preparations that gave the effect of suspension, of surprised expectation, of time finally defeated.
>
> Defeated time: is that not, perhaps, the best definition of art?" (Klossowski 2001: 15)

This way of understanding artistic creation as a means of abolishing concrete real time involves "mythical behaviour", a need to abolish concrete real time. If art is a way to get beyond time and eternalize moments, his objective was to immortalize the passage from childhood to puberty, the final moments of the idealized *in illo tempore* of childhood, the moment of *chaos* and creation when everything is still to be done:

> "Certainly, there will be biographers and art critics (there already have been!) who will seek to find my models' postures erotic, to sully this work of innocence that I have wanted to lean towards, this pursuit of eternity. But, whatever! It will even be said that I have imitated Pygmalion. But that way, these people will demonstrate that they have not understood anything of my work. The objective was always to get closer to the mystery of childhood, its languid grace within wrongly drawn boundaries. What I wanted to paint was the secret of the soul and this tension obscures and illuminates at the same time their as yet unfinished shell. The passage, I might say, yes, that is it, the passage. This uncertain and problematic moment where innocence is total and will soon give way to another Age, more determined, more social." (Klossowski 2001: 194)

These artistic corporeal representations of girls on the verge of puberty symbolize an eternal return to the beginnings, implying once again the abolition of concrete real time. Moreover, by painting the girls reading, dreaming or simply self-involved, this abolition of concrete real time becomes stronger, since they are not part of concrete real time but instead involved in another creation and time, another dimension.

> "I have often painted young girls reading. Probably I saw this act as a more profound way to get inside the secret of existence. Reading is the major access path to myths. (…) My Young girls reading, Katia, Frédérique or The Three Sisters escape as in their dreaming postures, from a fleeting and deleterious time. What matters, by immobilizing them in this act of reading or dreaming, is to prolong the privilege of a glimpsed time, marvellous and magic, by the grace of a drapery suddenly open to another light, in another window, which allows viewing only to those who know how to see. The book, then, is a key that enables opening the mysterious trunk, to the perfumes of childhood, we run to open it as a child does after butterflies or a young girl after moth. Time powdered with gold which has not undergone the alterations of the world, time which glows in a magic halo, immobilized time inside which one sees the dreamers smiling." (Klossowski 2001: 138)

Mirande's Thérèse

In the 1950s and 1960s Basque culture went through a period of major transformation and profound modernization. After the imposed silence during the Spanish Civil War and the early

years of Franco's dictatorship, Basque culture experienced a degree of revival and modernization. Jon Mirande was one of the most remarkable figures of that change but unfortunately his work was not understood at that time and its value was not recognized. Profoundly alone, and suffering problems with alcohol abuse and nervous breakdowns, he finally killed himself when he was forty-seven years old in 1972.

Although he theorized about politics, he never published any explanations about his idea of art or artistic corporeal representations of girls entering into puberty. In fact, it was not necessary since, as I will try to demonstrate, all the clues were inside his *nouvelle*. Beyond superficial interpretations, one realizes that in *Haur besoetakoa* there are theses that coincide with those of Balthus:

First of all, the man in the story sees another world when he looks at Theresa, a world that makes him feel nostalgic: the Country of Youth that he desires. Thus, Theresa's attractiveness is not so much about sensuality, but, rather, resides in the space and time that she represents:

> "In that short while in which they looked at each other, the child's noticeably light eyes remained transfixed on his eyes in that moment of eternity, what to say, what could he demonstrate? (…) The man, when looking at Theresa, could see the birthplace of his nostalgia with his inner eyes, and gave wings to his unspeakable dream to take him to the blessed Western islands, to the hidden Country of Youth (…)." (Mirande 1970: 37)

Furthermore, he is afraid of the changes that the passage of concrete real time will bring about in Theresa, because she would cease to be a promise and instead become an adult shaped by society.

> "*Et les fruits passeront la promesse des fleurs*… Unfortunately yes! In a few years, abou three or four, her childhood would be gone; instead of being a new flower she would be a ripe summer fruit to be bitten into by the teeth of ruthless lovers and, which would soon be withered by autumn… In a few years, all that gold would be blackened for the sake of the species, and for the sake of her sex that light and tender meat would become too thick and too filling. Her eyes would be as light and clean as always, of course, but the soul that was looking at him at that moment, even if it could not change, would cover up and hide for the rest of Theresa's life and in its place, the empty and blind spirit of a woman would look at him… Disgusting! It would be better if she died right now while her childlike feminity was not yet wonded, even if his heart would be injured hopelessly." (Mirande 1970: 45)

Finally, at different moments throughout the narration the reader is told time and time again that Theresa's body is a *symbol*. It could not be confessed in a more explicit way:

> "If she hadn't been so beautiful, would he have paid attention to his goddaughter? Perhaps not, he took her out of pity, when Theresa became an orphan, it was a long time since he had seen her and he did not even know what she was like. Little did he imagine that in a few weeks he would be troubled because of that little Theresa. And now, he started to suspect that that beautiful body, above its heady beauty, was no more than

> a symbol, a symbol of something that struck his nervous heart with nostalgia, but oh! Now he would never have the time to explore that symbol properly." (Mirande 1970: 44-45)

With regard to the two different levels of relationship between art and the myth of the eternal return, there are the same connections as those represented in Balthus' artistic corporeal representations. In both cases, at the level of image, the artistic corporeal representation of the girl on the verge of puberty symbolizes an idealized *in illo tempore* of childhood and the *chaos* or the doors of creation. At the level of artistic creation and reception, there is also the idea of abolishing concrete real time, since Theresa and Bathus' girls are often pictured reading or self -involved. Moreover, at the end of the story, it is confessed that the only way to eternalize and immortalize something is to turn it into an artistic work, just as Balthus does in his *Mémoirs*; in this case the painting that the painter is to do or, what amounts to the same thing, the *nouvelle Haur besoetako*a itself.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to demonstrate that the field of artistic creation was, for 20th century humanity, a place to satisfy its need to find solutions to deal with the melancholy that the idea of death and the passage of concrete real time could imply. During that time, people found new and, especially, individual solutions, except in the case of the National Socialist movement, to sublimate the same concerns that ancient societies had and faced in a collective way. But, essentially, like "mythical behaviour" itself, the mechanism here is the same: the nostalgic eternal return to an idealized divine *in illo tempore* created by mixing memory and imagination in order to abolish concrete real time. Therefore, I am simply talking about the updated myth of the eternal return.

If Balthus' and Mirande's artistic corporeal representations of girls entering puberty have been and are still often misunderstood it is because their basic philosophy was and is too far from that which prevailed among their contemporaries and prevails among ours. Balthus and Mirande would probably have perfectly understood the meaning of each other's work. Since it was written and published in Basque, there is no way that Balthus could have been familiar with Mirande's work, but the reverse is not necessarily true, for painting is in many ways a universal language.

Finally, regarding to future areas of research, it would be interesting to continue searching for artistic corporeal representations of the myth of the eternal return during different periods, countries, cultures and artistic forms. Another fascinating subject to study from the point of view

of gender studies would be to try to answer to the following question: Why have male artists chosen women's bodies to symbolize the myth of the eternal return? Have women done the same thing? Such research proposals may be of interest both to anthropologists and to those who work in the field of art criticism.

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SUMMARY

Nostalgia against melancholy: artistic corporeal representations of the eternal return as a solution. A comparative approach to the work of Jon Mirande and Balthasar Klossowski

This paper focuses on the role that nostalgia and memory play in avoiding the melancholy that the idea of death and passage of concrete real time convey to human beings. While archaic societies found collective responses to the issue and believed in the myth of the eternal return and cyclical time, their modern counterparts started to understand time as linear and, as a consequence, had to find other strategies to abolish concrete real time. By analysing art works from the anthropological and comparative approaches of art criticism, it is contended that art has been an important means to resolve the problem, as some of the corporeal artistic representations of the eternal return created during the 20th century demonstrate.

KEYWORDS

Art, literature, anthropology, the myth of the eternal return, memory, melancholy, nostalgia

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ESSAYS

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THE (PLAYFULLY) MELANCHOLIC STILL LIFE OF CONTEMPORARY PAINTING

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"That the affection is corporeal, i.e. that recollection is a searching for an 'image' in a corporeal substrate, is proved by the fact that in some persons, when, despite the most strenuous application of thought, they have been unable to recollect, it (viz. the effort at recollection) excites a feeling of discomfort, which, even though they abandon the effort at recollection, persists in them none the less; and especially in persons of melancholic temperament. For these are the most powerfully moved by presentations." (Aristotle 2001:453a: 15).

This paper aims to throw light on contemporary painting of still life and the ways in which it exists in forms of dialogue with the ideas and objects implicit in its tradition. Tradition, a form of collective memory, exists because its forms are reiterated and transformed over time. As a living memory, tradition's objects exist in our present and are consequently open to interpretation for us in ways that are both different to the past and particular to our own time.

The first part of my paper considers contemporary painting of still life in relation to memory and tradition, loss and retrieval, melancholy and reverie. In particular, I explore how these themes and issues are creatively worked through using methods of appropriation, reiteration and playful imagining. I present these themes and issues in two stages: Firstly, *Tradition's Address* and secondly, *Melancholy, Reverie and Play in the Contemporary Painting of Still Life.*

The second part of my paper, by way of exemplifying the first, is an exploration of the ways in which memory, melancholy and play are put to work in paintings by three contemporary British painters: Emma Bennett, Alan Salisbury, and G.L. Brierley. Since 2013 I have had the privilege of working with these artists as part of a three year curatorial research project that has included the exhibitions: *Still Life All Coherence Gone?* (BayArt Gallery, Cardiff, 2014), and *Still Life: Ambiguous Practices* (Aberystwyth University, School of Art Gallery, 2015).

My research makes much use of the hermeneutical writing of Hans-Georg Gadamer, author of *Truth and Method* (2006) first published in German in 1960. Gadamer states that in addressing us, tradition invites a response, and that in responding to art of the past and to the tradition that it gives rise to, both are revived and transformed in the process. Memory, recall, reverie and imagination all play a part in the process of contemporary reimagining and transformation of the traditional genre of still life and this has led me to the phenomenological writings of Gaston Bachelard, in particular *On Poetic Reverie and Imagination* (2005), first published in French in 1960. Through memory, reverie, and play, the physical properties and technologies of painting and the changing sites of reception, the tradition of still life is able to live on. "The horizon is … something into which we move and that moves with us. Horizons change for a person who is moving. Thus the horizon of the past, out of which all human life lives and which exists in the form of tradition, is always in motion." (Gadamer 2006: 303).

Tradition's Address

Still life painters before, and during, the seventeenth century used particular objects such as the hourglass, the half empty *roemer*, the unwinding lemon and the pocket-watch as symbols of

passing time, transience and inevitable mortality. These objects were intended by painters and commissioners alike to be 'read' as the Latin *memento mori* (remember you will die) or *vanitas* derived from the Latin *vanum* (empty). They became distinct conventions within still life painting at that time. Alongside these still lifes were painted others depicting nature in artificial states —bouquets of flowers and fruits and vegetables in evocative states of ripeness, juiciness, dryness and decay, often synchronically and vertiginously arranged. With the raw were also depicted the cooked—the preserved, fermented, hung and baked—often represented as if caught in their penultimate prime as if reminding the overzealous collector or the hubristic citizen of the inescapable imminence of putrescence, collapse, and death.

Willem Claesz. Heda's *Breakfast Table with Blackberry Pie* (1631) with its restrained palette, its Eucharistic arrangement, its half eaten pie crust, its wound down pocket watch left carelessly open, its half-drunk glasses with others drained and tipped over, seems intended for its viewer as the melancholic reminder of the inevitable transience of life. (Vroom 1999). A message made all the more palatable by the visual and sensory reverie induced in the viewer brought on by the sheer brilliance of the painted reflections and textured foodstuffs. The artist's palette, his attentive precision to the entrapment of light, the ruin of the pie, and the implication of infinity in the background, are certainly melancholy inducing. Yet, this still life also sets up a push and pull between the melancholic inevitabilities of death and the drives of the living, those of desire and appetite. The modest melancholic reminders of man's frailties and death competed with the *pronk stilleven* (the sumptuous still life), of which Willem Kalf (1613-93) and Jan Davidsz. de Heem (1606-83) became important exponents. In comparison to the restrained symbolism and subtle indicators of status practiced by Willem Claesz. Heda (1594-1680) and Pieter Claesz (1597 -1660) in Haarlem, the *pronk* still life tumbled its stuff in precipitous heaps of excess that reflected new mercantile success. Painted for the rich and successful, these paintings lost their modest melancholic message for an unapologetically exuberant consumerist one, a form of double speak for 'remember you will die'.

Since the eighteenth century the painting of still life has generally been studio-based rather than a workshop practice. It has become an introverted affair, one of personal withdrawal from the world in order to imagine objects of the world into worlds of their own. Since Manet, still life painting has been obliged not just to represent but also to reflect on the ways in which it sets out to conform to, refer, allude, copy, parody or otherwise be in conversation with, its own tradition. It is this reflective conversation with past art that has become the readable and intertextual element in recent still life painting, rather than the melancholic symbolism of before. Yet, it too often bears this melancholic quality as can be seen in the paintings I discuss in Part II.

In 2008 Glenn Brown appropriated Gustave Courbet's *Red Apples at the Foot of a Tree* (1871 -2) and mixed it up with the palette and style of Edwin Landseer's *Twa Dogs* (1822) in his still life painting, *Burlesque* (2008). Just a year before *Vase of Flowers by a Window* (1650-57) by Balthasar van der Ast had been appropriated by Ged Quinn in *No-one Knows Who You Are* (2006). So 'thieving' can also lead to play, that is, the intentional misremembering and misrepresentation of tradition.

Contemporary painting of still life thus walks a tightrope between tradition and contemporary practice to extend, interpret, reimagine, and transform itself. Memory in the Aristotlean sense is, according to Ricoeur: "… directly characterized as affection (*pathos*), which distinguishes it precisely from recollection. … It is the contrast with the future of conjecture and expectation and with the present of sensation (or perception) that imposes this major characterization" (Ricouer 2004: 15). At its most dynamic, contemporary painting of still life breaks with tradition's constraints whilst simultaneously acknowledging them. In so doing, artists have an eye on the potential such traditional paintings offer for future painting.

Melancholy, Reverie, and Play in Still Life Painting

If contemporary still life is always in conversation with a memory of itself, the sense of loss that accompanies all memory must likewise be accompanied by a state of melancholy. I suggest, as many others have done, that melancholy is a common attribute of all still life painting.

Time has brought about forgetting and misunderstanding of still life's symbolic language and in so doing has made the language of its original messages largely unavailable to us. Instead, what remains interpretable is analysed by those holders of collective memory such as art historians, iconographers, and connoisseurs for example. Most seventeenth century viewers would have seen themselves as being part of a greater scheme of God's geocentric creation, and would have understood still life's invocations against earthly excesses in those terms. Though this symbolic language is generally no longer used, Mat Collishaw's recent series of C-Type photographs *Last Meal on Death Row* (2011) makes use of it through pastiche of a Dutch sub -genre of still life known as the modest *onbeitje* (breakfast piece) such as those mentioned earlier by Pieter Claesz. Collishaw has appropriated from the tradition's melancholic formal and symbolic conventions to make an equally melancholic, but also highly personal, image in photography.

Ever since the eighteenth-century romantic notion of the melancholic painter, it seems that painters of still life have been particularly prone to melancholic qualities in their painting brought

on by the passing of time experienced as the reverie inducing, slow changes of light during the course of a day.

Ricoeur seems to conflate states of reverie and melancholy: "… is it not the sadness of meditative memory, the specific "mood" of finitude rendered conscious of itself? *This sadness without a cause* …" (Ricoeur 2004: 76). In unhitching melancholia from mourning and madness Ricoeur frees himself to consider the power of the arts to bring "gaiety, humour, hope, trust, and also … work", to bring with it "a dialectical humour in which Delight responds to Melancholia under the auspices of beauty" (Ricoeur 2004: 76).

Norman Bryson in *Looking at the Overlooked* (1991) considers that the inevitable sacrifice of reality in still life painting also induces a state of melancholy: "the reality of the still life as part of an actual world is sacrificed, and indeed that sacrifice is necessary if painting is to move from representation to presentation—to being staged, that is." (Bryson 1991: 81). The real world is lost to the still life in the process of becoming a world of its own. The viewer, however, never having experienced the reality sought out by the painter, experiences melancholy only as an affect of paint and painting.

Melancholic qualities in still life, as distinct from that which is represented, come about from the painter's modes of representation that in turn owe much to the technologies of paint and techniques of painting available at a particular time. Most traditional and contemporary still life continues to be painted using oil paints though the range of application is anything but conventional. Of Glenn Brown's *Burlesque* mentioned earlier, the Tate web page states: "Through his use of colour, especially a putrid, festering hue of green, these subjects appear as though their life were draining away. One painter's image has been conflated with another's palette, transforming the cute … into the deathly, and a serene, tempting still life of apples into a rotting mass." (Steiner and Gingera 2011). No object, nor its image, is melancholic in itself but instead depends for its effect on the palette, special qualities, viewpoint, mark-making and lighting employed. Together these produce an ambience, a mood, a feel and a context, to which the viewer responds. These approaches, combined with compositional arrangements that might involve tipping and tumbling, isolation or rigidity, microcosmic detail or suggestions of infinity, are the mechanisms of visual and sensory entrapment that can lead to a sense of reverie in the artist and viewer alike.

Play, like reverie, is a way of being open to tradition. As Gadamer states: "The movement of playing has no goal that brings it to an end; rather, it renews itself in constant repetition." (Gadamer 2006: 104). Memory enters the space of play, and the painter uses it and misuses it playfully. Play is purposeful but without an end in mind.

Gadamer's idea of play is being "wholly with something else" in "a state of self forgetting" though not without self-knowledge (Gadamer 2006: 122). He writes that that "play draws [her] into its dominion and fills [her] with spirit" (Gadamer 2006: 109). James Elkins, the art historian, comes close to describing this fusion of memory, melancholy, reverie and play that is the preparation and process of painting at its most intense and open to potential: "An artist … may not be sure of any categories—there is no clear difference between the artist and the half-formed work. Neither is in control, neither clearly "makes" the other. The experiment of art changes the experimenter and there is no hope of understanding what happens because there is no "I" that can absorb and control concepts—nothing has meaning apart from the substances themselves." (Elkins 1999: 166).

Part II

In part II I exemplify my thoughts on the playfully melancholic still life by considering the paintings of three contemporary painters of still life with whom I have worked on recent curatorial research projects.

Alan Salisbury

Alan Salisbury's *Still Life with Sweets with Reference to Osias Beert's 'Three Dishes of Sweetmeats with Three Glasses*' (2014) is an appropriation that acknowledges its traditional source in its title. Osias Beert the Elder was a prominent Flemish painter who worked in Antwerp at the turn of the seventeenth century. Like Beert's original painting, Salisbury's has an indeterminate horizon, a high and close viewpoint, inconsistent perspective, desaturated colours and a collection of sweetmeets though in Salisbury's paintings they are interspersed with contemporary popular confectionary—liquorice allsorts for example. Light has no source and space has no context. It is fathomless. Almost half of the painting is in darkness, actual or implied, a traditional feature of the melancholic still life from which it appropriates. The objects appear past their best, faded and dried out. The jelly snakes are depicted as entropic and floppy, in real life they stretch and split on being pulled, a sensation many of us might remember from childhood. The viewer is slightly lost in what appears, at first glance, to be a familiar enough traditional still life painting but is confused by its being playful pastiche.

Alan Salisbury, Still Life with Sweets with Reference to Osias Beert's "Three Dishes of Sweetmeats with Three Glasses", 2015, oil on board. Collection of the artist

Salisbury's *Still life with Reference to 'Basket of Peaches with Quinces and Plums' by Louise Moillon, Circa 1641 from a Google Download* (2014), seems less nostalgic and mischievous in its choice of subject matter. Yet here too Salisbury is playing with the irretrievability of the past and the melancholy inducing impossibility of the copy to live up to its origin. Salisbury's still life paintings are often a response to reproductions that he finds in books and websites. He plays with what are for him 'originals', having often never seen the actual painting. Photocopies and prints are made from reproductions that he grids up before beginning to play, a process that leads to adjustments and even re-composition. Yet, though his painting, like Beert's, is painted in oils, Salisbury's still lifes are possessed of a very different quality to their originals. The viewer is left unsure as to what can be remembered of an actual origin as Salisbury's 'copy' is so convincing—or even whether an original even existed. For *Still life with Reference to 'Basket of Peaches …'*, Salisbury worked from a particularly bad photocopy of an already low-resolution image. We need to recall here that a bowl of plums cannot be melancholic or nostalgic in itself. With the basket of plums of the original painting subjected to desaturation, indistinctness and flattening by over-exposure on the photocopier, Salisbury's painting here becomes hollow and moribund. Moillon's basket of fruit is left looking like the painter has wrung the life out of it—literally, and exquisitely. This painting is a melancholic ruin based on a false memory of an absent original.

Alan Salisbury, Still life with Reference to 'Basket of Peaches with Quinces and Plums' by Louise Moillon, Circa 1641 from a Google Download, 2014, oil on board. Collection of the artist

Emma Bennett

Hollowed (Unhallowed) (2009) is a painting that invites introspection. It is painted on canvas using oil paints and various varnishes that have been made to craze and scumble when mixed. Bennett's painting is she says, "pastiche", but it is also a playful conversation with seventeenth and eighteenth century still life paintings. (Woodley 2014: 68). The painting is suggestive of a state of reverie in which past art is set free in the space and time of dreaming. In *Hollowed (Unhallowed)* Bennett paints a miniature collage of fruits directly sourced from her collection of reproductions of Willem van Aelst's paintings (1627-1683) and others. In her arrangement of the fruits, contrary to the original, they appear to be flying off or coming in to land on a transparent cloth shaped to reveal an absent surface beneath. There is no implication of gravity here, objects float, and it is not clear where, or when, or why they do so except in dream states. Above to the left, hang two dead birds, preserved or putrefied, sourced from game still lifes by the seventeenth century Dutch painter Jan Weenix the Younger (1640/9-1719) and Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686 -1755). Displaced and rearranged, it is their fleeting resemblance to an original that is important here. Birds, fruit and cloth are bathed in fictional light, though not the light from a window as was still life's convention. Due to the absence of a light source very little shadow is cast except

that found within the body of the motifs themselves. These are, in any case, inconsistent being appropriated from reproductions of different paintings. These peculiarities of painted light increase a sense of disjunction and ephemerality. Objects, weightless and fragile, cascade into a space of play and into a world of their own. Blackness, sometimes matt, sometimes lustrous, surrounds everything. But whether this darkness is night, an infinite void, a scenic backdrop or the black bile of melancholia it is impossible to say.

Emma Bennett, *Hollowed (Unhallowed)*, 2009, oil on canvas, 140x110cm. Collection of the artist

At some point during the course of painting Bennett does something surprising–something that does not just subvert the tradition but also her own painting of it. It is a playful gamble that disrupts the reverie. She turns the painting on its side and administers a pour of pale translucent paint. This pour is a game changer, it is a playful intercession, and it has the power to change deep dark space into concrete flatness, and back. Such pours are a playful subversion of the tradition to which she is indebted. They are gestures that derive from her direct memory of pure abstraction. On physically being turned and re-turned, an abstract pour becomes transformed

from material gesture to the evocation of something else. Bennett has made herself open to the address of traditional still life through its variety of reprographic technologies. She has responded to them by putting them to play, materially and visually to achieve a melancholic sense of drifting and floating.

In *Tipping (towards love)* (2014), Bennett makes use of the dynamic compositional developments that occurred in the seventeenth century *pronk* still lifes when luxurious still life became synonymous with tipping, tumbling, and over-hanging. In this painting Bennett appropriates from Willem Claesz. Heda's *Still Life with Ham, Silver Jug and Roemer* (1656). Again she sets these motifs of traditional still life against Baroque blackness, but less dramatically this time, more as if in limbo. Here, the cloth seems to reach out to a motif in which tumbling water beckons across space and time in the manner of pathetic fallacy. Foamy water and folded cloth are made to float in a state of melancholic longing such as when Bachelard writes: "The dream withdraws into this interior space and develops in the most paradoxical delight, in the most ineffable happiness." (Bachelard 2005: 91-92). In Bennett's correspondence with me she writes: "The intricacy of the historical still life paintings feels to me to reflect something of the intensity and complexity of human emotions, especially those associated with love and loss. … I can include my own life experiences but keep the overall subject matter of the work universal." (Woodley 2015: 23).

Emma Bennett, *Tipping (towards love)*, oil on canvas
12x91.5 cm. Collection of the artist

G.L. Brierley

Breirley's painted 'objects' are not appropriations. Instead, they are nameless things that have been realized out of the process of painting itself. These still lifes, as the artist refers to them, rely on the viewer's prior experience, memory, and powers of association, to tantalize and disturb. Neither abstract nor conceding obvious references to the still life tradition, her paintings nevertheless take as their context still life's formal conventions, that is, objects in relation to a surface in a space lit to reveal a world of their own.

"This 'lost thing' or memory of 'the thing before' has been at the route of my compulsion to make these paintings." (Woodley 2015: 29) So writes G.L. Brierley in our correspondence in July 2015. 'Lost objects' in Brierley's paintings evoke lost states, sensations, feelings and relationships. In her paintings, nameless objects exist beyond the reach of taxonomy or classification and are at once both abject and seductive. They serve as transitional or substitute objects with which personal associations and memories, their loss and lure, can be reclaimed and transformed by the painter.

In the painting *Mylthrvthe* (2013) G.L.Brierley cuts, slices, embeds, stratifies, drags, marbles and scrapes her objects into and onto the painted panel. She writes that in this, and other paintings, she was "looking at the physicality of intimacy and the yearning for an unknowability or an unattainability of the thing" (Woodley 2015b). Her transitional or substitute objects are derived from ideas explored by the psychoanalyst, Donald Winnicott and the feminist writer, Julia Kristeva. (Woodley 2015a: 26). These painted 'objects' direct the viewer back to the trauma and melancholy of loss. However, Brierley's 'objects', for all the melancholic memories that inform them, are also playfully conceived as alchemical transmutations of matter and memory. Though painted, they are touchable and suggestible, physically seductive and saucy, yet strangely discomforting.

G.L. Brierley, *Mylthrvthe*, oil and inlay on panel,
30x40 cm. Collection of the artist

In *Mylthrvthe* the viewer sees no recognizable object represented there. This thing is nothing, yet it speaks to our loss of recognition, certainty, identity, place, and attachment—it is as if what we think we know is sliding away, and instead we are faced with the idiosyncratic logic of reverie and play. Yet the references could not be clearer. Brierley makes use of the tradition of melancholic representation—paint is wrinkled, viscous, dragged and suspended. Her 'objects are in penultimate states suggesting imminent decrepitude: they seek stability on a surface. To an art historically aware viewer, Brierley's still life paintings evoke the *vanitas*, not so much its literal warnings of the transience of life, but a contemporary correlation to the erosion of memory and life itself. Brierley's mother had dementia for the last fifteen years of her life, a condition in which memory, identity and dignity slip away.

The second of Breirley's paintings is *Peecheap (2010)*. It is reminiscent of a birdbox, in which fledglings are kept safe and warm. But the hole is stretched, chapped, sagged and leaking, suggestive of bodily wear and tear. It is the embodiment of abjection bordering on the absurd, and is melancholic in the extreme. Surrounded by discarded nest fluff, or a riotous perm, there is

also collapse, wrinkling, merging, sliding, frothiness and stretching—no horizon, only gloom. This still life, for it still seems to be that, feels as precarious and vertiginous as any seventeenth century pronk still life, but without the glitz. It is nothing that we can put a name to, yet it 'speaks' of loss, of decay, of fragility, of madness. Yet the painting itself is none of these things. Its impact is felt as affect, affect that is brought about by the playfully melancholic practice that is the contemporary painting of still life.

G.L. Brierley, *Peecheap*, oil on panel, 2013. Collection of the artist

Conclusion

Through my research it has become clear that the contemporary painting of still life is often a melancholic business, infused as it is with its memory of an origin and transformations such as that brought about by photography or cubism. Situating their practice in relation to traditional still life painting, contemporary painters of still life are keen to make the tradition their own. This

is only possible through play, a transformational process that is staggering in the variety of possibilities it opens up yet always constrained both by its own time and the time of memory.

The case for contemporary painting of still life emerges now. In its endless variations, it presents its viewers with a meeting of horizons, that of history, memory and the present. Unrepeatable and personal memories and responses provide a seemingly infinite source of interpretive possibilities for the artist. But, while artists are both tantalized and constrained by tradition, they are also limited by their own horizon. "Every finite present has its limitation. … The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point." states Gadamer. (Gadamer 2006: 301). Past and present are put into play in contemporary still life but the territory is bounded by the present—by what can be remembered of the past, and the melancholy for what is lost. The artist must explore and extend through purposeful play that which lies within the boundary of memory as it is encountered in her own time and place. The painting of still life, being a traditional genre, sets conditions for the creation of a world of its own, one that is in conversation with an historical past even as it circulates in the world from which it also retreats. "To understand [tradition] does not mean primarily to reason one's way back into the past, but to have a present involvement in what is said." (Gadamer 2006: 393). Bachelard, Gadamer's contemporary, goes further: "One must always maintain one's connection to the past and yet ceaselessly pull away from it." (Bachelard 1988: 24).

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SUMMARY

The (Playfully) Melancholic Still Life of Contemporary Painting

This paper considers the ways in which contemporary painting of still life accepts the address of its tradition. Tradition is considered here as cultural memory reiterated and transformed over time. The means by which contemporary artists work with, and against, tradition are explored through ideas of reverie, play and material process. Melancholy is a characteristic of the genre of still life, one that crosses time, and is thus given particular attention in relation to traditional and contemporary still life. Whilst Part I is an exploration of the themes and issues described above, Part II (case studies) is an attempt to exemplify them through the work of three contemporary British painters: Alan Salisbury, Emma Bennett and G.L. Brierley of whom it can be said that they paint playfully melancholic paintings of still life.

KEYWORDS

Memory, melancholy, tradition, play, still life painting, contemporary painting

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www.glbrierley.com

www.emmabennett.info

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THE MEMORY PLACES AND COLOR: THE METHODS AND PRACTICES OF COLOR USE IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

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Introduction

Colors, which are many times discreet in our daily life, are one of the main elements of our physical environment. They have certain affect on human's attitude. One reason is the physical reaction of the body. If an example is given, warm colors reveal sensation of warmness whereas cold ones give a feeling of coolness. Or else, while a combination of dull tones is tended to give calming impression bright tones create vividness. Depending on this, physical interaction between the colors and humans is implemented for functional reasons in daily life. If an example is given red which is a warm color and having the strongest wave-length

is used to attract the attention whereas a cool one; blue is thought to calm down. This sensation of colors is harnessed for codification by visual communication designers. Especially, the colors of traffic signs have been codified to provide a universal language that would regulate casual life. In the same vein of physical sensation of colors, red is codified culturally to warn about a rule or inform a danger whereas blue would remain the informative one. One should attract the attention and give a reaction immediately other is more open to dialogue. As historian Michel Pastoureau asserts, the red is 'there' to be in the center of attention to not only represent the earthly pleasures but also the danger, whereas blue has become the favorite color of European Union and many institutions because it is the one which is open to dialogue, discreet and ready to be common in the physical environment as we are surrounded by blue sky and blue sea (2005). Nonetheless, again Pastoureau assigns that colors are like a language whose meanings have evolved through the time. The culture which comprises religion, production process of color and the evolution in science has formed the senses of colors. (Pastoureau and Simonnet, 2005) The senses were transmitted again to the language itself and visuality which were nourished by the collective memory; a sort of 'pool' where the information is accumulated and circulated. Naturally the construction of me-mory is provided by the intersection of history, popular mass media and subjects' personal memories; in other words, the oral history. The latter multiplies the senses and events' trans-mission in the society, it may contrast, reflect or show some parallels. (Bilgin, 2011 and 2013).

This article aims to tackle the contribution of color as an instrument of data collection in qualitative research. To study this, I will share my experience of fieldwork among International Izmir Festival participants in which I have studied the concept of awareness of place. Parallel to a half-structured inquiry I implemented colors firstly as a visual to learn how my informants make sense in Izmir, and if possible during International Izmir Festival. Secondly, I attempted to determine how they embed colors' senses to the memory places where they attended to the concerts and faced with the past of the city where cultural traumas like forced migration or big fire are repressed and faded out. Another challenge for this technical study was to develop an interdisciplinary approach between my graphic design background with recent anthropological research. Indeed, although I struggled to manage the subjectivity of fieldwork setting, I could retrieve more practically data thanks to color use. Especially I had more constructive process of dialogue considering my insider positioning as a researcher conducting sometimes interviews with my own relatives and former colleagues from International Izmir Festival. This relatively original method rather than conventional participant observation techniques provided me to jump from

the blurred "you know what I mean" statements to the clear and concrete ones by my participants in data collection.

- **Developing Ethnographic Research Techniques**

A. Organization of the Fieldwork

The unique difference between office works and fieldwork is that while the researcher is absolutely depended to the documents at the office, in fieldwork there are many dynamics which may turn instantly to advantages as well as constrains. Some items might be counted such as physical conditions, the fieldwork strategies concerning how and when you get in-step out to the community, how you access to the participants, how to not have prejudice or going native or else how to be open without any obtrusive attitude. I was that 'native' one, the contrast of many anthropologists who choose a field area which would be preferably the 'other' to interpret its culture. (Okely, 1996) Indeed as Clifford sarcastically states 'the ethnography would be perfect if (somehow) the ethnographer becomes (when s/he wants) invisible' (1986). My purpose was to combine etics and emics, therefore I couldn't just report what I and the people surrounding me acted and said. My biggest challenge has been not to get in to the community but to provide a clear boundary in the field and to construct a new positioning of ethnographer. I needed to use merely all the advantages of being native but also 'keep an eye awake' by shifting from native to the researcher. Thus, to present myself was also double sided. When I contacted or re-contacted to the International Izmir Festival's participants I was there as they know me and as they didn't know me since I had another role to meet, talk or work with them. Therefore, I focused on the idea 'ethnographer as an instrument' in my fieldwork strategy and searched for an object which would help to assume my new positioning. When a researcher studies his/her own community, the 'blindness' is the first shortcoming of the fieldwork. I might neglect some visuals, objects or jargon finding them common whereas some details might be the tools to dig in or to specify the characteristics of the community. I may suppose that I 'know' who they are and 'what they think' which may become a pitfall. The most difficult part is the second, after being conscious of that the participant is a subject whose identities are fragmented and shifted therefore his/her making sense would be constantly shaped and flow, the other side may still think that I 'know' who they are and 'what they think', thus when I ask a question about the basics such as where the participant goes in daily life and why s/he didn't go to that memory place in daily life the answer seems 'too easy' and the latter may reply 'you know'. But as Pinxten (1997) underscores

anthropologists cannot 'read' the thoughts of the participants, but they can observe, talk and participate to the same activities to conceive the stratified structure of the meanings of the words and actions. (Geertz, 1973) In that sense I agree with the anthropologists of 'perfect stranger' positioning. (Dikomitis, 2012 and Clifford and Marcus, 1986) When you are supposed to 'know', you may not know what they know and they may not know what you don't know. The parts that I have seen might not be the entireness of the composition, and I may need another instrument to discover other layers putting aside the phrase 'you know'.

If I introduce my fieldwork setting, I conducted a fieldwork among International Izmir Festival's spectators and organizers. I focused on a group who has lived for more than ten years in the metropolitan zone of Izmir. The research group members consisted of high educated, upper-middle class and mostly older than fifty years old people. I also stressed that any participant was expected to participate to International Izmir Festival many times whether regularly or not. The festival itself might be defined as a summer arts festival in which the high culture practice is claimed into the public space. (Dimova, 2012) The program is mainly classical music, but there is a variety of opera, ballet, modern dance, jazz, world music and musical theatre. The characteristics of the festival are the venues. The Celsus Library in Ephesus Antic Site which is 83,8 km. driven by the city center[1] is the most sustainable concert place. Lastly the festival has given place to the new art center Ahmet Adnan Saygun at the city center. Apart from these stable venues, each year festival team engages to organize a performance in the neglected historical places. In the context of memory studies, I studied the last category, because while the festival attempts to valorize those places as cultural heritage, they also uncover a hidden past that contemporary inhabitants are disconnected. In other words when contemporary inhabitants enter to these memory places the act of organizing a performance in a *lieu de memoire* creates unintentionally an awareness of place process among the participants (including the organizers themselves) While they engage to organize and watch a performance in those place, they interact and contemplate on the past of city which triggers the memory.

Considering the setting of a festival, I entered to the fieldwork mainly with two techniques: in-depth interviews and participant observation. Depending to the conditions, I preferred to implement series of in-depth interviews in the head quarter of the festival organization and the spectators' home and workspaces. That was the most suitable period to implement deep interviews. I aimed to investigate an open questioner so that the participants shall answer what they think and feel, the target was to develop my fieldwork skills and let the participants release themselves.

[1] This distance was calculated in Google Maps from the port of Konak in down town till the entry to the antic site Ephesus.

First, I started with free recalling technique that is usually done for brainstorming the ideas. I drove my questioner in the spiral form; keeping the core and asking series of question related with that core. However, it might be possible that I could be stuck during the flow of questioner. Or else, the participant could sustain his discourse on some information that s/he learnt from a book for the sake of giving a smart and elegant impression. It is like in the example of African ethno-historian who wishes to study the cultural identity of a town in Gabon and when he meets with the chief of the town, the chief answers his questions opening a book that another researcher wrote. (Clifford, 1986; 116)

When I reviewed the literature of qualitative methodology, I marked on the idea of the researcher as an instrument. Depending to this the body, the identities and the knowledge of the researcher could be retrieved as an object to harness the fieldwork setting (McCracken, 1988; 18-20, Okely, 1996; 28-44, Chereni, 2014; 6-14). I immediately think of myself gathering data during the festival. Running from airport to hotel, then to the venues, meeting with other volunteers and the technical staff of the festival seemed manageable. The unrecorded talking moments, the observation of the staff around me and keeping field notes would be sufficient to collect data. However, if I want to collect data before the festival that I would ask the 'memory' questions about their experience, which instrument would fit to break a potential elitism and the 'noises' between my entity and the participant's one? I risked to hear many times "you know", because I am native and also one of the festival participants. Or else, I would receive the already-known information. My intention was to grasp which salient elements attract the attention of the festival participant, how s/he transmits analogically a possible social interaction among the festival participants with the daily life users of those places, further to see if this color analogy touches both personal and urban memory of the participant and finally the affect of the performance within the place.

B. Color Tablets

If the colors have been part of collective memory, then any interrogation concerning memory would be implemented by using the colors. I was inspired by the colorist Shigenobu Kobayashi and his book *Colorist* (1998). Kobayashi describes in his book that when he travels in the cities, he captures three colors that are sovereign in the environment and determines an identity of those cities according to the relations of the color combinations, for instance: 'similarity', 'contrast', 'colorful and soft' and 'calm and hard'. Once the colors are categorized based on his

observations, he assesses the sense of the combinations such as elegant, casual, fresh and pretty. I paraphrase one of his analyses:

> "Hameln, Germany: Fairy Tale – This town is associated with fairy tales and red seems to be a popular color among the townspeople, since women wore vivid red even in summer time. Red geraniums were blooming when I visited, and the red clothes of the flute players were impressive. Red toys could be found in display cases as accents. A combination of dark red and white is used for old houses. Tourists may like the familiar red in this town because of the fairy tale feel it creates" (Kobayashi, 1998; 54).

Similar to this example, Kobayashi constructed the identity of the town not only through what he saw but also what he learned about the local culture. When he writes, "this town is associated with fairy tales" more is revealed through ethnography than a pure color testimony. The combination that he makes is bright, vivid red, saturated green and light brown. According to the pictures in the book, he could say: "it is a vivid city which balances a red combining a hard and dark tone of green and a soft and warm tone of brown in order to create a separation combination." However, apart from the technical terms, his reference to 'fairy tales' is one that he presumably learned from the local people or maybe he saw some ethnic elements in an illustration of children's book. Another theory is that there have been some local festivities or minor events concerning fairy tales during his stay in Hameln. Unfortunately, Kobayashi doesn't explain explicitly why he associates such red tones with 'fairy tales'. The red color might be associated with 'fairytale' in western culture because of the red elements in the tales like red apple (Snow White) and Little Red Riding Hood. The red costumes of the flute players and storytellers may give reference to the history of the town and red geraniums might be significant as well in public space. Therefore, his identification remains less strong than his technique based on his color image scale. Being conscious of this fact, I aimed to give a voice to the festival participants instead of making color analysis of them and the memory places.

Kobayashi is not false in his discourse for the color sensibility of the townspeople that reflect the color identity of their city. Colors may contain the (hi)story of the place. The (hi)story that is constructed on the colors, like the language, interlaces with the meaning of the colors and (hi)story itself (Pastoureau and Simonnet, 2005). Hence, the colors might have the potential to be cultural memory components, too. In the case of Izmir, the dislocation of the indigenous and new settlers prevents this construction and creates a gap between the visual discourse shaped by the global popular culture and Izmir's own past. Precisely, nobody selected the colors of grey, yellow and red, implying the Great Fire of Izmir, because this historical event is not commemorated. While the city's inhabitants changed, the city was detached from its past and rebuilt regarding to the trends of 30's, then 50's and finally from 80's until today.

To illustrate the technical process of color usage, first I picked the hues demonstrated in Kobayashi's color table (1998; 8-9) by comparing it with the Pantone© Color catalogue and Color Index by Jim Krause (2002). After detecting the color values of CMYK2, I designed 120 color squares of 7x7 cm in computer with Adobe InDesign software. Considering the change of the colors due to the light and texture, I printed them on opaque, standard white paper of 80 mg. which was then pasted on white cardboard to create the color tablets. Instead of turning the page, which would give the impression of a test, I preferred that the prospective participant see them randomly spread across the same surface. This more playful approach would enable the participant to select the colors depending on his/her own selective perception of colors.

Picture 1: The color tablets spread out to select at random.

[2] CMYK: The abbreviation of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black. These are the colors in printing process. Once the image is finalized, it is converted from digital format colors of RGB (Red, Green, blue) to the CMYK values. Either electronic copy machine or a tremendous printing machine, it is necessary to make the configuration of the colors to have an accurate result.

Therefore, after some experiences I decided to evaluate the colors as "prompting object". (Gobo, 2008; 196-197) In this context, I implemented Kobayashi's method as a part of an in-depth interview technique. The colors signified what might transfer the knowledge and also how could be that an image is charged by the visualization and making sense process of 'stories' by the readers. They could be indirect extensions of cultural memory components (mnemonic element). The colors are attached to the culture. Indeed, each community may recall different meaning when looking at the same color. Red is able to be the color of 'fairy tale' in a city from Germany where the sensibility of red might be nourished by the fairy tales like Snow White (red lips, red apple, blood) or a religious reference like blood of Jesus and Vatican. (Pastoureau and Simonnet, 2005).

Moreover, regarding the unobtrusive demand of the participant observation technique in the ethnographic research, I didn't interrupt the flow of their discourse to capture the city's identity relating to its past by asking the participant such questions that 'would reveal the reality'. Consciously, I avoided manipulating my participants by asking leading questions, like the examples below:

Question: "There has been a big fire here, that's why you did select this bright red?"

Question: "You selected bright red. Very interesting. How do you connect your selection with the Great Fire of Izmir?"

I asked to my participants to pick 10 color tablets that represent Izmir for them from a hundred tablets spread out on a table. Then I asked them to see together and alone and what those colors and combination recalled for them. Referring to their home and its neighborhood, some participants picked the colors depicted from their physical environment. After few clumsy inquiries of spreading the tablets, I asked open questions and gave more time to make them express themselves. I realized that color tablets were guiding me to enhance my dialogue with the informants, because I was asking new questions based on their reactions.

If I sustain on memory, the color tablets served the informants to visualize the memory places during the festival. Seemingly not directly referring to any trauma or urban memory but the visualization moment of the informant was illustrating the memory places and their surrounding both in daily life and during the festival. Indeed, their festival experience is a memory and the informant was triggered by the color tablets to remember the memory. According to the results I had many replies of yellow because of summer heat (an analogy between vision and feeling senses related to sunshine) and grey-browns because the buildings and their surroundings were in the variety of dull tones of greys and browns. The preliminary

questions based on physical environment were gradually shifted to the symbolical narration of the festival experience.

If I give some examples, Emre picked a warm red tone to mention "*sokaktaki insanların sıcaklığı*" (the warmness of the people at street) to imply how local people were smiling and sociable. The people at street don't wear red, so it doesn't concern a physical determination, but there is a comparison between the connotation of red as warmth, giving reference to blood, life and human with the humans' behaviors described as 'warm'. When I interviewed Sophie, a European originated informant who has lived in Izmir since 1970s about Abacıoğlu Inn in Kemeraltı; the old market neighborhood, she said "When you ask me Kemeraltı, I see immediately a bright red. Because it is the heart of the city. The boat and many bus lines are connected to the square next to Kemeraltı. Kemeraltı is very vivid with such a crowd making shopping but also many people rushing to their work or home. But I also see burgundy; for me it is a noble color. Kemeraltı is also noble because despite of the kitschness (she means the products and window displaying) and destruction [of the old architecture] it is very old and hires something; it is the heart and you may say the spirit of the city as well. It has that wisdom and mysteriousness of burgundy. [The streets] covered by the textiles to make shade. It makes it darker. At night there is nobody and it becomes completely dark."

INFORMANTS	**CITED PLACES**			
	Konak/ Kemeraltı	**Alsancak/** Kordon	**Karşıyaka/** Bostanlı/ Mavişehir	**Bornova**
Ahmet (57)	**Black:** The ugliest place that I don't like most	**Orange:** Cosmopolite; there is everything	**Bright green=** Karşıyaka: my childhood, green of tree/ **Bright red=** Bostanlı: vibrant, full of life/ **Dull saturated blue-green=** Mavişehir: it is nice when the weather is sunny	No data
Belgin (60)	Dull saturated purple-grey: higgledy-piggledy	**Deep bright purple**: Cosmopolite and aggressive	**Bright light blue=**Karşıyaka: Luminous	**Dull light green:** Calmer than Konak
Gizem (36)	**Deep bright brown:** Many buildings with historical ones	**Bright light blue:** Adjusted to the sea	**White=** Bostanlı: When I leave for outside in the morning the sea is flat	No data
Onur (42)	No data	**Light dull yellow-orange:** Because of the lightning	**Bright light pink and vivid pink=** Karşıyaka: Life is sweet	**Bright dark green**: More green, serious and strict than Alsancak
Sevim (56)	No data	**Dull strong purple-blue:** A little sea and mostly concrete	**Dull light green=** Karşıyaka: old town, Çamlık Sokak (Pine tree Street)/ **bright light blue=** Bostanlı: Sub-section of Izmir; lighter/	No data

			dull saturated blue= Mavişehir: blue, seaside and its name is blue	
Umut (65)	**Bright light yellow-grey:** Marketplace, nested in the public, tourist, the grey of between the streets	**Bright light blue:** Sea and sunset	No data	**Half-bright green:** Because of its emblem and it is a green place

Table 1: The sample of some participants to define Izmir by using the color tablets

Regarding to this finding, I implemented a hybrid technique of color use and free recalling to foster the imagination of the participants. Thanks to their evocations, my informants didn't only describe their physical environment, but also could express the moments of interaction when they circulate in the city. The conversations on these techniques didn't 'tickle their traumas' but instead revealed their conception of Izmir.

In my first fieldwork I hesitated to contact to my informants with the recorder device, camera, notepad and pen. As I was the insider and my informants were one or even two generations older than me, it was challenging to gain their trust and to ask them to share their feelings and thoughts regarding the city's cultural fabric. Despite their modern lifestyle, they were maintaining the traditional way of thinking in regard to age hierarchy and indirect discourse, which potentially caused them to hold back from expressing what they really think and feel at times. In other words, I expected to retrieve more personal account of my informants rather than already-known information transfer. Moreover, the discourse would gain more didactic style reflecting again the social hierarchy. I was ready to utilize myself as an instrument, specifically an instrument that I would deliberately consider my own background during the interviews. Therefore, the color tablets have been a bridge between me and my informants. I would feel at ease reclining to my graphic designer past and the responses and reactions of the informants would be turned at first level around of color tablets playing, then the stereotypes that they evocate and pass finally their own personal experiences in Izmir especially during International Izmir Festival.

If I unfold more about color tablets being a bridge between my entity and my informants, they have become gradually the motivation objects of an individual that one tells about his physical environment and its connotations. One may illustrate its home, the neighborhood, business area and the places that s/he circulates in Izmir. One of the informants, Umut joked that the color tablets were 'intelligence test' while Nicole resembled them 'just like my

appointment with the painter last time'. I discovered that this method has got a playful effect on the informants and decreased first the moments of stumbling when one says 'you know' and I feel anxious to gain a flow in the conversation. Second, there was less reluctant approach of 'I accepted this interview out of politeness because you are a relative of my friend' or the anxiety of 'I must say something very smart to prove my intellectual capacity'. Many times the ethnographers face the difficulty of striking a balance between asking the questions clearly without undermining the notions and distorting the discourse according to the education level of the research group members. In my case, my informants were highly educated adults, thus I could ask more abstract questions. Yet at the beginning of the fieldwork I had some difficulties to understand their emotions and self-expressions at the first meetings. For the sake of conserving their social status, they would offer more informative and general data than a personal statement. McCracken (1988) claims that the visuals help to focus on the questions and reveal information that wouldn't be reached only by open questions. Indeed, I noticed later that the participants would skip some questions saying 'you know' or they would jump to an irrelevant topic when there was a lack of visual material. In a similar way, I had used the photos taken by myself to support the color tablets, with the aim to trigger the memory of my participants. However, the photos were more figurative and 'real' images created different obstacles between the flow of recalling moments and my retrieving questions. The participants were criticizing the pictures from an artistic angle. What it is called 'noise' in the photography were disturbing them, such as the cars passing by the building and avenue and the fact that I asked about their experiences with other urban objects, like the advertisement boards, street lamps and the shop signs dividing and complicating the composition of the printed photo. Despite of my informants' critiques, I believe that these 'noises' were also part of their contemporary life. I construed their negative reactions as an envy to calmer space. Once, after looking the pictures of an avenue with many cars, street lights with the façade of an old bank at background Umut recalled the concert in roman Agora and said how he was disturbed by the sound of cars, especially trucks driving uphill next to the concert.

Conclusion

As a result of this experience, I developed more prompting question techniques based on the experiences of in-depth interviews. I asked to my informants to identify Izmir with the color tablets. My intention was to access further their making sense process of memory places during International Izmir Festival. Although I didn't grasp any direct data concerning the cultural

traumas because they were not commemorated and not visible anymore in their lives, the color tablets have been useful methodologically for my ethnography. They became mnemonic objects to remember their experiences in memory places and further playful objects that they were interacted and prompted to speak more about their personal account than citing a formal discourse. In addition to this, color identification of the memory places embedded into their neighborhood has visualized the stereotypes of Izmir city which could be retreated as a visual communication design project. While the informants were asked to identify Izmir with the colors they departed by the main axes and their living hood, because the colors triggered an image of the city formed by their memories. Regarding from the replies, I extracted that while some replies referred to physical environment others were implying more symbolical meanings.

Colors have certainly a relation with the memory. This relation needs to be investigated more in an interdisciplinary perspective. However, my observations concerning the reactions and self-reflexivity indicate that color use remains as a practical tool. It becomes a prompting object of in-depth interview in which the prospective informant is engaged playfully. The playfulness of color tablets session motivates to talk with an insider beyond of 'you know' answer. Moreover, it reduces the anxiety of the informant to 'say important things' and the ethnographer to be stuck in open questioner. Both the researcher and the informant may feel at ease, hence the researcher has an opportunity to create more fluent dialogue with the prospective participant.

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SUMMARY

The Memory Places and Color: The Methods and Practices of Color Use in Ethnographic Research

Nowadays art festivals engage more to organize their events in unusual places. Either for the sake of city branding or a pure cultural memory action, a performance might be set in a forgotten memory place. The place which is distinguished sharply by a comfortable concert hall becomes one of the actors of the event and the participant questions a past that s/he hasn't been strongly connected. Thus, the individual is not only aroused by the performance itself and the information in the booklets but also physical environment has an affect. This article aims to tackle the contribution of color as an instrument of data collection in qualitative research. By using color tablets inspired by the colorist Kobayashi the colors are tested firstly as a visual to learn how they make sense in Izmir during International Izmir Festival. Secondly, they are questioned how the participants embed colors' senses to the memory places where they attended to the concerts. The research process indicates that the experience of a concert might not be visually powerful enough to associate memory places with the colors. However, the technique of color tablets becomes prompting object which support the dialogue construction between the fieldworker and informant. Thus, as an instrument for evocation and conversation color tablets become interactive objects for remembering of the festival experience and it mediates the social roles of the informants and the fieldworker.

KEYWORDS

Color tablets, Kobayashi, ethnographic interview, memory place, International Izmir Festival

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