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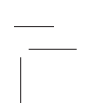
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15 INTRODUCTION

19 **BARBARA A. MISZTAL**

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28 Memory on the move: Theory 29 and methodology of memory 30 and migration 31 32 33 34

35 space too big

38 This special issue of *Crossings* is an original and timely contribution to the fields of
39 migration studies and memory studies.¹ It aims to address broader sociologi-
40 cal and cultural studies audiences, and in particular academics with an interest
41 in the sociology of migration and sociology of memory and diaspora stud-
42 ies. With this issue, we seek to overcome the divide between memory stud-
43 ies and migration studies by exploring the nature and impact of the current
44 changes on both fields and reflecting on how we can investigate 'memory on
45 the move'. We aim with this issue to facilitate communication between those
46 who study the internal logic of migration and those who study the signifi-
47 cance of memories and problematize the role of memory in the construction
48 of migrants' identities and belongings.

49 Moreover, given the social importance of topics of migration and memory,
50 this issue's objective is also to reach a wide audience beyond sociology and
51 cultural studies, beyond disciplinary boundaries, and indeed beyond the acad-
52 emy. The social relevance of developing our understanding of the role of

1. This issue is one of the outcomes of research conducted within the working group in 'Memory and migration', which is one of the work packages of the COST action network 'In search of transcultural memory in Europe' (ISTME, IS 1203).

migrants' memory in constructing means and ways towards new futures is of special significance in the light of the current numbers of people living outside their home countries, the increasingly convoluted transnational trajectories of the immigrants, the global spread of new communication media, the growing interest in migrants' experiences of daily life, and their identities and feelings of belonging. There has not been a substantial systematic sociological or cultural study of migrants' memory, despite the expansion of research on migration, media, race and ethnicity, and despite evidence of public interest in the issue. We have witnessed the proliferation of a variety of studies on the representation of migrants and ethnicity in media as well as research on media usage among ethnic minorities and diasporic groups. As the number of migrants and refugees rises, there is also an increasing need to critically explore the role of memories in constructing migrants' feelings of belonging.

The main themes and ideas in the fields of memory and migration research that this special issue debates are the role of post-memory and the role of memory for different migrants' generations. This special issue also contributes to discussions about boundaries of citizenship and migrants and reinforces the shift in memory studies due to the focus on agency and appropriation rather than representation and remediation of narratives. Thus, the issue also illustrates a transition from artefacts to acts.

Many articles in this special issue, apart from presenting the history and understanding of these various essential concepts, also show how to operationalize these notions and offer methodological insight and the results of interesting empirical investigations. Their theoretical discussions and empirical presentations, intrinsically connected to the issue of migration and memory, inform us about such concepts as diaspora, exile, nostalgia, mobile memory, post-memory and transcultural aesthetics. They also argue that in a society characterized by mobility and migration, and by transnational trajectories across borders, the notion of nation, which has been the dominant framework and metaphor of memory studies, has become untenable. The articles included respond to a need for an analysis of the agency of diasporic and transnational communities. Cross-border and transnational identifications challenge nationally bound theorizations of citizenship and belonging, while technological innovations are used by migrants to mediate their feelings of belonging and home and construct their memories. The intricate dynamics of migrants' past and present, and the relations between first- and second-generation immigrants, call for careful analysis and methodological renewal, and raise the question of how memory studies can undo a methodological nationalism, and which methods and what materials are of importance for focusing on migrants' own agency? Thus, the additional aim of this issue is to address the theory and methodology of studying transnational memory in which memory is considered a perpetual dynamic of construction and reconstruction, of past and present, of inclusion and exclusion.

This special issue integrates cutting-edge research from different countries (Bulgaria, Britain, Denmark, Finland and Sweden) and different disciplines (artistic research, cultural anthropology, film studies, literary studies and sociology), and relays different methods (bibliographical, ethnographic, film and literary studies, narrative analysis, content analysis, and practice-based artistic research). What our contributors have in common is their understanding that the complexity of the topic of migrants' memory calls for a diversity of strategies, methods and multidimensional and interdisciplinary approaches. The issue consists of seven articles and two reviews.

1 In the first article, 'Memories' role in lending meaning to migrants' lives',
 2 Barbara A. Misztal tries to overcome the difficulties of providing a compre-
 3 hensive sociological account of the complexity of the links between memory
 4 and migration by focusing on the role of experience in lending meaning to
 5 migrants' lives. The paper argues that, since we act differently towards old
 6 memories when we meet new experiences, the concept of experience is one of
 7 the central means of reconstructing the past. As migration is often responsible
 8 for the emergence of the new past, the paper tries to discover how migrants'
 9 past experiences lend meaning to their lives. Realizing that to study migrants'
 10 ways of constructing meaning is a very difficult task, as it requires an engage-
 11 ment with subjectivity and covers the past and the present, the article tries to
 12 capture details of people's experiences with the help of works of fiction. By
 13 relying on works of fiction, the article shows the role of migrants' past expe-
 14 riences in providing a frame for their sense-making practice and illustrates
 15 various ways in which migrants manage the present and respond to new
 16 circumstances by mobilizing the past patterns, memories and frameworks.

17 Using a broad narrative method, Misztal examines 24 British novels that
 18 won the main UK literary prizes during two different periods (1950–1960 and
 19 1990–2000s). By analysing the works of fiction from two different periods, the
 20 article demonstrates the transformative power of migration and the growing
 21 plurality and diversity of migrants' pasts and presents, alongside the growing
 22 importance of reflexivity on which individuals increasingly rely to make sense
 23 of a present situation with growing self-knowledge and experience. Arguing
 24 that, although we should not look to works of fiction for the authenticity of
 25 historical experience and we must be aware of the limits of the literary mate-
 26 rial, Misztal shows that the novel can be an important source of insight into
 27 the main mechanisms of migrants' sense-making practice.

28 In the second article, 'Diaspora, post-memory and the transcultural turn
 29 in contemporary Jewish writing', Jessica Ortner, through reading works by
 30 the contemporary Jewish writers David Mendelsohn, Anna Mitgutsch and
 31 Barbara Honigmann, investigates the interconnection between the experience
 32 of exile and diasporic aesthetics. Looking through the lens of transcultural
 33 memory studies, Ortner's analysis allows her to show the concept of dias-
 34 pora as a multi-layered phenomenon suitable for grasping various modes of
 35 memory and identity formation. The article explores different definitions of
 36 diaspora and elaborates which aesthetics of exilic post-memory those concep-
 37 tualizations entail. Without aiming to replace Marianne Hirsch's concept of
 38 the photographic aesthetics of exilic post-memory, Ortner, by focusing on
 39 Honigmann's auto-fictional writings, challenges Hirsch's notion that the
 40 diasporic nature of post-memorial writings necessarily leads to the use of a
 41 photographic aesthetic. With the help of examples of the transcultural mode
 42 of diasporic writing, she illustrates three different modes of diaspora and
 43 diasporic writing: photographic, nostalgic and transcultural. Ortner argues
 44 that the reason for Hirsch's stand is her idea of diaspora as the perpetuated
 45 exile of the descendants from the place of origin. As this understanding of
 46 diaspora translates itself to the concept of exilic post-memory, it points to the
 47 difference with the fictional creation of self-imposed exile, which relies on the
 48 idea of diaspora as the true source of identity. While adopting Erll's concepts
 49 of transculturality and transcultural identity, Ortner asserts that the photo-
 50 graphic aesthetics is associated with a distinct concept of diaspora in which
 51 the expelled remains entangled in their lost territory, despite the awareness
 52 that a return is impossible. Ortner's investigation of this difference between

diaspora understood as a territorial attachment to the former home and diaspora understood as a transcultural blending and mixing of identities leads her to identify three aesthetics of exilic post-memory. For the first two positions, the photographic and the nostalgic aesthetics, despite their difference, identity remains connected to the place of origin of the ancestors. The third aesthetic position – transcultural post-memory of diaspora and exile – while also rejecting the possibility of a return, roots identity in a perception of culture that is alterable and hybrid, as it refers to the notion of the diaspora as a heterogeneous space that mixes cultures, nations and religions. Ortner's argument is that the post-memory of homelessness can be expressed by means of nostalgic aesthetics and transcultural aesthetics, as well as by photographic aesthetics, and her account of these three aesthetics offers a very interesting way to understand how the experience of exile and diaspora is reflected in literature, and in novels in particular.

Galina Nikolaevna Goncharova's article, 'Getting into the migrant's world(s): Biographical interviews as a tool for (re)searching transcultural memory', offers a very convincing argument for the relevance of the method of the biographical interview as an instrument for exploring the complexity and dynamics of memory on the move and as a tool for researching transnationalism from below. The article's aim is to demonstrate how the method for biographical narrative interview can be used in the field of cultural memory studies. Debating the extent to which the biographical reconstruction of the act of migration can offer emancipation from the dominant discourses of the society of origin and settlement develops our understanding of the key concepts and methods of biographical research, the conceptual origins of which go back to the sociological heritage of the Chicago school (and are especially connected with William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki's famous study of , 1927). Arguing that migrants' biographical narratives are not represented by art and the media, and that they can offer an alternative to the official commemorative discourse mode of remembering ethnic destiny through time, Goncharova analyses the studies of Bulgarian Turks' migrant practices carried out with the help of biographical interviews. After discussing Jan Assmann's differentiation between cultural and collective memory as well as his emphasis on the power of everyone to preserve their past, the article addresses the complexities of the links between memory and migration by analysing lessons from the findings of the two international studies that call for a re-evaluation of the past and present of the Bulgarian Turk minority in a totally innovative way. The article concludes that the biographical interviews of the migrants could be applied to a search for transcultural memory from below, and that the transcultural memory offers the agency narrative control over the process of cultural socialization and some liberation from the institutionalized versions of culture and economy.

In the essay 'The memory practices of immigrant film-makers: Minor cinemas and the production of locality', John Sundholm draws upon his work on immigrant independent cinema cultures in order to make the argument that migrants' memories are directed towards the future rather than the past, and that agency is a precondition for the immigrant film-maker. By making use of Arjun Appadurai's notion of the 'production of locality', Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's 'minor literature', and in particular Zuzana M. Pick's studies on Chilean cinema in exile, Sundholm analyses how immigrant film-makers organized themselves in order to be able to make films. These cultural acts of self-organization also imply a revision of the film-makers' past to enable them

1 to establish a new context of belonging. This diasporic and exilic space is the
 2 'privilege of exile', as Pick termed it, and can be used in different ways. How
 3 this interstitial space is used for film production is exemplified by a discussion
 4 of films made in the 1970s and 1980s by Greek, Turkish, Colombian, Chilean
 5 and Peruvian exilic or diasporic film-makers residing in Sweden. By present-
 6 ing the conditions of production and readings of the films, Sundholm shows
 7 that they represent a wide range of uses of the past. Extending from revi-
 8 sions of the homeland as a nostalgic place, political dystopia or utopia, every
 9 film has in common the fact that they were made with the purpose of paving
 10 the way to a future. Thus, Sundholm argues that the migrants make these
 11 revisions of the past in the present and for the future, not only to produce
 12 a context for the makers themselves but also to address and enhance a new
 13 immigrant audience that is in the making. Therefore, migrants' memories are
 14 not only on the move and in the making, which calls for dynamic theories of
 15 memory, but also address a public that is in the making.

16 Nela Milic's contribution ' takes place in the midst of practice. The digi-
 17 tal photography and oral history project depicts what happens when migrant
 18 women are given the means to appropriate a present that they have lost (and
 19 hence a lost past too). Milic's practice-based research method enables a project
 20 in which the migrant women that she studies are also given the means to
 21 represent themselves. The staged photographs are turned into layered stories
 22 in which the women are able to act out their fantasies and desires of belong-
 23 ing to remake their past and present, but also to gaze back at that audience
 24 who has remembered and reproduced them as suffering and helpless victims.
 25 However, in a concluding note, Milic states that in the same way as memory
 26 is constantly worked upon by the immigrants who 'are so concerned with the
 27 future', you may also be thrown back to your own memories of migration and
 28 submission. The vulnerability of the migrants means that there is a constant
 29 threat of 'reversing the time' to when you were newly arrived.

30 In 'See(m)ing strange: Methodologies of memory and home', Špela
 31 Drnovšek Zorko discusses the diasporic memory of the former Yugoslavia.
 32 Through an ethnographic method she analyses how people from a place once
 33 united (Yugoslavia), now belonging to differentiated homelands, remember
 34 home. As a result of her method, Zorko is able to grasp the diversity of every
 35 single story, and thus display how even the home has been differentiated
 36 and is 'in flux' from the beginning. Consequently, Zorko holds that migrants'
 37 memories and cultural memories are essentially the same, as if memory
 38 would 'fail to "travel"', it would also fail to constitute memory in any mean-
 39 ingful sense'. Thus, memory is turned into a self-reflexive method, similar to
 40 Zuzana M. Pick's assertion that exile is a form of privileged, productive space.
 41 The experience of the migrant fosters a critical view on every place of origin
 42 as being never fixed or stable. Because of the symmetry between migration
 43 and memory, Zorko concludes with the suggestion that scholars of memory
 44 studies need to do no more than merely illuminate 'the work that memory
 45 already does'. This might not be as easy as it sounds, and Zorko's own essay
 46 shows the efforts and possibilities in finding a method for such a document-
 47 ing approach.

48 Sabina Hadžibulić and Željka Manić in their article 'My life abroad: The
 49 nostalgia of Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries' investigate Serbian
 50 immigrants' nostalgic feelings and analyse the objects of nostalgia, such as
 51 personal experiences related to specific life situations, periods in life, impor-
 52 tant events or past self-identities. Arguing that nostalgia, as a universal expe-

rience that tends to be shared and negotiated with others, can deeply affect
 immigrants and influence their lives and interpretations of their current life
 settings in their new countries, the authors define nostalgia as 'a memory
 practice that interprets the present with reference to a loss of something
 meaningful in another time and, possibly, in another place'. Stressing nostal-
 gia's capability to mix positive and negative emotions and motivate for change
 and adaptation, the article searches for features of the past that are important
 to Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries. The authors' goal is to demon-
 strate the personal and psychological function of nostalgia in the migrants'
 lives by analysing Serb immigrants' impressions of everyday life, which have
 been published as freestyle texts between 2007 and 2015 in the section 'My
 life abroad' of the Serbian daily newspaper, [Blic](#). The quantitative and qualita-
 tive content analysis of 36 texts referring to the lives of Serbian immigrants
 in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland shows that nostalgia links the
 past, present and future together and that in the majority of cases the objects
 of nostalgia are personal experiences related to specific life circumstances:
 living conditions, cultural differences and identity. The value direction of the
 analysed texts suggests that in the immigrants' memories there is an almost
 equal representation of positive nostalgic memories and 'bittersweet' nostal-
 gic memories, which is caused primarily by the realization of the unavailability
 of the positive aspects of the past life in the present. Observing that, overall,
 the immigrants more frequently expressed positive than negative feelings, the
 authors assert that nostalgia has a significant function in migrants' lives as
 it shields their values and norms and offers incentives for a fight for a better
 future.

The articles in this issue, by analysing the emergence of transcultural
 and transnational memories, the hybridization of identities, global culture,
 global ethics, borderless communication and intercultural dialogue, enhance
 the 'cosmopolitan turn' and expand our understanding of debates about the
 role of the media today and the public uses of new media, as well as the role
 of fiction in constructing the concept of 'difference' in popular imagination.
 Many research questions that have inspired the organization of this issue –
 such as how sociologists and cultural studies scholars can study migrants'
 memories, or how this study is distinctive from (and how it relates to) cognate
 subjects such as intellectual history, or which theoretical frameworks and
 methodological approaches are most productive for studying the memories of
 migrants – are, of course, in need of further debate. We hope that this special
 issue of *Environment and Planning A* convincingly shows a need for a wider and richer debate of the issue
 of migration and memory. As every contribution to this issue convincingly
 argues, an analysis of memory and migration shows that memory moves, and
 therefore research on memory also needs to move.

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4

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21 **Memory's role in lending** 22 **meaning to migrants' lives** 23 24 25

26 **ABSTRACT**

27 This article argues that our understanding of the complexity of the links
28 between memory and migration can be enhanced by focusing on the role of
29 experience in lending meaning to migrants' lives. Realizing the difficulties of
30 providing a comprehensive sociological account of experience and recogniz-
31 ing the potential of works of fiction to enrich sociological imagination, this
32 article will try to capture details of people's experiences with the help of litera-
33 ture. Using a broad narrative method to analyse the selected British realist
34 novels, this paper aims to discover their representations of the ways in which
35 migrants rely on past experiences in sense-making practices.
36
37

38 **KEYWORDS**

39 migration
40 memory
41 experience
42 past
43 novels

44 **INTRODUCTION: THE NOVEL AND STUDYING MEMORY**

45 Today, with migration being a highly politicized and widely discussed issue,
46 and with migrants' memories perceived as presenting a challenge to the tradi-
47 tional concept of social memory as a provider of national identity (Glynn and
48 Kleist 2012), both memory and migration are topics of great political and
49 social relevance. Because of both the importance and the difficulties of provid-
50 ing a comprehensive sociological account of migrants' memory, this article
51 relies on the potential of works of fiction to capture people's experiences of
52 their remembrances of the past and experiences in new countries. Although
we should not look to works of fiction for authenticity of historical experi-
ence, the novel can be a source of hypotheses of and insights into the main

mechanisms of the sense-making practice that could be further developed and tested by social scientists.

The appeal of novels is connected with the fact that they can 'say more, even about the social realm, than many writings with scientific pretensions' (Bourdieu 1996: 32). This attraction can best be illustrated by a frequent observation that 'some of the best sociology is in novels' (Ruff 1974: 368), and by the appreciation of the novel as 'a form of social inquiry' (Tait 2014: 38). With complexity being the essence of the novel's spirit, as every novel says to the reader '[t]hings are not so simple as you think' (Kundera 1988: 18), scores of sociologists view literary fiction as 'a... way of making known that which one does not wish to know' (Bourdieu 1993: 158), and appreciate novels for their ability to address human experience. As the novel's duty is to remove 'a magic curtain, woven of legends, hung before the world', or, in other words, the veil of prejudices that blocks our view of reality, novelists, by tearing this curtain of pre-interpretation, face the world's ambiguity and uncertainty (Kundera 2005: 92), and can help us grasp not only the complexity of social reality but also its more hidden aspects.

Thus, the novel can enrich sociological investigation by enhancing our imagination and suggesting ideas to be worked out by the social sciences. As the beings of fiction 'offer us an imagination that we would not have without them' (Latour 2013, 240, original emphasis), we should not only 'cherish and respect' them but also realize that 'we are produced by what we produce' (Latour 2013: 248). Apart from the awareness of this overlapping, while relying on literature we also need to realize that the stories are framed according to contemporary literary models, and that neither novels nor their representations of memory can deliver 'truth' (Radstone 2000: 85). In short, to limit any questioning of the validity of the use of literature for sociological purposes, we must be aware of the limits of the literary material and realize that the novel is 'defined precisely by the fact that it does not say what it says in the same way as the sociological reading does' (Bourdieu 1996: 32).

While remembering that '[n]ovels are sociology to the extent that their authors make them' (Runciman 1985: 21, original emphasis), and that the novel 'refuses to exist as illustration of an historical era, as description of a society, as defense of an ideology, and instead puts itself exclusively at the service of "what only novel can say"' (Kundera 2005: 67), this article will rely on the literary input to enhance the richness of our understanding of the role that migrants' memories play in constructing meanings of their experiences. Since literature is not a unified category, and since few novels' narratives coincide in a straightforward way with the theme of migrants' memories, a question arises about what kind of novels we should be concerned with in order to make some imaginative input into the topic. The contemporary nature of our topic also means that we cannot follow a clear preference in the history of the sociology of literature to study fiction through the examination of classics or a great literature that 'fulfills basic human desire to express the enigma of subjective experience' (Goodstein 2005: 34). However, accepting that the choice of the novel for sociological studies appears to be always marked by the quality of literary works, this paper will rely on novels that are recognized works of art. The sample consists of 24 British novels that won one of the main UK literary prizes either in the 1950s–1960s or between 1990 and 2009. The selected periods allow us to compare novels published in the first stable decades after World War II, which were characterized by a low intake of migrants, with novels published in another relatively economically stable period, but with an increasing number of immigrants. Apart from

1 being recognized and published in one of these two periods, the novels were
 2 selected on the bases of plot location (all the novels are set in Britain), genre
 3 (they are all realistic novels) and contemporaneity (all the plots are set in their
 4 contemporary societies). By relying on a broad narrative method (understood
 5 as a loose collection of methods ranging from the content analysis and inter-
 6 pretation of a story to a more systematic comparison of different elements of
 7 multiple stories), I shall analyse the selected novels to discover their represen-
 8 tations of the ways in which migrants rely on memories in their sense-making
 9 practices (see the Appendix for the list of selected novels).

11 **MEMORY, EXPERIENCE AND MAKING SENSE OF NEW LIFE**

13 Despite their importance, the relationships between memory and migration
 14 are often overlooked as – following Halbwachs's (1992) explanation of 'forget-
 15 ting' as a result of the disappearance of the social context of memory, without
 16 which we cannot mobilize and reactivate our recollections – it is assumed that
 17 migrants' remembrance is not longlasting and that migrants move with the
 18 future in mind. Yet, migration does not necessarily involve deleting the past
 19 and can entail managing to belong without erasing the past. Furthermore,
 20 memory is important in the context of migration because it provides 'continu-
 21 ity to the dislocations of individual and social identity' (Creet 2011: 3). Thus,
 22 taking into account memory's role in motivating, and framing comparisons
 23 and integrating migrants' various temporal narratives, it can be said that the
 24 relationships between memory and migration are significant but not simple.

25 Moreover, these relationships are further complicated by the fact that their
 26 nature depends upon many factors connected not only with the features of
 27 the receiving country (its migration policy, and socioeconomic and cultural
 28 divisions) but also with the nature or type of migration (political migration
 29 or economic migration, individual, family or group migration) as well as with
 30 the individual characteristics of migrants (gender, family status, education).
 31 Hence, grasping the complexity of the links between memory and migra-
 32 tion requires a boarder theoretical approach that could enrich the depth of
 33 our understanding of the plurality of migrants' lives. A good starting point
 34 for developing such a comprehensive perspective is to investigate the litera-
 35 ture on the subject to discover what notions are relied upon to construct the
 36 connections between memory and migration. The phenomena that are most
 37 frequently seen as mediating between migration and memory are concepts
 38 such as loss, melancholy and nostalgia (Rosinska 2011). If we encapsulate all
 39 these concepts into a broader and summary term of 'experience' and follow
 40 the narrative self-constitutive approach's view that persons tend to experience
 41 their lives as unified wholes (Nussbaum 2001), the importance of memory in
 42 the context of migration can be attributed to its role in integrating migrants'
 43 different experiences by providing the unity of narrative.

44 In other words, the concept of experience is one of the central means of
 45 reconstructing the past as we act differently towards old memories when we
 46 meet new experiences (Levin 2013: 716). Migration, often signifying a period
 47 of rapid change, is responsible for the emergence of the new past, 'which
 48 we construct for the standpoint of the new problems of today... based upon
 49 continuity which we discover in that which has arisen and [...] serves us until
 50 the rising novelty of tomorrow necessitates a new history' (Mead 1929: 235).
 51 Thus, since it is our past experience 'in relation to which the self-synthesis of
 52 experience is formed' (Ferguson 2009: 39), one of the most important functions

of past experience is lending meaning to our lives. Since we act differently towards old memories when we meet new experiences, the concept of experience is one of the central means of reconstructing the past (Levin 2013: 716). As human life 'simply is not possible without the quality of meaningfulness' (Barbalet 1999: 631), experience is 'the alpha and omega of what it means to be human' (Gardiner 2012: 51). However, despite the fact that experience is seen as the source of all meanings, and as sociologists' attempts to comprehend actors' experiences, there is still 'no way adequately to communicate the strange complexity and variable texture of immediate experience' (Ferguson 2009: 7).

Contemporary sociology's conceptualization of the notion of experience is the legacy of the pragmatism and phenomenological tradition that focuses our attention on the role of experiences in the construction and negotiation of reality. These approaches start from the viewpoint of actors in specific situations and the assumption that the actors' interpretation of their environment serves to stabilize it. For Mead (1934: xiii, 29), who believed that the past arose in such a way as to enable 'intelligent conduct to proceed' against situational problems, experience will be always presented and interpreted in the present, with the future within it. Our experiences belong to the past, but they are continually reconstructed in the present as the past itself is not a past at all, and only its relation to the present is the grounds for its pastness (Mead 1934). The recreation and reformulation of the past into different pasts occur when people realize, through self-reflection and awareness, the inadequacy of the old presentation of the past. Thus, as the past matches and articulates present feelings in order to make sense of a given situation (Mead 1934), migrants' memories can be assumed to be 'highly flexible instruments that can help adjust the criteria of affiliation and incorporation to any social context or political preference', and thus help to make sense of a given situation (Glynn and Kleist 2012: 242).

Also in Dewey's (1934) conceptual framework in which the cognitive and practical components of experience are linked, the role of experience is connected with its impact on the difference that exists between the past as it happened and the past of the present. According to Dewey (1934: 35), all types of experience, from the most 'unusual' to the most ordinary, have a significant transformative effect upon individuals. However, they differ in terms of their transformative potential, as this capacity depends on the past experience relevant for re-organizing the present. The past experience, which is behind people's different ways of making sense of and interpreting their social world, provides knowledge for the actors' interpretation of the emergent present. The phenomenological tradition asserts, moreover, that

we, the actors on the social scene, experience the world we live in as a world both of nature and of culture, not as a private but as an intersubjective one, that is as a world common to all of us, either actually given or potentially accessible to everyone; and this involves intercommunication and language.

(Schutz 1964: 53)

The recognition of the role of shared 'stocks' of common-sense knowledge in enabling interaction stresses that the actors' interpretations of their situations are rooted in the assumption that others see things like we do, and this ensures the predictability and stability of life.

1 The findings of empirical studies tend to support the phenomenological
 2 and pragmatist assertion that an actor's interpretation of a situation aims to
 3 stabilize his or her environment. Several investigations suggest that migrants'
 4 ways of making sense of new conditions and rules of living are guided by their
 5 vision of desired 'normal' societal patterns of living (Wettergren 2013: 155). As
 6 they make sense of their new circumstances, migrants' dreams of a better life
 7 express themselves in their aspiration to have 'normal lives', which is happi-
 8 ness, because '[h]appiness is feeling normal. Perceiving themselves as being
 9 on "the road to establishing a normal life," migrants aim to live in "normal"
 10 circumstances and experience "normal" security and stability' (Wettergren
 11 2013: 33). In the process of finding and negotiating their way in a new coun-
 12 try, migrants see normality as 'everyday reality, which is the materially and
 13 pragmatically experienced state of being' (Rabikowska 2010: 286). They also
 14 refer to normality as a factor behind the stabilization of their lives and as
 15 connected with their expectations for a better future for themselves and their
 16 children (Wettergren 2013; Rabikowska 2010).

17 What is interesting about these findings is that migrants' dreams of
 18 normality reflect Mead's (1929) assumption that, in the context of change,
 19 conditions of insecurity and destabilization can be routinized by the recon-
 20 struction of the past in such a way as to assimilate it into a meaningful flow
 21 of events. Hence, migrants' memory can be interpreted as an instrument of
 22 normalization: that is, as a means of making sense of the present circum-
 23 stances as 'normal', or reconstructing disturbed circumstances of daily life into
 24 being perceived as normal conditions. Goffman's (1983: 9) idea of normal-
 25 ity as the lens or the frame by which people interpret and report what they
 26 see focuses our attention on how migrants reach 'a working understanding'
 27 (Goffman 1983: 11) or a meaningful grounding for action in new contexts.

28 There are many reasons for the validity of focusing on migrants' subjective
 29 experiences and studying their ways of constructing meaning, from practi-
 30 cal to theoretical ones. For example, the importance of such an approach
 31 can be justified on theoretical grounds that our work as social scientists
 32 'depends on how human experiences can be understood, shared and then
 33 communicated to others' (Chernilo 2014: 347). Moreover, this type of study
 34 links people's subjective experiences to the structures of social life, and there-
 35 fore enriches our understanding of the larger historical scene in terms of its
 36 meaning for and constraints imposed on those individuals involved. Finally,
 37 because investigations of migrants' subjective experiences do not fail to
 38 recognize the challenges of structure or preclude references to politics, they
 39 can prevent 'discourse from slipping too quickly into ahistorical abstraction'
 40 (Huyssen 2011: 616).

41 Studying migrants' ways of constructing meaning is a very difficult task,
 42 as it requires an engagement with subjectivity and covers the past and
 43 present. There is a wide range of methodological approaches, such as
 44 life narrative interviews, oral histories, diaries, letters, blogs, and other
 45 autobiographical materials, to examine migrants' experience. Such
 46 studies however encounter the issue of the reliability of documentary
 47 sources, the problem of interpretation of oral evidence, concern over
 48 temporal distance from an event, and concern over the distortion or
 49 divergence between fact and fiction.

(Trew 2013)

To overcome the difficulties in providing a comprehensive sociological account of experience, this article will capture the details of people's experiences with the help of works of fiction. While recognizing that the beings of fiction 'possess a particular type of reality' (Latour 2013: 239), it can be argued that they are still important to our understandings of meanings, and that fiction can serve as an alternative vehicle in the search for meanings. In what follows, by analysing the selected novels, I will first demonstrate that to enrich our understanding of migrant memories it is important to locate them in the context of their specific historical circumstances.

THE CHANGING CONTEXT AND MIGRANTS' EXPERIENCE

The majority of analysed British novels published in the 1950s and 1960s do not address the issue of migration. In contrast to them, in the novels from the 1990s and the 2000s this topic is frequently approached. While this difference speaks for itself, a more in-depth comparison of the novels from these two periods offers an interesting account of contingencies of historical contexts, knowledge of which is essential to comprehend how migrants make sense of their circumstances. For instance, the comparison shows the differences between the autographical scripts offered by the cultures of the two different periods, and changes in the ways in which people manage to achieve unity and coherence of narrative frameworks, as well as exposing the process of the growing hybridization of identities and the increasing importance and scope of reflexivity.

In the novels from the 1950s and the 1960s, it is not the past in foreign countries or migrants' memories but rather the memories of the UK pre-war poverty and instability as well as the dramatic war experiences that are the permanent frameworks of reference. In the majority of the analysed novels from the first period, we are presented with the enduring pattern of relative stability, coherence, stratification and well-marked boundaries between 'us' and 'others'. These 'others' included outsiders that should be kept out – for example, Irish and Catholics who were listed as unwanted lodgers by one of the main protagonists in Storey's novel *This Sporting Life* (1960). If we encounter references on the pages of the early novels to people from other countries or ethnic groups, their presence is painted as a rather extraordinary event and source of amazement. These exotic 'strangers', who are only visiting or staying temporarily, are accepted but seen as subjects of some kind of wonder. For instance, a student from India and a tutee from Greece in Drabble's (1965) novel, and a Hindu lodger and visitor from Africa in Sillitoe's book, are all welcomed but also met with puzzlement. In *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, the hero's whole family is taken by surprise to see 'a Negro sitting in the living room' (Sillitoe 1958: 196). As they ask this visiting friend of their soldier son from the British services in West Africa if he can read and write, the 'coloured soldier... beamed with happiness at the universal sympathy around him' (Sillitoe 1958: 200). Apart from alien visitors, the novels of the first period also offer some portrait of established migrant communities that define respectability through their loyalties to old traditions. For example, in Bernice Rubens's (1969) novel *The Elected Member*, a close-knit Jewish family cultivates the memory of their past Eastern European home as a symbol of their social and economic mobility. The father of the main hero, Rabbi Zweck, arrived in the United Kingdom as a young migrant from Lithuania before World War II and married Sarah

1 Solomon, the daughter of a shop owner, also originally from Eastern Europe.
 2 Subsequently, the couple takes over a shop in the East End of London and,
 3 by clinging to the past and its values, achieves standing in the local commu-
 4 nity. However, their aspiration to preserve the unreconstructed past that
 5 defines for them what is 'acceptable' and 'normal' leads them to reject their
 6 daughter's non-Jewish husband and makes them unable to face and cope
 7 with their son's mental illness. *The Elected Member* (1969) exposes the tragic
 8 costs of the family's determination to rely on the past for lending meaning
 9 to their new challenges.

10 In contrast to the novels of the first period, in the novels of the 1990s
 11 and 2000s we have a fascinating glimpse into many ethnic cultures in Britain,
 12 such as Bangladeshi, Pakistani, African and Eastern European. For instance,
 13 Smith's (2000) *White Teeth* illustrates the expansion of the ethnic plurality,
 14 internal complexities, and richness of migrant groups, and paints an optimis-
 15 tic picture of the end to thinking in terms of 'them' and 'us'. Although the
 16 novel does not view the process of the growing hybridization of identities and
 17 cultures as painless or without tension, it celebrates the diversity. For instance,
 18 its main hero, Samad, while worryingly noticing that we are surrounded by
 19 people 'with the first and last names on a direct collision course', such as 'Isaac
 20 Leung, Danny Rahman, Quang O'Rourke and Irie Jones', is positive about the
 21 changing nature of our world: 'This has been the century of strangers, brown,
 22 yellow and white. This has been the century of the great immigrant experi-
 23 ment' (Smith 2000: 326). The idea of the hybridization of identities is well
 24 illustrated by Smith's portraits of several generations of migrants. For exam-
 25 ple, on the pages of *White Teeth* we meet a couple with a 'hybridized' identity,
 26 the Chalfens, a secular Jewish, middle-class, 'aging couple both dressed in
 27 pseudo-Indian garb' (2000: 131). The Chalfens cultivate their own hybridized
 28 standards of identity, or their 'Chalfishness', by following 'the Chalfen way/
 29 and trying to be a 'bit more Chalfenist about things all the time' (Smith 2000:
 30 314, original emphasis). Joyce Chalfen is the author of *The New Flower Power*,
 31 'a cross-pollination between a lapsed-Catholic horticulturalist feminist and an
 32 intellectual Jew' (Smith 2000: 309).

33 However, some of the novels from recent decades, while acknowledg-
 34 ing diversity, paint a less optimistic picture. Their presentation of the process
 35 of transformation of the whole country illustrates the changes in values and
 36 ways in which contemporary society defines itself and addresses its problems.
 37 For example, Phillips's (2003) *A Distant Shore* shows various ways in which
 38 people in a society under the pressure of change cope with this new flux and
 39 complex reality. The questions about the current state of the nation, about
 40 the notion of Englishness, strangers and belonging, are all set in the open-
 41 ing sentence of the novel: 'England has changed. These days it is difficult to
 42 tell who's from around here and who's not. Who belongs and who's a stran-
 43 ger. It's disturbing. It doesn't feel right' (Phillips 2003: 3). Dorothy, the main
 44 protagonist of *A Distant Shore*, reflects on a memory of her dead parents and
 45 their prejudices: 'Mom and Dad both disliked coloureds. Dad told me that he
 46 regarded coloureds as a challenge to our English identity' (Phillips 2003: 42).
 47 She realizes that the roots of this 'disturbing' condition lie in people's resist-
 48 ance to change and their determination to not acknowledge strangers. She
 49 herself cannot accept many things; she has problems with homeless people,
 50 gypsies, strangers beggars and thefts, and is annoyed by the fact that young
 51 people now feel 'entitled to dress, behave, speak, walk, do whatever they
 52 please' (Phillips 2003: 30).

What is interesting is that these more recent novels are often written from their migrant heroes' perspectives, which expands our understanding of migrants' ways of seeing and reflecting on their new situations. For example, we can find the increasing levels of reflexivity in migrants' narration in the novels by Ali (2003), Smith (2000), Phillips (2003) and Tremain (2008). We see British society through the eyes of the ethnic newcomers for whom the land of diversity and chance 'sounded like "paradise"' (Smith 2000: 38, original emphasis). While they appreciate freedom and hope that the United Kingdom becomes their new home, at the same time these migrants realize that they do not necessarily have much in common with the mainstream of British society and that they are not always welcome. For example, in Ali's (2003) *Brick Land*, its heroine, Nazneen, who migrated from a village in East Pakistan to London's East End, while observing ethnic tensions in the United Kingdom, comments on riots in Oldham and the National Front's programme and appeal to British people: 'The poor whites, you see, are the ones that feel most threatened' (Ali 2003: 265, 276). Nazneen, despite feeling trapped because everything is unfamiliar, as she lacks the means, knowledge and language to get out, is fascinated by English lifestyles, and females' fashionable dresses and independence. The ethnic protagonists of the novels realize that they themselves are seen as outsiders, yet they still want to believe in their good future in Britain. For example, in Phillips's (2003) *A Distant Shore*, Solomon (a refugee soldier from Africa), despite receiving threats from locals, trusts until his tragic death that the English village can provide him with a safe and good life.

The contrast between the first-period novels' image of the stable, coherent, limited and homogeneous context and the second-period novels' picture of the expansion of diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, sexual orientations, new family structures and increased mobility demonstrates the decline of the importance of home, the immediacy of diversity in people's experiences, and the emergence of the multiplicities of choices for local populations and migrants. Such new developments bring to our attention that the commonly accepted idea that 'past experiences lie at the root of all future actions', which tends to assume that people 'lived and [continue] to live in a homogeneous social space that is never transformed' (Lahire 2011: 42), should be open to discussion. In other words, the contrast between the analysed novels from two periods illustrates that the weight of habitus, defined as strategies and practices through which social order 'accomplishes itself' and makes itself 'self-evident' and 'meaningful' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 127–28), is maybe declining. Moreover, this shift between two analysed periods not only shows that 'the relevance of habitus began to decrease toward the end of the 20th century, given major changes in the structures of the advanced capitalist democracies', but also points out that, when habitual forms are incapable of providing guidelines for people's lives, the role of reflexivity increases (Archer 2010: 273). This means that when studying migrants' memories we should pay more attention to the reflexivity on which individuals increasingly rely to make sense of a present situation. Thus, while analysing the novels' representations of migrant experiences, we will be concerned with the role of reflexivity in the process of a sense-making and identity formation.

The literary presentations of migrants' experiences with the past, present and future

Apart from taking into account the contingencies of historical contexts, to comprehend how migrants make sense of their circumstances, we also need to grasp the role of their individual past experiences. This realization that to understand how migrants construct meaning to their new situations would require a reference to both individual and collective memories is well reflected in the analysed novels in which we see the reference to the collective past being used to provide the context in which the main characters search for meanings in their daily realities. As the novels' migrant protagonists strive to establish a sense of a coherent narrative in their lives, they actively learn to discover and sustain the constancy and continuity in a not-very-familiar present and even less known and predictable future. The migrants are presented as engaged 'in the battle between who they are and who they should be, what they were and what they will be' (Smith 2000: 516). This process of construction of the migrants' identities and making sense of their realities is viewed as necessitating an active reconstruction that links their successive selves across their life stories. Since the tragedy of personal sufferings in the face of historical trauma can limit people's abilities to perceive new things and prevent their exchanges and contacts with the outside world, the battle between the past, present and future is especially difficult when the public past and private memories are painfully intertwined.

In the works of fiction from both periods, individual traumatic memories are represented as the protagonists' private histories strongly enmeshed with collective or national pasts. These novels also illustrate that the past in which the public and private traumas are intertwined traps migrants, as such traumatic memories enslave them and construct a barrier that separates them from the external reality of their new country. Some main protagonists' memories of the war, poverty and other traumas are so painful that, despite their attempts to escape such recollections, the past keeps returning as phobias and obsessions that present a threat to mental well-being. For example, Solomon, the hero of *A Distant Shore* (2003), a former soldier from an unnamed African war-torn country where he experienced many traumatic events, is a victim of the suppressed past. He is a

lonely man who washes his car with a concentration that suggests that a difficult life is informing the circular motion of his right hand. His every movement would appear to be an attempt to erase a past that he no longer wishes to be remembered.

(Phillips 2003: 268)

Solomon, like other characters in this novel who are also unable to cope with the past traumas, initially simply tries to silence the past. However, he refuses to create false recollections in order to establish memory as 'a retreat', a place 'where you can lick your wounds and gather some strength before going back to the world [...] and where you learn to remember and therefore understand your life' (Phillips 2003: 312). Solomon, who recognizes the importance of private memories as the guardian of difference, feels that without sharing his past traumatic experience, he will 'have only this one year of [his] life' (Phillips 2003: 300); his inner life will be fractured, and he will always be 'a one-year-old man... burdened with hidden history' (Phillips 2003: 300).

To overcome his isolation, he searches for a person to whom he 'might tell the story' of his past and thus find some continuity between then and now (Phillips 2003: 300). However, Solomon, unassisted by the knowledge of the relevant cultural frameworks or scripts, fails to construct a coherent narrative able to connect the historical trauma with his painful memories. The novel illustrates the complexity and ambivalence of Solomon's attitude to the past and shows that the disconnectedness between memory and the present sense of self limits a possibility of overcoming trauma, and can lead to isolation from the external world.

Yet, as Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (1962) suggests, sometimes such sufferings and isolation can be overcome by people's self-reflexive attempts to bring some coherence and unity to their autobiographical remembering. *The Golden Notebook* (1962) illustrates how migrants, when faced with historical trauma, can undertake themselves dismantling the public past and private memories. Anna, the heroine, arrived in the United Kingdom from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). Her private memories are reflective of the collective past of 'the idealistic communist group in southern Africa', which was 'characterized by schism' (Lessing 1962: 78). The internal ideological divisions that result in Anna's 'personal breakdown is the analogue of collective insanity' (Lessing 1962: 80). Her anxiety, which 'is partly shaped and created by the times themselves' (Lessing 1962: 84), is slowly getting better with the help of her writing in her notebooks, in which she includes her remembering in a broader collective story of the past. In other words, while searching for a way to integrate her fragmented inner world and bring together her private and public self, Anna is assisted by her decision to keep notebooks. With their help, she develops self-knowledge and overcomes her fear of chaos and breakdown. Through writing in her several colour-coded notebooks (with a black-coloured one devoted to her experience in Africa), Anna removes the main source of pain from her life. In this way, her reflecting on the relationships between private and public past becomes one of the crucial factors in her fight to stay sane and against past traumas and anxieties. Tracing her process of remembering, Anna says, 'I was faced with the burden of recreating order out of the chaos that my life became. Time had gone, and my memory did not exist and I was unable to distinguish between what I invented and what I had known' (Lessing 1962: 36). Anna's reflexive construction of the coherent narratives out of her political memories illustrates a way of overcoming pain, suffering and trauma by the reflexive and active approach to autobiographical remembering.

However, painful and traumatic pasts are not the only causes of breakdowns and anxieties. Sometimes, tensions between past and present experiences are enough to increase migrants' desires to reconstruct the past. Contemporary novels illustrate the process of the reconstruction of migrants' memories as they encounter new things and gain understanding and confidence in new circumstances. For instance, for Nazneen, the heroine in Monika Ali's *Brick Lane*, her recalling of the past, on the one hand, is essential for her to survive in a new foreign world, and on the other, her continuous re-working of her recollections of the past is a part of the process of her self-actualization and empowerment. From the perspective of the process of her continual becoming over time, Nazneen views her voyage from Pakistan to Tower Hamlets as being full of her struggles with her fate, alongside dismissed moments where she felt that 'the power was inside her, that she was its creator', followed by giving power back to 'fate and not to herself' (Ali 2003: 300). Although initially her nights are full of memories from home and she submitted

1 herself to fate, with time Nazneen hardly recognizes herself in the story called
 2 'How You Were Left to Your Fate', which she continuously tells to her chil-
 3 dren. Even though she always starts her narrative about the village home with
 4 the words 'I was a stillborn child' and ends it with 'it was God's will' (Ali 2003:
 5 216), she keeps fighting her fate to find freedom and her genuine voice. By
 6 expressing her desire for a new life, as illustrated, for example, by her deci-
 7 sion to learn English, Nazneen embraces the transformative power of her
 8 new experience, without passively accepting whatever life brings her. With
 9 her memories of the past always being in a process of change, Nazneen feels
 10 liberated, no longer pinned to the prescribed, old, stable identity. Moreover,
 11 she not only reworks her story well, she also knows the power of visions of the
 12 past. During her love affair with the increasingly radical Karim, Nazneen real-
 13 izes that this disaffected British Muslim is attracted to her because of her own
 14 personal biography or the power of her past, because she represents 'an idea
 15 of home': 'How did Karim see her? The real thing, he said. She was real thing.
 16 A Bengali wife. A Bengali mother. An idea of home. An idea of himself he
 17 found in her' (Ali 2003: 454). With the succession of different selves, Nazneen
 18 learns to no longer evoke home as 'the remembrance of things past', but to
 19 rebuild 'home' in her new country (Ali 2003: 37).

20 Rose Tremain (2008), in *The Road Home*, while also pointing to the impor-
 21 tance of the cumulative assemblage of what is recalled at different stages of
 22 life, and to the liberating effects of freedom from the fear of breaking old
 23 rules, demonstrates how for migrants their past can serve as the source of
 24 aspirations, belonging, and the frame of comparison. As the title of the book
 25 suggests, Tremain's (2008) work is about a journey home. Its hero, Lev, a
 26 widowed, economic immigrant to the United Kingdom from an unspecified
 27 Eastern European country, is not interested in integration with the host soci-
 28 ety. For Lev, the memory of 'his own country, where he longed to return'
 29 (Tremain 2008: 337) determines his allegiance. At the beginning of the novel,
 30 Lev lives in memory, dreaming all the time about the past where he felt loved
 31 and was a part of the community. As he is haunted by the past, he 'longed
 32 to return to a time before the people [he] love most were lost' (Tremain 2008:
 33 71). He is totally convinced that forgetting Marina (his diseased wife) is some-
 34 thing he is not yet capable of doing (Tremain 2008: 7). Lev does not believe
 35 his friend's argument that 'it can change. Things like this are never what
 36 you'd call *stable*' (Tremain 2008: 92, original emphasis). Yet, as his old village
 37 is flooded, Lev accepts that there is no return to the same past, that there is a
 38 'need to move forwards, not back', and that this does mean 'a betrayal of the
 39 past' (Tremain 2008: 359).

40 During his first months in London, Lev experiences loneliness and
 41 displacement. While realizing that living in a foreign city challenges all his
 42 previous experiences, he still does not give up on his old friendships, and his
 43 passion or 'his heart's desire, his Great Idea', which prompts him to search for
 44 a job in which you do 'not feel humiliating' (Tremain 2008: 131, 336). Thus,
 45 Lev's reliance on the friends and values from home, while engaging his feel-
 46 ing of belonging, also helps him to pursue his active orientation towards the
 47 future. However, the past is also a reminder that in London his self-fulfilment
 48 is limited as he finds great difficulty in joining in conversation and grasping the
 49 meaning of many situations, misreading undercover signals or symbols. Lev's
 50 'feeling of inadequacy and rage' (Tremain 2008: 121) is connected with the
 51 fact that he does not share with his new friends not only their proficiency in
 52 English but also many cultural connotations, such as their past and background

knowledge. When talking to them he feels 'helpless and ignorant' (Tremain 2008: 119), and his inability to fit in makes him realize that: 'He was a stranger' (Tremain 2008: 211). Even though Lev admires English people, and although he is fascinated by their 'otherness', '*this newness*' is too exotic for him (Tremain 2008: 106, original emphasis). As his feeling of astonishment continues, Lev's longing to belong directs him home.

The topic of memory as a source of belonging is also addressed in Smith's *White Teeth* (2000), in which the issue of inescapability of the past and its importance for identities is signalled by the novel's epigraph from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: 'What's past is prologue'. The novel portrays a wide range of ethnic diversity and heterogeneity, and shows how the complexities, possibilities and difficulties brought about by modern conditions lead to growing negotiability and leniency in the ways migrants swing between desire to belong and a fear of being uprooted. The main characters in the novel, members of Archie and Samad's families living in contemporary London, are all aware of the diversity of the city that helps them realize that, although 'other people's music seems strange because their culture is different from *ours* [...] it doesn't mean it isn't equally good, now does it?' (Smith 2000: 155, original emphasis). The novel not only demonstrates the positive consequences of the openness, richness and tolerance of today's London, it also shows anxieties and tensions connected with the modern 'restless society' that makes it more difficult for people to make sense of their lives, and thus frequently ask 'what does anything matter?' (Smith 2000: 407). Probing of this ambivalence and the fluidity of diverse cultures is well illustrated by a confrontation between two main characters in *White Teeth* (2000). For example, Alsana, Samad's wife, who is very knowledgeable about the complexities of any claim to the pure identity of Londoners, about their racial origins says, 'it goes to show [...] You go back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy-tale' (Smith 2000: 236). When she is reminded by her husband that she is 'a Bengali' and should '[a]ct like one' (Smith 2000: 236), Alsana asks: 'My *own* culture? And what is that please?' (Smith 2000: 236, original emphasis). After reading to her husband from the *Reader's Digest Encyclopedia* about the diversity of ethnic origin of Bangladesh's inhabitants, Alsana summarizes it by saying that 'it looks like I am Western after all' (Smith 2000: 236).

In the novel, Smith focuses on two generations of immigrants' anxiety connected with belonging. Both generations of immigrants, in spite of their differences, face irrational worries and confusions as they either swing between their desire to belong and a fear of being rejected, of having their identity 'diluted', or of experiencing, in a 'schizophrenic' way, 'one foot in Bengal and one in Willesden' (Smith 2000: 32, 219). The first generation of immigrants is viewed as full of fears of 'dissolution, *disappearance*' (Smith 2000: 327, original emphasis), whereas the second generation is seen as 'crossing borders, sneaking to England' (Smith 2000: 328). While the parents' generation's anxiety reflects their worries about not being attached to their past, their children are faced with even more complex dilemmas as they feel that they are 'neither one thing nor the other' (Smith 2000: 351).

For Samad and Archie, the main representatives of the first generation of migrants, the past is the source of their identity and a new belonging. They are attentive to history as it offers the necessary framework for understanding their life roles. But they worry that the complexities and difficulties of their

1 new freedom could result not only in disconnection from their roots but also
 2 in difficulties in making sense of their present lives. Fearing the loss of iden-
 3 tity, Samad clings tightly to his past because you can 'begin to believe that
 4 birthplaces are *accidental*, that everything is *accidental*'. But if you believe that
 5 and give up on your past, 'where do you go? what do you do? what does
 6 anything matter?' (Smith 2000: 407, original emphasis). The first generation
 7 of immigrants is conscious that their experience differs from those settled
 8 Londoners who 'do not mind what their kids do in life as they are reasonably,
 9 you know, healthy, happy' (Smith 2000: 516). Unlike the 'lucky bastards' or
 10 insiders who do not need to struggle to make sense of their normal lives, the
 11 first generation of immigrants cannot simply rely on chance to 'get on with it'
 12 (Smith 2000: 516, 514). The parents assume that their children will do well in
 13 their new country only if they work harder than the local people, and there-
 14 fore impel their offspring, as Archie does, '*Go on my son!*' (Smith 2000: 542,
 15 original emphasis).

16 The first generation of migrants is disappointed in their offspring's lack
 17 of interest in family history and tradition: 'No respect for tradition. People
 18 call it assimilation when it is nothing but corruption' (Smith 2000: 190). Irie,
 19 Archie's daughter, does not accept the burden of the past, as it is the only
 20 way to freedom. For her, a member of the new generation, it is important
 21 to start afresh, to have 'a peaceful existence' with no past, full of unprob-
 22 lematic, normal 'joy [...] Just neutral spaces [...] Plenty of forgiveness. No
 23 attics. No skeletons in cupboards' (Smith 2000: 514–515). However, for many
 24 of the second generation of migrants who are caught in the middle as 'a
 25 hybrid thing' or 'a kind of cultural mongrel...' (Smith 2000: 213), the issue
 26 of belonging is not a rhetoric question. For instance, Millat, Alsana's son, is
 27 'this or that, Muslim or Christian, Englishman or Bengali, he lived for the in
 28 between, he lived up to his middle name, *Zulfikar*, the clashing of two swords'
 29 (Smith 2000: 351, original emphasis). Whereas Millat's search for his iden-
 30 tity takes him in the direction of Islamic fundamentalism, his brother Magid
 31 'comes out as a pukka Englishman, white-suited, silly-wig lawyer' (Smith
 32 2000: 448). While both young boys are trying different strategies and tactics
 33 to discard the past they see as irrelevant in the new country, and preserve the
 34 aspects of the past they perceive as nourishing them, their mother is 'caught
 35 between two of them trying desperately to find the middle ground' (Smith
 36 2000: 352). Alsana does not accept her sons' rejection of their religion and
 37 culture. She sees their hybridization as 'a symptom of a far deeper malaise
 38 [...] [they] really wanted to be in some *other family* [...] wanted to own cats
 39 and not cockroaches, wanted his mother to make the music of the cello,
 40 not the sound of the sewing machine' (Smith 2000: 151, original emphasis).
 41 Watching Millat's struggle between faith and secularism, between popular
 42 culture and fundamentalism, Alsana fears his relationships with his English
 43 friends: 'these people are taking my son away from me! Birds with teeth!
 44 They're Englishifying him completely. They're deliberately leading him away
 45 from his culture and his family and his religion' (Smith 2000: 345).

46 *White Teeth* (2000) illustrates that it is inevitable that the parents' view of
 47 integration is not shared by the second generation of young migrants who,
 48 with dual cultural competence, take for granted the hybrid and fluid nature of
 49 belonging. It also demonstrates that there is no one single answer to immi-
 50 grants' anxiety connected with belonging, and that migrants share with the
 51 locals feelings of loss of control and insecurity connected with modern condi-
 52 tions. With the growing importance of the process of individualization of

choices and the expansion of options, migrants need to find ways of addressing the issue of belonging, identity and making sense of the present. In short, under modern conditions, negotiating ways between isolation and integration, opting to have plural or hybrid identities, is not free of tensions of the cultural juggling act.

Conclusion: Managing the memory of the absent and the openings of the present

While recognizing the complexity of the links between memory and migration, this article demonstrates that our understanding of these connections can be enhanced by focusing on the role of experience in lending meaning to migrants' lives. Since meaning for the self does not come from external sources but needs to be achieved by the individuals themselves in relation to, but not separate from, the social world around them, it can be said that migrants' construction of meaning reflects their present experiences. By relying on the works of fiction, which offer a valuable insight into people's subjective experiences, we are able to grasp the role of migrants' past experiences in providing a frame for their sense-making practice. These novels also expose the transformative power of migration experience by showing how, in the face of a 'new situation', migrants act by 'mobilizing' embodied schemes that the situation calls for, which often include the past patterns, frameworks and habits for managing the present (Lahire 2011: 66).

By analysing the works of fiction from two different periods, we are able to illustrate that in the case of migrants' memories we cannot now presuppose the homogeneity and singleness of the past, as migrants' pasts and presents are themselves fundamentally plural and heterogeneous. Even more importantly, with the declining relevance of habitus, with habitual forms incapable of providing guidelines for people's lives, the immediacy of diversity in people's experiences is likely to engender reflexivity (Archer 2010). In this opening up of the past by the present, apart from the roles of the past schemes of actions, habits and manners, increasingly important are actors' reflexivity, self-knowledge and reflections.

Today, studies of migrants' memories have many new prospects, as the growing interest in blogs, and the increasing popularity of Facebook and Instagram and other new social media, offers new opportunities for the investigation of people's experiences, interactions, feelings and daily lives. The increase in the use of digital technologies, not only as a means of communication but also as new methods and tools to study texts and social interaction, can be a platform for new studies of memory, including migrants' memories. With people around the globe increasingly interacting with the help of digital devices that provide detailed relational records and new forms of participation in culture, studies on migrants' memories have a unique chance of overcoming the previous limitations to observing social interactions and people's subjective experiences.

APPENDIX

The sample consists of the recognized contemporary British realist novels of the 1950s to 1960s and the era between 1990 and 2009. Half of the selected novels for the 1950s–1960s were written by women, with four novels published in the 1950s and eight in the 1960s. Among the selected novels for

the second period, five were written by women and seven by men, while five were published in the 1990s and seven were published in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

NOVELS PUBLISHED IN THE 1950S AND 1960S

- Amis, K. (1954), *Lucky Jim*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Murdoch, I. (1954), *Under the Net*, London: Chatto & Windus.
 Braine, J. (1957), *Room at the Top*, London: Methuen.
 Sillitoe, A. (1958), *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, London: W. H. Allen.
 Storey, D. (1960), *This Sporting Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Dawson, J. (1961), *The Ha-Ha*, London: Anthony Blond Ltd.
 Lessing, D. (1962), *The Golden Notebook*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Trevor, W. (1964), *The Old Boys*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Drabble, M. (1965), *The Millstone*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Bowen, E. (1969), *Eva Trout or Changing Scenes*, London: Jonathan Cape.
 Read, P. P. (1969), *Monk Dawson*, London: Martin Secker & Warburg.
 Rubens, B. (1969), *The Elected Member*, London: Eyre and Spottiswoode.

NOVELS PUBLISHED IN THE 1990S AND 2000S

- Ali, M. (2003), *Brick Lane*, London: Black Swan.
 Cartwright, J. (2005), *The Promise of Happiness*, London: Bloomsbury.
 Fielding, H. (1996), *Bridget Jones' Diary*, London: Picador.
 Hornby, N. (2001), *How to Be Good*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 McEwan, I. (1998), *Amsterdam*, London: QPD.
 Mendelson, C. (2003), *Daughters of Jerusalem*, London: Picador.
 Parsons, T. (1999), *Man and Boy*, London: HarperCollins.
 Phillips, C. (2003), *A Distant Shore*, London: Vintage.
 Smith, Z. (2000), *White Teeth*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
 Swift, G. (1996), *Last Orders*, London: Picador.
 Tremain, R. (2008), *The Road Home*, London: Vintage.
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15 **JESSICA ORTNER**
16 University of Copenhagen

21 Diaspora, postmemory and 22 the transcultural turn in 23 24 contemporary Jewish writing

32 **ABSTRACT**

33 Since ancient times, diaspora has been intrinsically connected to Judaism.
34 Whereas modernization and emancipation at the end of the nineteenth
35 century had promised to end the principal rootlessness of Europe's Jewish
36 population, the rise of Nazism once again set them back into a diasporic and
37 extraterritorial state. According to Marianne Hirsch, descendants of exiled
38 Holocaust survivors unwillingly inherit their parents' continued dislocation.
39 As the homeland of their ancestors has 'ceased to exist', they are destined to
40 remain forever exiled from the 'space of identity', even if they choose to return
41 to the former homeland of their parents. According to Hirsch, the expres-
42 sion of this ongoing diaspora gives rise to a special narrative genre that is
43 governed by photographic aesthetics. The authors' imaginative completion of
44 their parents' experiences in the work of postmemory imitates the capacity of
45 photography to simultaneously make present and 'signal absence and loss'.
46 This article will differentiate Hirsch's approach to artistic representations of
47 diaspora in the aftermath of the Holocaust. By outlining different conceptual-
48 izations of diaspora, I will show that in addition to the aesthetics of photog-
49 raphy the postmemory of homelessness can also be expressed by means of
50 nostalgic aesthetics and transcultural aesthetics. The article exemplifies all
51 three of these types of aesthetics by investigating works by the contemporary

KEYWORDS

Diaspora
Judaism
Diasporic aesthetics
Nostalgic literature
Photographic
aesthetics
Transcultural identity
Postmemory
Holocaust memory

1. Parts of this article were previously published as 'Diaspora, postmemory and the transcultural turn in contemporary Jewish writing: Barbara Honigmann's autofictional writings', in *FORUM: University of Edinburgh Postgraduate Journal of Culture and the Arts* (Ortner 2015: 1–11).
2. The concept of rediasporization means 'a reversal of Jewish emancipation during the Third Reich and the Holocaust' (Garloff 2005: 6).
3. Autofictional writings offer the reader both an autobiographical and a fictional narrative, which frequently contradict each other (Zipfel 2005). For contradictions in Honigmann's autofictional writings see footnote 15.

Jewish writers David Mendelsohn, Anna Mitgutsch and Barbara Honigmann. Whereas Hirsch's photographic aesthetics represents the melancholic insight that a return to the place of origin is impossible, nostalgic aesthetics gives in to the very desire for a 'final return' (Hall 1990). Both the nostalgic and the photographic aesthetics intrinsically connect identity to a distinct location and cultural belonging, which the writers attempt to restore through the work of postmemory. Transcultural aesthetics, on the other hand, expresses the interconnection of different places and cultures that arises from living in diaspora. This article concentrates on the transcultural aesthetics exemplified in the autofictional writings of Barbara Honigmann. By voluntarily going into exile, Honigmann refrains from staying attached to a distinct space and from the attempt to assemble her fragmentary knowledge about her parents' past with regard to an imaginary homeland.

In this article I shall investigate how the experience of exile is expressed in postmemorial literature written by Jewish descendants of exiled Holocaust survivors.¹ I suggest that literary representations of exile and homelessness may be analysed by applying the concept of diaspora. As a highly multi-layered phenomenon, the concept of diaspora is suitable for grasping various modes of memory and identity formations, which the artistic representations of exile bring forth. The interconnection between the experience of exile and diasporic aesthetics has been investigated thoroughly by Marianne Hirsch (1997). This article will challenge Hirsch's notion that the diasporic nature of postmemorial writings necessarily leads to the use of photographic aesthetics. In contrast, I suggest that the photographic aesthetics is associated with a distinct concept of diaspora in which the expelled remains entangled to his or her lost territory, despite the awareness that a return is impossible. Another concept of diaspora may lead to a completely different aesthetic strategy of representing exile. In this article, I will outline and exemplify three different modes of diasporic writing: photographic, nostalgic and transcultural. I will concentrate on the transcultural writings of the German-Jewish author Barbara Honigmann, who, in contrast to both the photographic and the nostalgic modes, detaches identity from an attachment to a distinct place of origin. The article will begin by outlining Honigmann's and Hirsch's dissimilar perceptions of diaspora and postmemory. Afterwards, I will demonstrate the photographic and the nostalgic aesthetics on the basis of Anna Mitgutsch's novel *Haus der Kindheit/House of Childhood* (2000) and Daniel Mendelsohn's novel *The Lost. A Search for Six Out of Six Million* (2007). This will lead to a reading of the transcultural conception of diaspora, which surfaces in Barbara Honigmann's postmemorial writings ([1986] 2002, [1999] 2002, [2004] 2007, [1991] 2008).

Barbara Honigmann is one of the most important representatives of the post-Shoah generation, which from the midst of the 1980s started to broach the issue of their Jewishness. Honigmann explicitly situates her writings in the aftermath of the 'rediasporization' of the European Jews.² This article investigates Honigmann's writings through the lens of transcultural memory studies as recently defined by Astrid Erll. In a series of autofictional writings, which consist of 'collages of recollected stories, letters, quotes from books, inscriptions of graves, [and] diaries' (Fiero 2008: 2), Honigmann stages herself as a truly transcultural figure, blending traces from various mnemonic frameworks.³ Due to a self-imposed exile in Strasbourg, she shifts between her French residence, her German mode of writing, and her Jewish religious practice. In her writings, Honigmann seems to conduct a classical work of postmemory,

insert space after abstract

1 understood as an 'imaginative investment and creation' of the parents' traumatic past (Hirsch 1997: 22). She reconstructs her parents' Jewish genealogy, follows their routes of exile, considers their return to Germany after the war, and reflects on her own decision to leave Germany in order to readopt the Jewish religion. However, as I will show, Honigmann's writings oscillate between an excavation of her parents' past and the realization that this task is not sufficient for tracing their original identity, and thus restoring her own. Through the work of postmemory, Honigmann realizes that her parents' feeling of belonging to Germany, Austria or to the GDR had been a delusion that ultimately resulted in a state of total homelessness they no longer belonged to the Jews and had not become German either ([1999] 2002: 14). In contrast, Honigmann embraces life in diaspora as the sole possibility for being true to her Jewish birth and thus regaining an identity beyond national belonging. This reveals a striking discrepancy between Hirsch's conceptualization of postmemory in the aftermath of exile and Honigmann's literary conceptualization of diaspora and self-imposed exile. Whereas Honigmann understands diaspora as the true source of Jewish identity, Hirsch defines it as the perpetuated exile of the descendants 'from the space of identity' (1997: 243).⁴ The reason for this discrepancy is that Hirsch's concept of exilic postmemory and Honigmann's fictional creation of self-imposed exile rely on different concepts of diaspora. Following this line of thinking, I will now explore different definitions of diaspora and elaborate which aesthetics of exilic postmemory those conceptualizations entail.

DIASPORA: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

27 Originally, diaspora referred to the mythical event of the expulsion of the Jews from the Promised Land after the Roman destruction of the second temple. The yearning to end the state of dispersion holds a prominent position in Jewish liturgy and prayer. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, many of the Central European Jews had either abandoned their religious commitment to Jerusalem or were engaged in political efforts to found a Jewish state (Levy and Sznajder 2006: 50). As a consequence, the rediasporization of the European Jews the religious practice of re-enacting the religious bond to Israel was replaced by a yearning for the abandoned European cities (Bos 2006: 98). From the 1960s onwards, diaspora gained an expanded significance, referring to a wide range of experiences of displacement, such as slavery and postcolonial migrations. William Safran criticizes the fact that the term is used for virtually any group or minority 'who can trace their origins to a country or region other than that, in which they reside' (1999: 255).⁵ Levy and Sznajder, on the other hand, welcome the development, and even stretch the term to encompass a feeling of disenfranchisement, which does not imply geographical displacement at all but which is caused by the accelerating outcomes of globalization in the 'second modernity', a term they borrow from Ulrich Beck (2000). Their conception is part of a major positive redefinition of diaspora as social formations that 'challenge hegemony and boundedness of the nation state and, indeed [...] any pure imaginaries of nationhood' (Werbner 2000: 6). However, the 'abstraction and generalization' of diaspora implied a gradual disintegration of the term from the Jewish experience (Boyarin and Boyarin 2002: 12). This disintegration is particularly explicit in Stuart Hall's definition of diaspora. According to Hall, the 'literal' diaspora society understands the past as the source of one true

4. The terms 'exile' and 'diaspora' may be understood as two overlapping ways of describing displacement. However, whereas exile describes the concrete geographical displacement of a single person or family, diaspora is also linked to minority group solidarity, cultural dominance and identity, and to the way in which these subjects are negotiated artistically (Israel 2000: 3).
5. In order to limit the inflationary use of the term, Safran delineates several features that exclude several migrated groups from being labelled as Diasporas (see also Bardenstein 2006: 20).

identity, which can only be achieved by returning to 'some sacred homeland', 'even if it means pushing other people into the sea'. This 'imperialistic' and 'hegemonic' conception of diaspora as a *return* implies an 'imaginative rediscovery' of a, previously hidden, 'essential identity' (Hall 1990: 235). In opposition to the perception of the past as 'a fixed origin' to which one can make a 'final and absolute return' (Hall 1990: 226), Hall's 'metaphorical' conception of diaspora is not defined 'by essence or purity but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity' (Hall 1990: 235). As Boyarin and Boyarin critically remark, Hall reduces Jewish diaspora to a 'caricatured Zionism', and 'identifies Jewishness only with a lack, a neurotic attachment to the lost homeland', which 'banishes the Jews from the brave new world of hybridity' (2002: 13). Even though the critique is a valid one, Hall's distinction will be shown to be heuristically useful.

More neutrally related to diaspora societies in general, Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal criticizes the fact that the members of diasporas do not fully assimilate with their host countries but rather remain attached to their original home. Thus, she conceives the diaspora society as 'an extension of a nation state model', a 'trope for nostalgia' that preserves a linkage between 'territory, culture and identity' (Soysal 2000: 3). James Clifford objects to this perception, stating that 'whatever their ideologies of purity, diasporic cultural forms can never, in practice, be exclusively nationalist'. Rather, 'they are deployed in transnational networks built from multiple attachments' (Clifford 1994: 307).

Despite their critique of Hall and Clifford, Boyarin and Boyarin likewise see the diasporic identity as the result of a constant blending and mixing of cultures. In pointing out that God 'grounded Jewish group identity in a common genealogical origin rather than in a common spatial origin' (Garloff 2005: 4), Boyarin and Boyarin stress that the 'impossibility of a natural association between this people [the Jewish] and a particular land' lays bare the fact that 'cultures as well as identities are constantly remade' and thus are products of mixing (1993: 721). Hall, Clifford and the Boyarins thus agree upon the understanding of diaspora societies as open cultural formations that blend or mix the specific and local culture of the host society with cultural traces from the original homeland, thereby forming a hybrid or transnational identity. This insight is in accordance with Astrid Erll's concept of transculturality, understood as 'mnemonic processes unfolding *across* and *beyond* cultures' (2011: 9). Both Erll's conception of transcultural identity and the Boyarins' concept of Jewish identity comprehend identity as a heterogeneous complex. According to Erll, it is part of everybody's everyday experiences to belong to multiple mnemonic groups and to have hybrid identities, such as 'a German Protestant football fan or a Buddhist Englishwoman playing jazz' (2011: 10). Similarly, Boyarin and Boyarin identify the identity of the medieval scholar Rabbi Sa'adya as an 'Egyptian Arab who happens to be Jewish', and as 'a Jew who happens to be an Egyptian Arab' (1993: 721).

THE POSTMEMORY OF EXILE AND DIASPORA, AND BEYOND

Honigsmann bases her identity on her membership in multiple mnemonic groups. She lives a 'triple life' in touching upon the margins of three cultures French, German and Jewish ([1999] 2002: 72). Her Jewish identity is to a great part formed by a circle of friends, which contains both Ashkenazy and

1 Sephardic Jews. Thus, Judaism in itself is revealed as a highly inconsistent
 2 and diverse complex that contains different mnemonic groups. Honigmann's
 3 justification of her self-imposed exile strikingly resembles Boyarin and
 4 Boyarin's idea that the Jewish identity is not based on a territorial belong-
 5 ing but on a genealogical one. In a scene in the novel *Damals, dann und*
 6 *danach* 'The Past and What Came After' ([1999] 2002) in which Honigmann
 7 describes her protagonist's search for a Jewish identity, the gravestones of the
 8 Jewish cemetery in Berlin Weißensee in the mind of the protagonist begin
 9 to form a network of names, places and ages to which she, her parents and
 10 her grandparents belong ([1999] 2002: 26). As origin is constructed through
 11 genealogic relations, her inherited homelessness is considerably eased when
 12 she, upon publishing a book about her father, receives letters from hitherto
 13 unknown relatives that 'helped her reconstruct the paternal family tree' that
 14 her father had not introduced to her (Schaumann 2008: 184).⁶ In recalling her
 15 early attempts to find her identity in her mother's place of origin, Vienna,
 16 the narrator apprehends that Vienna was merely an arbitrary place of exile
 17 in a long line of other places of exile. Thus, she realizes that she has been
 18 searching for her origin in vain, presuming it to be situated in a distinct place:
 19 'Suddenly I realized that Vienna is an island. Also Vienna is one of those
 20 islands that are bound to sink into the ocean of exile sooner or later'.⁷ Thus,
 21 Honigmann's act of postmemory, which was supposed to lead to a place of
 22 origin, merely reveals that there is no place to return to.

23 Marianne Hirsch defines postmemory as a connection to the past that is
 24 'not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection and
 25 creation' (2012: 5). Thus, postmemory describes a creative act in which the
 26 children try to 'fill in the blanks' of a family story that is damaged by 'histori-
 27 cal trauma, by war, Holocaust, exile and refugeehood' (Bos 2006: 52; Hirsch
 28 2012: 33). Even though Honigmann, just as in a classic performance of the
 29 work of postmemory, lets her autofictional narrator visit the places where
 30 her parents have lived and meets the people they had known abroad, she
 31 does not succeed in finding any trace of her parents' former life and is left
 32 with a feeling of bewilderment and disorientation.⁸ It is neither satisfying for
 33 her to visit the streets of her mother's childhood in Vienna ([1999] 2002: 101)
 34 nor the streets of her father's childhood in Wiesbaden ([1991] 2008: 67–70).
 35 In *Ein Kapitel aus meinem Leben* 'A chapter of my life', she realizes that her
 36 mother had never tried to assemble the fragments of her life story ([2004]
 37 2007: 139), and asks what gives her the right to pick up the broken bits and
 38 pieces in order to arrange them into a consistent account (2007: 141). Her
 39 failure to find her origin in a distinct place leads her eventually to decline
 40 the work of postmemory. The autofictional narrator of *Ein Kapitel aus meinem*
 41 *Leben* ([2004] 2007) states that she had not travelled to the places of her moth-
 42 er's past, had not searched and found any documents, and had not talked to
 43 anybody asking questions about her mother (2007: 141). However, I disagree
 44 with Schaumann's understanding that Honigmann rejects the work of post-
 45 memory altogether ([2004] 2007: 190). Whereas Honigmann fails to 'fill in the
 46 blanks' of family history by visiting the places of her parents, she succeeds in
 47 this task in going further back in family history, revealing that she 'as so many
 48 Jews, has her origin in almost all European countries' ([1999] 2002: 89). Before
 49 her great grandfather David Honigmann had started the process of assim-
 50 ilation, her family constantly travelled from residence to residence, making
 51 each new home an island within a shoreless ocean of exile that is bound to
 52 sink sooner or later ([1999] 2002: 89). Thus, her genealogy provides her with

6. She refers to the publication of her novel *Eine Liebe aus nichts* ([1991] 2008).

7. 'Und plötzlich wurde mir klar, daß Wien eine Insel ist. Auch Wien ist eine der Inseln, die alle früher oder später im Meer des Exils versinken' (Honigmann [1999] 2002: 119, my translation).

8. E.g., in *Ein Kapitel aus meinem Leben* ([2004] 2007) she walks the Quai d'Orsay, the street in Paris in which her mother had resided ([2004] 2007: 32), and visits Wiesbaden, the hometown of her father ([2004] 2007: 66–70). In *Damals, dann und danach* she visits the places in Vienna where her mother had lived as a child ([1999] 2002: 101), and visits Pieter, the former lover of her mother in Amsterdam ([1999] 2002: 108).

an identity, which is intrinsically hybrid and continually subject to change. She underpins this identity in going even further back to the mythical past of the Jewish Exodus from Egypt that founded the Jewish people as wanderers. Already in the first of her autofictional novels, *Roman von einem Kinde* 'A child's novel' ([1986] 2002), she describes the crossing of the Alexanderplatz during her first celebration of the Passover as a revelation, reminiscent of the division of the Red Sea during the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt ([1986] 2002: 25). She seeks a cosmopolitan 'Behaustheit'/'home' in diaspora by embracing both the ancient past of the Jews, which started with the Exodus from Egypt, and the tradition of her family, which she reveals as constant travelling ([1986] 2002: 25, [1999] 2002: 89). Also, her home in Strasbourg is merely an accidental place of exile. Even though this insight sometimes makes her long for an unknown place of home, she realizes that this nostalgia for a final place of belonging is a yearning that can only be fulfilled in a religious realm ([1999] 2002: 79–81). Thus, as Christina Guenther rightfully remarks, 'Honigmann's engagement with Judaism intensifies her feeling of spiritual exile or alienation'. The autofictional narrator transcends this spiritual exile by voluntary geographic displacement, thereby achieving 'a self-imposed and empowering uprootedness' (Guenther 2003: 222).

In contrast, Marianne Hirsch's conception of exile is filled with feelings of sorrow and loss. In her book *Family Frames*, Hirsch dedicates a particular chapter to investigating the situation of those living in the aftermath of exile (1997: 241–68). In Hirsch's view, the children of exiles in contrast to children of survivors of the concentration camps do not merely inherit their parents' traumatic memories; they also inherit their feeling of displacement. Through stories and photographs of their parents' place of origin, their entire sense of identity and belonging becomes tied to 'a world that had ceased to exist'. Therefore, these children always remain 'marginal or exiled, always in the diaspora'. Even if they choose to return to the cities of their ancestors, 'home' will always be elsewhere, as 'home', according to Hirsch, is rooted in a distinct place. She sees the identity position of those living in the aftermath of exile as utterly threatened. However, as Astrid Erll has shown in her account of transcultural memory, the private memory of the individual is able to combine several, overlapping 'social frameworks of memory', which is what Maurice Halbwachs had earlier called the 'cadres sociaux de la mémoire' (Halbwachs [1925] 1994, quoted in Erll 2011: 10). Just as a single person can belong to multiple nations, religions and subcultures, an individual can simultaneously belong to his or her present national framework *and* to the unseen homeland of the ancestors. The imaginary place of origin, inherited by those living in the aftermath of exile, could be seen as one of these frameworks 'which overlap and intersect in the individual mind' (Erll 2011: 10). Hence, what is at stake in Honigmann's and Hirsch's different conceptions of exilic postmemory is a contradiction between diaspora, understood as a territorial attachment to the former home, with diaspora understood as a transcultural blending and mixing of identities.

HAUS DER KINDHEIT (2000) – THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A FINAL RETURN

In *Family Frames* (1997), Hirsch illustrates that the postmemory of exile and diaspora brings with it a special aesthetics, which she designates photographic. Photographic aesthetics has the ability to evoke the present while

1 simultaneously signalling its absence and loss (1997: 243).⁹ In postmemorial
 2 works that describe the lost places of one's ancestors, those lost places do not
 3 simply provide a referential sense of belonging; they remain places of geno-
 4 cide that have ceased to exist in the way known by the parents' generation.
 5 Photographic aesthetics renders visible the void the unbridgeable absence
 6 of home. Hence, when Henri Raczymow, a French writer and descendant of
 7 Eastern European Jews, in the book *Conte d'exil et d'oubli/Tales of Exile and*
 8 *Forgetting* (1979) depicts his parents' hometown of Konsk, he does not repre-
 9 sent the town as it was but rather as an empty memory. What he depicts is
 10 'the state of exile from Konsk', the inability to ever return (Hirsch 1997: 248).
 11 Hirsch's idea of a photographic aesthetics that perpetually recaptures the irre-
 12 trievable loss of home seems to correspond with Hall's metaphoric diaspora
 13 that refuses to give in to the 'overwhelming nostalgia for lost origins' and the
 14 attempt to 'return to the beginning' (Hall 1990: 236).

15 In contrast to the transcultural mnemonic concept, Hirsch's photographic
 16 aesthetics concerns the idea that identity is based on the belonging to a
 17 distinct territory, which the expelled cannot return to. Hirsch is right about the
 18 fact that this concept of diaspora underlies a number of literary representa-
 19 tions, written by descendants from exiled Holocaust survivors. The novel *Haus*
 20 *der Kindheit/House of Childhood* (Anna Mitgutsch, 2000) is a classic example of
 21 such a photographic aesthetics. Mitgutsch is not a child of Holocaust survivors,
 22 but 'engages' in the traumatic past of expulsion because of 'an ethical rela-
 23 tion to the oppressed or persecuted other', as Hirsch puts it ([1999] 2002: 9).
 24 The most evident autobiographical traces in the novel are the supporting roles
 25 of the two women Nadja and Nadine who, just as the author herself, have
 26 converted to Judaism. The novel describes the migration of an Austrian Jewish
 27 family from the small Austrian town H. to New York in the late 1920s. The
 28 grandfather, who sensed the indications of the arising National Socialism and
 29 anti-Semitism, had persuaded his daughter Mira to leave. Max Berman, Mira's
 30 son and the protagonist of the novel, was five years old at the time of his migra-
 31 tion to New York. At the age of 51 he returns to his hometown to reclaim his
 32 family's property, the house, which had remained the object of his mother's
 33 longing her entire life. The longing of his mother is embodied in a photograph
 34 of the house, which, as long as Max remembers, had a special place in their
 35 home, 'making each new residence another place of exile' (Mitgutsch 2000:
 36 7). His mother's yearning had turned the house to an unreachable utopia that
 37 was 'transfigured beyond recognition'. In her memory the house had become
 38 a bright and cozy place of an eternal summer day, in which her family lived in
 39 love and harmony, protecting her from any concern.¹⁰ She is unable to build
 40 up a home of her own in New York, but remains entangled to the place of her
 41 origin, which the rise of National Socialism in Austria has made even more
 42 unreachable. In consensus with the photographic aesthetics, Max has inher-
 43 ited his mother's constant feeling of displacement. This is the reason why he
 44 regularly frequents the emigrant cafés in Manhattan. Drinking a Melange, he
 45 feels transferred to Vienna that he only knew through stories from his mother,
 46 dreaming of living a life of a Dandy.¹¹

47 The novel describes Max's attempt to undertake a final return to H., to
 48 achieve closure of his mother's loss, which she never managed to overcome.
 49 After she had learned that her sister Sophie, Sophie's husband as well as her
 50 grandfather perished in the Holocaust, she started to abhor her home country,
 51 but continued to long for her house of childhood. At the age of 69, Max finally
 52 succeeds in recovering the ownership of the house. He moves back to Austria

9. The photographic aesthetics is inspired by Roland Barthes' concept of the *punctum*. Hirsch writes,

ultimately, the puncture of the *punctum* is not the detail of the picture but time itself: 'I read at the same time *This will be* and *this has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future'.

(Hirsch 1997: 5, emphasis in the original; Barthes 1981: 96)

10. [...] es war in ihren Träumen immer Sommer, ein kühler Sonntagmorgen, und sie war sorglos und geliebt, die Morgensonne lag wie ein Widerschein des Flusses schimmernd über den Fußböden und Möbeln, der Wind blähte die Spitzenvorhänge, es war das Versprechen eines heiteren Tages, lang wie ein Leben, das jäh zu Ende gegangen war.

(2015: 15)

11. 'Im *Eclair* am Broadway hatte er eine Melange getrunken und sich nach Wien versetzt geglaubt. Es war das Wien aus den Erzählungen seiner Mutter, in das ihn seine Phantasie entrückte. Vor dieser Kulisse sah er sich als Dandy, als Flaneur' (2015: 38).

and plans to renovate it. He expects that this undertaking will be the culmination of his career as an interior designer (2015: 166–67). However, what he returns to is not the house of his childhood dreams but ‘a shabby building from the 1920s’ (2015: 8). He has to recognize that he had intended to accomplish the impossible task of making the house fit the utopian dreams of his mother. The small town H., which used to signal the imagination of a true home, turns into a dystopic place, in which the destruction of Jewish life and culture has left an obvious void and in which the citizens continued a hidden anti-Semitism. The idyllic world Max had observed in the photograph of the house could not be restored. The picture, which seemed to make present the past in the sense of Hirsch, showed a time that was forever lost. As Max understands that he cannot achieve a true home in H., it becomes impossible for him to end his diasporic state. After spending one of each season in the house for the sake of his mother, he returns to New York, which he now accepts as his home.

THE LOST (2007) – THE LOGIC OF NOSTALGIC AESTHETICS

In her essay ‘Adopted Memory’, Pascale Bos undertakes a critical reading of Hirsch’s concept of postmemory, which reveals that the postmemory of exile may as well lead to another result. In focusing on Hirsch’s differentiation between familial postmemory and adopted postmemory, she shows that especially the latter form of postmemory, which is carried out by persons who do not have any familial relations to victims, often evokes a nostalgic longing for the lost homeland that ignores the aspect of difference that will forever separate the present generation from the residences of their ancestors. Also, however, familial postmemory can be problematic. Bos investigates the postmemorial writings of two American descendants of Eastern European Jews: Anne Weiss’s photobook *The Last Album: Eyes from the Ashes of Auschwitz-Birkenau* (2001), and Jonathan Safran Foer’s *Everything is Illuminated* (2002).

She shows that Safran Foer’s novel transforms ‘the exile from the space of identity’ into the beginning of a ‘creative journey’. By inventing ‘the imagined more “authentic” life in the shtetl’, he ‘strength[ens] Jewish identity on the basis of nostalgia’ (Bos 2006: 97, 104). According to Bos, Foer’s novel is an example of a number of post-exile writings, which invite a kind of over-identification with the Jewish victims of the Holocaust and the lost Eastern European homeland. Certain American Jewish writings promote a ‘nostalgic tenor [...] which rather than leading to mourning, leads to reaffirming one’s sense of Jewish identity’ (Bos 2006: 99). Even though the writers do not necessarily intend to invite the reader into a sentimental and nostalgic ‘process of identification’, the audience may choose to use the works to reaffirm their ‘sense of Jewish identity and belonging’ (Bos 2006: 99). The danger of over-identifying with the stories and photographs presented in the writings is an ‘appropriation and incorporation of the other’s experience and memories as one’s own [...] whereby one constitutes one’s self as a surrogate victim’ (Bos 2006: 100, referring to LaCapra 1994: 198). Thereby, the work of postmemory could relieve the Holocaust its historic specificity and instead ‘allow American Jews to anchor their Jewish identity more firmly to Eastern Europe in nostalgic ways’ (Bos 2006: 105). Thus, the American discourse on the Holocaust actually constructs an idea of the Jewish diaspora that has the potential to lead to an affirmation of the Jews as a distinct and less-integrated group.

1 The novel *The Lost. A Search for Six Out of Six Million* (Daniel Mendelsohn,
 2 2007) is an example of a 'narrative of return' (Hirsch 2012: 205) that evokes
 3 such a sentimental affirmation of belonging to Eastern Europe. In this exam-
 4 ple, it is not the audience but the author himself who gives in to a strong
 5 identification with the Holocaust. In Mendelsohn's novel, the pain of exile
 6 is not inherited but rather constructed by the autobiographic narrator. In
 7 the course of the novel, Mendelsohn redefines his identity from being a
 8 descendant of migrants to being a relative of Holocaust victims namely, his
 9 grandfather's brother Shmiel and his four daughters who were killed in the
 10 Holocaust, a fact that is met with impermeable silence in the family. In *The*
 11 *Lost* (2007), David Mendelsohn investigates the fate of Shmiel, who was the
 12 oldest of his grandfather's siblings, and the only one who stayed in the small
 13 Galician town Bolechow when his entire family migrated. The book repro-
 14 duces a considerable number of photographs, which could indicate the use
 15 of a photographic aesthetics. However, those photographs do not express the
 16 loss and absence of the referent, but rather support the task of building up
 17 the author's identity as a relative of Holocaust victims. In the very beginning
 18 of the novel, two photographs that show the eye areas of Mendelsohn and
 19 Shmiel are supposed to illustrate their resemblance, and thus indicate a close
 20 relationship to Mendelsohn's unknown great uncle (Mendelsohn 2007: 7).
 21 This constructed closeness is the starting point for a detective work in which
 22 Mendelsohn tries to attain confirmed knowledge about what happened to his
 23 Eastern European relatives. It is the overall aim of the novel to achieve an
 24 embodied and emotional realization of the past and thus come as close as
 25 possible to the experiences that Shmiel and his daughters might have had.
 26 The novel enables a nostalgic attachment to their ancestor's place of origin,
 27 understood as a place 'entirely determined by the Holocaust'. The conflation
 28 of the Galician shtetl Bolechow with the '(imagined) horror of the Holocaust'
 29 turns the former Austrian province into a dystopia and its non-Jewish inhabit-
 30 ants to possible Nazi-collaborators and betrayers (Bos 2006: 101, 104).

31 In order to facilitate a sentimental identification with the victims,
 32 Mendelsohn on several occasions emotionally transcends the distance
 33 between himself and his relatives. In a scene where Mendelsohn finds a
 34 woman in Bolechow who had known his family, he describes the feeling of
 35 a 'sudden and vertiginous sense of proximity to' Shmiel and his daughters
 36 that 'made my sister and me start crying' (Mendelsohn 2007: 123). The same
 37 woman knew which road the Jews had walked on when they were brought to
 38 a mass grave in the cemetery and shot as part of the Nazis' killing of the last
 39 remaining Jews in the town. Mendelsohn responds with the remark: 'It was
 40 the same road we had walked to get to this house', indicating that he and his
 41 siblings would have suffered the same fate had their families stayed in their
 42 place of origin (2007: 128). His investigation peaks when he finds a witness
 43 of the killing of his relatives. In this segment, Mendelsohn expresses an over-
 44 whelming excess of feelings: 'something snapped in me at that moment. I
 45 simply sank down and squatted there in the dust of the street and started
 46 to cry'. In contemplating the reason for his breakdown, he points to the fact
 47 that he had finally gotten a 'real confirmation' of the events: 'Now all pieces
 48 fit', Mendelsohn remarks, and thus achieves a final closure of the family
 49 trauma, and the ultimate feeling of the fact that *it* happened (2007: 500, 501).
 50 However, in some of the last scenes, where Mendelsohn stands at 'the most
 51 specific place of all' the place where Shmiel and one of his daughters were
 52 killed he realizes that he cannot even come close to the feelings they might

12. 'Gerade in der Entfernung, als ob ich erst dort nun endlich anfangen könnte meine eigene Geschichte zu erzählen, in der mir eigenen Form' (Honigmann [1999] 2002: 53).
13. According to the *Encyclopedia Judaica Online*, diaspora refers to self-chosen exile before the destruction of the Second Temple as well as to the era after the establishment of the state of Israel. With a biblical term, the intermediate period of dispersion is identified as *galut*, which refers both to forced exile and the resulting lack of a political-ethnic centre.

have had (2007: 502). Nevertheless, the novel achieves an embodied relation of the narrator to his relatives that enables Mendelsohn to constitute a fortified identity as a Jew, living in diaspora; an identity, which is anchored in the very spot of the killings. As Bos remarks, 'It is through the Holocaust that American Jews trace back their heritage to villages and families they have never personally known' (Bos 2006: 102). In promoting the possibility of identification with, and gaining a group identity through, a sense of belonging to a lost homeland, the nostalgic mode of diasporic postmemory remains entangled with the practices of territorial and national memory, even if the place of affiliation is an idealized utopia to which one can return only in a spiritual sense. Although the photographic and the nostalgic aesthetics seem to be clearly distinguishable, both are based on the notion that identity remains connected to the place of origin of the (imagined) ancestors. Despite the fact that the photographic aesthetics does not succeed in or even attempt to 'return to the beginning' (Hall 1990: 236), the photographic aesthetics, just like the nostalgic aesthetics, holds on to a territorial perception of home.

TRANSCULTURAL AESTHETICS: BARBARA HONIGMANN'S AUTOFICTIONAL WRITINGS

Against the backdrop of the photographic and the nostalgic aesthetics, I now want to return to Barbara Honigmann's writings, which I shall define as examples of transcultural aesthetics. Whereas the nostalgic and the photographic positions correspond with the theoretical conception of diaspora as a 'perpetual longing for then and there' (Soysal 2000: 3), the transcultural position corresponds with the conception of the diaspora society as a heterogeneous space that blends traces from different national, cultural and religious frameworks. Similar to the postmemory, which is produced by the use of photographic aesthetics, transcultural postmemory of diaspora and exile rejects the possibility of ever achieving a final return. However, unlike photographic aesthetics, transcultural aesthetics does not engage in an emphatic recreation of the lost, only to realize that the represented world is forever gone. Rather, the absence of the original home is turned to a catalyst for creating an individual position *in between* several cultural frameworks.

In Barbara Honigmann's autofictional novel *Damals, dann und danach*, self-imposed exile, understood as separation, marginalization and distance ([1999] 2002: 45), makes it possible for Honigmann to escape 'the history and the stories' of her parents ([1999] 2002: 11), and to start writing her own story in her own way.¹² As Christina Guenther has observed, Honigmann is conscious of the 'significance of exile within Judaism in terms of forced *and* voluntary dispersion (Diaspora and 'Galut') and literal *and* figurative displacement' (2003: 221).¹³ It is exactly this duality of both literal and figurative displacement that is crucial for the transcultural aesthetics Honigmann is practising. Her transcultural diaspora position cannot be reduced to nomadism understood as 'style of thought' that resists settlement 'into socially coded modes of thought and behavior' (Braidotti 1994: 5, quoted in Jeremiah 2012: 3). Rather, Honigmann's nomadism entails a willingness to expose her to actual alienation, which forces her to rearrange her identity in accordance with her environment, combining the old with the new, the familiar with the foreign. Emily Jeremiah suggests that Honigmann 'explores ethnicity and Jewishness in particular, as a complex construct' and that she stresses 'the fluidity and multiplicit-

ity of (Jewish) identities' (2012: 167, 169). Whereas Jeremiah emphasizes the connection between ethics and literature that takes place through addressing an 'other' in writing, I stress the construction of identity that is achieved exactly due to Honigmann's actual geographical displacement (2012: 183). And whereas Jeremiah, much like Hirsch (1997), stresses the loss entailed in the historical displacement of the Jews (2012: 177), I emphasize Honigmann's perception of diaspora as a position that, from time to time, estranges her but which first and foremost is a precondition of her Jewish identity ([1999] 2002: 72).

Honigmann primarily constructs her transcultural identity by objecting and revealing the failed identity position of her parents. Her postmemorial task leads her to reveal the family history of her father as the history of obliterating their true transcultural roots. In retracing the gradual abandonment of the Jewish culture and religion of her father's ancestors, Honigmann shows that their family's assimilation was all about achieving a nationally and territorially confined identity, which eventually rendered her father in a state of total 'unhomeliness'/'Unbehaustheit' ([1999] 2002: 34). In an entry in the father's diary, which she quotes in both *Damals, dann und danach* ([1999] 2002) and *Eine Liebe aus nichts* ([1991] 2008), we see that her father was never able to reconcile with his transcultural existence: 'Evening at circus Barley. [...] Walk home, sad, not quite sure where I am. A little bit like the Italian in the circus, who's really from Russia. Just as much of an Italian as I am'.¹⁴

Her mother, on the other hand, is represented as a transcultural figure that is nevertheless unaware of her true cosmopolitan nature. Honigmann explains how her mother, who had lived in Bulgaria, Vienna, Paris and London, unconsciously avoids integrating into any of her multiple places of residence ([2004] 2007: 85).¹⁵ Her social circle consists exclusively of a narrow group of former emigrants and communists, almost all of whom are Jews ([1991] 2008: 92). This circle of friends forms a kind of reversed diaspora society as its members deliberately separate themselves from their German and Austrian neighbours and colleagues, insisting upon maintaining a 'close, almost nostalgic attachment to England'. Paradoxically, England was not their homeland but their former place of exile from which they had returned ([1999] 2002: 92). To complicate the constellation even more, the mother can never return to the land she loves and admires so much because she betrayed the country by working for the KGB during her marriage with the Russian Spy Kim Philby ([2004] 2007: 62, 111). Due to her cosmopolitan nature, the mother possesses several personalities English, Austrian and Hungarian which shift in accordance with the language she chooses to speak ([2004] 2007: 139). When her mother speaks Hungarian she changes into an airy and excited person ([1999] 2002: 90). In contrast, when she speaks English, she keeps her countenance and calmness. When she speaks German, her heavy Viennese accent expresses her contempt for the Germans ([1999] 2002: 91). She also feels contempt for the Hungarians, not because they were Nazis like the Germans but because they are 'sloshed, drunken [...] illiterates' ([2004] 2007: 53).¹⁶ Her relationship with the Austrians is particularly complex since she loves the country but hates its people not for being barbaric but for being well educated anti-Semites (2007: 53). Thus, Honigmann constructs her mother as a multi-layered and transcultural person who had always lacked an original home and an 'actual' personality. This lack of centre is also evident in her many different names that change in accordance with the context. In addition to the first names Alice, Litzy, Lizzy and Lisa ([2004] 2007: 43), she has

14. 'Abends Zirkus Barley [...] Gehe traurig nach Hause, weiß so ganz genau nicht, wo ich bin. Ein bißchen wie der Italiener eben im Zirkus, der eigentlich aus Russland kommt. Genauso ein Italiener wie ich' ([1991] 2008: 101, trans. John Barrett, repeated in Honigmann [1999] 2002: 45).

15. Surprisingly, the mother does not have a French personality, even though her stay in France is described as her happiest time. According to *Eine Liebe aus nichts* ([1991] 2008: 28–29), her mother was born in Bulgaria, raised in Vienna, exiled first in Paris and later in England, and followed her husband to Berlin after the war. In *Ein Kapitel aus meinem Leben* ([2004] 2007: 53) and *Damals, dann und danach* ([1999] 2002: 21), the mother is born in Hungary.

16. 'saufende, trinkende [...] Analphabeten' ([2004] 2007: 53, my translation).

a number of different surnames, such as Kohlmann, Friedmann, Philby and Honigmann ([2004] 2007: 78). Furthermore, the mother's ambiguous personality also affects her appearance – she changes the colour of her hair so often that she cannot remember its original colour ([2004] 2007: 5). She even generates uncertainty with respect to the dates of her birth and death ([2004] 2007: 44). Despite her mother's cosmopolitan nature, she remains deeply attracted to the idea of having a territorial identity, which, in her case, is embodied in her belonging to the diaspora community of former English emigrants.

CONCLUSION

Honigmann's transcultural aesthetics, as performed in her autofictional writings, generates an unsentimental relation to territory as a ground of identity. It is not possible to 'return' to a place of origin, in Stuart Hall's sense of the word. It merely functions as a point of departure for constructing an identity, in which traces and impressions from different cultural, national and religious frameworks overlap and mix. The parents' places of origin, which are reframed as merely one station of eternal wandering from exile to exile, become one component part of Honigmann's transcultural identity. Even though the loss of home is sometimes painful for the autofictional narrator, the life in diaspora is understood as a necessity for building an identity true to her Jewishness. In accordance with Boyarin's and Boyarin's concept of diaspora, identity is based on her cosmopolitan genealogy and the religious tradition of wandering. Jewishness is not a facile identity position, but one that is interrupted by her linguistic boundedness to Germany and thus to a country in which a natural relation to the Jews has become impossible ([1999] 2002: 16). Both the protagonists of Daniel Mendelsohn's *The Lost* (2007) and of Anna Mitgutsch's *Haus der Kindheit/House of Childhood* (2000) express the experience of diaspora entirely differently and with different aesthetic means. Max Berman does not try to accept displacement but longs for a final return to his mother's place of origin. In the course of the novel, he has to realize that his longing for home cannot be fulfilled. The photography of the house, which he hoped to return to, represents a vanished place and time. Thus, the photographic postmemory performs the double movement of making present and representing final loss. The autobiographical narrator Mendelsohn, on the other hand, achieves closure of the family trauma by finding the distinct spot where his great granduncle Shmiel was shot during the Holocaust. The novel performs a nostalgic aesthetics as it 'allows American Jews to anchor their Jewish identity [...] to Eastern Europe in nostalgic ways' (Bos 2006: 105). The identification with Shoah victims that Mendelsohn performs inaugurates a diasporic consciousness based on a territorial attachment to the imagined homeland Galicia. Far from wanting to replace Hirsch's concept of the photographic aesthetics of exilic postmemory, it is my hope that my account of a photographic, nostalgic and transcultural aesthetics may serve as a preliminary and expandable catalogue of the various ways in which the experience of exile and diaspora is reflected in contemporary Jewish literature.

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15 **GALINA NIKOLAEVNA GONCHAROVA**

16 Sofia University

21 **Getting inside the migrants'** 22 **world(s): Biographical** 23 **interview as a tool for (re)** 24 **searching transcultural** 25 **memory**

38 **ABSTRACT**

39 Much of the recent research attempts to promote and define the notion of
40 transcultural memory tend to focus on 'the forms of remembering across
41 nations and cultures' and on the 'negotiation of colonialism, decoloniza-
42 tion, migration, cultural globalization and cosmopolitanism in literature
43 and other media'. Taking these attempts as a point of departure, this arti-
44 cle aims at discussing the narrative biographical interview as an instrument
45 for exploring the complex dynamics and dis(utopian) content of memory on
46 the move, which remains without publicity or representation in art and the
47 media. The claims for 'history from below' and for 'getting into the actor's
48 world', emblematic for oral history and biographical studies, are applied to
49 migrants' biographical narratives to show how the 'traumatic disruption of
50 life's continuities' triggers reflection and social criticism from below on the
51 collectively sanctioned modes of remembering of different cultures/cultural
52

KEYWORDS

biographical interview
transcultural memory
mnemonic experience
cultural socialization
cultural identities
agency
subjectivity
social status

pasts. The article also reveals the emancipatory potential of the biographical interview for developing the culture of mobility of middle- and low-social-status people, which is based on shared memories of 'surviving' in a variety of (hostile) environments.

There is no doubt that the movement, travelling and migration of people and (their) memories are some of the main issues in the recent scholarly research concerned with globalization, cosmopolitanism, transnationalism, transculturalism, etc. However, debates surrounding these new and novel approaches divert attention from nations, places and locations as powerful frames of the exchange of social and cultural experience to the mnemonic structures of the exchange itself, and to the role of the migrant's agency in the recollection of individual and/or collective pasts. To contribute to this debate, this article presents a methodological case study of controversial memories of labour migration in the context of a number of Bulgarian sociological and anthropological studies from the last decade. It shows the applicability (of the use) of biographical interviews for exploring the multiple modes of remembering across cultural borders.

The fall of Communism in Bulgaria in the late 1980s and the country's facing up to the overall liberalization of the economy and global citizenship that followed led to waves of extensive labour migration in the next decades, which mobilized people from all backgrounds (social, educational, ethnic, etc.) in the search for new and better lives. Quite expectedly, these waves inspired a great variety of institutional and media investigation into the general pull and push factors of migration. The latter varied from the adoption of democratic politics of mobility and accession to the European Union to the economic and social insecurity of the period of transition and the global economic crisis. Although defined differently over the years, they were nonetheless blurred through the trivial conclusions about the high level of poverty and unemployment in Bulgaria, which probably 'forced' the citizens to seek (with little success) fortune abroad (Open Society Institute Sofia 2011). The public debate on the topic expanded to different ethnic groups and countries of settlement and tended to collect dramatic memories and stories about living/working 'away from home', underlining the passive victimhood of the migrants crucified by the unfavourable social conditions of the post-Communist era and the risk society. The leading titles and articles in the electronic media were sufficiently indicative in this regard: 'For 23 years 1/3 of Bulgarians expelled Abroad' (Faktor.bg 2013), or 'Over 200,000 Bulgarians work in Greece for Peanuts' (Cross.bg 2014). Such a pessimistic approach was especially applied to the people with low incomes and/or poor educational qualifications, such as Roma people who, in contrast to IT specialists and graduates, were seen as incapable of adapting to the high economic and cultural standards of the West/Western Europe (Cherkezova 2015). What remained in the backyard of the discussion was the variety of historical and social frames of migrant experience (including the decision for migration) and the dynamic of the construction of transnational subjectivities. Thus, recent ethnographical and sociological research has revealed a significant gap between public and personal attitudes towards labour migration. If the public ones paint a simplified, alarming picture of the hardships on the road and integration into the society of settlement, triggered by a severe economic situation, the personal ones refer to migrants' trajectories, considering multiple and even contradictory mnemonic experiences of the move between cultures/cultural identities, which question the all-powerful role of the economic reasons. Especially

1 interesting in this regard is the case of the Bulgarian Turks. When it came to
 2 their migration, prominent intellectuals, artists and leaders of political parties
 3 tended to talk about forced migration, considering the so-called 'Revival
 4 Process' or the assimilation campaign (the persecution of Muslim rituals
 5 and traditions and renaming with Slavonic terms) of the Communist state
 6 of 1984–1989, which finished with the expulsion of around 360,000 people
 7 to the 'homeland', Turkey. Claiming to preserve the memory of the expul-
 8 sion, the official public discourse neglected the present migrants' minority
 9 practices and underlined the effects of ethnic 'cleansing' on the mobility. In
 10 contrast, the biographical interviews of ordinary people, collected by research-
 11 ers, followed a much more complex and tangled logic of cultural exile. Some
 12 interviewees reflect on the expulsion in the context of their present labour
 13 migration experiences, listing the personal and family achievements abroad
 14 and testifying to the positive aspects of crossing borders. Hence, Magdalena
 15 Elchinova emphasizes the importance of the work of memory for the devel-
 16 opment of transnational practices and projects for life fulfilment (2012: 23).
 17 The recollection of the recent past in the interviews was much more bound to
 18 success stories of overcoming the challenges of everyday life (in various times
 19 and places), commonly shared in a person-to-person communication, than
 20 to culturally and politically recognizable representations of the tragic history
 21 of the minority. As some Bulgarian scholars admit, with regard to the meet-
 22 ings commemorating the 'Revival Process', 'The memory about those events
 23 is extrapolated in the realm of the personal memoir or family history and it
 24 usually steps back under the impact of the developments of the "present day"'
 25 (Vukov 2012: 150). Thus, the biographical narratives support a kind of alter-
 26 native to the official commemorative discourse mode of remembering ethnic
 27 destiny through time and raise the issue of the mnemonic structures of the
 28 migrant's agency.

29 What are the relevant theoretical frameworks and methodological
 30 trends for the analysis of the case of Bulgarian Turks, especially in regard
 31 to the problematics of memory and agency of migration? Is their case, how
 32 do they relate to the numerous examples of how the migration experience
 33 shapes the individual and collective relation to the past? How much is it
 34 about a conflict between cultural and communicative memory, or about
 35 a particular and unique form of remembering of ordinary people, 'from
 36 below', which bounds the movement between different cultures/cultural
 37 environments with the realization or failure of the idea of better (or a better
 38 place of) living? Should this mode be approachable 'outside' of common
 39 life stories, without the tool of biographical interviews? In general, how can
 40 the biographical interview method contribute to the study of a migrant's
 41 cultural memory?

42 In attempting to answer these questions, the present article takes the case
 43 of Bulgarian Turks only as a point of departure and examines it in a strictly
 44 methodical perspective. After a short overview of the transcultural memory
 45 paradigm in regard to Jan Assmann's differentiation between cultural
 46 and collective memory, the article discusses key concepts and methods of
 47 biographical research that could be applied to the understanding of a quest
 48 for transcultural memory from below. In addition to a biographical interview,
 49 representative for the past and present migrant practices of the Bulgarian
 50 Turks, two additional interviews are analysed to shed light on the reorganiza-
 51 tion of mnemonic experiences in migrant cultural socialization at a biographical
 52 level.

CULTURAL VS COMMUNICATIVE MEMORY

The overt or hidden conflict between the forms of recollection of the crucial (historical) events and changes in the publicly sanctioned discourse and in the everyday/biographical discourse is inscribed in the basic theoretical framework of transcultural memory. In his well-known essay 'Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität'/'Collective memory and cultural identity' (1988), Jan Assmann particularized and polarized Halbwachs's concept of collective memory with the distinction of cultural vs communicative memory, thus demarcating and 'naming' a field of study that has continued to expand to the present day. Since the time of its publication, the research of cultural and transcultural memory has, for the most part, focused on what was 'exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms' (Assmann 2008: 110), rather than on what was 'not formalized and stabilized by any forms of material symbolization', and that 'lives in everyday interaction and communication' (Assmann 2008: 111). (Later, Assmann widely developed this conception in his book on cultural memory [2001].) If asked to describe in a few simple words or images the area of transcultural memory, someone might list the following: an itinerary or travel guide; a memorial, novel or movie dedicated to the Holocaust; a Catholic cathedral or Indian temple; immigrants' (cultural and political) organizations; a music festival; Facebook; and the marketplace in Skopje, among others. Such an inventory perfectly corresponds to Ann Rigney's concept of 'portable monuments' (2012) and to the 'interest in global media cultures, transcultural writing, world literature, and in the negotiation of colonialism and decolonization, migration, cultural globalization, and cosmopolitanism in literature and other media' (Erll 2011a: 2).

It is an exaggeration to see the opposition of Assmann as totally framing the field of transcultural memory studies, but it is nonetheless true that, metaphorically speaking, the communicative and biographical memory played a supportive, but not central, role in this field. The latter comes to the attention of researchers when the transmissions of cultural values and patterns, of narratives of crucial historical events in global terms and contexts, are analysed. Then, the methods of oral history and ethnography are 'called to help' in gathering the (life) stories and 'archives' of families and generations (telling, e.g., about World War II, the *gastarbeiters* in Germany, or 'invented traditions'), but the public (re)production of memories or the strongly medialized forms of remembrance predominantly remain in focus. To quote Astrid Erll: 'Media function as powerful agents in the production of family memories' (2011b: 312).

Although such a sensitivity was turned *inter alia* to the biographical level of the ways in which the meanings of cultural experience are negotiated, contested or preserved, it more or less projected individuals in a passive position as carriers of cultural memory by analogy with art and media products, more as 'inventories' and less as particular subjects, agencies or actors of memory. The oral histories of these agencies obtained significance as far as they created or recreated (the interpretative schemata of) the above described 'lists' of movies, books, photos in Facebook, etc. Hence, a conceptual risk of favouring the official 'high' or publicly recognizable forms of remembering evolved, which Assmann himself realized: 'The participation structure of cultural memory has an inherent tendency to elitism; it is never strictly egalitarian' (2008: 116).

1 If we turn to the case of the migration of Bulgarian Turks, the relevant
 2 studies mentioned in the introduction, relying on biographical interviews,
 3 also faced and managed the risk discussed. What I have in mind here are
 4 two international projects: 'Resettlers and Migrants on the Two Sides of the
 5 Bulgarian-Turkish Border: Heritage, Identity, Cultural Interactions',¹ and
 6 'MICROCON' (A Micro Level Analysis of Violent Conflict).² They both started
 7 from an approach to the (dis)continuities of the cultural traditions and relied
 8 on concepts such as 'construction of cultural heritage' and 'cultural conflicts'.
 9 In fieldwork, they brought under observation the cultural interactions across
 10 national borders, especially the migrants' strategies for identification, taking
 11 into account the official discourse and commemorative practices of 'ethnic
 12 cleansing'. Also, special importance was given to 'the discourse analysis –
 13 media, political, ideological' (Ganeva-Raycheva 2012: 6). However, both stud-
 14 ies using the biographical interview method detected a serious tension between
 15 what was claimed by prominent public figures in art and the media and that
 16 shared by the interviewees, who repeated things said and heard in informal
 17 networks (such as family and friend circles) along with their personal obser-
 18 vations on living abroad. If, in the first case, the assimilation and repressive
 19 politics of the Communist regime were denounced, in the second an approval
 20 of and even a kind of nostalgia for the regime were expressed. The interviews
 21 collected under the MICROCON project were structured by various 'us-them'
 22 distinctions, which compared Bulgarian and Turkish societies from the end of
 23 the 1990s in a manner opposite to the official discourse (Goncharova 2013;
 24 Karamelska in press). The interviewees defined the expulsion to Turkey as 'a
 25 great mistake of the Bulgarian state' or a 'great sadness', but at the same time
 26 admired the peaceful coexistence of Bulgarians and Turks under socialism.
 27 Similarly, they respected the hospitality and helpfulness of the Turkish rela-
 28 tives, but kept in mind the 'heavy experiences' of the majority of the expelled
 29 and 'the unfriendliness of some locals'. Furthermore, a representative part of
 30 the interviews of people of middle and low social status (mainly with second-
 31 ary education and working in the service industry) shows how the memories
 32 of expulsion played the role of a generator of 'decent' labour migrants' biogra-
 33 phies, far from the accepted notion of a victim of political or economic circum-
 34 stances. These people compared their experience of expulsion with the hard
 35 times spent working in Europe, recognizing the extraordinary capability of all
 36 Bulgarian people to adapt to new or hard conditions.

37 Such a mode of recalling the past in fact reflects the cultural and social
 38 (dis)similarities of the places of migration in a totally different way from
 39 the official discourse of the cultural and political elites. The latter switched
 40 between the production of commemorative meetings, memorials, archives,
 41 movies, etc. about repression and banishment, and the reproduction of media
 42 clichés about the severe (ethnic) destiny of the migrants – hence accumulating
 43 various memories of the migrant's trajectory through the biographical narra-
 44 tive, confronting cultural repertoires and navigating certain identity (re)forma-
 45 tion processes; the 'victims' in the media become 'capable of adapting' in the
 46 interviews. Thus, a kind of transcultural memory 'from below' is triggered,
 47 which re-evaluates the past and present of the Bulgarian-Turk minority in
 48 an unexpected, controversial and original manner. What is understood under
 49 'from below' here is the non-elitist, non-formalized and non-representative
 50 way of (re)organizing and transmitting the mnemonic experiences of particu-
 51 lar groups/individuals for a given society. This specific mode of remembering
 52 relies on communication in the informal networks of ordinary people, and in

1. The project (2008–2012) was financed by the national academic research fund (Bulgarian Science Fund) of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. The results of the project are summarized in Ganeva-Raycheva et al. (2012).

2. A five-year research programme funded by the European Commission (<http://www.microconflict.eu>).

3. For example, four volumes of oral history, published in 1981–1982, among which Maxine Seller's collection of essays, 'Immigrant Woman', was reviewed under the title 'Getting inside the World of Industrial Workers' (Bodnar 1982).

our case it becomes accessible through biographical interviews. Last but not the least, for many years it has been at the core of the research interest of oral history and biographical studies with their appeal for collecting 'voices from below' and 'getting inside the world' of regular workers, tradesmen, soldiers, immigrants, etc.³

Several important questions emerge. How does the migrant's agency of memory destabilize and reformulate the cultural repertoires and discourses of an individual or (an ethnic) group? To what extent does the biographical re-construction of the act of migration carry an implicit criticism of the society of origin and settlement as well as the high, institutionalized versions of culture? Is the criticism more obvious in the people of middle and low status who do not express themselves in art and the media? How can biographical interviews contribute to the research of transcultural memory? Does the interpretation of the biographical narration of the migrant's past in terms of transculturality overcome or reinforce the dichotomy between collective and communicative memory?

GETTING INSIDE THE MIGRANT'S WORLD(S)

Before trying (at least hypothetically) to answer the questions raised above, a brief outline of the conceptual potential of the method of the biographical interview in the field of migration studies seems useful.

As Gabriele Rosenthal convincingly demonstrates, the reflexive use of the biographical interview can be traced back to the earliest research on migration and more precisely to the sociological heritage of the Chicago school (2005: 32). Concerned with the process of the social adaptation of the immigrants in America, in 1927 William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki published their famous study based on personal documents (such as letters and diaries). The autobiography of a Pole, written especially for the study, was applied in a separate volume. The book perfectly fitted with the present and later research agenda of the school for 'getting inside the actor's world' (Rosenthal 2005) by the method of 'inside observation' and the tools of biographies, photography and informal interviews.

Criticizing the existing social theory for the isolation of men from their individual or social pasts, Thomas and Znaniecki applied the apparatus of the popular discipline of social psychology – the sociological data they were searching for were 'values' and 'attitudes', and 'moral and mental characteristics' in regard to certain social contexts (1927: 13–22). They outlined the dialectical and complex link between the expectations of realization of the individual, shaped by the family tradition and national culture (he or she came from) and the actual values and rules of social organization (in the country of settlement). Inasmuch as they addressed their work to social reformers, among others, they felt obliged to stress this link in the following manner: '[...] at every step we try to produce certain social values without taking into account the values which are already there and upon which the result of our efforts will depend as much as upon our intention and persistence' (Thomas and Znaniecki 1927: 52). Thus, since the very beginning, the use of biography as a source for scholarly enquiry was bound to the analysis of the memory of migration and the interplay of social expectations and cultural particularities in the past and present.

Outside the Chicago School, biographies/biographical stories were not conceptualized as main tools of sociological research, at least until the 1970s

1 when a boom in qualitative methods can be observed in answering the
 2 (ethnographical and sociological) claim for revising the classical notions of
 3 family, generation, class, nation, gender, etc. in the context of a rapidly chang-
 4 ing, multicultural and globalizing society. Dialoging with and challenging the
 5 various types of conversations/conversational analysis, the biographical inter-
 6 view method was developed under the theoretical framework of symbolic
 7 interactionism, ethnomethodology, sociolinguistics, critical theory, grounded
 8 theory, and the French tradition of phenomenology. Probably the most influ-
 9 ential, or at least the most engaged, in methodological procedures and prac-
 10 tices was the German school of biographical research, which also grew from
 11 the understanding of biography as a powerful sociological tool. The school
 12 became famous with the 'biographical narrative interview' method and the
 13 'biographical case reconstruction', which has recently found a very broad
 14 application in migration studies. Represented by Fritz Schütze, Wolfram
 15 Fisher-Rosenthal and Gabriele Rosenthal, among many others, it provided a
 16 profound and consistent discussion on the concept of biography, the search
 17 forms of communication, and the control over the inter-subjectivity of the
 18 situation of narrating and interviewing. The latter was strictly defined, the
 19 interviewee being asked to just talk about his/her life.⁴

20 Two important differentiations of the types of information and modes
 21 of interpretation of the biographical discourse were made: (1) between the
 22 description of the past events in their chronological consequence and evalu-
 23 ation of the significance of these events from the perspective of the narrator's
 24 present (moment of narrating) (Kohli 1981); and (2) between the lived and
 25 narrated life history (Rosenthal and Fisher-Rosenthal 2004; Rosenthal 2005).
 26 Another key assumption was that the moments of suffering and destabili-
 27 zation of status/state (for example, heavy disease, dismissal, exile, etc.) trig-
 28 gered identity transformation and affected the (re)construction of life review,
 29 including memories and evaluations of different stages of the life course. Fritz
 30 Schütze adopted from the American sociologist Anselm Strauss the concept
 31 of 'trajectory' in the sense of a 'cognitive process of understanding and organ-
 32 izing the change, which is mirrored in narration' (Boldt 2012: 100). Gabriele
 33 Rosenthal talked about 'a traumatic disruption of life's continuities' and 'the
 34 attack on the invulnerability of the human dignity, which result in attempts
 35 for "recovery" through the sense of belonging to a collective or we-group'
 36 (2005: 166).

37 The 'recovery' refers to another important concept of the research under
 38 view – the 'biographical work' in association with Freud's 'work of trauma'
 39 (Draganova and Zheleva 2013: 174). The idea is that the spontaneous review
 40 or 'oral extempore' of one's life should be seen as a process of building links
 41 between separate events of the individual and the collective past that presup-
 42 poses the (mis)recognition of various cultural and social identities. For exam-
 43 ple, comments on the opposition 'war victors vs the defeated' could turn into
 44 a historical excursus on the reasons for war. Hence,

45
 46 narrative interviews not only enabled the registration of abnormalities
 47 in social processes and the apprehension of the meanings of the social
 48 phenomena (in cases of ethnicity, for example), but also in tracing back
 49 the re-interpretations in the self-comprehension of the concerned indi-
 50 viduals.

(Karamelska in press)

4. Contemporary biographical interview practices are more complicated and aim to establish a closer contact and dialogue with an emphasis on the marking of important events, the evaluation of personal achievements and failures, and interaction with other people. The interview could be carried out in two or three sessions, the first always involving careful listening without interrupting the interviewee, whereas in the others, additional, clarifying questions connected to the topic of research and to what the interviewee shared might be asked.

Going further into exploring the sociological dimensions of the biographical interview, what we also need to mention is that a person's life narrative not only gives access to the history of the agencies and cultural expectations behind the concrete actions and decisions, but also empowers the narrator to interpret certain cultural and social realities. Therefore, Daniela Koleva saw 'retrospective self-discovery' as a kind of creative activity, since 'the social processes depend to a certain extent on the strategies and practices of particular individuals, on their interpretations of the social reality, yet, they do not come down entirely to these practices and interpretations' (2008: 24).

Such an understanding of the socio-cognitive dynamics of the agency and subjectivity guided the usage of the biographical interview in migration studies. The act of migration as 'a disruption of life's continuity' required a reorganization of the past experiences, with their stocks of knowledge and their historical contexts, in the perspective of the 'new' future across the borders. The reorganization could refer to 'projects' for securing a stable everyday life in the country of arrival (finding contacts, work and homes) as well as images of 'home/close' and 'foreign/distant', collected as a result of the encounter with cultural differences and cultural identity borders. Moreover, it could happen in different regimes of communication, the biographical interview being just one of the options, and respectively carry traces of them. Thus, with regard to the analysis of life stories of migrants from the former Yugoslavia, Rosenthal decided to gather information about 'the social discourses before and after the war, connected to specific conditions of life' (Rosenthal 2013: 159). For this purpose, she introduced herself to the whole period from the establishment of the state until its breakdown. In the course of the research she discovered that 'it is not enough', because the collected biographical interviews included 'more distant in time ethnic and religious conflicts and discourses (the Turkish conquest of Serbian lands in XIV century)'. She also noticed that the analysis of the interviews of refugees seeking asylum in Germany should take into account the procedures for issuing a residence permit, because very often the respondents treated the interviewers in the same way as did the interrogating clerks (Rosenthal 2013: 159). As Daniela Koleva mentioned, 'The identity construction is influenced not only by the self-interpretation but also by the interpretations of the others' (2008: 24). This is especially valid for the biographical work of migrants, as far as 'the change, which is mirrored in narration' is in their case always on the borders of two or more cultures/cultural worlds and in the interplay of the past and present of living in these worlds with other people. The biographical interview helped to get behind the mirror and especially to understand the inter-subjective 're-assembling' of perceptions and stocks of knowledge of a migrant's life course, shaped by different societal – political, economic, historical and cultural – contexts.

BIOGRAPHY AND TRANSNATIONALITY

In comparison to the recent scholarly research on the institutionalized and medialized forms of remembering, the above presented conceptions enable a more dynamic approach to the study of the migrants' memories. With the purpose of addressing both the dynamics of memory and the interplay between cultural and communicative memory, and at the same time not treating the former as fixed and stable, this approach refers to the 'cultural' as cultural identities in a process of transformation and to the 'communicative' as socio-cognitive and inter-subjective (along with 'conversational'). Hence,

1 the next step in applying the method of the biographical interview in the
 2 (re)search of transcultural memory is to translate and transfer its conceptual
 3 apparatus to the field of cultural memory studies.

4 The biographical research of migration, widely accepted in Germany since
 5 the beginning of the 1990s, started from an observation of the process of social
 6 adaptation and adjustments, and as a whole focused on problems that immi-
 7 grants had to face and resolve in the society of settlement. The classical, but
 8 seriously questioned, framework of migration studies concerned with accultura-
 9 tion, assimilation and enculturation was quite relevant at the time. The concept
 10 of trajectory was applied to the labour and forced migration in order to explain
 11 the complex dynamics of adaptation and the central role of national identities.
 12 The immigrants (usually *gastarbeiters*) were imagined as divided between two
 13 national cultures and citizenships. The most recent developments, however,
 14 contained a clear tendency to overcome the 'dramatic' and polarized picture
 15 of migration in combination with an elaboration of the cultural and historical
 16 relocation across (national) borders. What they were most interested in
 17 were the 'different' or 'parallel' forms of the cultural socialization of migrants.
 18 Especially instructive in this regard are the works of Roswitha Breckner, Ursula
 19 Apitzsch and Irini Siouti, which not only questioned the existing approaches
 20 to the migrant experience of otherness and strangeness but also discussed in a
 21 detailed manner the relevance of biographical research on the topic. They both
 22 outlined the creative re-formative tendencies of the migrant's trajectory and the
 23 encounter with the cultural differences at biographical and societal levels. They
 24 also demonstrated how these tendencies mirrored 'locations and dislocations in
 25 relation to gender, ethnicity, class and racialisation' (Apitzsch and Siouti 2007:
 26 17). Thus, Breckner, similar to Rosenthal, tried to explain 'how specific bounda-
 27 ries drawn in the respective us-them distinction take shape and change against
 28 a historical background, and what significance these distinctions gain in the
 29 migration experience and its biographical relevance' (2007: 147). Apitzsch and
 30 Siouti also scrutinized 'the transformative character of migration', but under
 31 the transnationalism paradigm with its emphasis on the social integration and
 32 exchange across national boundaries (Faist and Ozveren 2004). Building their
 33 arguments on the theory of transnational social spaces, in their case represented
 34 by Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Christina Blanc-Szanton, Ludger Pries
 35 and Tomas Faist, among others, draw attention to the agencies of migrants'
 36 informal networks existing between everyday practices and hegemonic contexts.
 37 In their conception, 'only by using biographical research is it possible to inves-
 38 tigate these informal networks', as far as 'transnational biography' is a kind of
 39 'site' for the biographical accumulation of experience and knowledge' (Apitzsch
 40 and Siouti 2007: 19). They underlined that this observation was true for both the
 41 transmigrants and the first generation of immigrants.

42 One of the recent outcomes of the paradigm shift to transnationalism was
 43 the interest in the material and symbolic practices of the ordinary people,
 44 'oppositional' to the capital and the state in the global era. Insisting on reading
 45 the transnationalism from below, Luis Guarnizo and Michael Smith defined
 46 the translocal networks as 'liberatory spaces', built on a shared informal
 47 economic economy and cultural beliefs and values (Smith and Guarnizo 1998:
 48 3). Although not explicitly, Apitzsch and Siouti contributed to this concep-
 49 tion by exploring how the 'chain of marginality' in the transnational networks
 50 was reflected in the different modes of biographical agency (2007: 15).
 51 Siouti's notion of 'biographical reflectivity' (developed with Minna-Kristiina
 52 Ruokonen-Engler) and emphasis on the research relationship also carried a

concern for preserving the 'otherness' of interpretations of the migrant experience (Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti 2013). In their view, the researcher should be conscious of his or her own biographical transcultural experience, thus becoming responsible for 'the constitution of the transnational research field' (Ruokonen-Engler and Siouti 2013: 250).

The developments of the conception of the biographical interview as an instrument for observation of the inter-subjective dynamic of the construction of (marginal) transnational/transcultural identities seem to 'return' the history of the biographical approach to the starting point of the Chicago school agenda. Thus, they consistently turned to the problem of relocation and resocialization in two (or more) societies, to the actors, agencies and networks 'from below', and to the 'biography as a field in which processes of continuation and transformation constantly take place' (Breckner 2007: 16). Obviously, they wanted to bring to the fore the 'specific intellectual and moral opportunities inherent in marginality, such as the development of a cosmopolitan perspective', which, according to Riemann, was essential for Robert Park's investigation of 'the marginal man, a man whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic, cultures' (Riemann and Schütze 1991: 335).

THE TRANSCULTURAL WORK OF MIGRANT'S MEMORY FROM BELOW

Let us illustrate the 'intellectual and moral opportunities' of relocation by turning back to the methodological case of the migrant practices of Bulgarian Turks outlined in the introduction to this article, this time, however, giving the floor not to the researchers but to the researched subjects themselves. Especially suitable for the purpose is the interview with Shukran, a 33-year-old real estate agent from Razgrad with secondary education, as far as it clearly reveals the intricate route of personal memory for migration. Shukran did not know how to read or write in Turkish when she was forced to go to Turkey with her family during the assimilation campaign against the Bulgarian Turks in 1989. Having stayed for only five months in her new homeland, she returned to Bulgaria and, later on, after marriage, worked for over a year in Belgium and visited France and Germany. Like other interviewees, Shukran did not adhere to the public versions of the expulsion and picked out the positive aspects of crossing borders. She outlined the great adaptability of 'our Bulgarian people' to the unfavourable living conditions, and without any discursive effort intertwined the memories of political and economic migration.

Yes, there were people who had been living in tents for months, where water was provided by tanks. And these people were compelled to live there, because they didn't have relatives, until the moment of receiving residence. And the schools were full of people. They had a really hard time, while we had relatives and they had villas and they put us up in the villas until we found rooms and started from scratch. And generally speaking our Bulgarian people seem to always start from scratch, wherever they go. Regardless of their nationality – Bulgarian, Turkish or Gypsy. One goes to Belgium, another to Spain, a third one to the Netherlands and he always starts from the beginning. He comes back, again starts from scratch, then returns from there and so on.

1 The case of Bulgarian Turks and especially the interview of Shukran could
 2 easily be brought under the framework of the biographical interview approach
 3 to cultural socialization and transnationalism, particularly in regard to the
 4 question of (the agency of) transcultural memory from below. If we chose
 5 ethnicity as a general frame for interpretation, Shukran talking about starting
 6 'from scratch', which merged that seen during expulsion with the openness to
 7 new people and places, could be applied to the understanding of the memory
 8 of transnational or transcultural spaces as part of the process of the transfor-
 9 mation of the mono-ethnic in double or cosmopolitan identities. However, it
 10 is better to focus on the subjective ground of the equalization of the political
 11 with labour migration. What the ethnicity-oriented research route lacks is the
 12 question of the (re)organization of the mnemonic experiences with regard to
 13 moving between a variety of (un)favourable surroundings and cultural habi-
 14 tats.

15 This reorganization is closely connected to a particular regime of remem-
 16 bering and communication, which could be compared with conversations and
 17 stories about the road and the conditions of life 'here' and 'there', and whose
 18 content depends, however (though not entirely), on the nationality of the
 19 interlocutor. Thus, if he or she is a relative or friend from the country of origin,
 20 the talk would be about the circumstances surrounding the trip (time), find-
 21 ing a job and place of living, the mentality of foreign employers, neighbours
 22 and state officials, the system of education, and entertainment and cuisine,
 23 among other things. But if the interlocutor is from the country of settlement,
 24 the decision for emigration and the 'native' economic or political situation,
 25 traditions or cultural habits would be primarily or additionally considered. It
 26 could be said that these conversations 'contain' the unofficial biography of the
 27 migrant, which the narrative interviews attempt to capture. As in the example
 28 of Shukran, they bring together memories of practical and cultural aspects
 29 of life 'here' and 'there' almost as a rule, producing various us–them distinc-
 30 tions and mingling memories of different personal and collective pasts/times.
 31 Let us give one more example with Shukran, who represented herself as a
 32 'professional migrant'. In order to explain why she spent so much time at
 33 work in Europe, she began by referring to concrete and commonplace situa-
 34 tions: 'Abroad you don't wait for your ticket, you don't wait for your doctor's
 35 appointment'. She concluded: 'These people have a system, and whichever
 36 institution you go to, you'll pass the different stages and they'll explain to you
 37 in a civil way what you have to do'.

38 As a whole, Shukran talked quite positively about her stay abroad, praising
 39 the medical care, the harmonious customer–client relations, the social secu-
 40 rity, and the effectiveness of policy activities, among other things. Contrary to
 41 that, she was quite critical when describing the native social reality, alternat-
 42 ing once again between concrete examples and larger generalizations:

43
 44 What kind of security do you have in this Bulgaria of ours? No secu-
 45 rity at all – neither social security, nor health insurance. When you go
 46 somewhere, not only do you pay your health insurance, but you have
 47 to additionally pay the doctor. Yes, here, one can kill a person and then
 48 he'll be released on bail; one might steal hundreds of millions and he'll
 49 again be released on bail.

50 Balkan people seem to like eating, drinking and partying more than
 51 anything else.
 52

5. In this regard, Breckner distinguished various phases of the migration process:

the time of the initial contemplation of migration and decision-making processes the stage of 'leaving' as a process of separation from people and places and of the termination of institutional, social, and local integration; transitory phases; the stage of 'arrival' in a new society and specific experiences during 'admission'; processes of 'establishment' and the beginning of participation in various function systems; phases of restructuring of local references to the country of origin (e.g. by the 'transplantation' of symbolic artefacts to the country of immigration, by family members joining, and by journeys home) and finally; phases of (re-) consideration of the migration with regard to return, permanent stay or further migration.

(Breckner 2007: 140–41)

At the same time, Shukran shared that she completely understood the sense of homesickness her sister felt, despite their 'wonderful life' in Belgium: 'She's feeling ok, but there are certain things she can't get used to – they don't have this type of mentality – to share. She misses this. You can't simply go and borrow a plate or something'.

She explicated the successful integration of Bulgarian migrants abroad in the following way:

It's because our schooling system is very good and those people, who are now 35–40, their children study there now. And they learn the language very fast, they quickly pick up everything and there are people who will never guess you are from Bulgaria until you say so.

From the overall context of the conversation it became clear that what she had in mind was the schooling system and the mentality to share from before 1989. The homesickness was mingled with nostalgia for the times of socialism and socialist culture. At one point in the interview, Shukran said: 'Since 1989 we've never felt happy'.

The life story of Shukran – like many other migrants' stories – contains an overview of the utopian contents of memory on the move, which constantly compares the pictures of the desired future with the realities of cultural differences, and transfers the 'promised land' from the small native town to a European city and vice versa. The virtual and real change of the places of living, so typical of the migration experience, is reflected in the forms of remembering cultures/cultural pasts in the reconstruction of collective identities. Shukran values positively or negatively 'Bulgarians' and 'Germans'/'Belgians' correspondingly to her hopeful visions about a decent life, comprising working institutions, social security, beautiful nature, and the mentality of close communication. On one side, these contrasting valuations are related to various stages of a migrant's biography – as in the case of Shukran's sister – such as the decision to settle down and obtain citizenship, or the moment before and after coming back that Shukran herself often reminisces about. They are also shaped by a specific historic background. Finally, they are implicitly critical of the society of origin and settlement, but this social criticism is articulated only through particular everyday situations, like going to the doctor's, regarding their positive or negative outcomes.

These constant identity transformations and evaluations, based on the mnemonic experience of the (mis)fortunes on the road, have much in common with the biographical work of 're-writing, transferring or reproducing the life courses' (Breckner 2007: 141).⁵ But it could also be defined as the transcultural work of memory from below. 'From below' here pertains not only to all the words and images of a migrant's experience, which do not form the content of political speeches, itineraries, movies, TV reportage, etc. – i.e. remaining without representation in art and the media – but also to the almost 'magical' transformation of practical and common-sense meanings of everyday migrant situations in the cultural valuations of certain environments and societies.

MARGINALITY AND TRANSCULTURALITY

The analysis of the discussed interviews (with Bulgarian Turks) draws attention to a peculiar characteristic of certain biographical discourses, which could not be observed at first reading and which deserves a special mention. It is hardly

1 a coincidence that the interviewees of low social status and poor educational
 2 backgrounds tend to describe the society of origin and resettlement in clear-
 3 cut oppositions and generalizations. In the sociological terms of Bourdieu, the
 4 more determined and popular the valuations of the cultural (dis)similarities,
 5 the lower and more limited the social and cultural capital of the people who
 6 give them. In her observations on living conditions in Bulgaria and Belgium/
 7 Germany, Shukran does not differ from most Bulgarian migrants with primary
 8 and secondary education who, in their pursuit of higher incomes, discovered
 9 the advantages of living in a welfare state and the disadvantages of getting in
 10 touch with the 'cold' mentalities of the West. For the greater part of the inter-
 11 view she spoke on behalf of an invisible, anonymous majority that criticizes
 12 and judges social realities: 'Well, your home is where money is, there's your
 13 home, there's your family, this is the new common sense, because nobody
 14 wants to go to bed hungry'.

15 In addition to the case of the Bulgarian Turks' migration, two other cases
 16 (of Emilia and Martin) perfectly illustrate the significance of the status frames
 17 for the transcultural work of memory.⁶ The main criteria for looking at them
 18 are the interviewees' educational backgrounds. Emilia, 27 years old, was born
 19 in a village in the north-west of Bulgaria. She has only primary education;
 20 she has been washing dishes in a restaurant in Germany for eight years. She
 21 emigrated 'as a joke' because she wanted to work and have money. She felt
 22 neglected by her parents, and is therefore happy in her new homeland and
 23 does not want to return. She is deeply impressed by the German attitude
 24 towards children:

25
 26 When a child is still a baby, they'd let him sleep in a separate room. In
 27 Bulgaria it's not like that. The mother would sleep with her baby in one
 28 room, but the Germans teach them to be independent, which is good.
 29 But you know, Germans are more distant, anyway.
 30

31 The only other opposition she recurrently spoke of in the interview was
 32 the following: 'People treat other people nicely, they are kinder than our
 33 Bulgarians. They know how to show respect – they speak politely. Our
 34 Bulgarian people don't know how to behave, how to speak – they have noth-
 35 ing, no manners, nothing'.

36 Martin's case is rather different. He is 23 years old, with secondary educa-
 37 tion, with no ambitions for higher education. Martin has been working as a
 38 waiter in a fast-food restaurant in a Bavarian village for three years. He took
 39 the decision to go abroad because 'I wanted to experiment, it was not about
 40 money, I didn't leave Bulgaria for financial reasons. Rather, I wanted to find
 41 recognition, an appropriate social environment and friends'. At the time of
 42 the interview he was preparing for his final return to Bulgaria because, in his
 43 words, leaving his homeland was the biggest mistake of his life. Compared to
 44 Emilia, his biographical narrative is much richer in the descriptions of every-
 45 day situations and evaluations of cultural differences (including observations
 46 on other nationalities and travelling/on the road experiences):

47
 48 In Bavaria a church bells toll every 15th cold year, the elderly people
 49 here are more religious and more conservative.

50 They cannot have fun the way we can because they are colder. The
 51 average German would get up early, work all day and at about 9–10
 52

6. The examples are from five biographical interviews of Bulgarian emigrants working in Germany. The interviews were conducted especially for the present article.

he'd go to bed, a daily grind. On Saturday and Sunday they'd organize a barbecue – this is their only entertainment.

Germans are tolerant, they have their scars from the time of Hitler and are very kind to foreigners, I'd say they are over-tolerant. When you go to the unemployment agency and you see a sign – women and foreigners having an advantage – it's insulting for the Germans themselves.

At the Serbian-Hungarian border I had to go through a thorough and pedantic check. You know, Serbians don't like us much.

I got stuck in a traffic jam in Austria, two cars had had a crash. As you are driving along the motorway, all of a sudden you see dozens and dozens of cars, one behind another, then helicopters come. I guess, Austrians are a bit paranoid as regards security, so they block the motorway for the smallest car accident.

The cases of Emilia and Martin clearly show the embeddedness of the critical view(s) of the societies of origin, and settlement in the biographical (dis)utopian projects for 'new', 'successful' and 'decent' lives, and the replacement of 'trajectories of suffering'. Thus, the 'good attitude of Germans' compensates for the lack of caring parents in childhood (Emilia), and the 'the coldness of Bavarians' turns down the plans for 'realization' for entertainment and finding new friends (Martin). Above all, the critical views could be part of the reflection on the past experience of mobility and transportation, as well as taking part in the interlocking of cultural stereotypes and historical imaginaries, connected to the social status among other identity markers such as gender, age and ethnicity/nationality. Emilia and Martin, similarly to Shukran, recreate one and the same mythicized local opposition: 'cold Germans' vs 'joyful and outspoken Bulgarians'. The latter can be short or *longue durée*, local or global, the working educational system inherited by the Communist regime and 'scars from the time of Hitler'. Last but not the least, they were reproduced both on the individual and collective levels of the migrant's mnemonic experience. Thus, Martin related how he used the Zaedno.de website and travelled with an elderly Bulgarian, and how, while travelling, they 'shared stories about their lives abroad', but how he got a bit bored with listening to stories about socialism and democracy.

Is it necessary to introduce the concept of transcultural memory from below in order to explain the role communicative memory plays in the reproduction of the cultural stereotypes in regard to transnational spaces? Assmann himself partially answered this question; he claimed that the historical picture built through memories and narratives collected in oral questionnaires is 'history from below', the 'history of everyday life'. He also added that 'the group's participation in the collective memory is dispersed and everybody is equally competent' (Assmann 2001: 49–52). Thus, he reiterated the claims of both oral history and biographical studies to give ordinary and marginal people equal power to preserve their pasts. In the case of migration and the transcultural memory, however, this 'competency' is connected to specific interpretations of the experience across the borders, which adjust cultural stereotypes to personal visions for better lives and predestine the decision for departure or return. Accordingly, the biographical interviews of the migrants not only encourage a 'retrospective self-discovery' (by the interviewee) or discovering of one's self (by the interviewer), but also allow the (re)locating of the self

1 in two or more cultural worlds. Thus, they provide at least narrative control
 2 over the process of cultural socialization and emancipate the agency from the
 3 power of the economic or any other imperative circumstances.

4

5

6 **CONCLUSION**

7 Since the times of the Chicago School, the use of biographical narratives/inter-
 8 views has contributed to gaining a more profound knowledge of the lives of
 9 individuals on the borders of two or more societies and cultures. The way it
 10 facilitates the researchers' efforts to get inside ordinary people's worlds prede-
 11 termined its high relevance to the analysis of the migrant's agency and espe-
 12 cially the attitudes/behaviours related to the life-course context and disposition
 13 for migration. To what extent, however, are biographical interviews applica-
 14 ble to the study of (the migrant's agency of) cultural or transcultural memory?
 15 As I have argued in this article, the answer to this question requires a broader
 16 understanding of the modes of cultural remembering. Such an understanding
 17 is conscious of the 'inner' sites of memory and the stories/histories of people,
 18 places and routes, left without formalization and (re)medialization. Along with
 19 that written in travel guidebooks and cosmopolitan novels, for example, there
 20 is a variety of such sites and stories or 'mental maps' of transculturality that
 21 tend to depict the experienced or what is worth experiencing with regard not
 22 to publicly sanctioned patterns and values but to the adaptation to unfamiliar
 23 environments and personal utopias for a better life. Notwithstanding that they
 24 are not guaranteed a place on the market, in the library, or in the archive, these
 25 mental maps are not devoid of cultural meaning(s) as far as they are actively
 26 shared in informal networks and take account of various differences in cultures
 27 and mentalities. Thus, they can shed light on the advantages of the German
 28 medical care or the 'scars from the time of Hitler'.

29 The biographical interviews do not simply render these maps visible; they
 30 also register them in an ongoing process of making and change. Returning in
 31 a (life) story to the places and routes of migration, the interviewees extend and
 32 revise their general visions of the society of origin and (re)settlement in rela-
 33 tion to the realization of particular projects for getting higher incomes, living
 34 in a welfare state, finding appropriate social environment and friends, etc. The
 35 narration of relocation from the life-course perspective enables the explication
 36 of certain social and cultural criticism of the different conditions of living –
 37 criticism that, even if is often widely shared, remains unrepresented in public.
 38 They open an enormous space for research, to a large extent, of the ways in
 39 which the cultural pasts are (re)constructed or transformed on a socio-cogni-
 40 tive level, rather than the ways in which they are fixed and preserved by the
 41 societies. In this sense, the biographical interviews play the role of an eman-
 42 cipatory regime of transcultural memory and encourage the dissemination of
 43 a kind of transmigrant folklore, which constantly refreshes and re-evaluates
 44 the cultural repertoires. Furthermore, they foster the democratization of the
 45 procedures by which cultural memories from below are both researched and
 46 accumulated, giving voice to marginal people (of low social status and educa-
 47 tional background). Even if migrant organizations and memory activists do
 48 often speak on behalf of the latter, their limited cultural capital or marginal
 49 cultural competency in most cases prevents them from making a public state-
 50 ment. It is much easier (and unengaging as concerns political and other inter-
 51 ests) to map the cultural dissimilarities in a spontaneous conversation rather
 52 than in official documents and speeches.

Applying the life history approach to internal migration, Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame argued for 'listening beyond' or 'trying to hear, beyond the words of a given person, the speech of a social culture' (Bertaux-Wiame 1981: 260). This is of great relevance to the (re)search of transcultural memory discussed in the present article. In recollecting the hardships and fortunes on the road, and in reflecting the differences between 'us' and 'them', they bring together varied (dis)utopian and socially critical perspectives of particular cultural pasts and habitats. When these stories are shared, as they always are (in family and friend circles, with strangers on the road, or with researchers), although they are not necessarily represented in art and the media, they form a trans-migrant folklore, which, in all the work and talk of the masses, binds the (extra) ordinary human situations to cultural myths, local stereotypes and universal values. Whether we discuss the inventive exchange of cultural and/or collective memory, the process of 'premediation' (Erl 2008), or the transcultural work of memory, what is certain is that the investigation of this folklore can contribute to a better understanding of the mechanism of 'inclusive distinction' (Beck 2000) and support promising research agendas, such as for the 'democratization of history' (Nora and Kritzman 1996; Myszal 2003), or the 'history of mentalities' (Confino 2008). In this case, the biographical interview proves to be inescapable, or, in the words of Ursula Apitzsch and Irina Siouti, 'In order to understand and reconstruct transnational migration phenomena today, biographical narrative interviews can be considered as a main research component in researching "transnationalism", [i.e. "transculturalism"] from below' (Apitzsch and Siouti 2007: 6).

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15 **JOHN SUNDHOLM**

16 Stockholm University

21 The memory practices of 22 immigrant film-makers: 23 24 Minor cinemas and the 25 26 27 production of locality 28 29 30 31

35 **ABSTRACT**

36 This article presents a case study of independent immigrant film-making
37 from the 1980s and the early 1990s in Sweden. The aim is twofold: to analyse
38 the memory practices of exilic and diasporic subjects and to stress that what
39 Zuzana M. Pick has coined as the subjective paradoxes and privileges of exile
40 implies an agential understanding of memory. Hence, the study of memory
41 and migration in relation to film practice before the digital turn calls for a
42 theory of cultural production and an approach in which film is not primarily
43 considered a means for representation but an act in itself.

44 It seems that one of the shortcomings in the field of memory studies is
45 its overly strong emphasis on the past. It may seem strange to claim that the
46 broad discipline of memory studies is too obsessed with the past – is it not
47 that which should be in its focus? Without doubt, the past is that force that
48 inflicts and pushes people and their memories in different directions, but
49 too much focus on the past may lead to overlooking what a cultural stud-
50 ies perspective on memory entails – namely, that meanings are made in the
51 present, out of the past, and this is because what is at stake is intervening
52

KEYWORDS

memory
migration
immigrant film-
making
minor cinemas
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diaspora

in the present. From such a perspective of memory studies, the question of agency – the doability of memory – is already inscribed into the approach. The study of memory and migration, mobility and transnational flows calls for dynamic theories and methods.

Another problem with the past being the chief referent for memory studies is that it often leads to comparisons between the present and the past in which history is turned into a stable frame of reference. Thereby, we are subjecting ourselves to the logic of representation, of analysing the representation of past events in the present, instead of stressing how and why memory practices are constructed as meaning-making practices in which the past is under constant revision.

Memory is on the move and, as Julia Creet has expressed it, 'Memory is where we have arrived rather than where we have left' (2011: 6). Yet, it is not so much memory that travels (because memory is not fixed), but its subjects and cultures. Whenever people are displaced, memory is activated, and the past is revised as part of the process to create a new context for oneself. It is this renegotiation that Arjun Appadurai coined as a 'production of locality' in his influential book *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996). There, he conceptualizes the production of locality as part of a theory of contemporary culture in which a 'break' or a 'rupture' has taken place (Appadurai 1996: 9), and shows how everyday cultural practices change because of globalization and increasing mobility, which in turn leads to a reconstruction of place and locality.

Appadurai's theory of locality proposes that we consider locality as a figure – not an actual place, but as an open space for renegotiation in which subjects and communities are producers, forced to find a place from which to negotiate new contexts for themselves. The interplay between what to preserve and what to dispose of or invent is what characterizes migrants' memory practices as tools in the dialectics between re- and deterritorialization, or de- and relocalization. Immigrants often stand in between, in an interstitial space, a place and mode of production that, according to Hamid Naficy, is typical for an accented cinema – that is, films made by exilic and diasporic subjects, filmmakers that are displaced and on the move (2001). These are accented not because they are talking their new language with a foreign accent but because the cinema they create and construct breaks with established norms for filmmaking.

Naficy (2001) distinguishes two major dividing lines in accented cinema: exile and diasporic. Exile film positions the past in a mythological 'then there was'. These films are existential and dystopian. The diasporic films position the past in a now, in a becoming, using the past to renegotiate a new context. Those in exile dream of returning, whereas the diasporic subjects work on creating a place for themselves. This division, however, is far too clear-cut. When you study immigrant films and film-making you discover a fundamental ambivalence of the protagonists. They are not always sure whether they are in exile or not, if they really yearn back, or if they actually want to produce locality. This ambivalence is often played out as a dialectic between making and longing, returning and leaving, remaking the past or establishing it as a stable signifier, a past and a place. Such a memory practice is reflected in what is considered to constitute the past. Homeland is also defined as a backwardness that you have been forced to leave, and sometimes even desired to leave, but nevertheless a past that you have also been able to understand, hence its character as a recent past. The present country and culture that you are entering,

1 on the other hand, represent an extended, modernized, and westernized non-
 2 place that is driving impatiently forward and which you do not understand; it
 3 is a place that is both alienating and tempting. Thus, the present is very often
 4 pictured as lacking a past, as having no history and being in need of a past so
 5 that it may become a manageable future.

6 Accordingly, the interstitial space for transnational memory, of displaced
 7 subjects in the production of locality and context, forces the immigrant film-
 8 maker to reinvent a past and a history; this invention becomes a key objec-
 9 tive for the immigrants in order to be able to act and produce. The past has to
 10 become something that is in the making in order to pave the way for a future.
 11 It can be made into a stable referent as in nostalgia, or it can be neglected
 12 because of the need to create a new context. Both positions, however, imply
 13 a revaluation of the past. It has to be renegotiated and revisited because the
 14 essential objective for the migrant on the move is to have a future.

16 THE CULTURAL PRACTICE OF IMMIGRANT FILM-MAKING

17 Film had, until the digital turn, been a peculiar art form due to its exclusiv-
 18 ity. The research that I have conducted together with Lars Gustaf Andersson
 19 on amateur, semi-professional, and professional independent short-film-
 20 making by people who migrated to Sweden in the period from the 1970s to
 21 the 1990s shows that immigrant film-makers were forced to organize them-
 22 selves and establish their own associations to be able to produce films (2014,
 23 2015). Because equipment and material were expensive and exclusive until the
 24 early 1990s, immigrant film-making was a specific kind of cultural produc-
 25 tion compared with, for example, literature or visual arts. Cameras and editing
 26 tables had to be borrowed, films developed, processed and printed – work
 27 processes that were not only costly but that also included many different
 28 people.

29 The exclusive material conditions for film-making we found in our research
 30 on immigrant films and film-makers turned us towards Gilles Deleuze and
 31 Felix Guattari's concept of minor literature (1986),¹ in order to find a way of
 32 analysing migrants' films and film-making as a cultural practice and to not
 33 treat it as foremost a means for cultural representation. According to Deleuze
 34 and Guattari, minor literature has three characteristics: (1) the deterritorializa-
 35 tion of language; (2) the connection of the individual to a political immediacy;
 36 and (3) the collective assemblage of enunciation (1986: 18). These features
 37 are all topical for the immigrant situation. The question of deterritorialization
 38 is the quest for creating a new language, an act that encompasses both the
 39 appropriation of a new spoken language as well as the invention of an appro-
 40 priate new film language – a language that is truthful to the new situation.
 41 This becomes a political act because it draws attention to the fact that there is
 42 a power relation to battle as well – namely, that of major vs. minor. And, in
 43 turn, this is a question of inventing a public because a new audience has to be
 44 created and addressed – the newly arrived immigrants. Thus, the immigrant
 45 situation forces one to act and create a place for oneself to produce locality; or,
 46 with D. N. Rodowick's interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari, one must first
 47 acknowledge one's position as the other in order to be able to act in a new
 48 situation (Rodowick 1997).

49 Deleuze and Guattari's main contribution to a theory of cultural produc-
 50 tion in a minority situation is that minor literature is characterized by being 'a
 51 small language' – not an alternative language, but a language that is written
 52

1. The most elaborate application of the concept of minor literature to film is that of David E. James in his *The Most Typical Avant-Garde. History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (2005), a study that has been seminal for our work as well. For a discussion of the various concepts see Andersson and Sundholm (2014).

from within the place of the dominant language. The position is not by definition that of an antagonism. It is a position of the minor because an initial displacement has taken place – the movement to a new subordinate cultural situation. Hence, an analysis of the films and film practice has thus to focus on how the past is understood and used under such transitional conditions, a situation in which the film-makers are coping with a new order that they have entered.

Not every film in our material depicts the past in an explicit way. The dialectics between the past and the present may also be transformed into a more abstract or general pattern of a pending ambivalence – the ambivalence of political standpoints or sexual desire, as in films by Guillermo Alvarez and Myriam Braniff, who immigrated from Colombia and Chile, respectively. There are indeed more typical depictions of the immigrant situation as well, the foremost examples being the cinema of Menelaos Carayannis and Muammer Özer, who collaborated in Sweden during the late 1970s and early 1980s, not to mention Peruvian Cesar Galindo's postcolonial cinema of the 1980s and 1990s. What is common for these film-makers is that they are depicting a recent past, or an extended present – to use two of Appadurai's terms – as they themselves were recently arrived immigrants in Sweden. Thus, the films are not so much reflections on the past or a retrospective analysis – time is not that of literature where you always look back – but are rather interventions, as such. The films are made and produced in the extended present of a quite recently arrived immigrant and unfold in that peculiar time of the moving image where you, by definition, are placed in the present, always waiting for what will happen next.

From the framework of cultural production it is important to stress that the accented cinema – and partly counter to Naficy's own argument – is not characterized so much by a particular aesthetic as by a specific cultural situation. Thus, the independent immigrant cinema is characterized by creating own associations and workshops in order to enable the production, whereas the production itself is quite heterogeneous. Zuzana M. Pick in particular has stressed the ambivalence and heterogeneity of immigrant film-making in various essays on Chilean exile cinema (1987, 1989), essays that have unfortunately been overshadowed by Naficy's comprehensive and influential work from the 1990s and early 2000s (1999, 2001). Pick argues that the concept of exile must be understood as dynamic and subjective, and that the subjectivity of exile is always re-inventing itself. Thus, there is, according to Pick, a 'privilege of exile' and a 'subjective paradox of exile' (1987: 42, 56). The exilic is a situation, not a place, and has no established essence; it is rather a situation that challenges one to act, to renegotiate one's past, and to intervene in the present: 'film-makers have redefined their practice as a means of cultural struggle [...] the privilege of exile is the awareness of the possibility of this process' (1987: 49). The paradox of exile is that the interstitial space of the migrant can be transferred and transformed into many different and even contradicting forms, 'swaying between the recognition of its origin and its identification within foreign formations' (1987: 56). The interstitial is thus an open and contradictory space of negotiation. Pick also supports an Appadurian approach to locality by pointing out that 'cultural practice in exile does not operate through the transposition of original elements into a new context. As the territorial boundaries of cultural identity have been dislocated by exile, its filiative elements also need to be rebuilt' (1987: 52).

1 While film until the 1990s was a highly exclusive and institutional form
 2 of cultural production, it consists of a peculiar dialectic of limit and freedom,
 3 which according to Pick is characterized by the 'efforts of individuals working
 4 within diverse social, cultural, historical and institutional formations and inde-
 5 pendent from an established programme of action which could have imposed
 6 limitations and constraints' (1987: 42). The exilic is thus primarily a produc-
 7 tive context of cultural production in which the dialectic relationship between
 8 history and future, between limiting conditions and opening possibilities, is
 9 constantly being played out. This should, however, not lead to a romanti-
 10 cizing of the exilic situation, something that Ali Behdad (2005) has criticized
 11 convincingly in his overview of postcolonial theory and applications of theo-
 12 ries of minor literature. Behdad points out how the dictum of Deleuze and
 13 Guattari and the affirmation of the marginal are often used in a too general-
 14 izing manner, ignoring context and agency (Behdad 2005: 224).

16 MEMORIES OF HOME; PLACES FOR THE FUTURE

17 Naficy, in his seminal book *Accented Cinema. Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*
 18 (2001), describes the fundamental chronotype of exilic and diasporic cinema.
 19 Homeland is depicted as a stable past, a point of departure that is pristine
 20 and open and light, unlike the place that you arrive at, which is depicted as a
 21 non-place with confined spaces in an ever present. It is the present that actu-
 22 alizes the specific image of the past while it is viewed as lacking a past due to
 23 its foreignness. The only past at hand is the place that the exilic or diasporic
 24 subject has left. Thus, it is not the homeland that is the starting point; it is the
 25 present that calls for a construction of a memory that is of mythic origin and
 26 which will work as a point of departure. Hence, 'memory is where we have
 27 arrived' (Creet 2011: 6).

28 This constellation between past, present and future is played out in
 29 Menelaos Carayannis's short *En gammal melodi/An Old Tune* (Carayannis,
 30 1981). The film, shot on 16 mm and just six minutes long, was directed and
 31 written by the Greek immigrant Carayannis and photographed by Muammer
 32 Özer who had migrated from Turkey via Finland. *An Old Tune* was made with
 33 financial support from the Stockholm Film Workshop and had an important
 34 production context in Kaleidoscope, the association for immigrant film-makers
 35 in which Özer was the chairman. Carayannis got the idea for the film – after
 36 having spent some years in Sweden studying and working as a cleaner and
 37 youth recreation leader – from meeting elderly Greek immigrants who were
 38 stuck in their nostalgic memories. Nostalgia was provoked for Carayannis as
 39 well when a friend played a tune for him on the guitar. In *An Old Tune*, this
 40 feeling and construction of a past led to miscommunication and the establish-
 41 ing of two worlds that are difficult to bridge.

42 The film tells the story from the point of view of a Greek resistant fighter
 43 who, after having fought the Nazis, was eventually evicted from the coun-
 44 try in 1967 as a result of a coup by the military junta. He is living in Sweden
 45 in a small apartment, bound to his wheelchair, and is taken care of by the
 46 municipal home help service. Carayannis begins the film with a sequence of
 47 still images in colour – first from the countryside in Greece and then from
 48 the old man's apartment. The use of still images is a classic way of denying
 49 the present tense of the moving image; however, Carayannis's choice to use
 50 colour images (in contrast to the black and white photographs that the old
 51 man shows later on) implies that they are mental and actual images – that is,
 52

1 constructions in the present by the male protagonist of the film. Hence, the
 2 images of the homeland and the apartment do not propose a tense where
 3 we are 'right now in Greece', after which we would move immediately to
 4 Sweden. Rather, they represent what the old man constructs in the present
 5 as his past right now due to his feeling of placelessness. After this short but
 6 subtle introduction, a story unfolds. The help service assistant arrives and the
 7 old man tells the story of his life – who he has been and what he has been
 8 doing. The young female of the home help service does not really listen or
 9 understand, and just wants to get on with her work. The old man plays a tune
 10 on the guitar in order to explain how he feels and who he actually is, but with
 11 poor results, and he is eventually left alone until the next visit from the home
 12 service. Thus, the film shows how a story is constructed out of both the past
 13 and the present, and how this narrative is handed over to someone else as a
 14 way of trying to create locality, a new context. The Greek immigrant in *An Old*
 15 *Tune* does not, however, succeed in handing over his past and establishing
 16 a new context, and is thus denied access to the future of his current society.

17 Muammer Özer, the driving force behind Kaleidoscope (the association
 18 for immigrant film-makers), finished his seminal immigrant film one year
 19 before Carayannis's *An Old Tune*. The title of the film is *Toprak Adam* (Özer,
 20 1980), or *Earth Man*, and it was made in close collaboration with his Finnish
 21 wife Synnöve Özer. Also, *Toprak Adam* was co-financed by the Stockholm
 22 Film Workshop and became an important exponent of Kaleidoscope. The
 23 aesthetics and poetics used, however, are quite different to *An Old Tune*.
 24 Whereas Carayannis creates a proper narrative space in *An Old Tune*, letting a
 25 story unfold, Özer chooses allegory and the metonymy as his poetical means.
 26 In this way, Özer addresses every immigrant, preventing the story from being
 27 anchored in a specific subject. The film is also a key example of minor cinema
 28 aesthetics, of how you create a hybrid narrative in order to address a public
 29 that does not yet exist as something given but which is in the making, as it
 30 were.

31 The protagonist of *Toprak Adam*, a poor immigrant from the region of
 32 Anatolia, is portrayed as a small, brown clay figure, in contrast to the people
 33 around him. The choice of the clay figure as the protagonist makes it into
 34 a metonymy for every immigrant, whereas the use of an aesthetic element
 35 derived from animation, but without submitting to the rules of animation,
 36 allows Özer to transgress the poetics of regular film grammar. Thus, the film
 37 is placed neither within the genre of animation nor within regular narrative
 38 fiction. The blending of modes – animation with live-action cinema, the ficti-
 39 tious with the documentary, oral narrative with cinematic – denies any regular
 40 narrative space for the story of his newly arrived immigrant. Instead, the film
 41 establishes an allegoric space that enables a story that is still in the making to
 42 be appropriated by an audience, and whose memory practices are character-
 43 ized by the migrant's position – that of being in an interstitial space and of
 44 living in an extended present and recent past.

45 In *Toprak Adam*, the clay doll escapes from the harsh feudal life of Anatolia
 46 and arrives in Germany, but does not pass the health test that every *Gastarbeiter*
 47 must undergo. He sets out on another journey, this time to Sweden, and is
 48 eventually able to get a job. In the new country, as a result of its oppressive,
 49 monetary and rational culture, Toprak Adam, although not physically suffer-
 50 ing, ends up living a mentally poor life. The bleak narrative of Toprak Adam is
 51 introduced as an oral tale and begins with a scene in which a boy appears in
 52 front of the camera, dressed as the sun, announcing that he will tell the story

1 of Toprak Adam. The oral introduction of the tale places the film in a bygone
 2 era, an allegorical past. The audience will follow the story of an immigrant
 3 in general, a past that is established in order for the immigrant audience to
 4 have something to refer to and carry with them. The role of the past in the
 5 narrative – because of the tense of the film medium it has to unfold in the
 6 present – is emphasized by the choice to not establish a coherent time-space
 7 continuum. There is no place tied to the narrative that unfolds; it is a tale
 8 of and for every immigrant that is looking for a place and a context. Hence,
 9 the use of the abstract mode of the allegory situates the film on a general
 10 level that depicts how the past is renegotiated in order to pave the way for a
 11 future of (every) Toprak Adam. This intention to tell every immigrant's story
 12 is emphasized by showing the sense of alienation that an immigrant experi-
 13 enced when arriving in a modern, western country. Contemporary Sweden
 14 is viewed as lacking a past. The crucial scene for this is when Toprak Adam,
 15 the minuscule clay figure, arrives at the public square Sergels torg in down-
 16 town Stockholm, surrounded by modern high-rises and vast, open, desolate
 17 spaces.² The vulnerability of Toprak Adam is made clear due to the contrast
 18 between the small clay figure from the countryside and the great anonymous
 19 western city.

20 The overall meaning behind the filmic act of making *Toprak Adam* is the
 21 paradoxical one of giving meaning to the immigrant by handing over a story
 22 of dislocation (and meaninglessness in that sense), thus confirming that this is
 23 the way it was. While Carayannis depicts a situation in the present in *An Old*
 24 *Tune*, Özer hands over a story to a new emerging group to have a story and a
 25 past, a narrative to remember after they have arrived in one of Europe's most
 26 modernized countries.

27 MEMORIES OF POLITICS; PLACES OF DESIRE

28 The situation of the immigrant is addressed directly in Carayannis's and
 29 Özer's films, but as Zuzana M. Pick has expressed it, the paradox and priv-
 30 ilege of exile are that the interstitial situation may be transformed and
 31 projected into many different forms. Two examples of such strategies of trans-
 32 ference would be the films by Guillermo Alvarez, originally from Colombia,
 33 and Myriam Braniff, who came as a teenager to Sweden following her father
 34 who had to flee the Chilean military coup of 1973. For both film-makers, the
 35 Stockholm Film Workshop was a significant albeit not the only necessary
 36 location of production – they also made use of other minor cinema institu-
 37 tions or founded their own.

38 Alvarez, who had spent some time in New York, created his own co-op in
 39 Stockholm, took classes in film and theatre, and worked mostly as a subway
 40 ticket seller. The second film that his co-op, called Cineco (Cinecooperativo),
 41 produced was *Hägringen/The Mirage* (Alvarez, 1981). The film was shot in 16
 42 mm and is of quite substantial length – 38 minutes – taking into consideration
 43 that the co-op members, who came from Latin America, Spain, Greece and
 44 Sweden, funded the film out of their own pockets. *The Mirage* tells the story
 45 of a Latin American immigrant in Stockholm who is stuck in the immigrant's
 46 afterlife: he has not managed to find a job, his girlfriend has lost patience, and
 47 he has lost his faith in the continent. He doubts Swedish institutions' abili-
 48 ties to send ignorant but well-intentioned Swedes to Latin America in order
 49 to build a new society when the Latin Americans themselves are stuck in
 50 Sweden. Roberto and his friends are trapped in temporary apartments, with
 51
 52

2. The choice of Sergels Torg in Stockholm is emblematic and a recurrent topos. It occurs, for example, in the amateur film *Monos* (1974), a collective production of Tensta filmförening, the film association that was placed in Tensta, one of the Stockholm suburbs with the highest percentages of immigrants.

3. Interview with Guillermo Alvarez, e-mail, 26 November 2013.

temporary jobs and temporary relations, and with memories of a failed revolution that has been stolen by the Swedes.

The Mirage is a good example of Naficy's definition of an accented cinema. We follow the male protagonist who, without success, tries to speak the language and manage the new culture. He does not find anything to relate to in his new country. The crucial scene of the film is when the protagonist, Roberto, meets two other Latin Americans in a Swedish friend's apartment. Björn, the Swede, has just received money from The Swedish International Development Organization (SIDA) for travelling to Latin America, and Roberto and his friends discuss his intentions (it is obvious that their Swedish host does not know Spanish well enough to be able to understand what they are talking about). They agree that their Swedish friend's intentions are good, and that it is understandable that he would take the chance – SIDA pays well and tall blonde men have their value on the continent. However, it is evident that the act of sending a Swede over to Latin America to build what should be their future is a harsh fact to face, and the more drunk they get the more they begin to remember the fights and revolutions that they were part of back home, and eventually they quarrel about their own intentions and possible guilt. Soon, Roberto gets enough and leaves the place. The scene emphasizes that Roberto and his friends have been stolen twice on their revolution and their ideals – first in the home continent, and then in Sweden. They have no future and nothing to build on in their present context. Eventually, Roberto's girlfriend, fed up with living with someone who has neither a future nor aspires to have one, kicks him out. Soon after that Roberto ends up in a fight, kills a man by accident, and finally ends up in prison.

In *The Mirage*, the Latin Americans live in a double void. Their lack of context in the present means they also do not have a stable past, being unable to agree about what they have left. However, from an agential perspective, the story that Alvarez has created is meaningful for an immigrant community as it depicts an ongoing struggle with creating a past and locality. That this is the case is not only proved by the fact that the film was made and self-financed, but also that, when Alvarez wanted to sell the film to Swedish national television, the offer was turned down with the argument that it showed a far too negative image of the immigrant.³ As in the case of Carayannis's film, Alvarez fails when trying to hand over his story to the Swedish public. The receiving established society does not respond to the immigrant's story. The migrants as a public are still in the making and do not yet have a place in the society in which they already exist.

Alvarez's *The Mirage* deals directly with the immigrant situation but without constructing an obvious past, as in Carayannis's and Özer's films. In Myriam Braniff's *La Espera/The Wait* (Braniff, 1989), the transformation of the relation to the past is taken one step further. Braniff had approached the Stockholm Film Workshop with several film projects about Chilean immigrants and the situation in Chile, but without success. When she finally succeeded in receiving support, the immigrant theme was omitted and the proposed film project was supposedly a story about a woman's fears and desires.

The Wait is an adaptation of a short story by the Chilean author Guillermo Blanco, and was shot as her graduation film at the college of Biskops-Arnö, a school that had become important for film-makers and writers. The film is shot in Spanish, and the Swedish countryside is transformed into a Latin American setting.

1 Braniff's film depicts a woman living a wealthy life in the countryside, but
 2 in both desire and terror, simultaneously fearing and waiting for a rapist's
 3 return. Finally, the rapist arrives, killing her husband; in the last shot of the
 4 film we can see a woman whose look is marked by both anticipation and
 5 fear. As viewers we never really get to know whether the rape depicted in the
 6 beginning of the film is something that has actually taken place, or whether it
 7 is a fantasy of the woman. It is thus possible to interpret the ambivalent desire
 8 of the woman as a way of picturing the void and ambivalent space that you
 9 are in when there is no stable past to relate to. The past is both haunting and
 10 desired; you do not know whether you want to forget or to remember.

11 12 **MEMORIES OF INJUSTICE; PLACES FOR COMMUNITY**

13 If the examples so far have been directly related to the more subjective para-
 14 doxes of exile, there are other strategies and modes, as exemplified in the
 15 films of Cesar Galindo and Claudio Sapiaín. Galindo was a trained archi-
 16 tect who had taken courses in film after graduating and residing in Paris. He
 17 came to Sweden in the 1980s for personal reasons, and when he could not
 18 find a job that matched his education he began to make short films, most of
 19 them with support from the Stockholm Film Workshop. Several of the films
 20 touch directly upon the history of Latin America, being condensed narratives
 21 that display the convoluted history of the continent in stories where the past
 22 and the present collapse in the same moment, looking both backwards and
 23 forwards. Except for an obvious postcolonial slant and enlightening aspect to
 24 the films, they may also be interpreted as transformations of the paradoxes of
 25 exile and its subjective expressions. They propose investigations into who you
 26 are in order to be able to understand where you are.

27 Galindo's most significant work is the five-minute *Fem minuter för*
 28 *Amerikas döda/Five Minutes for the Souls of America* (Galindo, 1992), shot in
 29 16 mm and partially funded by the Stockholm Film Workshop. The short film
 30



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51 Figure 1: Cesar Galindo, *Fem minuter för Amerikas döda/Five Minutes for the*
 52 *Souls of America* (1992).

4. For a use of Freud and an elaboration in relation to the various time modes that are characteristic for film as a medium, see Sundholm (2005).

consists of one tracking shot from a crane, beginning with four Indians in the picture. A woman is singing accompanied by three musicians. While the camera slowly pulls back, a cemetery filled with crosses and smoke is uncovered. Slowly, a large cross with a crucified Jesus appears while a conquistador, dressed as an American football player, rides in circles around the crucifix. The camera continues its journey, uncovering more of the bleak landscape, and suddenly a woman can be heard repeating the following line in Spanish: 'On the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America, Spain invites the world to join in the celebration'. When the camera finally descends it is revealed that the voice comes from a TV set, mounted in a large tomb. The film is thus both a monument erected in order to mourn the Indians that were killed as well as a snapshot of a continent today that is used and misused by American politics. But it is also a way of trying to establish a past – not a history – for a diasporic community of Latin Americans. Galindo's use of the condensed imagery – the conquistador, the crucified Jesus, the graveyard, and the TV set – is a true homage to Freud's initial argument about condensation. It is a fusion of different elements from various contexts and time layers, as in a photograph that has been exposed several times (1963).⁴ This is a quintessential image and metaphor for how memory works. The memory work performed by Galindo, of handing over a story to someone who has no story of their own, is emphasized by the device that structures the whole film – the tracking shot that moves slowly backwards. The continuous movement of the camera is both a way of tracing a story to its origin as well as revealing the hidden meaning of what is taking place on the screen – the colonial act and its aftermath – the actual reason why Galindo and his fellow Latin Americans once left their continent.

A much more positive note can be found in my last example, the short film *Främlingar/Foreigners* (Sapiaín, 1978), made for TV by Claudio Sapiaín. Sapiaín was one of the almost 1000 Latin Americans estimated to have fled Chile after the coup with the help of the Swedish Embassy. Sapiaín was already a prolific political film-maker when he arrived in Sweden. During his ten-year stay, he made several political documentaries, mostly funded by Swedish or Norwegian public television. While the Swedish government had been, and still was, an ardent supporter of Salvador Allende's government, it took an active part in the fight against Augusto Pinochet, and therefore Sapiaín had an evident platform and context from which to make his films, in contrast to Alvarez, Braniff, Carayannis, Galindo and Özer, who had to establish their own context, and to create locality.

The short *Foreigners* tells about a Chilean woman, Ana Maria, who lives together with her son in Stockholm, waiting for her husband to get out of Chile. Compared with *An Old Tune*, the roles are reversed. Ana Maria works for the municipal home help service and her clients are uninterested in who she is. They merely want her to perform her work. Eventually, Ana Maria receives a new client – an elderly man who has a political past as a trade union activist. He understands Ana Maria's situation and her story and they develop a friendship that transgresses the initial customer relationship. The film ends in a hopeful tone when Ana Maria receives a letter from her husband, in which he writes that the junta has lost its grip of Chile and that they will be united as a family. What is interesting about Sapiaín's film, as suggested by its trajectory of production, is that it does not constitute an example of true minor cinema production. It is clearly a story foremost made on the premises of the Swedish audience. It is the history of the Swedish public's past that is being

1 related to Ana Maria's. The friendship constituted in the film addresses the
2 Swedish audience on their terms.

4 CONCLUSION

5 While film is a specific kind of cultural production that requires human and
6 financial resources, every approach to cinema that claims to place film in a
7 social context must take into account the actual situation, and the premises
8 for production. To be a migrant further emphasizes this fact. The situation of
9 the immigrant film-maker – amateur or professional – is thus characterized by
10 special conditions and features that are similar to what Deleuze and Guattari
11 have termed 'minor literature'. To be in such an interstitial space forces one to
12 act, to negotiate, and to appropriate the new situation and culture if one wants
13 to have a future. And the quest for a future is what migrants' memory work
14 is all about. The past that is established is a past for the here and now, for the
15 future, in order to produce a context and address an audience that is not yet
16 there but that is in the making. Such an act can take many forms and may be
17 transformed and transferred into different associations, cohorts, stories and
18 patterns, such as organized associations, self-financed co-ops, stable referents
19 for the past, nostalgia, political action, or ambivalent desires. As this article
20 has demonstrated, an analysis of the contexts of production, combined with a
21 reading of the films in question, shows how migrants' memories materialize
22 in both film practice and film text. This can be exposed, in particular, if one
23 studies independently produced, amateur, semi-professional or professional
24 film-making by newly arrived immigrants. Such films are clearly marked by
25 the migrant's situation and the need for negotiating a place for oneself, for
26 producing locality. The importance of these immigrant films is not only asso-
27 ciated with their character as aesthetic and poetic contributions – and refer-
28 ential or allegorical depictions that make meaning for their communities – but
29 is also a result of the fact that they constitute significant cultural and material
30 acts – a cultural practice of minor cinemas.

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15 **NELA MILIC**

16 University of the Arts London

21 *Wedding Bellas* – migrancy 22 as a dispute to photographic 23 traditions¹

32 **ABSTRACT**

34 *Wedding Bellas*² is a digital photography and oral history project that explores
35 a wish to belong to the European borderscape. The photographs are the
36 stories of twelve women who found themselves at a time when they refused
37 to leave. Many have been rejected – by partners, by landlords, by employers
38 – and many have been refused leave to remain in the United Kingdom by the
39 state. The women displayed resilience and resourcefulness in the face of these
40 rejections, sometimes all happening at once, and the burden of those deni-
41 als made them escape to fantasy. Some opted for equally stable, rooted and
42 good-looking ‘Queen’s subjects’ – a lamp post, a tree, a traffic sign; London
43 landmarks. The artwork presents the brides as physically connected to their
44 rooted British fellows. The images show desperation and illusion as with a
45 true wedding ceremony. The paradox of this loss of reality, due to the pres-
46 sures of life circumstances, is portrayed in the photographs, questioning if the
47 situation the women are in is imaginary – a concept shared by both the audi-
48 ence and the person in the picture. With the nexus of text and image, the
49 project troubles the perception of refugees and asylum seekers in the United
50 Kingdom today and the role that digital technology plays in that process. It
51 deals with the question of mediation of migrancy through the historic visual

KEYWORDS

Keywords
migration
photography
feminism
mediation
memory
London

1. The project was supported by the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and the Migrants Resource Centre (MRC).
2. More about the project can be found in Milic ([2010] 2015).

representation and mnemonic depictions in photographs that are challenged by the interventions of the migrants themselves in that process.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

I planned to produce this project since I encountered the group of women at the MRC in 2007. I wanted to capture them in photographs, but their dramatic life stories needed to be told differently than in the documentary reportage of mainstream media where they are usually portrayed as victims – battered, distraught or crying. Art provides a more comprehensive platform for introducing these women and presents them in a more suitable, layered and fuller light. I engaged them with the idea of creating a calendar for the exhibition and a publication compiled from the oral history project that I also run with them. The women were taught the practice and theory of digital photography.

The project took place in and around the MRC and my home in east London. The women were from various countries – Iran, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Ukraine, Iraq, Ethiopia, Bosnia, Turkey, Eritrea, Rwanda, Kurdistan, Lebanon and the United Kingdom. They were posing as on a fashion shoot, providing glamour rather than the dreary everyday filled with troubles they had to encounter, such as queuing for food vouchers, immigration control and bad press. Hence, *Wedding Bellas* is about desire for roots, stability, and the wish to stay, to be attached to the place and leave a mark there. The project further acts as a comment on ageing, marriage and people's need for dressing up, etc.

CHALLENGING REPRESENTATIONS OF MEMORY

The project for the women served as a weapon to attack the trajectory of image making that reinforced the media canon through depictions of tragedy in the pictures of teary faces, devastated lands and abandoned children. The iconic photographs of human struggle fed the idea of females as the 'weaker sex', and robbed them of their dignity. The immigration laws followed suit from this notion of tolerance of them rather than acknowledging their strengths



Figure 1: Anne.



Figure 2: Jobeda.

and contributions to the United Kingdom. The women saw empowerment in the pictures of the western models even if they were revealing their bodies, as this was assumed to be conscious, sexy and profitable; so in comparison to the poverty present in the photographs of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, it looked like independence.

However, during the shoot they were standing on the street like clowns, saying ‘thank you’ to strangers as they wished them good luck with their marriages. As in my previous project ‘Balkanising Taxonomy’ (2008), I have been trying to expose the idea of understanding something by classifying it, creating a drawer for it as it has a particular belonging, i.e. the restriction of identity. However, I am repeating the same methodology that I criticize when applying for funding. I write ‘Soheila is Iranian’, when she is a Swedish citizen; I call Larisa a refugee, but she is a migrant of a country that many refugees came from; Jobeda is not Bangladeshi, she is a Londoner, and even though I do not feel British, this is who I am now. By analysing the transnational identity of my contributors, the discourse of my project widens and begins to touch cosmopolitanism, community and feminism.

In my photographs, the women are present as alien, costumed bodies in an ordinary space. The women observed by the public on the street during the shooting were looked at again in the gallery or subsequent publications, giving an opportunity to the audience to participate in the art production process by identifying with the public on the set. Women's wedding dresses are emblems of history situated in the midst of the urban environment, interrogating the old constructs of national boundaries, civic laws and social codes.

Photo prints on life-size silk panels simulated the flags as well as the dresses, and shuffling them kept the ladies alive and permanently glamorous. But how do memory features work in the minds of these women that are so concerned with the future? They seem only to think of memory as a collective agreement of their hosts – now their audience – who remember the women as victims. It is this facilitated memory that the women wanted to mediate further via the project, churning the established and popular images of themselves into a production line, from which they wish to come out differently. The iconic wedding photo aesthetics displaces one from the position of norm because it is inhabited by the migrants who are, contrary to mainstream char-



Figure 3: Mary.

1 actors in the images, happy people. Through this intervention, the media's
2 migrant picture is shaken, problematized and questioned.

3 The white wedding is a traditional formal or semi-formal western cere-
4 mony. Ironically, the white colour represents innocence and, even though
5 in the eyes of the state some of these women might be guilty of 'paper
6 marriages', they are blameless in the court of human rights and in their own
7 eyes. The evidence of their helplessness to have choices in life as free people
8 is reflected in their lonely wedding photos, but in the presence of that one
9 person in the image they gain power revealed in humour and fantasy of the
10 situation they are in.

11 The dress symbolizes a surrender to love, a submission that is, in the case
12 of women, the opposite of who they are, and this polarity is what the project
13 is trying to capture – the trouble with binaries and with clarity of opposition
14 when we work in the memory field through limited, constrained, and reduc-
15 tive notions of place and nation. A group of brides hugging the objects as
16 grooms is not a wedding anyone thinks of as real, but it provides a local spec-
17 tacle and encourages global debate about the impacts of borders on human
18 relationships, the representations of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in
19 the media, and social changes of the areas we live in.

20 21 **AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHY**

22 Still, the reactions of my European friends defeat me. In her e-mail, Rosa
23 writes: 'I do not really feel that I belong to the group you are representing'. An
24 Italian and German woman are overriding their gender camaraderie, and see
25 their national identity and social class as important distinctions in comparison
26 to refugee migrants in the group. This made me realize, for the first time, that
27 for them I am a refugee, not just a friend. Methods, the technology of repre-
28 sentation, and the classifying practice of western media and academia, as well
29 as my friends' empirical knowledge and encounters with otherness, do not
30 seem overpowered, even though my presence in their space has existed for
31 almost two decades.

32 During the installation of the project exhibition, a young man of Pakistani
33 origin attacked me when I jokingly said that the photographed women marry
34 objects because they do not like British men. 'Go back to Serbia', he said, going
35 back to the time when I arrived in England. Instead of the memory of the
36 women and the audience that I wanted to confront, it is my own that faces me.

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50 traditions', *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture*, 7: 1, pp. 75–80, doi:
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15 ŠPELA DRNOVŠEK ZORKO
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21 See(m)ing strange: 22 Methodologies of memory 23 and home 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

32 ABSTRACT

33 Drawing on Sara Ahmed's work on the stranger and Anne-Marie Fortier's
 34 approach to remembering home, this article argues for a methodology of
 35 memory and migration that would explore individuals' encounters between
 36 lived spatio-temporalities without affirming a migrant ontology. I look to
 37 my ethnographic research on diasporic narratives among migrants from the
 38 former Yugoslavia in the United Kingdom to ask how recounted memories of
 39 home might be bound up in, but not confined to, the experience of migration.
 40 Exploring mnemonic journeys that go beyond dichotomies of displaced origins
 41 and strange new homelands, I suggest that stories of embodied sensory expe-
 42 rience can make visible people's encounters with forms of difference: both in
 43 the past home, which loses its ontological fixity, and in the process of inhabit-
 44 ing a 'diaspora space', which comes with its own narratives and trajectories of
 45 being a stranger.

46 How does 'migration' affect the way people draw on the past in stories of
 47 home, without necessarily upholding a territorialized dichotomy of mobility and
 48 immobility? The present article is based on ethnographic research conducted
 49 in the United Kingdom on diasporic narratives of the past among migrants
 50 from the former Yugoslavia and their children. Like the conference panel from
 51 which it emerged, it responds to the insights of recent multidisciplinary work
 52

KEYWORDS

home
 memory
 strangers
 sensory
 Yugoslavia
 Britain
 socialism
 diaspora space

conducted on the relationship between memory and migration (Crete and Kitzmann 2011), and on theories of transnational (De Cesari and Rigney 2014) or 'traveling' memory (Erll 2011). What these debates have in common is a negative interlocutor of memory as bounded and emplaced – the sense that 'time is the only movement which memory tolerates' (Crete 2011: 5) – as epitomized by Pierre Nora and the influence his work have wielded over much of the cultural memory studies boom of the previous decades (Erll 2011). This flourishing literature resonates in part with those projects within migration scholarship that have attempted to 'nuance the migrant experience' (Osella and Osella 2008), rather than taking migration for granted as an unrivalled transformative event entailing entirely new subjectivities or social processes, and which look instead to how migration is experienced as one aspect of change in relation to others. Such approaches necessarily speak to a tradition of viewing migration as 'a *problem* that needs to be "fixed"' (Castles 2010: 1567, original emphasis) on the one hand, and on the other to those theorizations of migration and diaspora that emphasize hybrid identities marked by historical experiences of movement, which resist becoming untangled (Gilroy 1993; Hall 1993).

One of the key aspects of this debate is the question of whether 'home' can always be presumed to be that which people leave behind in the act of migrating. Feminist scholars have repeatedly pointed out that 'home' is not necessarily always a site of safety or a locus of positive feeling (Brah 1996; Ahmed et al. 2003), while, as Osella and Osella remind us, 'migrant ambivalence about home need not be a product of migration' (2008: 147), but can pre-date migration or shape how the act comes to be experienced by individuals. At the same time, the idea of home as a place 'where there is no need to explain oneself to outsiders' (Kondo 1996: 97) retains a strong hold on the scholarly as well as popular imagination, as does the sense that migrating across *national* lines holds a particular weight with regard to how such 'outsiders' are identified.

In this article, I reflect on my ethnographic fieldwork to address the question of what constitutes a 'methodology' for studying the relationship between memory, migration and 'home'. When thinking through my ethnography I have had to contend not only with the migration exceptionalism referenced above, but also with a long-established tendency to view post-socialism as contiguous with a sense of a historical break, symbolized by the post-Cold War idiom of 'transition'. Furthermore, while the break-up of the former Yugoslav state has been interpreted within the larger paradigm of post-socialism, it has also, due to the nature of the wars which accompanied it, frequently been viewed as inevitable (Rusinow 2003), or been described in the register of simmering 'ethnic hatreds' (Goldsworthy 2002).

My primary challenge has thus been to locate my interlocutors' narratives of belonging in relation to both a shared Yugoslav past, now refracted through the historical shifts and ruptures of the twentieth century, as well as through the experience of migration and subsequent home-making within a context that, as Srdja Pavlovic puts it in relation to his own experience of Canada as a 'Montenegrin Canadian', 'demands that I conceptualize myself in relation to it' (2011: 47). To this end, I focus on instances of memory talk among my interlocutors which assert an attachment to a past home whereby a belief in its inherent characteristic as a place where one need not explain oneself becomes impossible to sustain, not only as a consequence of migration and the changes this implies, but as a fundamental condition of the home left behind.

Two key themes emerge throughout the article: first, a preponderance of sensory imagery in such memory talk, and the evocation of a sensorial misalignment between the speaker and the past home; and second, the way that my interlocutors frequently attach their remembering to the experiences of 'homing' (Brah 1996: 193) in a new place – not as a reductive baseline for comparison, but as a process evoking a sense of strangeness as well as surprising moments of alignment. So, for instance, encouraging British-born children to establish links to a parental homeland by learning about 'their culture' is a means of keeping alive the memory of a past home, but it is also legitimated as raising a new generation of multicultural British citizens. Uniting around beloved songs might present an opportunity to recapture a former sense of harmony for Bosnians displaced by war; yet, the question of language and pronunciation emerges as a jarring note, triggering memories that prove 'Bosnian' does and never did mean the same thing to all people. At the same time, recalling moments of encountering visible 'difference' on the streets of London can evoke comparisons with the former home where presumed strangers are also revealed to be unexpectedly familiar.

I address the issue of methodologies on two interconnected levels. The first stems from my reflection on the process of seeking out people's stories of home through the lens of 'the past' while working in the context of the former Yugoslavia, where such stories are characterized by complex histories of solidarity but also by systematic processes of cultural differentiation, memories of everyday conviviality as well as violent upheaval. By refusing to focus on any single 'community' living in Britain – of Bosnians, Croats, Serbs, and so on – I wanted to avoid reifying the narrative of irreconcilable 'ethnic' difference that plagues the question of Yugoslavia to this day. At the same time, people's lived experiences, including but not limited to their national identification, class background, age, and which Yugoslav republic they or their families once lived in, influence the way they call upon this past even if no one axis can shape it definitively. As my research unfolded, it led me to think more laterally about the ways in which the past becomes visible in my interlocutors' narratives: an ad hoc methodology born out of the gradual process of realizing that such stories might not look quite the way I had initially expected them to.

The second inflection that 'methodologies' carry is the work that narratives of home do for my interlocutors. How do references to a past home evoke displacements that are not necessarily about migration, but are nevertheless bound up in the experience of migration? How do memories of the past make visible, or sensible, those qualities about the past home that reveal it as always having been less fixed than one had assumed? Do such memories make the present more or less inhabitable, more or less familiar? To explore some of the underlying issues these questions evoke, I first draw on several critical approaches to 'home' that have proven particularly useful for making sense of my ethnographic conversations.

44

45 HOMES OUT OF PLACE

46

The core tension running throughout much of the theoretical work on memory and migration is that while memory is inherently unmoored from any static framework of production or intelligibility, we cannot help but feel that there is something qualitatively different about memory in the context of the migration of people. The very fact that it is the metaphor of movement that is often called upon to make this point – making memory 'mobile', or inherently a

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1. Indeed, Avtar Brah's evocative 'meditation' on the London suburb of Southall is titled "'The Scent of Memory: Strangers', our own, and others' (1999).

'traveller' – is significant for what it implies about the concept of movement as an ontological quality. In *Strange Encounters*, Sara Ahmed draws on the idiom of the alien – both as an extraterrestrial other and as a person defined by law as not belonging within a national border – to argue against an ontology of strangers as 'a mechanism for allowing us to face that which we have already designated as the beyond' (2000: 3). Assuming that it is possible simply to be or to recognize a stranger is a form of 'stranger fetishism' (Ahmed 2000: 3–6), a displacement that severs the figure of the stranger from the historical and material circumstances of its determination. Rejecting the celebratory appropriation of the stranger in those strands of postmodern theory that call for a recognition of being a stranger as a universal condition, Ahmed argues that we require ways of thinking that do not conceal those processes that make some strangers and some bodies stranger than others. Central to the classic idea of the stranger are the concepts of emplacement and home, and alongside them, the feeling that home is a place one can leave behind. In this framing, it is not the home that is mobile, merely the body. For Ahmed, however, the assumed opposition between 'home and away' should give way to an understanding of the difference between being at home and leaving home, which does not enforce an ontology of home as 'stasis of being' (2000: 88–89).

Scholars working on diaspora have arguably long recognized the close entanglement of spaces and temporalities in the idioms of diasporas' altered pasts and never-there homelands (Clifford 1994; Hirsch and Miller 2011). But it is Avtar Brah who has been most instrumental in bringing to bear a complex vision of what a 'diaspora space' (1996: 181) might entail, not merely as a space in which migrants settle, but as the 'intersectionality of diaspora, border, and dis/location' where 'homing desires' (1996: 193) come to be enacted. For Brah, diasporic homing desire is distinct from desire for the homeland – as '[discourse] of fixed origins' (1996: 193) – in that it describes a multivalent project that can be oriented by memories of dislocation but could just as well signify hope and new possibilities. Here 'feeling at home' exists in a tension with being seen to be at home, or with staking the right to inhabit somewhere as a home. The diasporic thus dwells in those acts of home-making that take place around collective imagined journeys, in a 'diaspora space' such as Britain, which itself bears the marks of multiple contestations and alliances around what it means to be 'native' or 'Other'.

Ahmed draws on Brah extensively when exploring the simultaneous meaning that home contains as both 'a mythic space of desire in the diasporic imagination' and '*the lived experience of totality*' (original emphasis), which does not represent a foreclosed and fully constituted space of origin, but rather 'defines what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers' (2000: 89). Home, here is interior rather than exterior to the person, made up of embodied sense-memory as well as being a discursive idea.¹ For Ahmed, there is an analogy to be drawn between place and memory that lies in the very impossibility of return:

The experience of leaving home in migration is hence always about the *failure of memory to make sense of the place one comes to inhabit*, a failure that is experienced in the discomfort of inhabiting a migrant body, a body that feels out of place. The process of returning home is likewise about the failures of memory, of not being inhabited in the same way by that which appears as familiar.

(2000: 91, original emphasis)

1 How might memory be embodied even without a literal return 'home'?
 2 Ahmed and Brah have been influential for Anne-Marie Fortier's (2003) work
 3 on 'motions of attachment', which Fortier locates within narratives that recall
 4 'originary' homes. Writing about queer migration stories and the differ-
 5 ent relationships to childhood homes that they produce, Fortier shows that
 6 'returning' to a past home through its recollection can mean encountering
 7 both familiarity and estrangement in what one had considered fixed. For
 8 instance, personal stories about queerness and migration, predicated on the
 9 assumption that migration can bring about the possibility for people to 'reas-
 10 sess their childhoods' (Cant 1997, quoted in Fortier 2003: 120), can instead
 11 serve as a way of shifting the image one had of this childhood – as Bob Cant
 12 does in his own narrative by remembering his home town as having been
 13 populated with fellow outsiders. Requiring both attachment and movement,
 14 Fortier's take on remembering implies a journeying between homes that
 15 populates them with difference, denying the originary home any ontological
 16 or foundational reality. She writes:

17
 18 [remembering] is lived in motions, the motions of journeying between
 19 homes, the motions of hailing ghosts from the past, the motions of
 20 leaving and staying put, of 'moving on' or 'going back', the motions of
 21 cutting or adding, the motions of continual reprocessing of what home
 22 is/was/might have been.
 23 (2003: 131)

24
 25
 26 Remembering thus involves journeys of memory that are not about simple
 27 returns, but that connects the past and present via embodied experiences of
 28 inhabitation and dislocation: strangers', our own, and others'.

30 (POST-)YUGOSLAV NARRATIVES OF HOME AND BELONGING

31 The question of what home might have been, as well as what it is and what
 32 it was, remains crucial to former Yugoslavia and the questions it raises
 33 about belonging. The story of collective identity formation in the region is a
 34 complex one, tangled up in histories of migration, occupation, empire, and
 35 various attempts to construct a South Slav state.² The historical production
 36 of 'nationhood', variably organized around ideas about communal language
 37 and dialect, religious identification, naming conventions or cultural traditions,
 38 characterizes a 'Balkan Babel' (Ramet 2002) that has been seen as the inevi-
 39 table cause of Yugoslavia's downfall on the one hand, and romanticized as a
 40 bygone 'multi-ethnic' utopia on the other. Recent edited volumes have broad-
 41 ened the discussion on 'post-Yugoslavia' by analysing the political, economic
 42 and social relations that characterize its aftermath (Hudson and Bowman
 43 2012), addressing ways of remembering everyday life in Yugoslavia (Luthar
 44 and Pušnik 2010), or by employing a reflexive perspective on the mean-
 45 ing and idea of Yugoslavia from the point of view of the present (Abazović
 46 and Velikonja 2014; Gorup 2013). At the same time, multiple ethnographies
 47 coming out of the region are emphasizing that people's sense of the present-
 48 day and future is mediated via a relationship to the Yugoslav past that some-
 49 how refuses to be made wholly irrelevant (Velikonja 2008; Petrović 2010a,
 50 2010b; Kurtović 2011; Jansen 2015).

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2. For more on the historical construction and experience of Yugoslavism, see Djokić (2003).

3. As discussed also by
Ryan-Saha (2015).

The very fragmented nature of migration from former Yugoslavia to the United Kingdom, which formed the basis of my research, ranges from the arrival of largely Serbian political émigrés post-World War II, through to occasional migrants in the 1960s to the 1970s who moved for reasons of employment or education, to the mostly Bosnian refugees arriving in the 1990s along with displaced persons from other parts of the region, and finally the more recent migrations after the end of the war. It thus gives rise to a multiplicity of narratives about the past. At the same time, the multifarious legacies of post-imperial migratory histories in the United Kingdom provide a tapestry of narratives around difference and belonging into which all migrants must enmesh themselves. Over the year and a half of my fieldwork, I sought out individuals and organizations aimed at people from the former Yugoslav region, mostly in London but with several trips to other parts of the country. The majority of my fieldwork, at least in terms of sustained and repeated contact, was conducted with people from Bosnia, most, though not all, of whom identified as Bosnian Muslims; but I also encountered a number of people from other parts of Yugoslavia, all of whom had diverse stories and reasons for ending up in the United Kingdom.

Through my engagement with community organizations I took part in several commemorative events and celebrations, many of which were organized under the aegis of Bosnian supplementary schools – weekend projects designed to teach children and young people about Bosnian language and culture – or the associations linked with them. My first encounter with the schools' joint mission of pedagogy and community formation occurred at the annual summer meet-up of Bosnian supplementary schools in Britain,³ which I attended just before the start of my fieldwork period. The day unfolded largely in the sign of Bosnia as motherland: speeches, including that by the Bosnian ambassador, emphasized the need for children to speak their mother tongue, while others stressed the connection between language and the preservation of Bosnia in the children's hearts and memories.

This did not mean, however, that such commemorative events reinforced only a backward-looking vision of home(land) as a symbolic place of origin. The overlap between teaching children and the appeal to a wider remembrance of Bosnianness was a notable feature of other large events organized by the London-based school later that year. The London branch of the school was where I volunteered regularly, and the one I came to know most intimately. Since it represented an important nexus of organized Bosnian community in London, as well as having access to an auditorium in the community centre where it rented space, the school hosted not only curriculum-specific events but also commemorations of public Bosnian holidays, including Statehood Day, Independence Day and International Women's Day (the latter is no longer a state holiday in Bosnia, but nevertheless features strongly each year).

At both events the programme included requisite speeches from notables as well as readings by poets from the community, one or two of whom had travelled from other countries for the occasion. The speeches were largely undeviating in their linking of collective memory and national affinity to the pedagogical mission of the school, but there were some departures from the narrative. While a speaker at one event emphasized the importance of children learning their language and being proud of Bosnia, one of the school's teachers chose to highlight the importance of language learning with reference to academic success in English schools, and called on parents to enrol

1 their children in a GCSE homework club she was trying to organize alongside
 2 the regular programme. This tendency to frame the mission of the Bosnian
 3 school in terms of 'multicultural competency' and as integral to the forma-
 4 tion of good *British* subjects appeared again in my interactions with teachers
 5 from the school, as well as in conversations with some of the parents. Later
 6 that afternoon, one of the poets recited a poem in which she evoked a self-
 7 consciously multi-directional attachment to different homes: she described
 8 missing Bosnia in London and thinking of London in Bosnia, wrapped up in
 9 the metaphor of a suitcase. 'Home' could no longer appear in the singular,
 10 just as the teacher's interjection of English schools and English success made
 11 it impossible to view children's attachment to Bosnianness only in terms of a
 12 collectively remembered origin.

13 Most striking, however, were those evocations of home that occurred
 14 outside the direct remit of pedagogical remembering. Here I return to the
 15 notion present in both Ahmed and Fortier, of home as something which is
 16 inhabited by and inhabits the senses. As Fortier points out, looking back at
 17 a place that was once experienced as immutable can reveal that difference
 18 was in fact always already present. Yet, mnemonic returns do not necessarily
 19 produce increased feelings of familiarity or hominess. As became clear in my
 20 interactions, such journeys of memory can also serve to show that the home
 21 left behind – be it Bosnia, Serbia, Yugoslavia or the family backyard – might
 22 never have been the sites of effortless belonging one had thought. The stories
 23 that follow here were all related to me in terms of sensory experience, where
 24 feeling at home is not necessarily a matter of dislocation caused by migration
 25 – being a strange body in a strange place – but a recognition that a familiar
 26 place can *become* strange at the moment when certain ways of being embod-
 27 ied become strange also.

28 29 SENSIBLE MAKING VISIBLE

30 During the time that I was volunteering at the Bosnian supplementary school,
 31 I was gently but efficiently recruited to take part in a newly established week-
 32 end choir. The main driving force behind the choir project was a man called
 33 Nedim, whose plan was to build up a varied repertoire featuring not only
 34 popular Bosnian folk songs, but also what he described to me as older pop
 35 songs that people remember from 'Back in the Day'. This meant casting a
 36 wider net in terms of a shared regional cultural history: one of the first songs
 37 the choir rehearsed and offered to perform at a commemoration event was
 38 a popular track recorded in 1972 by a Croatian pop group, whose title was,
 39 incidentally, in Italian.

40 At one rehearsal several weeks before the event where we were sched-
 41 uled to perform, we tackled a song that everyone (bar me) already knew, but
 42 which, unlike the Croatian song earlier, happened to be written in *ekavica*.

43 A brief note of explanation: the language formerly known as Serbo-
 44 Croatian, which now exists as Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Montenegrin
 45 (or 'BCS/M'), has three forms of pronunciation, although only two are
 46 used prominently. Many common words with the same meaning are thus
 47 pronounced differently in *ekavica* and in *ijekavica*.⁴ Whereas the differences in
 48 pronunciation used to be largely regional when the language was still known
 49 as Serbo-Croatian, they too have now become political tools of differentiation
 50 (Longinović 2013), with *ekavica*, once more widely used in Serbia, becoming
 51 associated with Serbianness (as well as being widely used in Montenegro),
 52

4. For instance, *ijekavica* inserts a soft 'j' sound, so that the word for 'sand' can be either 'pesak' in *ekavica* or 'pijesak' in *ijekavica*. For more on the use of language in the process of cultural and 'national' differentiation in the production of the independent successor states, see Longinović (2013).

5. The Dayton Agreement of 1995 formally ended the Bosnian War, as well as dividing the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina into two autonomous political and territorial entities: Republika Srpska, with a predominantly Bosnian-Serb population, and Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine, inhabited mostly by Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims (or Bosniaks).

while *ijekavica* is now mostly spoken in Croatia and all parts of Bosnia except Republika Srpska.⁵

One member of the choir raised her hand: were we planning to sing the song in *ekavica* or *ijekavica*? There was some hemming and hawing. Another singer, Amela, said that since she had first learned the lyrics in *ekavica*, she intended to sing them that way now.

Nedim did not answer her directly, but turned to face me. '*Ekavica* is closer to how you would say things in Slovenian, isn't it? But we tend to prefer *ijekavica* here – many people don't much like *ekavica*, as you can imagine'.

When the choir rehearsed the song a second time, we did so in *ijekavica*, mentally changing the words on the lyrics sheet; although if one person had stuck with *ekavica*, I dare say it would have been quite difficult to notice. The rehearsal was light-hearted and relaxed, and as we were breaking up, Amela surveyed the room.

'We sounded good!' she exclaimed. 'And just think: in this room we have Bosnians, a Herzegovinian, a Macedonian, and a Slovenian. We almost have a little former Yuga in this choir!'

What went unspoken, of course, was that this little former Yugoslavia was missing several republics, including 'a Serb' and 'a Croatian', either of which can represent a paradigmatic symbol of enmity within the context of the Bosnian War. I nevertheless left the rehearsal feeling buoyed by the camaraderie, as well as by Amela's reminiscence of a Yugoslav past within a space of Bosnian diasporic culture, which seemed to prove that such memories of conviviality can play a positive role in the present, despite the intervening ruptures.

Just over a year later, I was invited to a celebration of Statehood Day hosted by the Bosnian association of a neighbouring county. When I arrived, Nedim greeted me with the unexpected news that the choir would be performing several songs, but told me not to worry, they were all our old standards. Amela had by then left the choir due to work obligations, but in the hallway I ran into Adi, another singer from Bosnia I had chatted to in the past but did not know particularly well. We struck up a conversation, which was interrupted once by two passing acquaintances who greeted each other with 'salam!', a casual greeting popular among the mostly Muslim Bosnian members of the organization.

As they walked on, Adi shook his head and lowered his voice. 'This must seem a bit strange to you', he said.

Religion used to be a private matter in Bosnia, he continued, and he thought that people who really are religious do not need to talk about it in public or to make it political. What's wrong with saying 'good day', anyway?

Adi and I sat down together and awaited the start of the programme. When the choir was called upon to perform, we all went into a quick huddle to discuss our set. The question of pronunciation arose again when Nedim reminded us to sing that one particular song in *ijekavica*. In an almost exact repeat of last year's discussion, Adi noted that the song had originally been written in *ekavica*. This time Nedim did not turn to me specifically, but addressed the whole group with what struck me as a slightly forced smile: 'Yes, but it was *ekavica* that forced me from my house!'

Since our audience was getting restless, there was no time to arrive at a conclusion, and the matter was never quite resolved. It remained a small but irreconcilable difference between the memory of the song as it was meant to be sung – harking back to a time when most Bosnians could easily switch

1 between pronunciations at will – and Nedim’s painful memory of being
 2 expelled from his house. His exclamation remembered this past home with
 3 *ekavica*-speaking Serbian soldiers, giving the lie to the memory of an uncom-
 4 plicated Yugoslav past. Here, the memory reveals the shadow that must have
 5 resided in the home even when one had still thought it homey. At the same
 6 time, the context in which the song was sung that day already interpellates
 7 different visions of home: Bosnian Statehood Day marks the day in 1943 when
 8 the Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Yugoslavia (AVNOJ)
 9 refounded Bosnia and Herzegovina as a republic in the newly established
 10 socialist federation. This legacy of the Yugoslav past in contemporary Bosnian
 11 political identity, especially when commemorated as a form of community-
 12 making on a sunny autumn weekend in south-eastern England, is a constant
 13 reminder of the shifting nature of the home(land) that is remembered collec-
 14 tively.

15 Nedim’s stance on *ekavica*, however, also made it clearer to me how the
 16 visceral memory of home becoming uninhabitable can intervene in such
 17 collective projects. Happy to sing songs from across Yugoslavia, happy to
 18 come together and celebrate Bosnia in its complicated history, with a group
 19 of people who might not all entirely agree with him on what that home
 20 is or should be, Nedim waged a protest at the point where his memory of
 21 estrangement threatened to be swept aside in a vision of home he could no
 22 longer recognize. But there was some harmony to be found in disharmony:
 23 which lyrics people actually sung, either deliberately or because they acciden-
 24 tally followed the song as written, was largely drowned out by the ill-config-
 25 ured backing music.

26 In the course of my fieldwork I encountered further stories of the home
 27 becoming strange. One such account came from Jovanka, who was born and
 28 raised in Belgrade and had left Yugoslavia to move to the United Kingdom for
 29 work in the late 1980s, several years before the first war broke out.

30 ‘You see, we didn’t know there would be a war’, she told me when we
 31 met, stirring her cup of coffee. ‘We just couldn’t imagine something like that
 32 even happening’.

33 When it did happen, she went on, ‘they’ all asked themselves whether
 34 they had been living in a vacuum. The Belgrade of her youth was such a
 35 ‘cosmopolitan’ city: perhaps people living elsewhere had an inkling, but no
 36 one from her circle was aware of any growing tensions. Jovanka did, however,
 37 have a very clear memory of visiting her parents in Serbia, once she and her
 38 family were already living in Britain:

39
 40 One day, my father was walking across the garden with a transistor
 41 radio trying to catch Radio Zagreb, to hear everything he could [about
 42 the situation]. This was maybe in the ‘90s and I asked him to come
 43 inside: ‘Dad, please, they’ll think you’re an extraterrestrial, or some kind
 44 of spy!’ But those waves could only be caught in one part of the garden
 45 and of course we all discussed everything, and [...] The disintegration of
 46 Yugoslavia first became visible in language.

47
 48 Jovanka went on to describe how entirely new words started popping up in
 49 Croatia, which were supposedly based on older Slavic roots but seemed to her
 50 completely fictitious. As a teacher of Serbo-Croatian, she had to buy a new
 51 dictionary in order to translate some of the new words which were coming in
 52 over the radio.

VISIBLE DIFFERENCE AND FAMILIAR STRANGERS

On another autumn day, I sat down to conduct an interview with Azra, who I had by that point known for over a year. Azra came from a small town in the north-west of Bosnia and arrived in London in the mid-1990s as a refugee, joining her husband with their young child. That day I touched for the first time on what had seemed to her the most important difference when arriving in the United Kingdom. We had just been talking about growing up in Yugoslavia, so I asked whether having been raised in a socialist country presented a big change for her. 'No', said Azra decidedly. For her personally, other things were much more important, capitalist country or not. What was it that she noticed most, then? 'The democracy'.

Despite my expectations, Azra did not mean this as a reference to the British multi-party parliamentary system in contrast with a disintegrating socialist state. In the very next sentence, she described democracy as seeing 'everyone' on the streets of London: a woman wearing a burqa, a man from Jamaica. When I asked whether democracy to her meant some form of multiculturalism, she replied: 'Well, we had a version of multiculturalism in Bosnia. And the differences between us were much smaller, but it still didn't work'.

In recounting her memory of seeing 'everyone' on the streets of London as evidence of peaceful coexistence, in spite of 'larger' cultural differences than those she had known in Bosnia during Yugoslav times, Azra fashioned democracy into something capable of being seen. Democracy here resides in bodies that most clearly evoke difference: the racialized figures of the man from Jamaica and the woman in a burqa. In the memory of this first encounter with street-level conviviality, there are perhaps things that go unseen: the continued British legacy of postcolonial power relations, which always adapt to new regimes of differentiation; the systematic Islamophobia which haunts British Muslims as the potential enemy within; and the state-sanctioned violence against black male bodies that takes place on many a street in London. At the same time, the sight in this recounted memory also serves to show that the 'multiculturalism' that existed in Bosnia was never truly democratic, else it would not have ended as it did. As an answer to my question, then, Azra's comments locate the most important difference between the place left behind and the place newly encountered in the memory of conviviality: both as that which had turned into violent estrangement in Bosnia, and as that which was still perceivable on the streets of Azra's new home.

Fleeting though it was, this reference gave me pause, since it contradicted what I had expected to be her answer. In the moment when Azra said 'democracy', I assumed she was using the term in the sense that it has been used by a parade of scholarly treatments on so-called post-socialist transition – as an end goal made elusive by ever-moving posts (Burawoy and Verdery 1999). It made me confront assumptions I did not quite realize I held, that memories of Yugoslavia would be recognizable as such by constituting memories of a *system*, whether seen in a positive or negative light. This moment of cognitive dissonance in my conversation with Azra – the moment between 'democracy' and 'burqa' – prompted me to look for different ways in other conversations by which the past experience of home might manifest itself.

The initial encounter with a new home, however, can also change over time into a form of familiarity, a new hominess that comes to be contrasted with the old. Azra told me that her then-teenage sons had complained, after spending several weeks in Bosnia on a summer break, that they missed being

1 home in London: 'they were bored, they missed curry, and they missed seeing
 2 black people'. The lack of an expected and familiar sight – or smell – cast a
 3 different light on the familiarity of the parental homeland. At the same time,
 4 Azra added, many of these things have become normal for her as well. She
 5 remembered coming to England for the first time, when they were staying in
 6 a refugee hostel with a number of families from Sri Lanka, and smelling all
 7 those cooking scents that were unknown to her. They seemed so strong to her
 8 at first, but now she is completely used to them. 'That's integration for you',
 9 she finished, 'getting used to smells!'

10 There were also other ways in which intimacy and estrangement were
 11 narrated in terms of encounters with visible (and often racialized) forms of
 12 otherness. Amela, the woman who had once attended the choir, told me the
 13 story of seeing a 'black woman' outside her local shop who failed to clean
 14 up after her dog. Amela muttered something insulting in Bosnian: 'luckily, I
 15 didn't say anything about her being black!' It turned out that the man who
 16 was with the dog owner – also black, clarified Amela – smilingly replied in
 17 the same language, whereupon it turned out that he had studied in Belgrade
 18 before the war. This largely positive encounter (Amela added that the man
 19 lives on the same estate as her and that they wave hello occasionally) was
 20 later accompanied by another anecdote, in which Amela recalled using racially
 21 charged insults to respond to a woman on the bus who told her and her son
 22 to 'go back home'.

23 On another occasion I was visiting Nada, an acquaintance from a folk
 24 dance class, who introduced me to her adult daughter Marina. The three of
 25 us were chatting about language, and how in London you never know when
 26 you will be understood by a passing stranger – although less so here than in
 27 Vienna, where 'every second person on the street is one of ours', as Nada put
 28 it.

29 Marina then related her own story of meeting 'a black man' in London,
 30 who had also studied in Belgrade and chatted with her in Serbo-Croatian.
 31 But when I mentioned that I now find it very strange to return to Slovenia
 32 to be reminded of how white it is, Marina confided that although she had
 33 been raised in Yugoslavia to think of everyone as equal regardless of skin
 34 colour, and was taught at school that black people the world over had been
 35 oppressed throughout history, her attitude changed a little when she came to
 36 the United Kingdom. She had had some experiences, she said, which really
 37 made her wonder whether that was true.

38 Marina's and Amela's memories of encountering unexpected intimacy
 39 in the form of a visible stranger necessitated a rethinking of where and how
 40 familiarity might be embodied, as well as implicating the various histories of
 41 journeys that had placed both 'the black man' and the speaker on the same
 42 street, whether in Belgrade or in London. At the same time, this familiarity
 43 did not necessarily extend or translate into encounters with other 'Others', as
 44 evidenced by Amela's meeting on the bus; or, as in Marina's case, the abstract
 45 tolerant sensibility taught 'at home' might start to unravel in the course of
 46 inhabiting a diaspora space. My own discomfort at some of these exchanges,
 47 entangled in my complicit role as confidante on the basis of the assumption
 48 that I was 'one of our people', also came as a reminder that reassessing the
 49 past home as more heterogeneous than first assumed may not necessarily lead
 50 to a more liberatory or convivial stance towards racialized forms of difference.

51
 52

FEELING THE WAY TO A METHODOLOGY

The encounter with a situated, present-day act of homing – such as through singing songs one used to know in a London community centre, or walking down the street – can precipitate a journey of memory to a past home, which emerges as less homey, less easily and more precariously inhabited than a home understood as the ‘mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination’ (Ahmed 2000: 89) left behind through a migratory movement. Since the ‘home’ in question is removed not only by virtue of physical distance but also by an imbrication of spaces and times, of the past as a place one was able to inhabit at a particular moment, ‘place’ and ‘memory’ might indeed be seen as analogous: neither of them allow for a return to a fixed point, or even to a sense of fixity that could be repeatedly revisited from the point of being ‘away’. Thus, the memory of the past home, despite the frequent emphasis on remembering the homeland deployed in commemorative or pedagogical contexts within my interlocutors’ projects of diasporic community making, cannot quite locate a stable referent: an effortlessly inhabitable home that did not undergo the violent process of differentiation which evicted Nedim from his house, nor the realization that the idea of democracy which Azra had grown up with was unable to hold up to the continued coexistence of ‘small differences’. What matters here is that memory does not and cannot return one to an ontologically homey home; yet, all the same, the act of re(-)membering, by making visible the fact that the past home was never fixed and never stable, might be able to assert an individual’s ability to know it as never fixed, never stable. In other words, by evoking what is sensible about this home or another, one can also become sensible of its implications.

It is in this way, I would suggest, that we might think about methodologies of migrant memory: as the space of possibility for seeing differently that is provoked by encounters between memories of homing. The fragments of stories I have heard, peppered with continuous references to the spaces and times that people have inhabited, are telling in their minute evocations. The very sensory recollections of *what can be seen* – heard, smelled, sensed – become part and parcel of the way in which home is lived, as well as the way in which it might no longer be lived as home at all. This estrangement of home need not necessarily be a result of migration; yet the experience of migration, and the diverse embodied ideologies of who belongs where that it so frequently represents, become integral to the articulation of those journeys of memory that go beyond any dichotomy of homeland and host land. Inevitably, these stories also implicate a number of collective gestures that they may or may not intend to evoke: those state-based and global policies, both past and present, which enable certain possibilities of movement and define lines of national inclusivity; the structures of inequality and possibilities for solidarity that open up within them; the largely invisible practices that construct and fix space, until memories armed with other expectations of fixity come to unsettle them. In order to think about migration and memory in terms of such encounters rather than as a crossing of fixed territorial borders, we as researchers may merely need to illuminate the work that memory already does, and thereby create possibilities for disrupting the assumed stability of places by foregrounding the contingency in their collective visions of normality.

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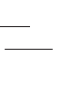
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My life abroad: The nostalgia of Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries

ABSTRACT

In this article we analyse the nostalgia of Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries. The aim is to determine which features of the past are important to them, and how they influence their lives and interpretation of their current life settings. The research is based on a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of immigrants' impressions of everyday life, which have been published as freestyle texts between 2007 and 2015 in the section *Moj život u inostranstvu/My Life Abroad* of the Serbian daily newspaper *Politika Online*. The material includes 36 texts referring to the lives of Serbian immigrants in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. The analysis shows that the objects of nostalgia are personal experiences related to specific life circumstances, followed by periods in life, momentous events, past selves, and persons. In respect of value direction, bittersweet nostalgic memories are slightly more frequent than positive, followed by neutral memories. Nostalgia has a significant function in their lives. It narrates the values and norms that represent their life guidelines, based on which they envision and construct a better future. Additionally, this is evidence of the need for understanding from and acceptance by their new environments, which provide stimulus to survive and create in the conditions of the unstable present.

KEYWORDS

nostalgia
Serbian immigrants
Nordic countries
online newspaper
life circumstances
identity

1. The authors would like to thank Prof. Mikko Lagerspetz for his thoughtful considerations and insightful comments regarding different drafts of this article.
2. The modern concept of nostalgia is closely linked to the new concept of time, which is characterized by acceleration, irreversibility and linearity (see Lowenthal 1985, 1989; Smith 1998; Pickering and Keightley 2006).

INTRODUCTION¹

Nostalgia is a topic that has recently gained more attention in the academic world, and 'is experiencing a sort of renaissance in contemporary theoretical and social scientific literature' (Spasić 2012: 578). The subject of this article is the nostalgia of emigrants from Serbia who temporarily or permanently live in the Nordic countries. The reason for selecting the Nordic countries is their widespread reputation for having high qualities of life and hence being desirable destinations for emigration. The study of the nostalgia of Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries is particularly intriguing because of diametrical differences between their home countries and countries of destination, representing a radical change in their life circumstances. The Nordic countries are democratic and relatively stable societies politically, whose cultures are characterized by individualism. They share a similar 'universalist' or 'social democratic' social and political model (Esping-Andersen 1990). In contrast to them, Serbia has experienced political, economic and social instabilities in the process of post-socialist transformation, with collectivism being a strong feature of its culture. This article aims to analyse which features of the past are important to Serbian emigrants, and how they influence their lives in the Nordic countries. In other words, it talks about 'the life between here and there, and dilemmas the people fight with' (S1).

The research is based on the content analysis of immigrants' impressions of everyday life, which were published as freestyle texts between 2007 and 2015 in the section *Moj život u inostranstvu/My Life Abroad* in the leading Serbian daily newspaper *Politika Online*. Therefore, the article is partly descriptive, containing lengthy quotations. Although there is no precise information on immigrants' country of origin or the length of emigration, Serbia is assumed to be their home country due to the need to share their experiences in a Serbian newspaper. This research focuses on the nostalgia of immigrants in those Nordic countries on which texts have been published – i.e. Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland.

ON NOSTALGIA

The definition of nostalgia is an interesting question not only for scholars but also for those who face it in their everyday lives. As Davis (1979: 28) argues, it is, in all its simplicity and complexity, 'open' to everyone. Nostalgia was defined and named for the first time by the Swiss doctor Johannes Hofer in the late seventeenth century. The name itself comes 'from the Greek *nostos*, to return home, and *algai*, a painful condition; thus, a painful yearning to return home' (Davis 1977: 414). By analysing the condition of extreme homesickness of Swiss mercenaries fighting far from their native land, Hofer labelled a disease characterized by despondency, melancholia, weeping, anorexia and even suicide. Over the following centuries, 'the meaning of the term shifted from spatial displacement to the more pervasive sense of temporal discontinuity and loss endemic to modernity' (Nadkarni 2010: 193).² Regardless of the change from a disease to an universal experience, it stayed within a rather derogatory discourse that commonly represented it as a 'hazy perception of the past that glorifies what was and is no more, while downplaying all the shortcomings of the past' (Palmberger 2008: 358). This might be one of the reasons why scholars have been avoiding research on this widespread psychological and sociocultural phenomenon for a long while.

1 In this article, we define nostalgia as a memory practice that interprets
 2 the present with reference to a loss of something meaningful in another time
 3 and, possibly, another place. It functions as an ordering principle for a set of
 4 emotions and is corresponded by a discourse that provides a meaning for the
 5 past, the present and the future.³ Like all other memory practices, nostalgia
 6 has the past as its indisputable feature. According to Halbwachs, nostalgia
 7 'offers a zone of stability and normativity in the current change that char-
 8 acterizes modern life. The collective frameworks of memory appear as safe-
 9 guards in the stream of modernity and mediate between the present and the
 10 past, between self and the other' (Boym 2001: 53). The past here represents
 11 what is already known and experienced, and thus offers a secure environment
 12 with no surprises and instabilities. However, this is not to claim that the past
 13 is 'the motivational source or triggering circumstance for a nostalgic experi-
 14 ence as such' (Davis 1977: 416). It is always the present situation that evokes
 15 and leads the way to nostalgia. Comparison between the past and the present
 16 is inherent to nostalgia (Davis 1979). Therefore, it conveys messages on the
 17 present moment, and even on the possible future. It is always more about
 18 what we miss and what is not here today than about how it used to be once
 19 upon a time. Hence, little wonder that nostalgia has recently been compre-
 20 hended through its emancipatory and critical potential as a 'stimulus for
 21 building social alternatives' (Velikonja 2009). In that regard, nostalgia is not
 22 only 'one of the most important tools for shaping human memories' (Petrović
 23 2010: 129), but is also becoming a potentially 'productive and analytical cate-
 24 gory' (Petrović 2012: 191).

25 The study of nostalgia by Wildschut et al. (2006) has shown that, in most
 26 cases, the trigger for nostalgia is a negative emotion, especially the feeling of
 27 loneliness. It was also proven that experiences of nostalgia as a memory prac-
 28 tice are more typically characterized by redemption rather than contamina-
 29 tion sequences. In other words, people are more likely to make their nostalgic
 30 narrative progress from a negative life scene to a positive or triumphant one
 31 than the other way around. That is why, despite the descriptions of losses,
 32 disappointments and bad circumstances they might contain, the overall value
 33 direction of the nostalgic memories is predominantly, even if not completely,
 34 positive. Nostalgic memories might also have negative emotional tones, but
 35 somewhat less so.

36 This article is based on the belief that nostalgia should be taken seriously,
 37 as it is not only a personal matter but also a universal experience that tends
 38 to be shared and negotiated with others. Its complexity and multiple capaci-
 39 ties can deeply affect individuals, as well as groups and wider segments of
 40 society. In this regard, we should consider the concept of articulation, defined
 41 as 'the bringing into being of past experiences and present feelings' (Yang
 42 2003: 278), which enables the public sharing of private feelings. Thus, it can
 43 be argued that this phenomenon has a twofold significance for sociology: 'it
 44 brings private thoughts and feelings into the public sphere, while also help-
 45 ing to transform that sphere by creating or reconstructing collective identities
 46 among particular social groups' (Yang 2003: 278–79).

47 Nostalgia is most pronounced at those transitional phases in the life cycle
 48 that exact from us the greatest demands for identity change and adaptation
 49 (Davis 1979: 49). Since immigration presents a major life change that certainly
 50 brings up dilemmas and fears, nostalgia plays a distinctive role in immigrants'
 51 lives. Immigrants' stories are the best narratives of nostalgia – not only because
 52 they suffer through nostalgia but also because they challenge it (Boym 2007: 16).

3. The definition was suggested by Prof. Mikko Lagerspetz in a private discussion on nostalgia.

4. In 1994, about 112,320 persons born in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia lived in Sweden, out of which 28,642 obtained Swedish citizenship, while 83,678 had foreign citizenship. It should be noted that Sweden hosted almost 70,000 refugees from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1992.
5. The citizens of Serbia registered as immigrants in the country of destination in 2009 formed 1% of the immigrant population in Sweden, 0.2% in Finland and 0.2% in Denmark. The data for Norway were not available.
6. The data given in the table do not include the data for 2014, since the Migration Profile of Serbia for 2014 has not yet been presented. The Migration Profile for 2013 is also the most recent one publicly available.

Nostalgia serves as a resource for understanding the status quo and even criticizing it with the possibility of building a vision of a desirable future. The fantasies of the past, determined by the needs of the present, have a direct impact on the realities of the future (Boym 2007: 8). The present article is an effort to find out which features of the past are important to Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries and how they influence their lives, along with their interpretations of their current life settings in those countries.

SERBIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

Serbia has had a tradition of emigration for more than a century (Bobić and Babović 2013). The emigrants from Serbia were registered for the first time by the Serbian Census in 1971 due to the increase in the number of citizens temporarily working abroad caused by the economic crisis in the country, the liberal emigration policy, as well as the increased demand from Western European countries in the labour market (Stevanović 2006). About 2.8% of the total population was temporarily working and living abroad. An increase to 3.5% was registered in 1981. The situation remained unchanged in 1991 due to the restrictive immigration policies of the Western and other European countries, and a consequent massive return of workers. In 2002, the highest proportion of emigrants from Serbia ever (5.3%) was registered as a result of unfavourable economic and political conditions in the country. The first results of the 2011 Census indicated that the number of emigrants corresponded to 4% of the total population (Penev and Predojević-Despić 2012).

The Nordic countries became destinations for the emigrants from Serbia after World War II, especially in the 1960s and 1970s. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia disintegrated in the first half of the 1990s, and a civil war started in the former federal republics. At that time, the Nordic countries became a destination for refugees from war-affected areas, as well as for the young, highly educated workforce from Serbia. In the mid-1990s, people born in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia constituted the second largest immigrant group in Sweden – i.e. 12 per cent of the total number of immigrants (Martens 1997).⁴

Recent data on citizens of Serbia living in the Nordic countries included in this study (Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland) indicate that the number is constantly increasing (Table 1 below), though their share of the total immigrant population is small.⁵

Country of destination	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Sweden	4170	5123	5744	6127	6409
Norway	2024	2215	2388	2635	3050
Finland	816	887	894	901	832
Denmark	354	452	556	660	788
Total	7364	8677	9582	10,323	11079

Source: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database>, cited according to The Government of the Republic of Serbia (2011: 27, 2012: 27, 2014: 31); data on the number of immigrants in Norway from Statistisk sentralbyrå, available on <http://www.ssb.no/en/forside>.

Table 1: The number of Serbian citizens with permanent residence in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark in 2009–2013.⁶

The figures shown in Table 1 are much smaller than those indicated by the Serbian Ministry of Diaspora, as presented on the government's official website. Here, 'diaspora' refers to all people of Serbian origin living outside the borders of the present Republic, and includes the first, second and third generation of emigrants. According to the Migration Profile of Serbia for 2010, the Serbian diaspora includes 75,000 people in Sweden, 4000 in Finland, 7000 in Denmark and 2500 in Norway (The Government of the Republic of Serbia 2011: 32). However, the authors of the texts analysed here belong to the first generation of emigrants; i.e. they are individuals with personal memories of life in the present geographical Serbia (The Republic of Serbia and The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

7. It has been printed in Belgrade since 25 January 1904. In its long history, the publication was suspended only twice, during World Wars I and II. The contributors to *Politika* were prominent cultural workers, academics and public figures (e.g. Thomas Mann, Sir Winston Churchill and Ivo Andrić).

METHOD AND SAMPLE

This work relies on a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of Nordic immigrants' freestyle texts published in the My Life Abroad section on the *Politika Online* webpage – i.e., the online edition of the Serbian daily newspaper *Politika*. It is the oldest daily newspaper in Serbia and traditionally one of the most popular among the Serbian readership.⁷ This section has existed since November 2007. Its content is determined by the rules of the Editorial Board, which also reserves the right to shorten or exclude the texts and to not publish those of offensive nature. According to the editorial notes, it is intended for the readers who live outside Serbia so that they can interact with other readers primarily on topics related to their daily lives. The purpose of the section is rather unique within both printed and electronic Serbian media, as there is no other section that aims for the same or similar content. The authors are not paid for their texts, nor are they allowed to use them in other media. The maximum text length is 5000 characters, with the possibility to add up to three photos to illustrate it. The commentators are readers, regardless of whether or not they reside in Serbia.

Texts published in the My Life Abroad section of the online edition of *Politika* not only allow the study of their nostalgia but also witness the need of immigrants to share their experiences and feelings with others, and make them available to a wider audience. The authors turn to those whom they left behind as much as to those who share their life situations. They are looking for an authentic understanding of their difficult life choices, which can sometimes essentially be unknown to newly found local friends in the country of destination. The cultural background and language they share with the section readers is what inspires them to write without hesitation or back thoughts. As a result, it brings a certain meaning to their immigrant life ('I read this section with great interest, I must admit... I can conclude that all that is written here has greater effect on me than other things that happen around the world and even in my direct vicinity' D8).

Sometimes, they even expect the readers to answer certain questions and dilemmas they encounter, so that they can help them orient themselves in the present world. An illustrative example includes a description of how a female author was recognized based on the contents of her previous text, so she re-established contact with a school friend who had also emigrated and read the texts online ('For only few day, we exchanged dozens of e-mails [...] As if we continued the conversation we left off yesterday' S6). Those meetings are of significant importance for reconstructing the narrative of the previous life and preserving the identity continuity. It seems like they have a

8. This number refers to the time when the section was last approached – 8 August 2015.
9. Not all the texts are relevant for the object of analysis, which will be discussed further in the next section.
10. Each analysed text is followed by at least one photograph aiming to illustrate its content. Nevertheless, only two texts include their authors' photographs, and so further photo analysis has been done.
11. Wildschut et al. (2006) use the term 'settings' instead of 'life circumstances'.

therapeutic effect not only for immigrant authors but also for those who get to know them through their writings. Nostalgia is not, above all, about a life left behind; it is about a life to be lived here and now.

A total of 653 articles have been published in the section *My Life Abroad*, with no regularity in the dynamics of publication.⁸ The sample analysed in this article includes a total of 36 texts referring to life in the Nordic countries, out of which fifteen deal with life in Sweden, twelve in Denmark, eight in Norway and one in Finland. Therefore, the authors are anonymous emigrants from Serbia who submit texts accompanied by additional information about the city and the country they live in. The authors of the texts are ten women and fourteen men. Some authors felt the need to share their experiences and feelings more frequently, writing from two to five texts. Due to this fact, a slight majority of the texts were written by women (nineteen) compared to men (seventeen), but there is still equal representation of both genders as the authors of the analysed texts.⁹ In most cases, the authors do not specify their ages. However, based on the contents of the texts, it can be concluded that three-quarters of them are middle aged, and members of this category usually wrote more texts. The contents of the texts enable us to conclude that three-quarters of the authors live in the Nordic countries permanently, and are the authors of the vast majority of the texts. The remaining are merely temporary residents. Since some of the basic characteristics of the authors are left unknown, it should be emphasized that the sample is biased and hence does not reflect the 'average Serbian emigrant'.

Each of the published texts represents a unit of analysis.¹⁰ The basic questions of the analysis are about the object and the topic of the text; hence, the variables to be analysed are the main object of nostalgia and the main topic of the text. The categories of the objects of nostalgia are defined beforehand according to the existing empirical findings (Wildschut et al. 2006), and preliminary insights into the content of the analysed material: life circumstances,¹¹ periods in life, momentous events, past selves and persons. The topics will be discussed in connection with the object of nostalgia. The identified topics are living conditions, cultural differences and identity. Additionally, the analysis includes the question of 'how' the subject of the text is expressed, which refers to its value direction. The dominant attitude of the message's transmitter to its content may be positive, bittersweet or negative. Positive value-oriented texts are those in which the authors write about nostalgia in an affirmative way, filled with pleasure and approval. The category of negative value-oriented texts includes those in which nostalgia has a critical tone, coloured by disappointment and sadness. Bittersweet value-oriented texts express nostalgia in which the authors have both positive and negative attitudes and mixed feelings.

Both authors coded the texts independently. The inter-rater reliability, as assessed by Scott's κ index of intercoder agreement, was 0.80 for the object of nostalgia and 0.81 for the value direction. The authors resolved disagreements through discussion. The expressions of interaction enabled by the Internet had an additional role in understanding the texts. These are the reactions of the readers to the texts in the form of comments, as well as reactions to those comments. In some cases, the comments section was helpful in validating authors' interpretations and coding the texts.

THE ANALYSIS

Our first observation is that nostalgia encompasses various experiences, which is not surprising, not only because of the broad definition of the section My Life Abroad but also because 'nostalgia draws its material from a broad spectrum of past life' (Yang 2003: 280). Only four texts (the authors are from Norway, Denmark and Sweden) provide neutral descriptions filled with historical and statistical data on host countries and their inhabitants. These four texts are left out of our analysis. It is noticeable that they were published in the period when this section was newly established, and that a nostalgic approach in writing was quickly adopted and soon became the authors' only expression. The predominant nostalgic tone is not surprising, considering the authors' immigration experiences that pose challenges to adjustment to new conditions of life and, hence, identity changes.

Considering the fact that 'nostalgia possesses an important social element' (Wildschut et al. 2006: 976), the object of the nostalgia was analysed first. The categories of our analysis are life circumstances, periods in life, momentous events, past selves and persons (see Table 2 below).

Category	Number	Percentage (%)
Life circumstances	17	53.1
Periods in life	9	28.1
Momentous events	3	9.4
Past selves	2	6.3
Persons	1	3.1
Total	32	100

Table 2: Object of nostalgia by category (absolute frequencies and percentages).

In most cases, the objects of nostalgia of Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries are personal experiences related to specific life circumstances – i.e. living conditions, cultural differences and identity. Presumed explanations of the findings may be various. Foremost, we should bear in mind the characteristics of the section in which the texts were published. The editorial office dedicated this section primarily to topics about the everyday lives of immigrants, which may be compared to the experiences of life in Serbia. This directed the authors of the texts to write about life circumstances. Furthermore, the authors are in a specific situation. Change of country of permanent residence includes a change of life circumstances. Thus, they may become the significant object of nostalgia for the immigrants. Finally, the object of nostalgia may be caused by the type of migration. Although most texts are about voluntary migrations, there are also texts from authors who lived in areas affected by the civil war in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and were forced to leave their country of origin ('I came here, "thrown from the saddle," not by my will, nor was it my choice' S5).¹²

In respect of the value direction of the texts (see Table 3 below), there is an almost equal representation of bittersweet and positive nostalgic memories. Bittersweet feelings in the memories of immigrants are caused primarily by evoking positive aspects of the life before, followed by the comprehension that they are not available in the present. However, the immigrants

12. The code refers to the texts analysed in this article, and denotes the Nordic country an author is writing from/about and the number of a text according to the order of publication; i.e. S is for Sweden, N for Norway, D for Denmark and F for Finland.

Categories	Number	Percentage (%)
Bittersweet	13	40.6
Positive	12	37.5
Negative	7	21.9
Total	32	100

Table 3: Value direction of texts (absolute frequencies and percentages).

more frequently expressed positive than negative feelings. Nostalgia seems to primarily cause pleasure rather than sadness.

In the following, the texts will be discussed with reference to the categories of objects they use to anchor a discourse of nostalgia.

LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

• Living conditions

Cultural differences force the immigrant authors to make comparisons. Nostalgic evoking is caused by new life circumstances, which are shown in their portraying of the country of destination. They witness good living conditions offered by the Nordic countries to their citizens, involving employment, income, social protection, education and a stable political situation.

Thinking about living conditions in the Nordic countries, many Serbian immigrants gladly admit that just the thought of life somewhere far away used to be so impossible and unattainable, but that they are now aware of all the advantages of their decision to change their life circumstances. Life in post-socialist Serbia was accompanied by many hardships and uncertainties, and the decisions of departure were mostly rational and led by the basic need for a safe life, in accordance with their abilities. Differences between the possibilities offered by the present and the hardships of the past are precisely what the immigrant authors emphasize in their nostalgic evoking:

How are we doing here? It depends, generally speaking much better than in our former homeland; it is very rare that someone goes back. This country offers many possibilities, and it is up to the individual how he/she will use them or, in other words, how he/she will pay back to the country which offers more in respect of social protection, work and income, education, sports activities.

(N2)

On their way to the destination country, those who leave face not only their internal dilemmas and conflicts but also the opinions of those who stay behind. Relatives and friends frequently do not show understanding for their decision to leave and easily judge living conditions elsewhere ('We left, our head full of advice and stories... of this country being the country of cold, distant people and how we would have hard time fitting in' D11). Frequently, such strong negative opinions of the closest people are shown to have little to do with the real circumstances in the society they judge. In the story of the author who came with his wife to Denmark in 1968, there is a strong outline of the propaganda of the socialist Yugoslavia of the 'backwards and detested West' (D5), which was reflected in, among other things, a negative attitude towards the local population who worked abroad:

1 The propaganda used the German name for newly arrived workers –
 2 *Gastarbeiter*, and the authorities additionally vulgarized this term and
 3 gave it the following meaning: those are all manual labor workers with
 4 jobs refused by local workers, who live in basements and attics, eat the
 5 cheapest food, and their life consists of just work and sleep.

(D5)

8 Soon after his arrival in the new country, the author established a successful
 9 career as a manager in a factory and acquired his own property ('After two
 10 years we already lived in our newly built yellow brick house' D5). However,
 11 he was unable to contest the prejudice of his closest ones, even in using his
 12 own example:

14 I, of course, talked to my brother in Belgrade about all that, but it always
 15 seemed that he listened to me using one ear and that it all went out
 16 through another one. Probably, being someone who was up to his ears
 17 submerged in the daily propaganda, he was not even able to imagine
 18 something like that.

(D5)

21 Sometimes, even the emigrants, long before they leave their homeland, are
 22 persistent spokespersons of such anti-emigrant attitude. They believe that
 23 they belong where they were born and grew up, and thus no other living
 24 conditions could bring true happiness and fulfilment:

26 I remember, exactly twenty years ago, when my colleagues, cousins and
 27 friends were massively leaving the country; I spoke and wrote to them:
 28 But why are you leaving? You do not know anyone there, no one knows
 29 you. You will need to invest a lot of work and effort to prove yourselves,
 30 let alone to be accepted! Why don't you invest all that work and effort
 31 here, to jointly make this country the place worth living in?

(D8)

34 But change of life circumstances caused by hard economic, political and social
 35 crises in Serbia during the 1990s caused a radical change of opinion in one
 36 such immigrant author. Pressured by her inability to meet the basic needs of
 37 herself and her children, she decided to leave:

39 And then, in 1996, I concluded that not only my work and effort did not
 40 have any results, but I had become a part of the problem – someone
 41 who does not manage to earn enough to have the roof over her head
 42 and basic food for the children I had given birth to. And when I realized
 43 that it was not my fault that I did not know how to find my way around
 44 in the chaotic Balkans, I started looking and left to the first country I was
 45 able to find work in – and that was... Denmark.

(D8)

48 Comparing her life in Denmark with what she had fifteen years earlier, she
 49 evokes a bittersweet tone. Her memory indicates that nostalgia is not neces-
 50 sarily characterized by glorification of the past, nor the present with which it
 51 is compared.

I have not gotten rich, I have not accomplished anything significant professionally or given back to the society, but I have succeeded in what seemed impossible to me during the nineties in Belgrade – to help my children become independent and educated.

(D8)

The immigrants' tales echo, on the individual level, the structural reasons that fed the emigration flows of the Cold War and post-Cold War years.

• *Cultural differences*

Facing a new cultural environment is always a multifaceted challenge for immigrants. The old familiar environment is left behind, and a new one is a road with many unknowns and obstacles waiting to be passed. The obstacles are often about a seemingly 'modern', individualist lifestyle at odds with a culture oriented on family and local community ('I will never understand them' S8). The authors feel disoriented, spending time observing and contemplating the social relations they find between the members of a new society, which are different from the learnt patterns of interaction. In one of the attempts to understand their new environment, a lonely, middle-aged female immigrant author dwells on the impressions of everyday relations among people in Sweden:

I have tried to understand why children announce when they come to visit their parents, why their relations are the same we have with our neighbors, why they walk and love their dogs more than their grandchildren [...] I have tried to understand why they give up on marriage so easily, why the family, as an institution, weakens, why egoism overpowers altruism and why self-centeredness and selfishness are valued more?!

(S9)

Valuing individualism is interpreted as egoism. Human relations in the destination country are seen as rational and not emotional. One of the male authors, after spending almost half his life in immigration, compares his love life in Serbia to the one he has in Denmark now, and emphasizes the differences in establishing relationships ('It is easier to find a girlfriend here... It is very rational – you like me, I like you, what are we waiting for?' D6), but he also reflects on the breakups:

Quest for shared life and love is banally based on material elements such as new kitchen, cars, skiing, thus, even the things that seem as small misunderstandings end in divorce. And divorce is then very rational, the same as the life as a couple – no one yells, cries, et cetera.

(D6)

The security and prosperity of a life in emigration are paid for by emotional poverty in a society where not only the economic decisions but also human relations are carefully planned and calculated. The 'loss endemic to modernity' (Nadkarni 2010: 193) becomes painfully real.

1 • Identity

2 The whole range of new values and norms brought to immigrants' lives by
3 new life circumstances is a challenge for their identity as well. A major part
4 of what they considered themselves to be is left behind, and, to them, the
5 newly created situation carries the danger that they will never be in touch
6 with it again. By connecting with the past through nostalgia they try to deal
7 with the identity crisis – they contemplate who they were, how they perceive
8 themselves now, and what they will become ('Who am I really? Emigrant,
9 foreigner in my own country, legal citizen in another, pro-Swedish Serbian
10 or pro-Serbian Swede?' S10). In relation to that, another important issue is
11 self-consistency, which is particularly visible in the text where an immigrant
12 mother reflects on differences in the behaviour and world-views of women,
13 especially mothers, in Serbia and Denmark:
14

15 Sometimes I catch myself comparing my upbringing and attitude to life
16 with the ones of my environment. Or better, to the ones of girls and
17 women around me. Then, I wonder whether my behavior is the conse-
18 quence of my Balkan origin and traditional upbringing, because we all
19 carry our roots with us no matter where we were born.

(D12)

21 She is aware of a specific feature of her identity ('It seems that we, Serbian
22 women, have this dominant feature of our character and that is our insatiable
23 wish to be super women' D12), which is in constant conflict with the new
24 cultural environment acquired by emigrating from Serbia:
25

26 I watch my Danish girlfriends, who have no problem giving their chil-
27 dren oatmeal for breakfast every day, while I wake up at 6 a.m. to make
28 them pancakes. I also watch them serve bread with pate and cucum-
29 ber for lunch on weekends, while I peel carrots for chicken soup with
30 dumplings. Then I listen to them how on work days they cook 'some-
31 thing fast,' because they had good lunch at the work canteen and the
32 children ate at school or kindergarten. And I work so hard on weekends
33 to make enough for the entire week.
34

(D12)

35 Even though she questions herself sometimes ('Can a human being be like
36 that over here, and if it can, can it last in the long run?' D12), her identity is to
37 a large degree defined by her origins (*Balkan women*), and hence she finds it
38 important to behave and act in the same manner in a new society, especially
39 as a mother ('I am still filming a movie in which I am a superwoman, who is
40 completely outside of the striving of the environment she lives in' D12). By
41 rejecting the rules of the present, she reaffirms her identity and tries to main-
42 tain some (badly needed) continuity.
43

44 On the other hand, by being nostalgic many immigrants search for a
45 way to face the identity change that happened after they left their country of
46 origin. It starts with resistance ('Being a hotshot from Belgrade, I thought no
47 one could make me do anything and that I would easily handle them' D2),
48 and continues with a constant quest, and even rejection:
49

50 Seventeen years have passed, ups and downs go in a row year after
51 year, but there is one certain thing – I will never be a Dane. Not because
52

I do not want to, as they have many good sides. There is simply no genetic predisposition for an emotional man from the Balkans to match the character of cold and rational Dane.

(D2)

It ends in a positive affirmation of certain aspects of identity that have led to final adjustments to newly created circumstances after years of immigration:

My biggest compromise and probably the biggest success is that I have managed to define myself as a 'Dane from Belgrade' and, I can tell you, I feel really good. Thus, I distance myself from what I do not like, and I take what suits me.

(D2)

It is apparent that when reconnecting with past memories through nostalgia there are different and mixed feelings, even in the texts that have dominantly positive or negative tones. However, re-establishing links with the past through nostalgia seems to move more frequently from negative impressions of life circumstances towards positive, rather than the other way around.

Periods in life

For the immigrant authors, nostalgia is often manifestly about a place left behind. But the place is also a scene of past experiences. They describe those periods in life that, more or less, everyone feels nostalgic for. They evoke school and student days or some particularly fulfilled or dear period of life ('We all long for certain times, small restaurants where we used to meet, our cinemas and summer vacations' S6). Hardships of the new life and the inability to fit in make them long for those days when everything seemed much easier ('All those careless days, come back to lessen the longing!' S11). Memories generate positive emotions and strength for the future:

I am far away again, unknown people around me, unknown people and smells. All you need to do is embrace it and learn that you are both part of this and that; to live where you are, and to love what you are!

(S11)

At the same time, difficult life periods serve as lessons through which one can learn how change is sometimes important, no matter how hard it is. Getting in contact through nostalgia with those past periods, both about life in the home country or from the beginning of their immigrant experiences, is important for reconstructing the narrative of positive change that was so significant for their functioning in life. A younger author who suffered professionally and could not find his way as a doctor in his country of origin, but who managed to establish himself after emigrating, found an experience of a positive self-regard in reconstructing the event at the beginning of the exile:

It was difficult in the beginning, because we did not know anyone and we did not speak the language. However, the hardships paid off, since this is the country where the effort is really appreciated, and in the end it is worth it.

(D10)

1 On the other hand, for temporary immigrants, as a rule, a period of temporary
 2 stay in a new environment was of a formative kind. Some of the immigrant
 3 authors spent a certain period of their lives in one of the Nordic countries
 4 within academic programmes. At the time of departure, fearing for their
 5 future, they obtain good things from the positive life period they are about
 6 to leave behind. It was during those periods that they made a big step – they
 7 learnt a lot about themselves just by being and communicating in a differ-
 8 ent cultural environment ('There I saw what normal life was and how people
 9 lived. Saw! Or to phrase it better, it opened my eyes!' F1). Those experiences
 10 mark the time when they started rethinking their life achievements and,
 11 accordingly, found the encouragement to believe in a better future.

13 **MOMENTOUS EVENTS**

14 Transformative experiences, such as the first day of a refugee life, are signifi-
 15 cant marks in time when immigrants realized that life for them had gained
 16 a new direction, and might never be the same again. A female author, now
 17 living in Denmark, describes her first day as a refugee in her new home – a
 18 floating hotel (a flotel) – where Serbian refugees were accommodated upon
 19 their arrival ('Flotel Europe became our new home [...] for an indefinite time
 20 [...] 1080 people from mountains, villages, and cities accommodated in the
 21 center of Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, but not able to say a word in
 22 Danish' D1). She spent two years there, but it was after four years that she
 23 finally gained a residence permit and the possibility to learn the language and
 24 live outside of the refugee camp. To her, a memory of the first refugee day
 25 serves as a 'compass in time' ('But that first night in the iron swing on the
 26 water will stay in our minds forever' D1). Nostalgic evocation is an attempt
 27 to underline the fact that the worst has passed, and at the same time acts
 28 as a confirmation of the current situation that is better and more promising.
 29 Exactly at that time, the will and hope to survive the worst were born, and
 30 therefore represent the turning point of the immigrant's experience:

33 With commotion... once again we started filling up the insides of the
 34 boat [...] and somewhere inside me there was a flicker of entirely
 35 unreasonable, irrational hope that someone would tell me that all
 36 that... all that... the war and the exile were only a big test ... and how
 37 we completed it successfully....

(D1)

39 In the same manner, encounters with those who share the same hardships of
 40 experience in immigration are of particular significance for the immigrants.
 41 These events are, implicitly, encounters with oneself. It is in that moment that
 42 they feel inspired to ponder over significant issues of both the home and host
 43 cultures, and now those issues and dilemmas are shared with readers of the
 44 section ('How much did we immigrants do to present Serbian culture here?'
 45 S1). New life leads to changes in social settings. Even hardships are handled
 46 well when there is someone who understands you. Such moments lead to a
 47 positive affect and 'bolster social bonds' (Wildschut et al. 2006: 985).

50 **PAST – SELVES**

51 The past contains both pleasant and unpleasant elements. Sometimes, a
 52 look back at a negative experience will generate a positive affect and increase

13. Vojvodina is the northern province of Serbia.

positive self-regard. This often happens with nostalgic evoking of the past negative part of oneself as a way to emphasize the change of character that followed and led to a positive life change. Here, we have an example of nostalgia as a source of empowerment (Yang 2003). In most cases, the cause of that change was the emigration itself. The immigrant authors see this as an essential change, as the one that led them to meet their 'authentic selves' (N4). Thus, it is not surprising that narrative progress goes from a negative to a positive life scene:

And I suppose I then grew up overnight [...] I sailed in a new sea, big and mysterious. No, I was not scared, I was terrified. I was anxious at every corner, wondering which monster would jump up and swallow me. But that did not happen. I quickly learnt this new type of swimming and stopped thinking I was just a small fish lost in the unknown waters. (N4)

To question a past negative part of oneself is an important identity matter. In that regard, facing the old negative self can also be a way to redeem oneself for the lack of understanding of identity in the past. One of the male authors speaks of the transformation of his old self in the emigration as a way to truly comprehend his 'original' identity. When living in Serbia he was not aware of what he had, and how important that was for his personal understanding of who he was:

Back when I was a kid, I dreamt that I would live somewhere 'outside,' drive a good car, have a happy family, enough money to travel whenever I want [...] In those moments I never thought that I should fall in love with everything that surrounds me [...] All those things that make Serbia what it really is. (N6)

He had to come to Norway and meet his old self in a completely different cultural and social context in order to pass through a significant change. As he puts it: 'My impression of it is different today. Because, if a man is entirely in honey or feces he cannot notice it until he moves a bit and sees it from different angles. Then he sees everything properly' (N6). By articulating his past experience and present feelings he clarifies and enhances his identity ('Today, I have all that... I have found my answer. I am glad that I realized all that precisely here [...] that I am a Serb, a patriot. That is my change' N6).

PERSONS

A long tradition of emigration from Serbia caused by turbulent political, social and economic changes has even led different generations of the same family to flee in different periods. A female author, an immigrant in Sweden, describes her mother and remembers one part of her life that ended with her mother's death ('She fell asleep forever six years ago. It was a cold and dark day such as this one' S4). The mother had a similar destiny of an immigrant, forced to live and work far away from her hometown in Vojvodina.¹³ At her old age, due to the civil war, she had to leave again and live in Sweden, where she died. A similar life path, in fact, served as a way for the immigrant author to reflect upon her own biography ('I remember how mother used to say that

she could not wait to return home and drink cold water without smell or taste, like the water from the wells in Vojvodina. I did not understand her then' S4). By reconnecting with the past through a nostalgic memory of her mother, the author is latently rethinking her own life. In that way, she gives meaning to her own immigrant experience and finds continuity in life through the closest family member.

CONCLUSION

Nostalgia is a ubiquitous phenomenon, and there is no 'nostalgia elite' (Davis 1979: 27). However, some people have a greater tendency towards it due to certain life circumstances. The significant life change caused by leaving one's home country definitely makes one nostalgically reminisce about the past. Thus, the results of this study, generated through an analysis of texts by Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries, are not surprising.

Even though they can write about any of the aspects of their everyday life, the immigrant authors, predominantly middle-aged people with permanent residence in the Nordic countries, most frequently opted to re-establish their connections to the past through nostalgia, and compare it with the present. Different personal experiences are the basis of their nostalgic reminiscing. They most frequently refer to life circumstances, different periods in life, momentous events, past selves, and significant persons. The same applies to the topics of their nostalgia. They describe living conditions in the home country and call it a new country; they talk about cultural differences, challenges posed by preserving identity, important education episodes that initiated the temporary stay abroad, as well as the initial period of immigrant life and encounters with significant persons as transformative experiences.

In most of the nostalgic overviews, the authors themselves have the main role because they reminisce about their personal pasts. Also, the fact that, besides the authors, there are other people in the evoked memories only confirms that nostalgia is a social phenomenon. There are few memories where an author is the only participant, and even fewer where the authors do not play the main role. Although it is not possible to precisely determine a concrete trigger of nostalgia for some texts, it is often possible to sense that it was caused by a negative emotion. In the moments of longing, disappointment and loneliness in the new home, immigrants use nostalgia to find the support and strength required to build a better future. Nostalgia to them comes as a sort of resistance to the present that, through critique, gives inspiration to their actions. It offers 'a warm shelter', and an ability to maintain, reconstruct or even affirm their identities. Sometimes, even when endangered by cultural differences in the host country, their existence gains meaning in nostalgic remembrance. For immigrants, nostalgia is also 'a weapon in internal confrontations with existential dilemmas, and a mechanism for reconnecting with important ones' (Sedikides et al. 2004: 202–03).

Nostalgia is a complex phenomenon; so it is not surprising that immigrants often display mixed emotions. They may be both positive and negative, because memories of pleasant events are followed by an understanding that they are lost forever. There is an almost equal presence of bittersweet and positive value directions of the texts, but some of them are also negative towards the topic remembered from the past. Nevertheless, in most cases, the line of nostalgic reminiscing leads the immigrants towards redemption, since a positive ending offers a vision of and hope for a more desirable future.

The nostalgia of Serbian immigrants in the Nordic countries has a significant personal and psychological function in their lives. This is proven not only by the contents of the analysed texts but also by their need to write about the evoked past and share it with others. It also narrates the values and norms that represent key guidelines for that particular group of immigrants and serve as 'a way of making sense of the present' (Petrović 2010: 148), based on which they see and construct a better future in their new homes. Primarily, they crave stability, support, solidarity and respect for who they are. Their nostalgic stories bear evidence of the need for understanding and acceptance from their new environment, and provide them with the will to survive and create in the conditions of the unstable present. Therefore, it is important to find an adequate critical approach to nostalgia rather than dismiss it as a useless discourse on a romanticized past. Building on the past, nostalgia becomes the messenger of the present and also grows to be the herald of the future.

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REVIEWS

THE ASHGATE RESEARCH COMPANION TO MEMORY STUDIES, SIOBHAN KATTAGO (ED.) (2015)

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Some of the contributors to the companion explicitly express their puzzlement at being asked to take the term ‘companion’ literally, i.e. to reflect on their own intellectual companions in memory studies. After all, scholars are trained to reflect on their subjects of investigation but not to write personal accounts or egodocuments. Fortunately, the result of the encounter of scholars from history, cultural history and theory, philosophy, psychology, literary studies, sociology and political science is a rich, thought-provoking and challenging collection of essays, which lays to rest any initial concerns about the outcome of this enterprise. The contributions are arranged around four guiding themes, with certain recurring themes and conceptions of memory, such as spatial and/or temporal figurations of memory, the relation between memory and history, the dialectics of recollection and oblivion, and, particularly, the transnational concept of memory.

The first section focuses on ‘Memory, history and time’, with pertinent elaborations on memory and identity and the relation between individual and collective memory. Three different kinds of ‘movements’, relevant to conceptualizing memory, come to light: the movements of thought made by the author (Hutton), the movements of the companion (Fritzsche) and the perspective of the movement (Ruin). After thorough, close readings of his companions (Yates, Halbwachs, Nora, Benjamin), Walter Benjamin turns out to be the decisive companion for Hutton in order to problematize linear conceptions of history and to reflect on it from a pluralistic perspective of time, topics and cultural imaginations. Central to Peter Fritzsche’s investigation on

'shapes and forms of time' (39) is not his own movement but Chateaubriand as émigré, who preconfigured in his letters and memoirs a concept of identity as simultaneously consisting of displacement and stasis. The common line of a certain crystallization of time in space finds its expression in Hans Ruin's contribution on spectral phenomenology, which implies a shift in perspective, calling to mind the figure of Benjamin's Angelus Novus. By drawing on Heidegger's notion of the past in the sense of 'derivation' (Herkunft) or coming/arrival (67), Ruin relates memory and the problem of the ancestral to responsiveness and responsibility, and thus to ethics and politics. Angelica Nuzzo revisits with Hegel the ongoing discussion on the relation between individual and collective memory, which results in a concept of dialectical memory. In her claim that, '[o]ur personal memories are made possible only by the collective memory in which all our spiritual, conscious and unconscious activities are always already inscribed' (57), she actually radicalizes and shifts Halbwachs' relational approach, while remarkably not mentioning the power of imagination in its relation to dialectical memory.

The title of the second section of the companion, 'Frameworks of memory', suggests a somewhat prosaic and programmatic encounter, yet actually provides surprising connections and startling rediscoveries. From the recognition of Bakhtin as a rewarding scholar in Memory Studies (Passerini, Dessingué), to an appraisal of the influence of Juri Lotman (Tamm), and the chronicling of experimental psychology as an additional framework (Hirst and Stone), this part of the book re-evaluates the methodological frames of memory studies. Both Luisa Passerini and Alexandre Dessingué reflect on the work of numerous formative scholars like Yates, Rothberg, Landsberg, Assmann, Olick and Margalit. However, it is obviously Bakhtin and his considerations on carnival and dialogue that allow for a reconsideration of ambivalent, transitory and polyphonic notions of memory, without reproducing spatial metaphors. Alexandre Dessingué's close reading of Halbwachs' various studies through the analytical lens of Bakhtin finally allows for a 'plural conception of individual identity' (98) and a reframing of the collective as 'collectiveness' within the individual (100). Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi is one of the few scholars who risks a cautious juxtaposition of personal memories and critical reflections. In her essay, she combines autobiographical memories from Israel and New York with reflections on Karl Mannheim, who first emigrated from Hungary to Germany, and later to England (119). It is of interest that, despite these varying sites, Vinitzky-Seroussi chooses Mannheim and his influential paper on generations because 'he took our historical position seriously'; i.e., the reflection on 'our being in time and our relations with time' (119). She thus posits that it is a certain position in time, not space, that is formative for social relations. Marek Tamm introduces the work of Juri Lotman to memory studies with a delay of more than 50 years, and, as he painstakingly makes clear, this delay is not by chance. Being a representative of the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics, one might hastily conclude that his reappraisal comes too late. However, considering the importance of information technology at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Lotman's formative work on information, transmission, culture and memory acquires a refreshing relevance.

The title of the third part of the book, 'Acts and places of memory', suggests another central theme. However, the articles by Mieke Bal, Stuart Burch, Siobhan Kattago and Julie Hansen actually circle around fundamental questions of representation and the performativity of memory. With her characteristic lucidity, Bal's starts by distinguishing memory from 'acts of

memory', since only the latter can truly be understood as a concept encapsulating a mini-theory (146). In order to 'understand the political aspect of acts of memory as based on responsibility in the present' (149), Bal approaches works by Eija-Liisa Ahtila (the video installation *Where is Where?*) and Doris Salcedo (the installation *Plegaria muda*). Analysing the responses to these artworks, Bal comes to the conclusion that it is 'the address to the viewer through affect' that makes acts of memory performative (158), and thus interventions in the political. Stuart Burch's intriguing elaboration on various layers of private and collective aspects of recollection and forgetting in the shadow of Big Ben, a monument of the control of public time, contains the thought-provoking remark of De Certeau that 'memory is not localizable, and – when it does get tied-down – it becomes subject to decay' (168). This assertion veritably inverts the arguments of a number of contributions to the volume. Bradford Vivian argues with Hannah Arendt that localized memory subjected to decay sometimes becomes tyrannical (228), a consideration that strikingly fits to the homeless statues and monuments in Eastern Europe that appear at the beginning of Siobhan Kattago's contribution on 'Monuments and representation'. However, Kattago first and foremost thoroughly distinguishes the different aesthetics of heroic monuments before World War II, monuments of the Unknown Soldier, which, according to Koselleck, present a democratization of death, and monuments of the Holocaust as counter-monuments, understood as figurations of sacralized silence. Kattago's conclusion implies an ethical and political aspect by summarizing that, 'war memorials are modern palimpsests with multiple layers of meaning and inscription as their meaning changes with the passing of time' (192). Julie Hansen finally reclaims literature and works of fiction as companions for memory studies and reopens the discussion on representation with her reflections on metaphor. However, reading metaphors of memory with Derrida's concepts of the past and present becomes troublesome. Hansen quotes Derrida: 'Everything begins with reproduction. Always already: repositories of a meaning which was never present, whose signified presence is always reconstituted by deferral' (205).

The last part of the book, entitled 'Politics of memory, forgetting and democracy', opens with a contribution by Daniel Levy on methodological cosmopolitanism. In the light of Levy's fierce critique of Nora, to whom he attests a methodological nationalism, his contribution implies a plea for a reflected politics of memory as performed by scholars of memory studies. However, considering the four kinds of cosmopolitan relationships Levy introduces with G. Delanty – 'relativisation of identity', 'positive recognition of the other', 'mutual evaluation of cultures', and 'creation of a normative world culture' (220) – one necessarily comes to the conclusion that the recursive relationship between periphery and centre is somewhat unbalanced in the present book, since very few contributions actually reflect on how 'local articulations are inscribed into global norms' (220). Given the recurring claims for a transnational conception of memory studies, Daniel Levy's considerations offer a nonetheless compelling beginning to a methodological framing. In light of memory's preoccupation with the past, it is remarkable that Bradford Vivian's article stresses Hannah Arendt's notions of natality, beginning and acting. Vivian juxtaposes Arendt with Paine's pamphlet *Common Sense* for an independent America, and emphasizes that Paine's distinct rejection of tradition is an absolute necessity in order to establish different social relations and power structures, and thus to truly make a new beginning. The preparation of a common ground to facilitate a new beginning is certainly one of the

reasons for the establishment of a Historical Truth Commission, the subject of Eva-Clarita Pettai's contribution. Her case studies on Truth Commissions in Switzerland, Estonia and Lithuania, including highly illuminating reflections on the role of mandates, contexts, political support and social memory, may be regarded as constituting a good example of methodological cosmopolitanism. To posit Alexander Etkind's contribution on 'Post-Stalinist Russia' at the end of the book is an absolutely felicitous decision, since his considerations make the prepositions and premises of most contributions painstakingly clear. His basic claim is that, in Eastern Europe, 'cultural memory is hot and liquid rather than cool and crystallised' (258). In other words, it still needs memory events or acts of memory in order to recognize the ghosts of the past, and as he concludes, 'ghosts need recognition rather than justice' (261). Reading Etkind's text, one realizes that even Derrida's 'always already' needs materialized traces, crystallized acts of memory which allow for a deferred signified presence. Thus, this contribution effects a sort of Benjaminian shock, a moment of insight that it might be necessary to forget prepositions and premises and to begin again. I cannot think of a better recommendation to read the research companion as comprehensively as possible.

That all contributors interpreted the term 'companion' as 'travel companion' is significant, since the term 'companion' also carries economic and strongly Christian connotations. Given ongoing discussions on the far-reaching processes of commodification in culture and science, it is striking that an economic perspective is missing throughout the reader. Furthermore, it is regrettable that the Christian notion of companion has not been recognized, and which has not come about by chance, considering that the volume contains no contributions from the so-called global East, Arabic or African Countries.

Nevertheless, the invitation of the editor to reflect on intellectual companions in memory studies has resulted in a doubtlessly multi-voiced and sometimes polyphonic book. It would no doubt be elucidating to the reader to look for the forgotten scholars, like Hayim Yosef Yerushalmi, James E. Young, Hayden White, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub and Cathy Caruth, to name but a few. This does not mean that some of the names are not mentioned, just that their work is far less formative than a decade ago. Since most of them provided seminal books on trauma, memory and the Holocaust, the present choice of companions is a clear indication for a shift in focus and, finally, methodology, which again makes the research companion highly pleasurable to read, but might equally mark the beginning of a historiography of memory studies.

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MEMORIES OF BELONGING: DESCENDANTS OF ITALIAN MIGRANTS TO THE UNITED STATES. 1884–PRESENT (STUDIES IN GLOBAL SOCIAL HISTORY, VOLUME 17; STUDIES IN GLOBAL MIGRATION HISTORY, VOLUME 5)

CHRISTA WIRTH (2015)

Leiden: BRILL, 406 pp., ISBN: 9789004284562, h/bk, €129.00

Reviewed by Simon Mercieca, University of Malta

The book *Memories of Belonging* represents a collection of stories pertaining to one family – that of Giovanni Soloperto and his wife Elvira Stranieri, their children, and some of their descendants up to the fifth generation. In 1913, the Soloperto couple emigrated to the United States from Sava, their home town in Southern Italy. The author, Christa Wirth, is one of their descendants of the fourth generation. Basically, she acts both as an outsider and as an insider in collecting idiosyncratic stories from her relatives, which she then transforms into empirical data for this interesting study.

This analysis hinges on the triangulation of oral history in the form of interviews conducted between 2002 and 2010 together with migration and memory studies. These three points intertwine between individual and collective experiences. Those interviewed shifted constantly over time and space, linking their present experiences to their recollections of the past.

Wirth shows how, over generations, collective memories and individual stories of belonging are created, contested and recreated. The author explains that her analysis unfolds along the lines of locality, class, gender and generations (12). Thus, Wirth is not interested in ancestry as such. Genealogy normally traces the paternal lines. In this study, the author found more help through the maternal lineage.

As a historical demographer, I find it difficult to reject, as the author did, the notion of heritage through the ‘bloodline’. The author believes that people are kin when they believe that they share a common ancestry. In itself, such an idea reflects the currently influential social theories formulated as a reaction to neo-liberal positions. The author definitely does not seem to share the neo-liberal ideas in which the responsibility of the state is shifted onto the individual.

Such a definition is changing the notion of kinship; yet, in her analysis, Wirth had to rely on the traditional meaning of kinship. Her interviewees were mostly descendants of Giovanni and Elvira, and are the backbone of her study. Still, it is not clear whether the author covered all the descendants of Giovanni and Elvira. In her case studies, descendants from the female line appeared to be better disposed to cooperate with her than descendants from the male line.

Thus, this book is more or less the story of three women – Elvira and her two daughters, Beatrice and Marie. No Soloperto surname appears among those interviewed. We do not get to know whether anyone of the three sons of Giovanni and Elvira – Angelo, Dan and Americo (Ski) – had offspring or not, and whether they were interested in cooperating with this research. The author speaks of some sort of split in the family. Perhaps, in part, this explains why she preferred to apply a restricted concept of the family based on common experience and shared family memory, rather than the more traditional one, based on values and paternal lineage.

For this reason, Beatrice La Motta, daughter of Giovanni and Elvira, becomes a pivot of the whole analysis. She and her descendants are described as the separated line, as they did not stay in Worcester, the town of arrival of the Soloperto family, where Marie and her descendants continue to live.

The author was helped by the fact that Beatrice was the last survivor of the Soloperto family who, besides being Wirth's grandmother, actually engaged in conversation with her. More importantly, Beatrice made the transition from migrant to ethnic American. Beatrice was born in Italy and brought over to America when she was only 2 years old. In theory, she has no vivid memory of Italy, but reading between the lines of Wirth's narrative it clearly transpires that these two years seem to have somehow conditioned Beatrice. It is not clear whether such conditioning is to some extent a subconscious remembrance of Italy or linked to memory stories through the family of her country of origin.

ISSUES RELATED TO THE HISTORY OF MIGRATION

Wirth's work backs Dolores Hayden's studies on identity being intimately tied to memory (1995). However, both identity and memory can only be fully understood if analysed within an historical context. The issues related to memories within the family of what may be defined as policies of assimilation form the backbone of this study.

The collective memory of the Solopertos strongly challenges the immigration paradigm of assimilation. It is often argued that America, as the most complete democracy, created a space where one's dream can come to fruition. Studying the lives and endeavours of these Italian migrants questions such an understanding of the American nirvana.

For many Italian migrants, this turned out to be just a slogan with no relevance to their lives or identities. At least Wirth's study shows that Elvira had serious problems in understanding the New World. More importantly, the Italians were one of those 'races' to have been heavily discriminated against and demonized by the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP). The non-WASP individuals were considered racially inferior people. It was a time when theories of race and ethnicity were held in high esteem.

History shows that America had different and contradictory policies with regard to the issue of assimilation of migrants within the prevailing culture. The Soloperto family witnessed policies of ethnic resilience dominated by the eugenic racial theories that placed Italians in an ethnic group culturally and religiously diverse from the white Protestant majority.

Wirth reminds us that scientific arguments were used to deny African Americans and Indians citizenship, while the Mediterranean people, together with the Jews, ranked at a lower pole than the Aryan race. The resulting social uncertainties faced by the Italians, in particular racial discrimination, which led to depression and feelings of loss, were experienced by others – not only by the Eastern Europeans to whom Wirth refers but also by Maltese (who at the time were British subjects) and Arabs. The Italians, like the Maltese and Arabs, entered the United States as aliens.

It was only by the fourth generation that concepts of fear related to migration were completely rejected. Such an empirical revelation shows that integration takes generations – at least three – before it can become complete (159). Second, it confirms the author's concepts of 'Liberalism' and that an American society where everyone can make their dream come true is a 'myth',

as is the idea that America is a society where everyone can choose his or her own identity (38). Finally, I would add, American society is similar to any other society that one would find in the West and, ultimately, the rest of the world.

Perhaps the Civil Rights Movement was responsible for the rejection of values of competition and social mobility. Instead, it slowly formed a counter-culture. From non-pure white Aryan subjects, the Italians, like the Poles, Lithuanians, French, Greeks and Maltese, started to be seen as part of the white ethnic groups, in particular after World War II. Whiteness studies confirm that, in America, being white was quintessential for gaining access to resources and power. Yet Wirth challenges Mae M. Ngail's argument that Southern Europeans represented the prototype for assimilation. Wirth insists that not all the Italians were assimilated, and there were Italian migrants who returned to their homeland while others continued to undertake the trans-atlantic crossing, to and fro, between Italy and the East Coast. Half of the Italians who entered the United States returned home (301).

Such a narrative implies that the historical idea that the American dream involved no class struggle is totally false. Yet, if an ethnic group is discriminated against by another dominating group, which in the case of the Italians happened to be the Irish, then that ethnic group would be more prone to reaching out.

Elvira sought to raise her children in the Roman Catholic tradition. Some broke away from their Catholicism completely, either because of marriage or for other reasons. Those who sought the confessional line joined the Protestant church, such as the Presbyterian Church. Without doubt, many Italians sought to counter the negative image that they had started to acquire, which in part was linked to the fact that the Protestants demonized Catholics by accepting the concept of 'Anglo-conformity'. In conformity, members of the Soloperto family started to see the key to their success. In other words, they sought to adapt to the dominant culture.

The perception of religion, or better Catholicism, was different for the next generations. Some of the adult males ended without any religious affiliation. This was in part explained as being the result of an embedded sense of anti-clericalism among Italian males prevalent in Southern Italy at the time. The Church was seen as the ally of landowners who started being depicted as the oppressors of the working classes. Ironically, while anti-clerical discourses were welcome among the Protestant community, speakers against landowners appeared in America as radicals and anarchists, and could explain why the same Protestant American society started to target Italian migrants. Landownership was a principal value on which American society and the whole system was founded.

THE FOURTH GENERATION

Today, the members of the fourth generation are going through an ethnic revival, which is expressed by the interest shown in genealogical studies, Italian food and cuisine and, in some cases, by having migrants returning to their Roman Catholic roots, seen as the religion of their forefathers. Others had their ethnicity fade away as a result of intermarriage, with their offspring being brought up against a mixed-heritage background. These are also seen as hyphenated identities. In these situations, it is up to the descendants to pick up the pieces and choose the type of ethnic affiliation they want to belong to. In many cases, this depends on the particular situation at that moment.

The author shows that, by the fourth generation, the idea that an individual could rise above the social ranks, as far as their talents would allow, was not always the case. Social mobility, as in the case of the Soloperto descendants, shows its presence during the first and second generations, and this was obtained through, among other ways, education and college degrees. Moreover, some of their descendants viewed integration efforts in an often-unfriendly environment as really worth the price (149).

However, by the fourth generation family members can also start experiencing regression, in the sense that their social level would not necessarily be the same as or even higher than that of their fathers and mothers. On the contrary, they are more likely to experience downward mobility than an upward trend (296). This might explain why, when fourth generations were asked about the way they view migration, a collective nostalgia was created as the interviewees forgot all about the hardships, and associated the success of their forbearers on economic autonomy, which in turn was equated with the family – in other words, how much land the family would succeed in owning or whether the family would own its family home (252).

What is also interesting is the idea presented in the book that the concept of education also changes by the fourth generation. While for the first and second it was seen as a male domain, by the fourth, females are found to be more interested in pursuing their studies than males. But this is not necessarily related to migration. The fourth generation is experiencing the trend that is prevalent in our times. It is now part and parcel of American society and will therefore be following the main trends developing within that society. Contemporary studies undertaken for Malta, for example, show that females are more prone to continue their university studies than males. What is striking, but expected, is that education reflects the way those interviewed tackled the questions put to them. Wirth rightly notes that education is, in a way, conditioning their replies, as many sought to uphold a learned standard of objectivity in their answers by consciously or unconsciously seeking to distance themselves from the question.

Education can account for the descendants of the Solopertos forgetting or losing all knowledge of their ancestors' maternal language. By the third generation, they barely knew a word in Italian, or could only remember a word or two of the dialect their grandparents spoke, but many of those interviewed continued to identify themselves as Italian American.

But there are also positive points that emerge amongst the third and fourth generations. These generations are more likely to bury past feuds and start talking again and sharing their memories. At the same time, by the fourth generation, some of the second cousins lose any knowledge of their kinship. Social media is helping to re-establish such lost links.

CONCLUSION

Wirth has succeeded in providing a new anthropological and historical understanding of the history of migration and memory based on the intersection of class gender, residence and generation (267). Convincingly, the author shows that the price of migration is the loss of continuity and identity (266). This challenges certain popular perceptions currently being pursued in Europe that the inundation of migrants will annihilate Europe's perceived identity.

The author has presented a strong basis on which future studies can continue building on post-structuralism studies. Her studies convincingly

show that the Italian community differentiated, in their collective memory, between what is known as cultural and communicative memory.

Today Italy, together with the rest of the south, has shifted from a migrant-sending to a migrant-receiving country. Therefore, this study is not only important in terms of its analysis of the history of memory and identity of a migrant family, but it can also help to formulate a framework for all European countries that are today experiencing an influx of migrants in the same proportion as the one experienced by America at the turn of the twentieth century. Reading this book can help administrators in Europe to not repeat the mistakes committed in America against non-white migrants.

Yet, the tension being experienced in Europe finds a parallel in America's history. This book about memory and identity shows the way. Perhaps we in Europe should start emphasizing more the values of social mobility and difference by producing values aimed at creating cohesive communities. The problem lies in Europe's lack of any existing structure today that can create cohesiveness within the community. In the past, this was given by faith. Perhaps the creation of a common identity and memory in Europe can help us find the cohesive structure that can start making our continent one.

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