Spatial Mediations of Holocaust Memory in Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Art

by

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I have much gratitude for my time at Michigan. To Aleks for being my confidant during the years we shared an office, Grace, my cheerleader, and Lauren, my trusty writing partner during the pandemic. I made many other friends along the way and could dedicate many more words to you than I have space for here.

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A Note on Translations, Spelling, and Language

All translations from B/C/S/M and Hungarian are by the author unless otherwise noted. Translations of Aleksandar Tišma's *The Book of Blam* are by Michael Henry Heim and translations of the edition of Danilo Kiš's *Homo Poeticus* (edited by Susan Sontag) are by several translators: Michael Henry Heim, Frances Jones, and Ralph Manheim.

I have written out certain words to facilitate readability for those unfamiliar with the B/C/S/M language. These words include *Ustasha (Ustaša)* and *Chetnik (Četnik)*. I have not changed the spelling in cited works; therefore, these words may appear in different variations. In addition, many of the authors I work on are of Hungarian background which is reflected in their surnames (Kiš, Šalgo, Lovaš.). I have kept Hungarian names in the Serbo-Croatian spelling, except for authors from Hungary proper (i.e., Radnóti Miklós).

The B/C/S/M language as we refer to it now was once called Serbo-Croatian in the SFRY. When I discuss a work written and published under socialist Yugoslavia, I refer to it as Serbo-Croatian. Due to complex language politics tied to the delegitimization of the Yugoslav legacy and legitimization of ethno-nation states in the post-Yugoslav period, Serbo-Croatian became Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Montenegrin. Depending on the variant used, I may refer to it as Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, or Montenegrin. Names of important sites with different variants (such as the Kameni cvet/cvijet) will be written with both variants since the monument was a 'Yugoslav' one. Serbo-Croatian was also a biscriptal language and I have transliterated all Cyrillic writing into Latin when necessary.

Abstract

This dissertation investigates the spatial dynamics of memory of extreme violence and state terror, focusing on Holocaust memory formation in Yugoslav and the post-Yugoslav successor states. Unlike the ethnocentric and appropriative memory frameworks that define official Holocaust remembrance in the region today, my dissertation focuses on more productive engagements that take place via space to confront the deeply entrenched legacy of the Holocaust and its reverberations in the present. The interdisciplinary scope of this dissertation is informed by various methodologies including literary and film studies, trauma theory, architectural history, translation and multilingualism studies, feminist theory, and affect theory. My dissertation views spatial memory as a dynamic process produced via complex and multimodal processes of mediation involving sites of memory, mnemonic actors, and media of all genres: literature, testimony, graphic novel, documentary and feature films, poetry, and autobiography. My chapters examine the theoretical implications of different types of spatial mediation. It is invested in Marianne Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" (Hirsch 2012), the memory-work done by the generation after the Holocaust because such memory is always and necessarily mediated. I argue that spatial mediations are acts of translation that transpose physical spaces and landscapes into textual, visual, and embodied archives. Following Bella Brodzki's reassessment of the relevance of Walter Benjamin's central theses on translation for cultural memory studies (Brodzki 2007), I explore translation as a framework for mapping the engagement with and transformation of sites of memory across mediums, genres, languages, cultural and generational communities. In the process, sites of Holocaust memory are layered with different individual,

group, and cultural memories that further facilitate multidirectional (Rothberg 2009) and transnational encounters between temporally and spatially disparate memories of historical violence from the corrective labor camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur to the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s. On another level, this dissertation also capitalizes on the role of cross-linguistic translation and Yugoslavia's multilingual geography of translation in generating transnational memories. I contend that such translation work, which spans across the region's many languages, has established much more productive encounters and solidarities that undermine ethnonationalist myths of supremacy and uniqueness. As a whole, my project offers insights into how artists have opened up concepts of heritage and collective memory outside national boundaries to encapsulate the experiences, perspectives, and mnemonic labor of diverse groups.

<div style="text-align:center">**Introduction**</div>

I.   Space and Memory

This dissertation analyzes spatial mediations of memories of extreme violence and state-sanctioned terror in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav art with special focus on the Holocaust. I use the concept of spatial mediation to describe processes of memory-making and recuperations of the past that locate memory *within* space and *as* space. The process of attaching memory to space is not a recent phenomenon, but something first described in the Simonidean tradition of rhetoric which employed *loci* (mostly architectural spaces) as projections onto which memory could be imprinted (Yates 1984). Orators would then be able to remember their speech by recalling these *loci* in a fixed sequence (Ibid.). Such was the necessity of the *loci memoriae* in a society devoid of media to aid memory (see den Boer 2008, J. Assmann 2008). Pierre Nora's seminal study on *lieux-de-memoire* likewise understood sites (monuments, heritage, etc.) as a way for the nation to imprint and instill a shared collective memory on the national landscape (Nora 1984).

Among the many lacunae in Nora's study, however, was his omission of the moving parts that comprise sites of memory. Nora proposed the site of memory to be static, an unfortunate symptom of a memory culture that no longer experienced memory internally as the 'lived' experience of a national collective. Memory must thus be externalized in stable points of reference.[1] But other scholars of cultural memory such as Ann Rigney have argued the opposite.

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[1] Another glaring issue with Nora's study is how it defines French national memory in homogenous terms, glossing over the legacy of French colonialism and migration.

Rigney contends that sites of memory are much more dynamic, existing only because of continued engagement across time and often by different groups and mnemonic communities (Rigney 2005). According to Rigney, sites of memory are the products of conflicting, convergent, and coalescent memories as mnemonic groups and discourses use sites to consolidate their own version of the past and present (Ibid.) Memory is now understood to be "an ongoing process of remembrance and forgetting in which individuals and groups continue to reconfigure their relationships to the past and hence reposition themselves in relation to established and emergent memory sites," a process in which media play an integral role (Ibid. 2). As Rigney and Astrid Erll elaborate, different mediums of memory production—literature, photos, films, etc.— are performative technologies that shape and negotiate individual and group relationships to the past (Erll 2008, Erll/Rigney 2009: 1-2). Thus, studies on spatial memory can now think beyond the "site" and look more closely at the centrality of media to reinvesting spaces with memory.

It is precisely these dynamic processes of mediation that take place via space with which this dissertation engages. My dissertation foregrounds spatial mediation in the former Yugoslavia as a multifaceted process involving mnemonic actors, physical sites of memory with mnemonic significance, and media of various forms and genres that rework memory across space and time. I focus on the ways topographies of Holocaust memory have been mediated in literature, film, graphic novel, monuments, and oral and written testimony in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav culture. I argue that spatial mediations are acts of translation that ensure the survival of sites of Holocaust memory. My use of translation encapsulates the transposition of physical and material sites to textual, visual, and corporeal archives, as well as their continued mediation across mediums, genres, and generational and cultural communities in the region of the former

Yugoslavia. The theoretical encounters between translation and memory are informed by Bella Brodzki's work *Can These Bones Live? Translation, Survival, and Cultural Memory* (2007) which applies Walter Benjamin's understanding of translation as survival to cultural memory practices. For Brodzki, translation can be linguistic yet also an act of reconstruction, excavation, recovery, and inscription that "reanimates" the physical and often fragmentary matter of the past (Ibid.) Brodzki likewise links translation to "survival as a cultural practice and symbolic action, and above all as a process that extends life, but one that also prolongs the meaning traces of death-in-life; life after death, and life after life. Both bodies and texts harbor the prospect of living on in their own remarkable ways" (Brodzki 5). Translation ensures the survival of memories by renegotiating them in the present and for the future. In other words, "translation is the mode through which what is dead, disappeared, forgotten, buried or suppressed overcomes its determined fate by being borne (and thus born anew) to other contexts across space and time" (Brodzki 6).

Drawing from Brodzki and Benjamin, I also understand translation as a mode by which sites of memory are also "renewed" within "new signifying forms" and cultural contexts that attach memory with new meaning as a result of transcultural and transtemporal maneuvers. The central thesis of Benjamin's essay "The Task of the Translator" argues that translation is an act of transformation and renewal (Benjamin 256), to which Brodzki adds, "through the act of translation, remnants and fragments are inscribed—reclaimed and reconstituted as a narrative— and then recollected collectively; that is, altered and reinscribed into a history that also undergoes alteration and transformation in the process" (Brodzki 4) This process of renewal and transformation is central to my dissertation since spatial mediations never reproduce an exact replica of the sites of memory they mediate. Instead, they add to them and create difference,

ultimately presenting them in a new light. Spaces can be transformed when the process of mediation makes visible what lies behind their immediate façades, or sites can transform in contact with different generational and cultural communities who invest Holocaust memory with new layers of memory, some of which result from renewed histories of extreme violence, the replication of camp worlds, etc. The excavation and addition of mnemonic layers in the process of mediation are also what enriches and pluralize public memory space.

II.   **The Spatial Dynamics of Holocaust Memory in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav Successor States**

Perhaps nowhere are these processes of convergent, coalescent, and divergent memory practices more conspicuous in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cultural space than at the site of the Jasenovac concentration camp in present-day Croatia.[2] The Stone Flower (*Kameni cv/ij/et)*[3] on the grounds of the former Ustasha-run concentration camp (depicted above and below) is one of the most recognizable symbols of Holocaust remembrance in the former Yugoslavia. The monument was sculpted from reinforced concrete by the famous war memorial sculptor Bogdan Bogdanović. Unveiled in 1966, the Stone Flower was dedicated to the "victims of fascism" (*žrtve fašizma*), the dominant mnemonic vocabulary used at the time to commemorate the victims of crimes committed by the fascist Croatian Ustasha, as well as those by Nazi, Italian, and Hungarian occupiers during WWII. The massive monument sits against an otherwise bucolic landscape in Eastern Croatia. Without this monument, visitors to the lush green park flanked by the Sava River would have difficulty guessing that this was the site of the former system of

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[2] There are other sites that have garnered much attention and controversy in the former Yugoslavia, however, for the purpose of my study on Holocaust memory in Yugoslav/post-Yugoslav cultural memory, Jasenovac is the most visible site.

[3] To avoid enforcing one dialect on this site that was "Yugoslav" (rather than Croatian, Serbian, Bosnian, etc.), I have included both the ijevakian and ekavian pronunciation/spelling here.

camps where such extreme violence took place against Jewish, Roma, Serbian, and anti-fascist prisoners.

Figure 1.1
Bogdan Bogdanović's Kameni cv(ij)et at the Jasenovac concentration camp site. Photo by author.

Figure 1.2

The Jasenovac Concentration Camp Memorial Park. Photo by author.

The Jasenovac concentration camp system was constructed shortly after the founding of

the first Independent State of Croatia, the NDH (*Nezavisna država Hrvatska*), in August 1941.

The NDH was governed by the *poglavnik* (the Croatian translation of the German Führer) Ante

Pavelić and the fascist Ustasha. The NDH's official policies drew significantly from Nazi

Germany and Croatian nationalists such as Pavelić who appropriated Nazi racial ideologies into

their visions for the Croatian nation in the 1930s. The Ustasha were especially known for their

performances of extreme violence, as prisoners in camps like Jasenovac were often brutally

murdered in public rituals. Violence in the name of the nation was treated like a sacred rite,

demonstrating the strong links between Croatian fascist zeal and religion. The Catholic Church

was a powerful player in the newly forged state: because of Catholicism's centrality to Croatian

identity formation, the support of the Croatian Catholic Church helped Pavelić stoke images of a

resurrected nation and legitimized the righteousness of the Ustasha's violent mission.[4] While the

Ustasha was not run by the church or fundamentally religious, the Ustasha's performative

violence and religion were undeniably enmeshed in their ideology which "glorified violence and

killing as well as self-sacrifice and self-denial, and its rituals and imagery were infused with the

mystic and sacral language of martyrdom, death, and resurrection" (Yeoman 296). "Through its

(the Ustasha's) cult of death," Yeoman adds, "influenced by Balkan rituals of death, burial, and

mourning, it created a form of "village Catholicism" combining pagan customs with Roman

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[4] The Croatian Catholic Church has historically distanced itself from the annual commemoration ceremonies at Jasenovac. Rather, in the past representatives of the Croatian Catholic Church problematically chose to preside over ceremonies held at Bleiburg, a town in Austria where Croatian Ustasha, Serbian Četniks, German Wehrmacht, as well as Cossacks fled from Yugoslavia with the goal of surrendering to the British army in 1945. The British instead handed them over to the Yugoslav partisans whence they were executed or sent on to forced labor. Bleiburg has always existed as a site of collective memory within the Ustasha emigration committee, though in Yugoslavia this memory was largely suppressed by the state (Goldstein 2011: 8). Commemorations at this site were then officially supported by the Croatian government during and after the Tuđman era beginning in the 1990s to 2012 when the Croatian government stopped funding the annual commemoration (the Austrian government has in turn more decisively banned the gathering as of 2022). In the past, the Catholic Church of Croatia had often presided over these commemorations which are known to openly display Ustasha symbols. For more on the Bleiburg, Jasenovac, and the Church, read Slavko Goldstein's open letters to the cardinal Josip Bozanić which called out the church for their failure to visit Jasenovac (and when the archbishop finally did, he did so hastily) and involvement in maintaining Bleiburg as a predominant site of collective Croatian wartime trauma in *Bleiburg i Jasenovac nisu isto.* Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2011.

Catholic traditions to form a new set of legitimizing rituals and ceremonies" (Ibid.) As I return to in Chapter 1, the combination of spectacle, ritual, ceremony, and cult of violence would become the subject of several literary and filmic works in the Yugoslav period dealing with the Ustasha legacy, most notably Croatian director Lordan Zafranović's WWII trilogy (*Evening Bells, Occupation in 26 Pictures, The Fall of Italy)* produced in the 1970s and 1980s, which grappled with the sudden emergence of extreme violence against neighbors in close-knit, multicultural communities on the Croatian coast.

While the NDH set out to create an ethnically defined nation-state, this definition was not clear-cut. Creating a semblance of ethnic and confessional homogeneity would be an impossible task given the multiethnic composition of the lands now comprising the NDH: alongside ethnic Croatians, there were also ethnic Serbs, Hungarians, Slovenes, Bosnian-Muslims, Italians, Germans (otherwise referred to as Volksdeutsche), Jews, and Roma. This diversity was the product of Croatia's imperial subsummation into the Austro-Hungarian Empire until WWI, before becoming part of the Kingdom of Croats, Slovenes, and Serbs (later renamed the Kingdom of South Slavs "Yugoslavia"). Zagreb, the chosen capital of the NDH, was a multiethnic city that bore the mark of Hungarian and German influences. Zagreb also contained a significant Jewish community on the eve of the Second World War, and although this population was smaller in comparison to centers of East/Central European Jewish culture like nearby Budapest, it had a vibrant Jewish cultural scene.

After the Ustasha took power in 1941, they quickly imposed anti-Semitic laws modeled after Nazi Germany's racial anti-Semitism thereby stripping all Jews in the NDH of their former rights as citizens.[5] The speed with which these laws were enacted shows that they were not

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[5] The Nazi and Ustasha's designation of Jewishness as a racial category created significant confusion in the NDH, particularly in Sarajevo where Jewishness continued to be perceived only as a confessional identity. See Emily

hastily drawn overnight but long premeditated (Ivo Goldstein & Slavko Goldstein 2016). As early as 1941, the construction of the Jasenovac camp was underway, demonstrating their plans for exterminating the designated "enemies" of the Croatian nation, that is, Jews, communists, Serbs, and Roma. In 1941, arrests and deportations of Jewish, Serbian, Roma citizens, and known communist party members to concentration camps in the NDH began, and by 1942 the deportations of Jewish citizens were also directed to concentration camps in Germany and Poland, including Auschwitz-Birkenau (Ibid.). Bosnian-Muslims were deemed ethnic Croats and were a major body of recruitment for the Ustasha, while Serbs living in the NDH were often forced to convert to Catholicism—or, according to the Ustasha, they were to be converted "back" to Catholicism since Serbs living in Croatia were seen as Croats who had merely converted to Orthodox Christianity under what the Ustasha viewed as the negative influence of the 'Turkish-Byzantine' yolk. Other citizens of the NDH were killed when the Ustasha began the mass murder of Serbs in Serbian villages starting in 1941, while others were deported to concentration camps. Alongside Jews and Serbs, the Roma, long perceived as racially inferior and outsiders, were also rounded up for deportation.

Jasenovac represents the most brutal excess of four years of mass murder against the NDH's designated undesirables and enemies. Prisoners were tortured, starved, and murdered in extremely cruel ways with primitive tools (axes, hatchet, knives). Jasenovac was the most extensive system of camps in the NDH and the second-largest death camp with which the Nazis had no direct involvement in Europe (Ivo Goldstein and Slavko Goldstein 2016: 268).[6] The exact

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Greble for a historical analysis of aranyization in Sarajevo and the ways religious institutions dealt with these policies in *Sarajevo, 1941-1945: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Hitler's Europe*. Cornell: Cornell University Press, 2011.

[6] The other death camps not run by the Nazis were those in Transnistria, which were under the administration of the Romanian government.

number of victims who perished in Jasenovac has not been determined today, obscured by continuing political conflicts between Croatia and Serbia as official institutions of memory consistently revise these numbers, either exaggerating or downplaying Serbian casualties in the camps. Under Yugoslavia, Jasenovac was both a site of reconciliation among Yugoslavia's various ethnicities, but also for superficially burying the hatchet before a productive, collective confrontation with the violent past could be had. Before the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980, the annual Jasenovac concentration camp ceremony served to reify the Yugoslav foundational myth of the struggle for national liberation (*narodno-oslobodilačka borba*) and brotherhood and unity (*bratstvo i jedinstvo*). WWII was complex in Yugoslavia and had to be dealt with particular care: in 1941, what was then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was occupied by Nazi Germany, Hungary, Italy, and Bulgaria. At the same time, Yugoslavia had also descended into violent civil war, inter and intra-ethnic conflict. The occupations and civil war would result in nearly 17 million casualties (Žerjavić cited in Sindbæk 2012: 4), or around 10% of its prewar population in Yugoslavia alone, in which civilian deaths outnumbered military losses (Judt 2005:17-18). Yugoslavia was also one of the few countries in Europe with an organized and victorious resistance movement, that of the partisans, who became the enduring symbol of the war's triumph over fascism as embodied by the proliferation of partisan monuments which had once decorated the Yugoslav memorial landscape and remembered a dual legacy of both death and heroism.

Bogdan Bogdanović, whose other war monuments will also be duly discussed in this dissertation (see Chapter 1), was one of the vanguards of a new, uniquely Yugoslav aesthetic that departed from the rigid prescriptivism of Soviet Socialist Realism. The abstractness of this

WWII *spomenik* (monument)[7] at Jasenovac sought to create a transnational space of

remembrance that connected Yugoslavia's diverse ethnic and confessional groups who had

perished and/or participated in the national liberation movement. It became one of the most

prominent symbols of suffering and the cruelty of the fascist enemies in Yugoslavia (if not the

most prominent) thanks to annual commemorative ceremonies held at the camp and required

educational tours for school children to the former camp site. Other WWII *spomenici* were often

perched on mountaintops, forests, or in scenic valleys (where major battles or massacres took

place) and involved engaging with the site of memory in everyday spatial practices that

combined leisure with education. This participatory memory work cemented a uniting,

supranational Yugoslav identity to which all ethnic and confessional groups living in the SFRY

could ascribe. However, it can also be argued that the abstractness of Yugoslav memory culture

led to certain gaps in collective memory. Officially memorializing any specific ethnic groups'

persecution by another had to be handled delicately to maintain the tenuous postwar peace, hence

the vague glosses attached to these sites that remembered the "victims of fascism" rather than

mentioning the specifically Jewish, Serbian, Roma victims of Ustasha terror at Jasenovac.

Yugoslav official memory also problematically insinuated that the violent ethnic conflict that had

occurred during the war was instigated by outside forces and that such tensions were

subsequently vanquished once the victorious partisans ousted its foreign occupiers.[8] In Tito's

very first public speech on May 21st, 1945, he essentially laid out the terms for how inter- and

intra-ethnic violence would be approached in official memory frameworks. Tito largely deflected

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[7] *Spomenik* (plural *spomenici*) has been adopted in English terminology to denote the Yugoslav antifascist monuments which is why I will leave it untranslated.

[8] Sindbæk notes how official rhetoric approached the fresh memory of ethnic conflict and massacres in the immediate postwar period. Recounting Tito's very first public speech on May 21st, 1945, he shows how Tito sought to "externalize guilt and responsibility from the Yugoslavia peoples" while "balancing the blame and guilt for betrayal among the different ethnic groups" (Ibid.).

the causes and blame for wartime ethnic tensions and massacres to the Nazi occupiers and their

direct collaborators to forge a sense of unity among previously warring ethnic groups. As Tea

Sindbæk puts it, "the internal massacres were not the main themes of Tito's initial speeches after

the war. Yet, they were regularly (if superficially) mentioned as well-known elements of the war.

While the single most important enemy and aggressor in Tito's accounts were the Germans, the

planning and responsibility for war crimes were ascribed to foreign occupiers and internal, now

dead, or exiled, traitors and enemies. By presenting the war in this way, Tito laid the basis for a

narrative that could rally all Yugoslav peoples together against external enemies" (Sindbæk 43).

The proliferation of official ceremonies at Jasenovac during the existence of the SFRY

(Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) as well as the amplified political interest in the site

and its history during the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s have ensured it from falling

into obscurity. As Ivo and Slavko Goldstein, the foremost authorities on the history of the

Holocaust in Croatia, have noted, by 2000—just one year following the official end of the

Yugoslav conflict of the 1990s with the NATO bombardments— "nearly 1,106 books, 1,482

memoirs, and research papers, and 108 collections of documents had come out" on Jasenovac

(Ibid. 266). This body of research has grown exponentially since then, not only from

contributions by those from the former Yugoslavia but by international scholars who have

become interested in Jasenovac as a continued site of memory conflict between Croatia and

Serbia. In the 1980s and 1990s, Croatian nationalists published work that revised the camp's

legacy as a site of mass murder and extreme violence, claiming that the camp had operated as a

labor camp rather than death camp, or even a communist-run camp formed by the partisans in

1946. When, in 1991, Yugoslavia began to fall apart during a series of civil wars and violent

conflict that would last until the end of the decade and result in its complete fragmentation;

independence was accompanied by widescale historical revision and the negative reassessment of WWII's anti-fascist legacy. [9]

Namely, the nationalist government (the HDZ) that took the helm under Franjo Tuđman following Croatia's secession from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, embarked on largescale historical revisionism that disassociated the Ustasha from its fascist and violent past, and instead converted them into the legitimate predecessors to the modern Croatian nation.[10] The central political platform of Tuđman and the HDZ party was to reconcile all Croats, meaning both former Ustasha and communists, into a united national body. As Ivo and Slavko Goldstein succinctly describe this period of extreme historical revisionism, it became necessary to "provide the Ustashe with some kind of legitimacy for participating in Croatian development in the predominately Democratic European environment," and thereby radically alter and even fabricate the legacy of the Ustasha (Ibid. 2016: 522). This fabrication continues today, assisted by the Europeanization of Holocaust memory superficially appropriated by Croatian governmental institutions that handle Holocaust memorials and commemorations, including those at Jasenovac. Ljiljana Radonić's work on memorial museums in the post-Yugoslav period has shown that the current museum exhibits at Jasenovac merely import Western European and American memory schemes at the expense of "the specificity of their respective location and its history" (Radonić 2018:134) According to Radonić, the current museum heavily appropriates the ways the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. seeks to individualize victims. This individualization is highly problematic in terms of its representations of certain prisoners,

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[9] For an in-depth historiography on Jasenovac and the Ustasha, see Ivo and Slavko Goldstein's *The Holocaust in Croatia*. Pittsburg/DC: University of Pittsburgh Press/United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016.

[10] Tudjman was a so-called "historian" himself, one particularly adept at revisionism: his 1989 monograph of WWII history *The Horrors of War* was a gross attempt at revising Croatian complicity in the murder of its Jewish, Roma, Serbian and antifascist citizens during WWII.

namely the Romani, who are depicted as racist stereotypes (Ibid.141).[11] The exhibit further

evades any serious conversation on the Ustasha perpetrators (this can only be found on the

computers available for visitors' further use and information, rather than the actual exhibit). The

biggest issue with the museum, however, can be found in its hermetic relationship vis a vis the

actual site of mass atrocity since the museum is almost entirely separated from the former

campgrounds and makes no effort to memorialize former structures or mass graves. The

revisionary and superficial memory frameworks applied to Jasenovac's violent history thus

demonstrate the continued failures of contemporary Croatian memory frameworks to actually

confront the legacy of Ustasha crimes, rather, the exhibition superficially applies European

memory frameworks which fail to account for the specificity of genocide carried out in Croatia

under Ustasha rule.

The glaring issues with post-Yugoslav Holocaust memory at Jasenovac are not limited to

Croatia, however. In breakup and post-breakup era Serbia, the government under Slobodan

Milošević likewise propagated an ethnonationalist model of Jasenovac remembrance, one that is

highly problematic and has overshadowed more critical attempts to approach Serbian

victimization in the NDH. The political instrumentalization of Croatia's Ustasha past and

Jasenovac as its primary symbol in official Serbian rhetoric was just one of the many

performances of WWII trauma that entered the political stage in the late 1980s, which were

underscored in a 1986 *Memorandum* published by the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences

(SANU), which solidified a "nationalist teleology" of Serbia as a "heroic" but victimized nation

(Macdonald 633). Croats became the main antagonists in this teleology, something which was

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[11] For instance, Radonić notes how the Jasenovac guidebook "exoticizes" Romani culture and emphasizes the difficulties camp life must have been for their nomadic lifestyle (this is something that I also noticed on my visit to the Jasenovac museum). Its representations of Jews in turn makes it seem that they had never truly been a part of Croatian society, rather there is an emphasis on their immigration to Zagreb (141).

magnified in the 1990s to justify the war in Croatia (Ibid). Today, according to the sociologist

Jovan Byford, the contemporary Serbian commemorative culture can be called one of

"comparative martyrdom," in which the suffering of European Jews during the Holocaust is

coopted indiscriminately as a framework for remembering Serbian persecution in the NDH.

Comparative martyrdom is a stance promoted by the state, the academic community, the

Museum of Genocide in Belgrade, which is devoted predominately to the "Serbian victims of

genocide," and by the Serbian Orthodox clergy who have their own institution that supports this

ethnonationalist interpretation of WWII, the Jasenovac Committee of the Bishops of Synod

(Byford 2007: 58). The Jasenovac committee claims to be an educational institution. It has the

support of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), yet over the years,

they have expressed a troubling stance that Serbian students do not need to be educated about the

Holocaust but rather about the victimization of Serbs during WWII (Ibid). As Byford

demonstrates, Holocaust remembrance in Serbia is overwhelmingly focused on upholding Serbs

and Jews as mutual martyrs and victims of history, which it achieves by promoting a metonymic

understanding of Jasenovac as the Serbian "Auschwitz" (though, according to revisionist Serbian

authorities, Jasenovac was *worse* than Auschwitz). Jasenovac as the dominant site of Serbian

Holocaust memory deflects from the action of Milan Nedić's nationalist and quisling

government under the Nazi occupation, the extermination of Serbian Jews in Sajmište—a

concentration camp in the old fairgrounds outside Belgrade—among other camps, which

succeeded in making Serbia the first *judenrein* (literally translated to "clean of Jews") nation in

Europe and has received far less attention in current discussions on WWII memory. It further

deflects from the legacy of the collaborationist paramilitaries, the Serbian Chetniks, who were

complicit in the ethnic cleansing of Bosnian Muslims during WWII. The figure of the Chetnik

was yet another of these WWII legacies resurrected in the extreme ethnonationalism of the Yugoslav dissolution wars and has maintained a relatively neutral, if not positive, image in post-Yugoslav Serbian society.[12]

If the past year's events during which I wrote this dissertation can tell us anything, it's clear that Jasenovac still hits a major nerve. When the Serbian production *Dara of Jasenovac* (*Dara iz Jasenovca*, directed by Predrag Antonijević) was released last winter in 2021 as a potential foreign film entry for the Oscars, the media treatment of the film in Serbia and Croatia, as well as Western Europe and the US showed just how volatile and misunderstood the history of genocide and ethnic violence can be in the former Yugoslavia. American and Western European audiences were preemptively critical that Serbia would go so far as to represent their persecution during WWII on equivalent terms with Jewish suffering given their aggressive warmongering in the 1990s, while the official Croatian stance was one that the film was targeted anti-Croat propaganda. While critics have argued that the film certainly has many of the major shortcomings of a feature film in its representation of Jasenovac, the historian of the Ustasha movement Rory Yeoman has also argued that it is not Serbian propaganda despite its vilification by Croatian and American media outlets. The media attention given to the film demonstrates the necessity of generating a serious body of artistic work that might critically approach the persecution and murder of Serbs in Jasenovac without using nationalist ploys.[13] For now, as

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[12] In fact, the Serbian government even gave former Chetnik veterans and their families veteran compensation, putting them on the same level with former antifascist partisan fighters. For an excellent analysis of Serbian memory politics and the legacy of the Chetniks in contemporary Serbian society see Đureinović, Jelena *The Politics of Memory of the Second World War in Contemporary Serbia: Collaboration, Resistance and Retribution*. London: Routledge, 2020.

[13] For a critical insight on the film *Dara of Jasenovac* and its problematic reception in Western Europe and the US see the following article by Rory Yeoman, a historian of WWII in the Balkans: https://balkaninsight.com/2021/02/16/controversial-serbian-holocaust-film-isnt-anti-croat-propaganda/

writer Miljenko Jergović commented, much more could be learned about Jasenovac from the media storm that accompanied the film than from the film itself.[14]

The question remains as to whether Jasenovac can indeed become again the transnational site of remembrance for Croatians, Serbs, Jews, and Roma that it once represented under socialist Yugoslavia. As Gal Kirn argues in his reevaluation of the Yugoslav *spomenik* culture, in many ways, the Yugoslav *spomenici* representing sites of wartime atrocity or battles were transnational sites of remembrance that attempted a non-competitive framework for memory—as long as it remained within ideological boundaries and glorified the revolution and partisan heroism (Kirn 2014). The transnational legacy of the *spomenici* would be shattered in the breakup, as the post-Yugoslav successor states frame memory within the tightly patrolled boundaries of the nation-state. During and after the dissolution, anti-fascist and partisan monuments were dismantled and destroyed, mainly in Croatia, and the Jasenovac site is often vandalized with Ustasha graffiti. In Serbia and Bosnia & Hercegovina, they are mostly derelict, some maintained by grassroots individuals and organizations committed to preserving Yugoslav heritage. Some *spomenici* have been transferred onto the Serbian list for "Immovable Cultural Heritage" (*Nepokretna kulturna dobra*) yet even this does not protect them from privatization and eventual removal.

More recently, many of the *spomenici* have also been appropriated for their post-apocalyptic appeal; the unique combination of ancient and futuristic aesthetics central to the *spomenik* culture and their current decay has provided the setting for everything from music videos (see Sutjeska in Alan Walker's "The Darkside" music video), sun wear commercials

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[14] Read Jergović's comments here: https://www.danas.rs/kultura/jergovic-ne-odredjuju-nas-samo-nase-sudbine-nego-katkad-i-fatalnije-stil-i-ukus/.

(Australian Valley's highly problematic use of Jasenovac), or films such as the recent production *The First and Last of Men* (2020) which features the Yugoslav *spomenici* in a post-human world accompanied by the voice-over of Tilda Swinton and the haunting music of Icelandic composer Johann Johannsson. These reuses of the *spomenici* uphold the aesthetic qualities of these sites over their history as none are interested in approaching the meanings behind these monuments that mark important battles and sites of atrocity like Jasenovac. The main issue with these sites' appropriation is not simply their decontextualization from their initial mnemonic function, as a degree of decontextualization often occurs with memory's travels across different temporal and geographical contexts. Rather, it is that this decontextualization makes the *spomenici* seem unreal—as if they quite literally come from a different planet— representing yet another way that socialism's material remnants are negated and delegitimized. The *spomenici* are futuristic images, but their futurism was also a concrete means of linking temporalities in a transnational memorial space. Thus, while the mediation and remediation of space is a critical component to sites' continued survival, it's also crucial who mediates it, how they mediate it, and what memories and messages they convey in their mediation and remediation.

III. Creating new forms of spatialized memory in Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Art

This dissertation focuses on works that create alternative forms of spatialized memory practices of the Holocaust that challenge the essentialization of memory within reductive—whether politicized and/or nationalized—master narratives. My case studies depart from official memory discourses that obfuscated important sites of memory, such as Jasenovac, discussed above. As this dissertation argues, there are many writers, sculptors, filmmakers, graphic novelists, and other memory actors from the former Yugoslavia who have, in fact, given us the tools to see memory as a productive and transformative process that establishes dialogue across

ethnic, confessional, and linguistic communities as well as across generational and temporal divides. The works I examine create critical counter-narratives that fill in the gaps produced by amnesiac and revisionary official memory discourses. Critical to my study is not simply the relationship of space to memory and vice versa, but more specifically, the networks, practices, and processes of cultural memory formation that take place via space. Spatial mediations include actors involved with the survival of spaces, often mediating between past and present, individual and group memories, while media preserve architectural spaces and other topographies as images or textual memorials. Sites are not passive either, as they, too, perform memory. Liedeke Plate and Anneke Smelik argue that the 'texture' of space can be productive of memory: "The interweaving of memory with space is not surprising, since memory is such a crucial component of who we are and what we do, at the level both of the individual and of the collective. The whole social fabric is shot through by memory, including its spatial textures. Thinking through the intimate bonds between space and memory, we are led to understand that, while performances of memory take place in space and thus are mediated by it, they are also productive of space and mediate our experience of it" (Plate and Smelik 2015: 15-16).

The body is also productive of spatial memory. In clarifying the connection between the *lieux de memoire* and *mileux de memoire* (environments of memory), Kerry Whigham writes that "if places of memory and environments of memory can exist at once, then the entity that connects these two concepts is the body, for it is the body that exists within, experiences, shapes, and constitutes these spaces … Memory spaces are designed to be inhabited by bodies, as the transmission of memory is dependent on the dialogue between the memorial space and the individuals who visit it" (Whigham 45). The body is an important memory actor whose presence within space reminds of the reverberations of state terror, genocide, and its continued trauma

across bodies. Bodies do the majority of memory working simply by reinhabiting space, yet they also experience sites of immediate or less immediate (spectral) trauma with intense corporeal and emotional reactions, therefore inscribing space with embodied memories left out of the logocentric tradition of "voicing" trauma.

Renewed inquiry into the embodied and affective mapping of memory landscapes is not only important to analyzing the Holocaust's reverberations across time but also for identifying hegemonic power structures that silence the memory of minority groups in official memory arenas. In Whigham's terms, genocide comes about via affective regimes of terror and continues to be experienced as such long after the event. This is especially true for women's memories, for whom these embodied practices of memory lay bare the body as the site of continued repression, the interlocutor of trauma, as well as the agent of resistance in the present and for the future. My study is attentive to how women must inscribe themselves into memorial landscapes through embodied and affective performances and other translational acts, as well as how they create their own memorial spaces in defiance of the patriarchal logic of national memoryscapes. I contend that affective modes of memory and memorialization in art dismantle oppressive systems of power to seek radically different modes of attachment to sites of memory and construct alternative communities outside national, ethnic, and ideological paradigms.

While my project uses translation as an overarching theoretical framework for analyzing the survival of place and memory due to its transmission across other signifying forms, it is also interested in cross-linguistic translation and the circulation and transformation of memories across different cultural and temporal contexts. In the case of the former Yugoslavia, an official multicultural and multilingual national project, translation is a tool of intranational memory-making that mediates between the layers of different cultural memories present in the same

space. As part of the transnational turn, translation scholars have been pressed to think about how growing multilingualism and multiculturalism force a reevaluation of translation as an agent not only of cross-border movements but as a means of describing the multiplicity of languages and writing present in one national space. Azade Seyhan represents these hybridized spaces of writing formed in migration to be a sort of third geography of language, translation, and memory which can link cultural memories of the homeland with those of emigration (Seyhan 2001). In the case of Central Europe and the Balkans, this alternative geography encapsulates entrenched multilingualisms produced by a long-standing history of border movements—those related to migration but also forced expulsions and the geopolitical reassignment of borders following war, empire, and national collapse. The movement of people and borders over the centuries resulted in bilingual and multiethnic communities of writers whose translation capabilities generated minor transnationalisms within the former Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslavia raises important questions regarding translation because it challenges the assumption that there is an essential link between 'mother tongue' and ethnic identity. Oftentimes this assumed link was arbitrary, particularly in borderland regions such as Vojvodina and Istria.[15] In such regions bilingual (or even multilingual) authors were able to choose their dominant writing language.

The Balkans has a rich history of multilingual writing, facets of which are emphasized in chapters of this dissertation. During the Austro-Hungarian and subsequent interwar period, translators, publishing houses, and presses worked to translate and disseminate texts from the many languages of the region: Serbo-Croatian, Hungarian, Italian, German, Macedonian,

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[15] For an in-depth study on language and identity in Istria, see Pamela Ballinger *History in Exile: Memory and Identity at the Borders of the Balkans*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.

Slovenian, Albanian, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish, or *Judezmo*), among others.[16] The postwar period

continued this tradition, particularly in Vojvodina, where there was a strong Hungarian-language

artistic and literary community (Ottó Tolnai, Nándor Gion, Katalin Ladik, among many others),

and texts were translated from and into Hungarian internally by translators and publishing houses

located mainly in Novi Sad.[17] Translation presented a situation of not merely translating

'foreign' texts into the national language but also circulating texts written in Yugoslavia's

minority languages. Borderland regions like Vojvodina were able to preserve a semblance of

their multilingual identity through translation and bilingual Hungarian and Serbian publishing

houses even after periods of homogenization following war, ethnic conflict, and postwar

expulsions. Thus, while scholars of cultural translation such as Emily Apter have represented the

Balkan's linguistic medley as a site of conflict and miscommunication, I argue that this is not

necessarily the case.[18] To the contrary, this dissertation demonstrates how many artists have

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[16] A note on Ladino presses: According to Krinka Vidaković-Petrov, Ladino-language newspapers and publications were present in the 19th century in Belgrade, yet by the turn of the century, Sephardic writers had largely assimilated into Serbian society and used Serbian as their primary written language. The situation was much different in Sarajevo and other parts of Bosnia, however. The gradual linguistic assimilation of the Sephardim in Sarajevo did not take place until after WWI. Ladino-language publications and attempts to develop a literary culture in Ladino were present in the interwar period in Sarajevo thanks to the efforts of a few writers, namely Abraham Kapon and feminist Laura Papo-Bohoreta. Their works circulated in Sephardic newspapers and in the case of Papo-Bohoreta, they were also performed by amateur theater groups until WWII (see Vidaković-Petrov, who examines the historical process by which Sephardic writers assimilated linguistically into B/C/S/M in Belgrade and Sarajevo in "From Sephardic traditional to modern Serbian/Yugoslav literature," *Around the Point: Studies in Jewish Literature and Culture in Multiple Languages*, edited by Hillel Weiss (et al.), Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, pp. 434–452.

[17] For instance, the Vojvodina-based translator János Borbély translated both Aleksandar Tišma's and Danilo Kiš's works into Hungarian. Bilingual authors like Danilo Kiš, Aleksandar Tišma, and Judita Šalgo also translated Hungarian works into Serbo-Croatian.

[18] Apter draws from Marija Todorova's historical study on the development of the West's negative perceptions of the Balkans to describe warzones as a "Balkan Babel" in which different languages become weapons of miscommunication. While I agree with her premise that war is the ultimate manifestation of breakdowns in language and our ability to communicate, I take issue with her negative characterization of the Balkan's multilingualism and find it to be reductive and misguided in scope. It focuses on two authors, the Albanian Ismail Kadare and Yugoslav Ivo Andrić, to argue that linguistic border crossings always result in some form of violence due to miscommunication between languages. Apter's broader perception of language politics in the Balkans from these two works neglects centuries of bilingualism and multilingualism among numerous inhabitants of the region which forged much more productive encounters in literature, art, and society at large. See *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006.

utilized the former Yugoslavia's multilingual geography of translation to open up lines of communication between its diverse ethnic, linguistic, and confessional groups. In addition, bilingual and multilingual authors of multi-hyphenate ethnic identities often capitalized on their complex relationship to identity and language to question national master narratives and the ethnocentric rhetoric that reemerged starting in the late 1960s and would culminate in the Yugoslav dissolution and its reversal to ethno-nation states.

The spatial mediations that I discuss reject the discarding and desiccating of memories within national frameworks that came into play during the post-socialist transition. They also problematize the finality of national and temporal rupture. Rather, my case studies employ mediation as a means to bridge temporal divides, particularly that of the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav rupture, as they carry over important sites of memory and even recycle and refer back to previous media in the process. They engage past histories of extreme violence to apprehend present ones and vice versa. Each chapter in this dissertation analyzes how sites of memory have traversed these points of temporal and cultural rupture via continued mediation and engagement by diverse mnemonic actors and medias that push forward memories that might have otherwise been forgotten. The engagement of sites of memory in different medias across space and time offers a counterpoint to the discarding of shared cultural memories and cultural heritage following the Yugoslav collapse in the 1990s— such as the *spomenici* which were predicated on antifascist and transnational memory—when current societies in the Yugoslav successor states are plagued by ethnonationalist politics, continued conflict, normalized fascism, and historical revisionism.

Michael Rothberg's study on the intersections between the Holocaust and the legacy of colonial violence argues that multidirectional memory counteracts the competitive zero-sum logic ascribed to nationally and ethnically exclusive memory formation and instead generates dialogue between disparate histories of violence and oppression (Ibid.). Following Rothberg, I am interested in spatial mediations that forge transnational memory practices and solidarities within the communities of the former Yugoslavia and outside the nation as a means of resisting the essentialization of memory within temporally and spatially fixed discourses. Central to each chapter in this dissertation is how these spatial mediations pluralize sites of memory, investing them with new and often-marginalized memories, as well as interacting with other memories as they move across space and time. While I focus predominately on Holocaust memory, the sites that I use as case studies do not remain within their fixed mnemonic boundaries. Theories on transnational memory have given scholars of memory frameworks for shifting their focus beyond spatially and temporally defined boundaries to think more about the ways different memories encounter one another in shared cultural memory space as a result of transgenerational shifts, migration, and globalization. Holocaust frameworks have certainly been appropriated uncritically, something the case of the Holocaust's Europeanization in the Balkans discussed earlier underscores. As a counterpoint to appropriative discourses, Rothberg's "multidirectional memory" encapsulates the productive encounters that are forged within the malleable discursive space of cultural memory; memories can influence one another and make linkages across seemingly disparate times, spaces, and histories of violence (Rothberg 2009). These hybridizations are critical to the pluralization of sites of memory which, unlike Nora's understanding of the *lieux de memoire*, allow diverse groups outside the designated national

boundaries to participate in memory as solidarities are formed across diverse ethnic, linguistic, national, generational, among other mnemonic communities.

In this vein, my dissertation engages Holocaust memory to analyze how memory discourses established by the Holocaust map onto continued histories of extreme violence and state terror. At the same time, this dissertation also recognizes that the very nature of extreme violence, including that experienced in the Axis-run concentration camps, necessitates unbound memory, both for survivors who continue to experience this trauma far beyond the cordoned spaces of the camps and in their everyday lives—for whom the temporalities of "after" and the present merge—but also for cultural memory which, since the postwar period, operates within the shadow of the camps. Similar to Rothberg's multidirectional memory, Max Silverman and Griselda Pollock propose "concentrationary memory" as a means of exploring the permeable boundaries of Holocaust memory in the post-WWII period in which the concentration camps are a "prism for the analysis of cultural responses to horror in the 20th-century political history, which fall outside, but complement, the paradigm and concerns of Holocaust memory" (Silverman, Pollock 5). As such, this dissertation also teases out the Holocaust's mnemonic entanglements with camp worlds after Jasenovac, such as the corrective labor camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur (or the "Yugoslav Gulag") in the 1940s and early 1950s as well as the extreme ethnicizing and genocidal violence of the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s.

IV.   Chapter Layout

This dissertation consists of four chapters, each of which explores a different dynamic of spatial mediation and its theoretical implications:

Chapter 1: Spatial archaeologies of Jewish architectures and cultural landscapes after the Holocaust. This chapter traces the afterlives of Jewish heritage in four Yugoslav cities: Zagreb,

Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Sarajevo. It looks at how Jewish architectural spaces have been mediated in literature and film, as well as through other architecture as is the case of Bogdan Bogdanović's memorial to the Fallen Jewish Fighters and Victims of Fascism in the Sephardic Cemetery, which reused the rubble of Dorćol, a former Jewish neighborhood in Belgrade. As I explore in this chapter, Jewish architectural spaces are theaters that staged the collapse of centuries of multicultural and multiconfessional tolerance as they were intentionally destroyed by the Ustasha or even used as ad-hoc transit camps during WWII as was the case in Hungarian-occupied Vojvodina. Synagogues, Jewish neighborhoods, and cemeteries represent an amalgamation of cultural pasts reflected in their architectural forms and materiality from the Ottoman to Austro-Hungarian empires, among others. The mediations of Jewish spaces that I analyze in this chapter lay bare the role that genocidal violence continues to play in the making of postwar society, even when all physical traces have been wiped clean from the landscape. This chapter brings into conversation works by both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav representatives (writer Aleksandar Tišma, the war memorial sculptor Bogdan Bogdanović, filmmaker Lordan Zafranović, and contemporary writer Miljenko Jergović), to show how actors have used these spaces to bring the Holocaust to bear on renewed histories of violence during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s, and the re-fascisization of Croatian society. It proposes a theory for urban memory in post-Holocaust cities that locates excavation (archaeologies), bricolage, and flânerie as modes of reinscribing Jewish absence as well as democratizing cities' public memoryscapes.

Chapter 2: Cross-linguistic memory and transnational encounters with the Holocaust in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav art. This chapter traces the formation of a transnational, Hungarian and Serbian, site of Holocaust memory centered around the continued mediation of a text and

site of memory across Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav memoryscapes. The text in question is *The Bor Notebook* by the Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, which records his experiences as a Jewish slave laborer in the Serbian Bor copper mine before he was killed on a death march to the Austrian border in 1944. Radnóti's poems were exhumed alongside his body in 1946 and published in a posthumous publication. In 1979, Danilo Kiš translated the entire collection from Hungarian into Serbo-Croatian, and in 2019 it was transformed into a graphic novel by the Serbian graphic artist Aleksandar Zograf. This chapter reads *The Bor Notebook* as a work of lyric witness testimony that is already in translation due to the inherent impulse to speak and be read beyond death. As the text's later Serbo-Croatian translator, Kiš responds to the ethical concerns of translation as survival while also using the text as a site for working upon the past that allows Kiš to negotiate his own traumatic experiences as a child survivor of the Holocaust and loss of his father in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Drawing from Radnóti's questioning of home and homeland during the Holocaust, Kiš works within the Hungarian language to promote alternatives to nationally and ethnically informed identities. The second mediation of Radnóti's testimony I analyze in this chapter is Zograf's graphic novel *Borske beležnice* (2019). The graphic novel lays bare the very process of memory's mediation as it is joined by a newly printed version of Kiš's Serbo-Croatian translation and a work of scholarship by the Serbian academic Zoran Paunović that draws links between Kiš's and Radnóti's oeuvre. I also argue that Zograf experiments with the ethics of post-Holocaust witnessing to produce a work of counter-memory that reinscribes the space of the camps with memory, detailing the victims, perpetrators, and interworking of the entire camp infrastructure. My second point of analysis on the graphic novel draws from Michael Rothberg's concept of a "multidirectional landscape" (2013) to claim that Zograf's collaboration with the project "Missing Stories: Forced Labour under Nazi Occupation. An Artistic Approach"

sheds light on the implications of the Bor labor camps for European infrastructure that locate the mine as a recurring spatiality of oppression and violence during the Holocaust, the Yugoslav dissolution wars, and the neoliberal present.

Chapter 3: Memorializing landscapes of pain and trauma through the body: women's camp memories. This chapter analyzes women's testimony from the corrective labor camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. In this chapter, I foreground the role of the body in mediating landscapes of pain and trauma, emphasizing how women's memory and mediums of memory production put forth the body as the site of trauma as well as resistance. I analyze autobiography and self-narration as important mediums that allow women to reconstruct the entirety of their lives that were symbolically destroyed in the camps. Because many of these women were former partisan fighters, the state's persecution of real and imagined Stalinist supporters in the late 1940s and 1950s effectively had to 'unmake' women's biographies and wartime contributions to the revolution in order to rebrand them as national traitors. I focus on the first documentary that broached the subject of women's memory of the camps by Danilo Kiš and Aleksandar Mandić, *Goli život/Bare Life,* which also broke nearly half a century of women's silences following its release on Yugoslav television in 1990. The documentary features the testimonies of two Yugoslav-Israeli emigres, Eva Panić-Nahir and Ženi Lebl, and reflects on a constellation of state terror, totalitarianism, and bare life politics in successive periods of Yugoslav history from the Holocaust to the corrective labor camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. I then turn to the embodied practices of memory that the women employ in their autobiographical works (*Ljubičica bela/White Violets, Eva*) to reconstruct and reclaim their identities. This chapter further contributes to a discussion on the role that emigration played in the renegotiation of identity, homeland, and language, given Ženi Lebl and Eva Panić-Nahir's traumatic departures

from Yugoslavia for Israel after their failed reassimilation into society following the camps due to continued repression by the state and self-censorship. It discusses how modes of self-translation, in this case from Serbo-Croatian to Hebrew, reproduced their self-censorship while also activating the possibility of reauthorizing their lives and working through the extended shadow of state repression after the camps.

Chapter 4: Imagined spaces of memory. This chapter reevaluates the fictional and autobiographical writings of the Vojvodinian writer Judita Šalgo, and her "Jewish" novel *Put u Birobidžan/Journey to Birobidzhan* (1997). Šalgo's work differs from other Yugoslav-Jewish writers (e.g., Tišma, Kiš, Filip David, David Albahari) who return to a set collection of topographies of Holocaust memory and trauma in their art (concentration camps, family homes, and other sites of atrocity) to consider questions of Jewish identity and fate. Instead, Šalgo latches onto the forgotten legacy of the Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan in Siberia as an alternative repository of the past. In *Journey to Birobidzhan*, Birobidzhan is an imagined space that figures as a symbol of hope in the novel, at once the real Jewish homeland project and the purely imagined space of the female utopia. Šalgo's female utopia/continent/island formulates its own space of memory that continues the emancipatory politics of post-structuralist feminism and *žensko pismo* (*écriture féminine*), as well as the utopian projections of the (neo) avant-gardes. This chapter argues that Šalgo's real and imagined spaces of memory, Birobidzhan as well as the Forest of Martyrs in Western Jerusalem that plays an important role in her novel, work to subvert practices of memory, mourning, and the politicization of memory and trauma; here, the Holocaust and Yugoslav breakup in the 1990s. Because Šalgo attributes violence and war to patriarchy, she imagines Birobidzhan as the deterritorialized and gendered space of the female utopia/continent that provides alternative forms of belonging predicated on the possibility

of affective communities that transcend terms of kinship configured in patriarchal, ethnic, and national terms. In my reassessment of Šalgo's work, I read *Journey to Birobidzhan* as a work of counter-memory that refutes the ways hegemonic memory structures bind memory to space, instead experimenting with movement and unrooted memory practices that orientate the past towards the future.

Chapter 1
Urban Archaeologies of the Holocaust: The Case of Jewish Architectural Heritage

"A shell hit one of the facades on Marshall Tito Street. The plaster poured down and, with it, a sheet metal sign. The sign read: Dr. Ante Pavelić 11. Until then I had no idea, but now I knew: the central street of Sarajevo had a different name fifty years ago, and that name was hidden for years behind the plaster, like a geological diagram of different ages" (88).
Semezdin Mehmedimović, "Surplus History"[19]

I.   Remembering Jewish Pasts in the Former Yugoslavia

The Sarajevan writer Miljenko Jergović's novel *Ruta Tannenbaum* is loosely based on the

life of a famous Jewish Croatian child star, Lea Deutsch, who was murdered in the Holocaust

when she was 17 years old. Yet, as Jergović notes at the time of the novel's publication in 2006,

there is not a single street or monument named after Lea Deutsch in all of Zagreb. While

Jergović had initially set out to write a fictional biography of Lea Deutsch, he drastically

departed from this endeavor and concluded that any fictionalization of Lea's life would have

ultimately been inadequate (Jergović 2006: 423). Jergović's admission lays bare the limits of

representing another's life and history in narrative form; *Ruta Tannenbaum* does not try to

amend this gap but instead calls attention to it in its recasting of Lea's life into Ruta

Tannenbaum's. While the child star Ruta and her family are all imagined, "the place and time are

not" (Ibid).[20] In the appendix attached to the novel, Jergović suggests that his novel is a creative

rewriting of the effaced Jewish cultural landscape of Zagreb, one that remains behind only in the

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[19] Translations of Mehmedimović's *Sarajevo Blues* are by Ammiel Alcalay.
[20] "Mjesto i vrijeme nisu izmišljeni" (Ibid.)

absences that an invested passerby will notice: "Ruta Tannenbaum lived on the very same street as Lea Deutsch, only in a different building. The location of this narrative on Gundulićeva street is just a tiny marker. There are many more of them, none more important than the other. Driving slowly past the Botanical Garden towards Ilica over the years, I thought about how Lea must have looked at these same beautiful, dark Austro-Hungarian buildings. To her, I owe my tenderness towards this view. Lea Deutsch let me into her street. This is a little stone on the threshold of her home where there is no other grave (Ibid. 424)."[21] As can be seen here, *Ruta Tannenbaum* upholds narrative as a textual memorial to the otherwise forgotten memory of Lea Deutsch and Zagreb's former Jewish community. *Ruta Tannenbaum* as a *kamenčić* ("little stone") can be read as a little stone placed on Jewish graves in Jewish tradition, as well as *kamen spoticanja*, the Croatian translation of a *Stolperstein*—little bronze plates that first emerged in Germany in the 1990s, and that memorialize the names, dates and places of birth and deaths of Jewish residents murdered in the Holocaust in front of their former homes.[22] Until very recently, Zagreb was the only European capital without *Stolpersteines*. In 2020, over a decade after the publication of Jergović's novel, the very first stumbling block in Zagreb was laid in front of Lea Deutsch's apartment on 29 Gundulićeva.[23]

Despite this gesture, however, the absences that Jergović addresses in the early 2000s are still relevant today as the loss of Zagreb's Jewish community during the violent period of the

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[21] "Ruta Tannenbaum je stanovala je u istoj ulici kao Lea Deutsch, ali na drugome broju. Situiranje ove pripovijesti u Gundlićevu ulicu samo je sitan znak pažnje. Ima ih još nekoliko, ali nijedan nije toliko bitan. Godinama sam, vozeći se sporo od Botaničkoga vrta prema Ilici, razmišljao kako je Lea gledala iste ove lijepe i tamne austrougarske zgrade. Njoj dugujem nježnost u tom prizoru. Lea Deutsch pustila me je u svoju ulicu. Ovo je kamenčić na njezinome kućnom pragu, pošto drugoga groba nema" (Ibid. 424).

[22] The German artist Gunter Demnig began the Stolperstein project in front of Cologne city hall in 1992. The site was significant as it memorialized where Heinrich Himmler gave the orders to begin mass deportations to concentration camps.

[23] The stumbling block to Lea Deutsch was the first in Zagreb. Others would follow in 2021 through an initiative by the Centar za promicanje tolerancije i očuvanje sjećanja na Holokaust and the Croatian Jewish federation. https://stolperstein.hr

NDH is almost entirely disconnected from the ways the city currently presents its history. After a tour of Zagreb during which I and a group of those interested in Croatian culture and history were led around to the city's various historical sites, I asked if the guide could show me where the city's Jewish heritage was. The tour guide took us on a short, unplanned detour to the busy street corner near the town square, where, in a parking lot, a small memorial plaque could be found against the peeling plaster of one of the buildings:

Figure 2.1
Memorial plaque marking the former synagogue on Praška. Photo by author.

"In this spot once stood the Synagogue of the Zagreb Jewish community. The Synagogue was built in 1867 and destroyed by fascist powers in 1941." When Ante Pavelić and the Ustasha came to power in 1941, Croatian-Jews were stripped of their rights as legal citizens, forced to wear a Yellow Star, and fell victim to openly antisemitic attacks. In Spring 1941, Ustasha

supporters sang the following song in front of the Praška Street synagogue just months before the government sanctioned its demolition: "Zagreb is not a Jewish town, a Jewish town, a Jewish town, Zagreb is an Ustasha town, an Ustasha town, an Ustasha town, out with them, we won't have them" (Goldstein 112). It was in fact the Ustasha (more specifically, the appointed mayor of the new Ustasha government in Zagreb, Ivan Werner) who demolished the synagogue, rather than the Nazis as the somewhat vague denotation of "fascist powers" might suggest above.[24] Images and film footage of the demolition were later showcased across the NDH from Zagreb to Sarajevo in exhibitions extolling the NDH's proactivity regarding their Jewish question.

The Ustasha footage of the synagogue's demolition in 1942 in turn would immortalize the moment of its destruction in a 1991 documentary film by Lordan Zafranović *Zalazak stoljeća: Testament L.Z./ Decline of the Century: The Testimony of L.Z.* The documentary provided history of the Croatian Ustasha's rise to power and bloody reign while at the same time confronting the Tuđman regime's intensive "re-Ustashification" of Croatian society following its break from Yugoslavia.[25] The documentary footage of the synagogue's demolition is accompanied by choral music, which is at once haunting while simultaneously making reference to the performative aspects of fascist and Ustasha violence—an underlying theme present in Zafranović's WWII films and documentaries—through mass ceremonial executions in

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[24] Zafranović (born on the island of Šolta in 1944), was a member of the FAMU school, a group of filmmakers who studied in Prague in the 60s and 70s. His oeuvre includes the WWII trilogy *Večernja zvona/Evening Bells, Pad Italije/The Fall of Italy*, and *Okupacija u 26 slika/Occupation in 26 Pictures*, as well as a documentary on the Jasenovac. concentration camp *Krv i pepeo Jasenovca/Jasenovac the Cruelest Death Camp. Decline of the Century: Testimony of L.Z.* was the documentary he was working on when he fled the country in 1991 following the Croatian independence war. Zafranović openly interrogated the horrors of the Ustasha regime during WWII, thus, when the newly independent Croatia began to legitimize itself through the problematic resurrection of its fascist past during the Tudjman era, Zafranović was treated as a national threat and many of his films were destroyed.
[25] I borrow the term "Re-Ustashification" from Croatian historians Ivo and Slavko Goldstein to describe the normalization and collective political and societal rehabilitation of Croatia's fascist legacy in the 1990s.

concentration camps such as Jasenovac, parades, and public performances of destruction as with

the synagogue on Praška.

Figure 2.2
Image from Zafranović's *Decline of the Century:* The Destruction of the Synagogue on Praška.

Figure 2.3
Image from Zafranović's *Decline of the Century:* The Synagogue in Ruins
(The recovered footage of the Zagreb Synagogue can be seen from 22:13-23:07 in the film.)

Following the destruction of the synagogue and state acquisition of all Jewish property in

Zagreb in 1942, deportations began to concentration camps abroad as well as in the NDH, such

as Jasenovac where around 4,000-4,500 Zagreb Jews would perish (Ivo Goldstein and Slavko

Goldstein 2016: 304). By the end of the war, 80% of the NDH's (which included present-day

Croatia and Bosnia & Hercegovina) Jewish population was murdered in camps within the NDH

or abroad, mass executions, or as partisan fighters in the struggle for national liberation (Ibid.).

Since the destruction of the synagogue, the space has lent itself to various uses: a handball court,

a department store, and now a parking lot. The Jewish community has long made plans to rebuild

the synagogue, originally in Moorish revival style, while other groups have proposed a memorial

site that would project a simulation of the former synagogue onto an adjacent building. In 2018,

the current mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandić confirmed that the reconstruction of the synagogue would begin in order to remove this 'dark stain' from Zagreb's past, however, this project has yet to see any serious progress. The indecision over what the empty space should be highlights the marginalization of Holocaust memory in Croatia when it comes to the legacy of the Ustasha and the NDH. Contemporary Croatian society has mostly forgotten that there ever was a Jewish community in Croatia, while at the same time maintaining a contentious and controversial relationship to the legacy of the Ustasha regime as outlined in the introduction to this dissertation. The first "official" memorial to the Holocaust in Croatia has been slated for 2021 though, as with other Holocaust memorial projects in Croatia, it has been hindered by setbacks with planning as well as pushback from memory actors demanding more transparent recognition of Croatia's complicity in the murder of its Jewish citizens and Ustasha crimes. The monument, which will represent a stack of suitcases at Zagreb's main train station and memorialize the "6 million murdered Jews of Europe," is symptomatic of the problematic Europeanization of Holocaust memory in the former Eastern Bloc and Yugoslav successor states as politicians and official memorial efforts uncritically recycle the mnemonic vocabulary used in Western Europe. In the meantime, the empty space of the synagogue on Praška physically embodies this absence and violent episode in Zagreb's history.[26]

The failures to forge a strong Holocaust memorial culture in the Yugoslav successor states is not only a product of the Yugoslav breakup in the 1990s and the historical revisionism that accompanied it. During the socialist period, the writer Aleksandar Tišma perceptively noted the relationship between postwar reconstruction and amnesia. Writing from Novi Sad in the early

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[26] Due to efforts by members of the Zagreb community who dissatisfied with the intended gloss for the memorial, on April 27th, 2002, a memorial was erected in the city memorializing "The Victims of the Holocaust and Ustasha Terror." See https://www.portalnovosti.com/kompromisni-spomenik

1970s—a city that formerly held one of the largest Jewish populations in Yugoslavia before

WWII—the first novel of Tišma's Holocaust trilogy *The Book of Blam* (1971) stages a

melancholic flânerie through the city where the protagonist looks on helplessly at the

transformation of the urban landscape, the demolition of sections of Jevrejska ulica (the "Jewish

Street"), and the conversion of the Hungarian Neolog Synagogue into a municipal concert hall.

Like W.G. Sebald, the German writer who tackled the nation's amnesiac relationship to aerial

bombing, the erasure of the traces of destruction from the landscape facilitated collective

forgetting, in this case, of Yugoslavia's Jewish pasts. During the war, there were both targeted

attacks on Jewish cultural spaces such as the Synagogue on Praška, as well as extensive damage

to Yugoslav cities by axis bombing—most significantly the Luftwaffe bombing of Belgrade in

1942 which destroyed vast sections of the city— and continuous allied carpet-bombing

throughout the war. As the new Yugoslavia sought to model a socialist utopia from the ruins of

its predecessor the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the immediate years of postwar reconstruction were

characterized by radical urban planning that would concretize its rupture with the past and

movement towards a progressive utopian future. Urban landscapes in major Yugoslav cities from

Belgrade to Sarajevo were transformed with socialist-modernist buildings which resulted in an

unprecedented level of architectural symmetry by the 1960s (Kulić 2014). The ruins of Jewish

spaces demolished or destroyed by aerial bombing were cleared rather than rebuilt to make way

for these new utilitarian housing projects and boulevards.[27] The Jewish Federation of

Yugoslavia, the main official Jewish organization, was more preoccupied with humanitarian

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[27]Such was the fate that befell the majority of Belgrade's Sephardic heritage, such as the Ottoman-era synagogue El kal vjež Bet Israel, which was bombed and burnt to the ground following the 1941 Luftwaffe bombing of the city which had destroyed vast sections of the Dorćol and its Jewish Street. The abandoned lot of the El Kal Vjež was first converted into military barracks and later a basketball court. See Jevrejska opština u Beogradu. "Beogradske singagoge, Jevrejski istorijski muzej" www.beogradskasinagoga.rs/ISTORIJA.html

work and emigration and was forced to sell the majority of synagogues to the state due to lack of

funding and a congregation to keep them open, after which they were then used for various

decontextualized functionalities (Byford 2013: 522).

This chapter in turn sets out to map the role of Jewish architectural remnants in spatial

archaeologies of post-conflict cities. Below, I examine how diverse artistic mediations from the

war memorial sculptor Bogdan Bogdanović's Memorial to the Jewish Fallen Fighters and

Victims of Fascism in the Sephardic Cemetery, to writers Aleksandar Tišma (*The Book of Blam*)

and Miljenko Jergović ("Apocalypse in the Synagogue" from *Sarajevo: A Map of the City*)

reinvested empty, abandoned, and ruined Jewish architectural spaces as sites of memory in the

Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav period.[28] While Bogdanović, Tišma, and Jergović's memorial and

literary mediations of these spaces all create Holocaust memory, they also use them to comment

further on the continued bearing of war, ethnic cleansing, and genocide on their present societies.

On the most basic level, remembering the Holocaust through these sites reminds of the

fragility of the multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional city in the face of the hegemonic

blood and land configurations of the nation that reached excessive proportions during WWII and

the Yugoslav breakup. At the same time, these acts of remembrance also counter the

continuation of violence in the present. To return to the work with which I opened this chapter,

Jergović and Zafranović acutely demonstrate the ways in which memorializing destroyed and

absent spaces of Jewish cultural life in Zagreb can work against dominant memory regimes in

Croatia that are bent on removing these traces of violence from the built world as part of their

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[28] As heritage scholar Laurajane Smith argues, there is essentially no such thing as heritage; rather, heritage, is a discourse that is maintained by institutions and actors seeking to consolidate memory within ideological, national, ethnic, political paradigms. See *Uses of Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

manipulation of the Ustasha's genocidal past. They intervene in the ways that official discourse

on the destruction of cultural heritage problematically reifies a superficial temporal divide

between peacetime and conflict, failing to recognize how destruction and violence continue to

permeate post-conflict societies.[29] The political and institutional conversations surrounding

heritage in international spheres (UNESCO, the Hague, and governmental groups in the former

Yugoslavia) focus primarily on the necessity of preservation, restoration, and reconstruction of

heritage in order to preserve cultural legitimacy—or as the mayor of Zagreb has even

suggested—to right historical 'wrongs.' By comparison, the artistic mediations of Jewish

architectures in the socialist and post-Yugoslav period that I map here all use destruction as the

dominant *topos* of memory to allow architectures to continue to bear memory, rather than freeze

a desired past in space and time. In his article on postsocialist memory and architecture in

Russia, Andreas Schönle argues that institutionalized heritage in the former Eastern Bloc

deprives heritage of its "difference and heterogeneity" in an attempt to consolidate pasts, such as

an image of Croatian multiculturalism in line with EU values, even when this couldn't be farther

from the truth (Schönle 741). These spatial archaeologies of destruction that I explore here in

turn undress the unassuming facades of Jewish spatial heritage and transform them into salient

monuments to violent pasts. In this way, Jewish architectures are continuously invested with

renewed mnemonic significance across space and time as artists negotiate the role that the

memory of destruction, violence, genocide, and war play in the remaking of urban communities

in the present and for the future.

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[29] See, for example, Herscher, Andrew, and Siddiqi, Anooradha. *Spatial Violence.* First Edition., New York: Routledge, 2019; Bădescu Gruia; Baille, Britt, and Mazzucchelli, Francesco. *Transforming Heritage in the Former Yugoslavia: Synchronous Pasts*. New York: Springer International Publishing AG, 2021.

II.   Memorial Bricolage: Bogdan Bogdanović's Memorial to the Jewish Victims of Fascism and Fallen Fighters in Belgrade's Sephardic Cemetery

In 1944, following the partisan and Soviet liberation of Belgrade, the Sukat Šalom, Belgrade's main Ashkenazi Synagogue, became the first and the only in the city to reopen for religious services, albeit in ruins. Today, the Sukat Šalom, or Beogradska Sinagoga (Belgrade Synagogue), remains the only synagogue in Serbia to be actively functioning for religious services. The Novi Sad and Subotica synagogues are used only on religious holidays.[30] During the Nazi occupation of Belgrade (1941-1944), the Sukat Šalom was used as a brothel for Nazi soldiers; pillaged and plundered. [31] The memorial service in 1944 thus signaled the Belgrade Jewish community's reclamation of a space that had born witness to the Holocaust and the destruction of the Serbian Jewry. Belgrade's Sukat Šalom, however, represents an exceptional case following the war. The remaining Jewish community was only able to reclaim or rebuild very few among the abandoned and ruined Jewish topographies now scattered across Yugoslavia's postwar landscape.[32] From the ruins of Belgrade, the desacralized space of the Sukat Šalom staged conflicted futures, one evoking both the promise of rebirth from the ruins of war as well as the irreparable void produced by the Holocaust.

The ruins of Belgrade's former Jewish spaces after the Holocaust became the material substance of a memorial to the "Jewish victims and fallen fighters" in Belgrade's Sephardic

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[30] This image of the reopening of the Sukat Šalom in the aftermath of the war is from the recollections of the painter Zuko Džumhur cited in Ristović, Milan. *U potrazi za utočištem: Jugoslovenski Jevreji u bekstvu od Holokausta.* Belgrade: Službeni list, 1998.

[31] See for reference Zavod za zaštitu Spomenika kulture Grada Beograda. "Sinagoga Sukat Šalom". beogradskonasledje.rs/arhiva-2/sinagoga-sukat-salom.

[32] According to Emil Kerenji, "two things are worth noting in relation to the issue of property. First, Jewish communal property had been confiscated by anti-Jewish measures passed by several different occupation collaborationist regimes; some of this property was returned by the communists to the Jewish communities, while some was not. The issue of restitution of Jewish private property, like that of other private individuals in Yugoslavia, came to the agenda only after the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1911. In Serbia it has not been returned or compensated to this day" (Kerenji 132).

Cemetery by a young Bogdan Bogdanović—the architect of the Stone Flower memorial at Jasenovac—who would go on to become the most eminent war memorial sculptor in Yugoslavia.[33] While the persecution of Yugoslav Jews was largely framed in otherwise ethnically neutral mnemonic vocabulary which upheld the national liberation movement (*narodno-oslobodilačka borba*) as the dominant site of commemoration, at the same time, Yugoslavia was one of the very first nations in Europe to erect a specifically Jewish site of WWII remembrance (Kerenji 2008).[34] In 1952, the Jewish Federation unveiled an ambitious plan to erect five memorials commemorating the "Jewish victims of fascism and fallen fighters" (*spomenik jevrejskim žrtvama fašizma i palim borcima*) across major Yugoslav cities: Sarajevo, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Zagreb as well as Đakovo on the grounds of a former Ustasha-run camp (Ibid.) The unveilings of these five monuments were each accompanied by high-profile

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[33] The monument to the Jewish victims of fascism in the Sephardic Cemetery is part of a complex memorial network in and around the cemetery. Bogdanović was also the coarchitect of the nearby "Alley of Executed Patriots" (1959), which remembered the resistors of the Nazi occupation who were shot in the Terazije neighborhood. Right beside the opening of the Sephardic cemetery is the monument to the Liberators of Belgrade, which was erected two years after the Jewish memorial in 1954 and is remembered as the first major war memorial in Belgrade. This monument commemorates both the Yugoslav partisans as well as the Soviet army that also assisted in the liberation of Belgrade in 1944. The monument to the victims of fascism and fallen fighters is also linked spatially to other memorials which were later placed in different parts of the adjacent Ashkenazi cemetery (Novo Jevrejsko groblje) which include the monument to the "drowned Jews" (*spomenik utopljenih*) of Novi Sad following the massacres of 1942 conducted by the Hungarian army, and a monument to Austrian refugees, which remembers the Austrian Jews who fled Vienna hoping to make their way to Palestine via the Danube-Black Sea Route. Otherwise known as the Kladovo Transport, the Austrian refugees' hopes were dashed when they were captured by the Nazis in Šabac, Serbia, from where they were executed or deported to the Sajmište concentration camp in Belgrade.

[34] Kerenji's dissertation maps how the memory of the war was predominately fixed within the heroic-liberative vocabulary of the revolutionary movement but also how there were official Holocaust memorials erected in Yugoslavia such as Bogdanović's that recognized Jewish suffering and avoided ideological framing. See *Jewish Citizens of Socialist Yugoslavia: Politics of Jewish Identity in a Socialist State, 1944-1974*. 2008. University of Michigan, PhD dissertation. As Stijn Vervaet also notes in his monograph on Holocaust memory in Yugoslavia, studies on French Holocaust memory such as Ann Wieviorka's have mistakenly surmised that the first Holocaust memorial in Europe was the "Tomb of the unknown Jewish martyr/memorial to the unknown Jewish martyr" in France, which was actually only completed in 1956. The first state-funded Holocaust memorial in turn was Nathan Rappaport's Warsaw Ghetto Monument in 1948, followed by the Yugoslav Jewish Federation's memorial project" (Vervaet 5). see *Holocaust, War, and Transnational Memory: Testimony from Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Literature*. First edition., New York: Routledge, 2018.

ceremonies which included various non-Jewish officials and organizations. As Emil Kerenji

contends, the Jewish Federation's memorial initiative emerged from a specific desire to provide

the Yugoslav Jewish community with "a new framework for Jewishness" following a significant

wave of emigration to Israel after WWII, which accordingly mapped Jewish experience during

the war onto the Yugoslav master narratives of the war, that of "brotherhood and unity" and the

partisan struggle during the national liberation movement (Ibid). At the same time, the physical

marginalization of these monuments in Jewish cemeteries and other spaces removed them from

public eye, marking them as heterotopic and heterochronic spaces of Belgrade's postwar present

that gathered the displaced remnants of the past and extreme violence of the war within a

contained space. As in the Foucauldian sense of a heterotopia as a displaced place (Foucault

1986), this displacement is a necessary consequence of the hegemonic maintenance of public

space—which in Yugoslavia was one of endless progression towards a utopic future from the

ruins of war and violent ethnic conflict.

    The monument in Belgrade is unique from the other five monuments due to its material

composition. Bogdanović reused the rubble of Jewish homes from the Dorćol and fragmented

gravestones of the destroyed Paliula Jewish cemetery that had been left in heaps beside the banks

of the Danube. When Bogdanović won the competition to design the memorial to the Jewish

Victims of Fascism in the Sephardic cemetery, he initially wanted to reinforce the monument

with concrete, yet this proved too costly for the Federation's budget. [35] Bogdanović reinforced

the rubble in the major structure of the monument, the gate (*kapija*) (see below) and incorporated

the shards from broken tombstones into the walkway (see below). The rubble of Dorćol can thus

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[35] The Jewish federation also asked that Bogdanović to use stone, despite his favoring of concrete. Apparently, Bogdanović was so taken with the stone that afterwards many of his future monuments were sculpted from stone instead of concrete.

be further understood as a heterotopic material in the more literal understanding of the

heterotopia as a displaced place. The rubble represents the excesses of the past that could not be

subsumed into the official narrative of the war, which, until Bogdanovic's plans to repurpose it,

had been left in a rubble pile from where it would have presumably been swept up and

discarded.[36] Bogdanović's reuse of the rubble can be best described as a form of memorial

"bricolage," i.e., the reuse of discarded materials for new purposes, into a unified site of

remembrance. The monument is, therefore, not only a site of memory but also a media that

memorializes the existence of former spaces, creating something new in the process.

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[36] Unlike Foucault who was much more interested in the spatiality of the heterotopia, Bogdanović was much more invested in the texture and materiality of spaces which he expressed in his 1960 book, *Mali urbanism/Small Urbanism.*

Figure 2.4
Memorial to the Jewish victims of fascism and fallen fighters in Belgrade's Sephardic Cemetery.
Photo by the Author.

Figure 2.5
A fragment from a gravestone, among other materials, in the walkway. The unevenness of the stones further reveals the bricolage aesthetic of Bogdanović's *spomenik*. Photo by the author.

Before WWII, the Dorćol neighborhood was one of the oldest standing neighborhoods in

Belgrade, as well as its most culturally and linguistically diverse The name Dorćol comes from

the Turkish word "dörtyol," meaning "crossroads," as it was situated on the crossroads between

four main trading routes leading to Vienna, Viden (in present-day Bulgaria), Istanbul and

Dubrovnik during Belgrade's Ottoman era (Bahun 467). The Dorćol was the home of diverse

ethnic groups who emigrated to Belgrade under Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian, and later Yugoslav

rule, as well as Belgrade's historically Jewish neighborhood, the "Jalija," of the Belgrade

Sephardim who came to Belgrade from other areas of the Ottoman empire beginning in 1521

with the Serbian capitulation.[37] [38] The neighborhood was a linguistic medley as well as one of

the central topographies of the Sephardi language, Ladino (also known as Judeo-Spanish or

Judezmo), a romance language derived from medieval Spanish. Reflecting the multiethnic,

multiconfessional, and multilingual composition of its inhabitants, the architectural landscape of

Dorćol was an eclectic mix of high-rise modern buildings, low-rise Ottoman-era buildings and

kafanas, synagogues, mosques, and churches, all of which suffered significant damage during the

second world war.

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[37] The Ashkenazi community came much later, only in the 1800s beginning with the Austro-Hungarian advancement into Serbia

[38] Under the Ottoman millet system, Sephardic Jews were granted a significant degree of cultural, religious as well as linguistic autonomy in the Balkans (Vidaković-Petrov 435). The Ladino language was the vernacular of the Balkan's Sephardim and later played a much more distinguished role in the formation of a Jewish cultural and literary scene in the pre-WWII period. Under Austro-Hungarian rule, access to modern education allowed Sephardic culture and Ladino language to flourish; newspapers and literature was disseminated in Ladino and Jewish schools and societies were also formed (Ibid. 437). By the 1900s and the development of Yugoslav statehood following WWI, this changed, and Serbo-Croatian began to overtake Ladino in public spheres (Ibid). The Sarajevo (as well as wider Yugoslav) Ashkenazim consisted of largely multilingual speakers; Yiddish, Hungarian, German, which contributed to the multilingual melding of the city's Jewish topographies. By the time the Kingdom of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs was formed in 1918, Yugoslavia "was the only state in the Balkans where two historical Jewish communities—that of the "Turkish" Sephardim (in Serbia, Bosnia, and Macedonia) and that of the Central European Ashkenazim (in Vojvodina, Croatia, and Slovenia)—were integrated into a single political and cultural framework in which the majority population was Slavic" (Ibid.436).[38]

Bogdan Bogdanović felt a particular affinity for the former Dorćol he had known before its bombing by the Luftwaffe and allied bombing campaigns and the removal of its former Jewish community by Nedić's collaborationist government which ensured that Serbia would become the first *Judenrein* country in Europe by 1942. Bogdanović's parents had been active in leftist circles in the interwar period, and at a young age, Bogdanović was introduced to the surrealist artists like Marko Ristić. The latter would later inspire his unique monumental aesthetic when he entered the post-WWII Yugoslav art scene as a self-proclaimed surrealist sculptor As Sanja Bahun characterizes the group, "the Belgrade Surrealist Circle was comprised of mostly educated, merchant-class youth, many of them of Jewish or Aromanian (Tsintsar) descent, and most of them living at the time in or near the Belgrade neighborhood of Dorćol" (Bahun 463). The Belgrade surrealists were inspired by the electric and anxiety-inducing landscape of interwar Dorćol, as the center of these historic "crossroads" in the Balkans. In Bahun's adaptation of Laura Doyle's notion of "inter-imperiality," she describes Belgrade as a city of mediation that was structured as a space "in-between" successive Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and South Slav power regimes: "inter-imperiality refers both to the experience of being positioned at the intersection of empires or, more generally, conditioned by simultaneous and consecutive imperial claims, and to the structure of relations and affects resulting from global inter-imperial interactions over time" (Ibid. 460).

Central to Bahun's analysis of this dialectic is the "gaps" that structure urban existence in the Balkans. Paradigmatic of this dialectic were the observations made by Scottish-Serbian surrealist writer Lena Jovičić who located the gaps in the severe lack of middle ground and urban extremes: the disparities between the poor and the rich, as well as the eclecticism of a cityscape generated in the convergence of Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and South Slav imperial idioms.

Mosques are clustered beside the domes of orthodox churches and synagogues, created a sense of being swallowed by the city: "in view of such extremes and contrasts you cannot but feel that there is a gap somewhere. The connecting link between one and the other is missing and so you constantly find that you suddenly drop into the gap" (Jovičić cited in Bahun 458). The gaps of the interwar period make for disorientating interactions that lay bare the absences and palimpsestic layering of historical pasts and the legacies of violence that accompany them. The post-WWII reconstruction of the ruined city, in turn created a landscape of even more destabilizing extremes: high-rise apartment complexes rose in vacant and ruined lots and former topographies, such as the Dorćol, were replaced and its former eclecticism homogenized as reconstruction covered up the void in Belgrade's postwar landscape produced by the war and the Holocaust.

Bogdanović's monument in the Sephardic Cemetery pays homage to the Belgrade surrealists and the loss of Dorćol's former landscape. His fragmentary bricolage embodies the enormous sense of displacement that the Holocaust enacted upon space and memory in Belgrade. The monument incorporates Jewish imagery—the only of Bogdanović's memorials as well as the only of the Yugoslav *spomenici* to transparently use religious imagery—such as the Menorahs, the Star of David or the hands depicting the lifting of the hands, or "Priestly Blessing" (*Nesiat Kapayim*) in a collage that builds climactically along the pathway, guiding the visitor along to the gate. The two pillars at the end of the pathway form an interpretative zone, a spatial and visual opening that disrupts and disorientates the viewers' expectations of the space. Bogdanović referred to his technique as the "anti-perspective" (see Vuković 2012). The anti-perspective opposes a hegemonic, vertical, or horizontal center; rather, it cultivates a space that allows for diverse associations to be made. For example, the gate of the monument in the Sephardic

cemetery has been read in various ways: as a symbol of heaven's gate, or the two Jewish communities of Belgrade, the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim; angel's wings, or the tablets of the 10 Commandments.[39] In my reading of the monument, the spatial opening also performs interwar Belgrade's inter-positionality, as the opening is also a gap that stages the jolting absences of space, buildings, neighborhoods and people of the former Dorćol. The monument's material composition further preserves the present-ness of effaced past; the rubble and slivers of destroyed Jewish gravestones emulate a chronotopic crossover that never resolves its own inter-positionality between past, present, and future but instead amplifies it. The anti-perspective disrupts the viewing subject's expectations of the space precisely because it emulates the gaps and the sense of extremity that arise from the cohabitation of violent histories, effaced lives, languages and spaces, the destruction of former urban palimpsests, and the creation of new ones. In turn, the monument, as a heterotopic and heterochronic space of remembrance, articulates the immense void that continues to haunt the rest of the city outside the closed boundaries of the cemetery.

III.   "Erased by time and asphalt roads": Aleksandar Tišma's post-Holocaust Flânerie through Novi Sad

As Bogdanović stated in a later interview on the monument, his thinking behind its material composition was that "each family could contribute something of their own" ("Spomenik je i bio tako zamišljen da svaka porodica može da doda nešto svoje").[40] The rubble could thus engender a language for mourning the past precisely because it embodied the fragmentation and displacement of Jewish memory in Belgrade. Fragmentation as a language of mourning is further explored in Aleksandar Tišma's 1971 novel *The Book of Blam,* which reads as a fragmented

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[39] (Ibid).
[40] See interview with Bogdan Bogdanović by Ida Labudović http://www.makabijada.com/bogdan.htm.

bildungsroman of the novel's titular Miroslav Blam. [41] The novel stages the anxious relationship between preserving empty replicas of Novi Sad's Jewish past or letting the city's rapid urbanization sweep it away. In many ways, the novel represents Tišma's own coming to age during the Holocaust in Novi Sad and Budapest. Tišma was born in 1924 in Horgoš, a town just a stone's throw away from the Hungarian border, but later moved to the largest city in Vojvodina, Novi Sad. His father was an ethnic Serb, and his mother was of Hungarian Jewish background. His multiethnic, multiconfessional, and polyglot identity was not exceptional; rather, it was a defining feature of Vojvodina where alongside Hungarians and Serbs, Montenegrins, Volksdeutsche, Slovaks, Romanians, Bunjevac, and Yiddish, German and Hungarian-speaking Jews, Roma, among others also lived. Tišma and his mother lived in Budapest during the war, which up until 1944 was considered relatively safe for Jews compared to Nazi-occupied territories and the Hungarian borderlands. In Budapest, Tišma was briefly conscripted into the Hungarian Jewish labor service at the end of the war with other gymnasium students, where he built trenches against the oncoming Soviet onslaught. For the rest of his life, he explored the sense of survivor's guilt that comes from having escaped one's Jewish fate

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[41] The sequel to *The Book of Blam, The Use of Man,* is also a traumatic reinvention of the bildungsroman, centering on three figures in a gymnasium love triangle whom the war takes separate ways: one embarks on a career as a Nazi collaborator and uses his authority to sexually prey on women until he later falls in with the partisans and becomes a war hero. The second joins the partisans and loses his limbs in an explosion. The shared romantic interest of the two boys, Vera Kroner, is deported to a concentration camp where she is forced to become a prostitute in the camp brothel. The partisan hero and the camp survivor return to Novi Sad, yet the communist party provides no sense of sanctuary and the two ultimately fail to rehabilitate back into postwar society. The final novel of the cycle, *Kapo* (1987) portrays the continued haunting of victims by their victimizers. A former Kapo—a camp prisoner given special privileges and authority to discipline other prisoners—stalks a Hungarian woman from Subotica that he sexually abused in Auschwitz 40 years earlier. In this trilogy, Tišma also notably interceded in the sacralization of the hero/victim binaries in Yugoslav official discourse, going beyond Primo Levi's "grey zone" of nonjudgement regarding victims, such as the Sonderkommando—the prisoners tasked with cleaning bodies from the crematorium. In Tišma's works, neither heroes nor victims are essentialized as both are capable of committing truly detestable actions during and after the war.

relatively unscathed, something that is caricatured intensely in his Jewish protagonist Miroslav Blam.

Like Tišma, Blam grows up in a comfortable, middle-class Jewish existence in Novi Sad. His family, German-Jewish emigres from the Alsace, arrived in the multicultural city of Novi Sad following centuries of violence and persecution in pogroms. Novi Sad's multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional composition allowed the Blam family to live in relative security until the Hungarian occupation of 1941, where Hungary would receive Greater Hungarian lands lost after the Treaty of Trianon, including Vojvodina, after allying with Nazi Germany. László Bárdossy, the presiding Hungarian Prime Minister at the time, issued an official decree in Vojvodina warning that all "Serbs, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Gypsies and Jews who were not citizens of Greater Hungary before October 31, 1918, are to leave the country in three days' time" (Braham 1994: 191-92). Longtime residents of Novi Sad were suddenly considered illegal aliens overnight, and in the ensuing chaos, Bárdossy swiftly implemented anti-Jewish laws that would disregard the fact that many of Novi Sad's Jews were legal citizens of Greater Hungary before 1918. While Jewish residents were not immediately deported to concentration camps as was underway in the NDH and Nazi-occupied Serbia, raids were carried out in Novi Sad and surrounding areas in 1942 under the pretense that the Hungarian army was searching for dangerous partisan rebels. This event resulted in the murder of 3,000 thousand Jewish, Roma, and Serbian civilians on the banks of the Danube. In *The Book of Blam,* Blam loses his parents and several school friends in the raids, while he is saved at the last minute by his wife's lover, a fascist collaborator.

Blam's melancholic flânerie around the city stages fragmented encounters between past and present as he mourns the loss of his family murdered during the raids, but also the loss of a

fated chronology regarding growing up and induction into adulthood that was abruptly shattered during the Holocaust. Blam graduated from gymnasium and entered adulthood during the outbreak of WWII, where, unlike his friends and family, he unwittingly survived the raids and deportations through the rejection of his Jewishness and marrying a Christian woman. Now a middle-aged man, Blam's flânerie through 1970s Novi Sad likewise engenders the fragmentation of self, narrative, and memory after the Holocaust. As Blam approaches the former Jewish Street, he enters a "gap" in the postwar landscape, recognizing in the absent street "erased by time and asphalt roads" his own suspension between time and space: "on one side of the street is the past, the other the present (30-32). He can't get at the present, he knows he can't, though he feels it, feels it bodily, on his skin, like the sporadic gusts of air from the boulevard that lash him and move on ... His will dooms him to return to the same old roads and streets, to remain their intent yet listless and melancholy observer" (30-31). Having escaped his Jewish fate, he can only watch as an outsider of the city and its changing urbanity, "completely cut off from that force, abandoned. It has dropped him, betrayed him because he betrayed it: he only pretended he belonged to it, he never really felt at one with the city, the street, the air, the soil" (147). Blam's repetitive transversals of Novi Sad's streets and its former Jewish sites reflect his impossible desire for a return to the points of rupture in both his individual as well as the city's narrative. In turn, he becomes this petrified "remnant" of the city's forgotten past, "like a fossil of a long-forgotten age. Which he is in fact, having been blown there by the wind of an extinct climate, the harsh, merciless, climate of the Occupation, though it was slightly milder for a Jew who had converted to Christianity and married a Christian and was therefore exempt from annihilation" (40).

As Michel de Certeau, one of the foremost scholars on urban spatial practices has shown, the flaneur is also a mediator between the spectral overlaying of past and present in the city. In *The Practices of Everyday Life,* de Certeau cements the essential relationship between the body and space: "Physical movement has the itinerant function of yesterday or today's "superstitions." And in the end what does travelling produce if not through a sort of "going back" "an exploration of the deserts of my memory," a return to a close-by exoticism via far-off detours, the "invention" of relics and legends…" (de Certeau 142). Here, flânerie is a form of urban mediation that imbues space with the lived memory of the flaneur, i.e., Blam and his personal and collective, Jewish experiences of these spaces. Through flânerie, Blam remains a liminal subject in his city as he cannot consolidate his narrative after escaping his Jewish fate. During the raids, he stood watching as a voyeur to his fate, "excited yet frightened by it like a child by fireworks" (97). During the occupation, he was excited by the liberating prospects of being free of expectations, responsibilities, and the good future that his comfortable middle-class Jewish existence had formerly promised him. Yet, now he is lost, stranded in the very same position that he assumed during the war as a helpless voyeur to the erasure of Jewish Novi Sad "by time and asphalt roads" (32).

Taking her cue from postcolonial studies, Piret Peiker's study on post-socialist Eastern European bildungsroman characterizes it as "constantly liminal" and "forever incomplete; also, there are feelings of self-estrangement as one follows (or pretends to follow) imposed norms that one has not fully naturalized" (Peiker). In Peiker's terms, the coming to age story is subverted due to the impossibility of self-realization. Although Tišma's bildungsroman was written in the socialist era, I find her concept useful for thinking about traumatic comings to age, its fractured

identities and the sense of displacement that ensued in the wake of the Holocaust.[42] In *The Book of Blam*, Blam is now left as the inheritor of ruins and dispossessed of communal belonging: dispossessed of family, Jewishness, and a language for mourning this profound sense of loss. He is haunted by the loss of his family and community, survivor's guilt, and stuck in the uncertainty of adolescence due to the sudden destruction of a master narrative into which he was meant to be subsumed. The linear chronology of the bildungsroman is heavily subverted here as the novel's rupture of temporal boundaries further rejects any sort of 'coming to age' or moving on past this liminal role he accepted as an adolescent, given that his marriage is stagnant, and he has no child of his own that would allow him to take the place of the father. Peiker additionally argues that the fragmented subject gains no power from any assumed sense of agency, something self-evident in the case of Tišma's Blam, who is powerless in the face of both the progression of his own biography, his wife's private life that unfolds without him, as well as ideological and economic forces of forgetting that structure postwar society.

Blam embeds his fractured sense of self and identity after the Holocaust within architectural spaces, both his home in the Merkur building in the center of town that cements his cosmopolitan ties to the city, and the Novi Sad synagogue, now a concert hall.[43] Vojvodina's Jewish architectural remnants mark the former promise of Novi Sad's truly multiethnic, multireligious, and multilingual society while also standing as testaments to violence and the failures of multiculturalism in the 20th century. As translation scholar Sherry Simon argues, architecture can represent a "linguistic topography" that reveals the various cultural mediations

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[42] Peiker is also interested in the sense of fragmentation in the post-socialist novel produced by East-West meridians. East-West, borderland positionality is not present in Tišma's novels and has been thoroughly analyzed in my study on the Holocaust and post-Holocaust society, however, I am less interested in how geopolitical and geocultural identities are assigned or how artists such as Tišma might subscribe to or resist them in this chapter. Instead, for the purposes of my research, I focus more on the broader sense of inter-positionality and fragmentation that emerges in the wake of the Holocaust, war, and ethnic cleansing in Vojvodina.
[43] Tišma also lived in the Merkur building.

that take place in multilingual, multicultural, and multiconfessional urban zones (Simon 2012). Using Trieste as a primary case study—an Austro-Hungarian borderland city with a similar history to Novi Sad—Simon argues that "language mediations were also concretized in the city space of Trieste through architecture" (Simon 62). During the city's Austro-Hungarian period, imperial architectural styles were utilized in urban planning to assert hegemony in a city that was ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse, one inhabited by Italians, Slovenes, Greeks, Austrians, Hungarians, Italians, Germans, Croatians, among others. Languages inhabited certain zones of the city during different periods of its tumultuous history, with German occupying the dominant cultural and administrative position during the Austro-Hungarian period. Then Italian, while Slovenian and Croatian were "relegated to the marginal spaces of domestic and menial labour, and, under Fascism, literally forced underground as proscribed languages" (Simon 57). The Triestine Jewish community absorbed these language mediations and renegotiations of power, even becoming intermediary subjects between the co-habitant languages of German and Italian. The Novi Sad Jewish community also used the dominant cultural and administrative languages of the time, Hungarian and German, given that many emigrated to Novi Sad from these regions—like the Blam family whose roots are in Alsace. A sense of Hungarian cultural hegemony in Vojvodina came to mark this community more than its Austrian/German allegiances as is underscored by the architectural styles adopted for the main synagogues in Novi Sad and Subotica.

The synagogues of Vojvodina, with their Hungarian art nouveau aesthetics, in turn demonstrate a significant level of Hungarian hegemony in the region until WWI. Following the establishment of the dual monarchy in 1848, Greater Hungarian territories such as Vojvodina were also Magyarized to assert a semblance of cultural dominance in otherwise multiethnic

regions. Designed by the Hungarian architect, Lipót Baumhorn,[44] the synagogues of Novi Sad

and Subotica are both representatives of Hungarian secessionism, a movement that integrated

symbolist and romanticist styles with Hungarian folk-art motifs also emerged in the 19th and

early 20th centuries and added to Novi Sad's eclectic architectural landscape. The magnificent

Synagogue of Subotica, in particular, incorporates tiles from the Zsolnay ceramics factory in

Pécs, Hungary, which links it to several sites across the empire, from the Matthias Church in

Budapest to the cathedral of Saint Stephen in Vienna. This shared cultural legacy reflected the

relative tolerance towards Jewish communities in Hungarian lands following 1848 and their

subsequent assimilation and adoption of Hungarian language and identity.

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[44] Baumhorn was also the architect of various synagogues throughout Austria-Hungary, including synagogues in Zrenjanin, Szeged, Budapest, and Rijeka.

Figure 2.6
The Novi Sad Synagogue, now a concert hall. Photo by author.

Figure 2.7
The exterior of the Subotica Synagogue.
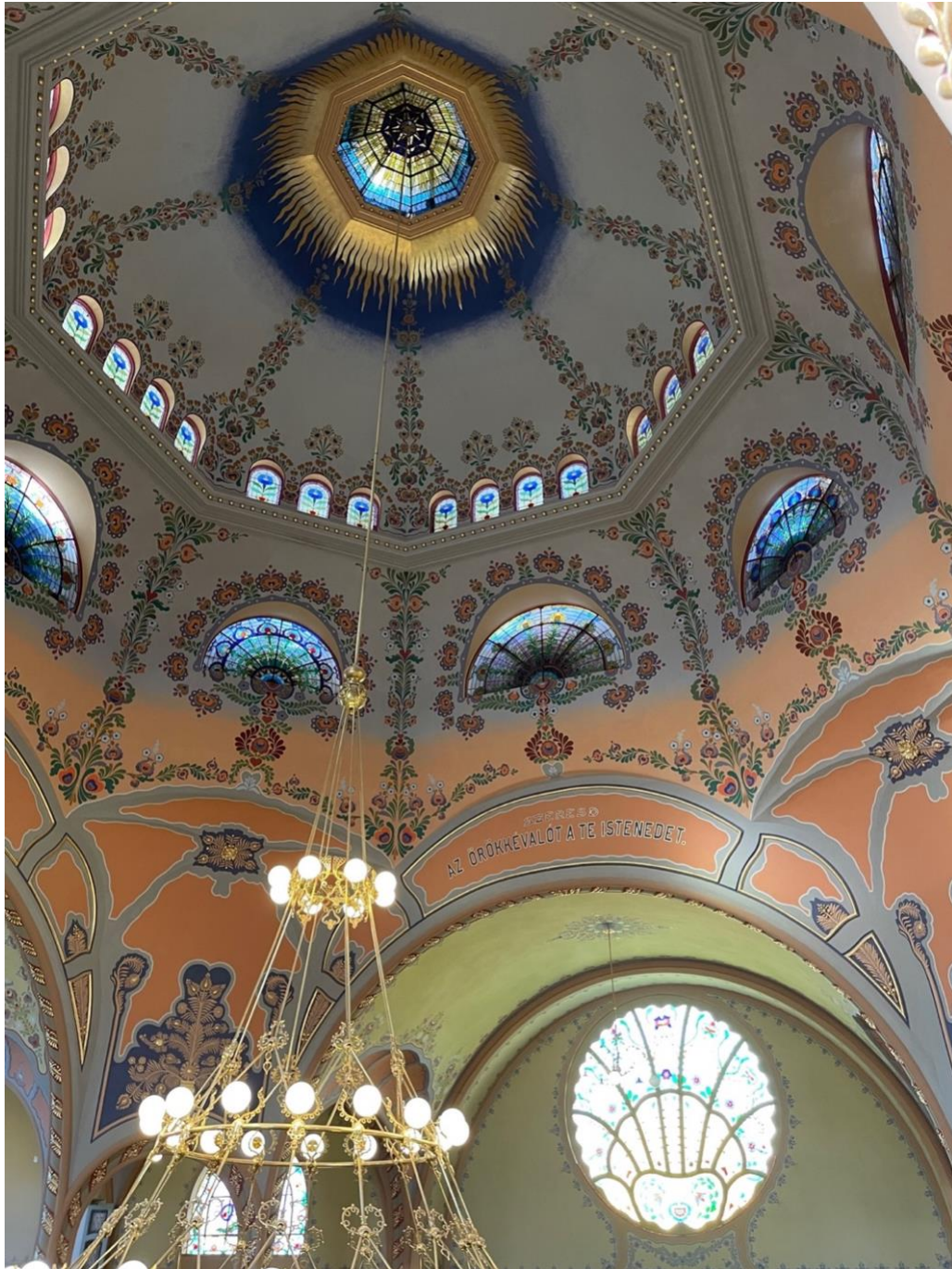
Figure 2.8
The interior of the Synagogue. The interior uses typical Hungarian folk motifs, and most of the writing in the synagogue is in both Hebrew and Hungarian: as can be seen here in the center below the cupola: *Szeresd az örökkévalót a te istenedet. Love the eternity of your holy father.* The synagogue was restored with financial help from the Hungarian government and Hungarian Jewish Federation. Photos by author.

The urban landscape of Novi Sad, its streets, and multilayered architectures, also reveal the violence that underwrites its multicultural façade. As Danilo Kiš, an author and native of Novi Sad, also recalls, the "cold days" of Novi Sad signaled the violent "culmination" of centuries of cultural mediations that had taken place on multiethnic and multilingual streets. In his essay, "Gingerbread Heart," Kiš recalls how he, as a Jew, was constricted to Bem Street, the border of which was armed by a "cruel yet just Volksdeutscher" (Kiš 22). Kiš writes that violent childhood games acted on the streets, which he refers to as a "pubescent brand of totalitarianism," were performances that later metamorphosized into lethal war games on the streets of Novi Sad during the raids when it turned out that ultimate crime was to be a *büdös zsidó* ("a dirty Jew") as Kiš writes in Hungarian, perhaps referring to the racist, yet common Hungarian phrase used to belittle Jews.[45] In Tišma's oeuvre, in turn, the synagogues of Vojvodina symbolize that false sense of security afforded by Jewish assimilation and the ruins of this enlightened master narrative based on humanism, tolerance, and coexistence. The transformation of the Novi Sad and Subotica synagogues into DULAG (*Durchgangslager*) transit camps, where the Hungarian and Nazi authorities concentrated Vojvodina's Jews before they were liquidated in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Buchenwald, among others in 1944, signaled the ultimate breakdown of Novi Sad's culture of mediation.[46] Tišma recalls how the synagogues became the great equalizers during the war, as the differences that once made

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[45] Jessie Labov points out that although the Novi Sad raids were orchestrated by the Hungarian army, they were assisted by local populations who had intimate knowledge of their neighbors' ethnicities, as such markers in multiethnic communities were not readily discernible to the occupiers. See Labov, Jessie. "Cold Days in the Cold War on the Hungarian-Serbian Border." *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, vol. 6, no. 2, Routledge, 2015, pp. 139–53. Additionally, the raids set the stage for the enaction of the Final Solution in Hungarian territories, leading to the liquidation of over 90% of Hungarian Jews by 1944.

[46] In her analysis of Italo Svevo's mediations of imperial and borderland anxiety in Trieste, Simon writes that the concentration camp at the San Sabba rice mill in its industrial outskirts for Jewish and communist political prisoners from Croatia, Italy, and Slovenia marks the "spectacular breakdown of Trieste's culture of mediation" (Simon 85).

them individuals were suddenly leveled as all were collectively marked for death. The enlightened atheism and cosmopolitanism of Blam's father no longer mattered when Jewishness became a racial category. It is not incidental that in the second novel of Tišma's Holocaust trilogy, *The Use of Man,* the character Robert Kroner—a lover of German culture and books which he collects in his library, his only sanctuary which shields him from the bastardization of the German language that take place in his home; the Volksdeutsche dialect spoken by his wife and the Yiddish of his mother—dies in the synagogue of Subotica before his deportation to the camps.

For Blam in turn, the Novi Sad synagogue has always been a site of the uncanny.[47] While ostensibly a Hungarian topography because of its architectural style, the synagogue also reflected a reterritorialized idiom of this supposed Hungarian cultural hegemony. Blam's sensory memories of the synagogue as a place that invoked terror and dread due to the "Levantine songs and speech, feverish rituals, and a scintillating life of the mind made possible by distance and otherness" emanating from its interior hybridizes the space, making strange the synagogue's external architecture. Blam was always intensely aware of the precariousness of Jewish existence in Novi Sad, of being the designated Other despite the community's allegiances to a larger cultural identity of Austro-Hungarian and Mittel European enlightenment. Blam seeks to rid himself of all cosmopolitan, i.e., Jewish markers of identity. His future wife, Janja, became an object of obsession for him during the occupation as he fetishized her peasant roots and closeness to the earth in her dwelling on the outskirts of the city, in comparison to him, an

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[47] Deleuze and Guattari writes that the minor literature is "a literature that the minority makes in the major", such as Jewish Czech's reterritorialization of German into the Prague German dialect. Hungarian Jews did not speak a particular dialect as compared to Prague German speakers, thus for the purpose of my study I use the uncanny to express how such encounters were created via architecture as a linguistic topography in Vojvodina. See Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Félix. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

inhabitant of the center, as she represents the unattainable blood and land connection to the nation that he had been denied as a Jew. The desacralization of the synagogues of Vojvodina into transit camps and makeshift ghettoes represent the collapse of European humanism and its acceptance of multiculturalism from the very margins of its legacy, laying bare Tišma and Kiš's understanding of the Holocaust as a tragedy that happened not despite shared values, but sprang directly from an illusionary image of the multicultural city as an impenetrable bastion of humanism and tolerance. Blam's spatial archeology of Novi Sad's urban landscape works to reveal the traces of violence and destruction underneath. While the momentum of the novel is generated by Blam's return to these sites and uncovering of their spectral layers, there is no nostalgia to be found. Tišma recognizes that the potential 'object' of nostalgia—that of the multicultural, multiconfessional, and multilingual city—is imbedded with violence and thereby deflects any nostalgic glances back at the past.

Figure 2.9

Novi Sad's Jewish citizens concentrated in the Synagogue before their deportation to concertation camps in 1944. (Photo courtesy of the US Holocaust Memorial Museum archive. Copyright: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Provenance: Moshe and Malka Lovy. Source Record ID: Collections: 2001.336. Photograph Number: 12892)

When Blam attends the concert in the synagogue, he initially feels as if he as reentered a "womb", embraced by the "maternal" warmth of this familiar Jewish space (Tišma 211). However, he soon gets the sense that his presence is unwanted there, comparing himself to an unwelcome tourist (along with Leon Funkenstein, the only other Jew that Blam encounters in the novel) who has joined a tour of their former property: "It is as if the two of them have come to the synagogue with the express intention of demonstrating that it belongs to them, the survivors, as a disinherited landowner might visit a castle as part of a tourist group and at a certain point beam confidently and say, "Right,! You've guessed it this castle was once mine" (213). The warmth dissipates as he recognizes its sterility, as if the renovation was an operation that in fact removed this womb: "A beautiful hollow space" he observes, "an empty palace with a new purpose. The blood of the massacred has been wiped clean. Everything is clean, everything beautifully lit" (224). An empty womb can no longer produce whilst this metaphor of the empty womb can be further applied to the site's divestment from its past, the Holocaust, or as the "empty womb" of European Jewry as Dragan Kujundžić reads it (in connection with *The Use of Man* and Vera Kroner's forced sterilization in the camps) (Kujundžić 2017). The empty, sterilized space of the synagogue embodies this larger cultural landscape of Jewish erasure that Tišma confronted in his travels through postwar Yugoslavia, Hungary, and Poland as an editor at the *Srpska matica*, the oldest Serbian literary and cultural institution located in Novi Sad. As he wrote in his private journal of an instance following a joke told during a dinner in Poland, "Had a surviving Jew come up with it, in one of the old towns of Central Europe, following the ancient

habit of this once colorful and picturesque, now no longer existing community? Or had others

put it together, inspired by the same spirit – or poison, as a Hitlerite would say – and actualized it

with a new meaning? Either way, there was something ghostly about it" (Tišma 69, transl. Snel,

469-470). As Snel writes, "Tišma doesn't recognize himself in the cleansed memory of that

Central Europe, 'I, who experienced the other extreme side of Central Europe: persecution,

flight, and blood' (Tišma 80). Why is he a stranger? Not because he is in different surroundings,

but because all traces of the war have been wiped away" (Snel 470).

Figure 2.10
The restored cupola of the Novi Sad Synagogue, now a stage for a performing Novi Sad choral group that I had the chance to glimpse while visiting the city. Photo by author.

In *The Book of Blam,* the transformation of the synagogue into a site of leisure facilitates collective amnesia towards the past as the preservation of the space erases its mnemonic significance and former function as a synagogue. It's new role as concert hall smooths out Otherness–that is, Jewishness, that the space once represented in Novi Sad. Blam recalls the "Levantine prayers" that he absorbed in the synagogue which have now been eclipsed by the sounds of Dvorak's symphony. The romanticist tradition to which Dvorak's symphony gestures was predicated on ethnonationalism which had failed to recognize the multiple possibilities and realities of the nation. Images of the Holocaust impinge upon the concert, as Blam imagines Dvorak's symphony playing a Celan-esque "Todesfuge" to those on their way to the gas chambers, revealing the space's history as the last-stop on the way to the death camps and representing what had—up until this point—been the ultimate cost of this failure towards pluralism in the 20th century. Blam suddenly imagines the concert goers jumping at each other's throats again as the latent violence and trauma suppressed within the space during the renovation briefly reemerges in renewed acts of neighborly violence. The trauma of the war is thus far from being resolved, as Tišma replaces the Yugoslav foundational myth with other memories of the war, those that exist side by side with the dominant mnemonic framework. While the legacy of extreme violence and persecution from within this close-knit community was superficially buried under "brotherhood and unity" and Tito's indictment of the fascist occupiers and collaborationist governments, Tišma superimposes this image of violence over the harmless communal postwar gathering at the concert to lay bare a palimpsest that not only reveals past conflict but forebodes future ones.[48]

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[48] In *The Book of Blam,* Tišma describes the history of the war in terms of a palimpsest "Which of these is the true picture? Both of course, and neither. Representing as they do the opposing viewpoints of accusation and defense, finality, and continuity, the essential and superficial, openness and secrecy, history, and day-to-day existence, they

At the end of *The Book of Blam*, Blam leaves the Synagogue, turns onto the New

Boulevard and spectra traces of Jevrejska ulica and returns to the main square. Blam's flight

from the "womb" of the synagogue and exit onto the streets of Novi Sad, from "security to

insecurity" further underpins the reality of the Holocaust bildungsroman as the subject is instead

thrust into a world of continuous violence, bloodshed, and ethical failures. In this way, Blam's

given name, the Slavic "Miroslav," can be read as highly ironic here as it translates literally to

"one who celebrates peace," though the reality is far from true as he awaits a future execution

which he will accept with open arms, finally fulfilling his Jewish fate on his own terms. The last

scene of the novel projects a dystopian panorama onto the city: "Main Square lies before him

like a dark stage, the Mercury and the cathedral rising opposite each other in the background like

a set. Lit only by the streetlamps, they blend into the night sky, except for an occasional bright

dot of a window. It is as though their tops had been destroyed, as though the terrible heat of a

weapon had melted them and, upon cooling, they had taken on a new asymmetrical, ungainly

shape, the shape of ruins" (225-226). Blam juxtaposes the asymmetry of the ruins to the

symmetrical, classical lines of the square, as the ruins disrupt the harmony of the landscape with

their brute ugliness that also unmistakably resemble the bombed-out silhouette of many

European skylines. The flaneur's dystopian image of smoldering ruin creates a monument to the

breakdown of enlightened European civilization, Novi Sad's culture of mediation and the

Holocaust. Tišma in fact presciently sees the possibility of a coming conflict as he bares the role

that these repressed traumas of the past play in the building of a future that will prove to be

equally violent and destructive.

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are like two drawings of a countryside, one showing the mountains and rivers, the other the roads and villages. The
only way to come up with even a marginally accurate landscape is to superimpose one drawing on the other" (96).

IV.   Urban Mediations and the Survival of Place and Memory

Given these everyday erasures of Jewish presence taking place in Novi Sad, the anxieties of *who* will bear the burden of memory in the face of widespread societal amnesia towards the past is a predominant theme in Tišma's novel. *The Book of Blam* emphasizes the precarity of the built world, the anxieties and tension surrounding architecture *as* memory, and thus cultural memory in prosthetic form. Tišma is well aware that sites of memory can only produce memory if they are re-invested as sites of remembrance and references to the past (see Rigney 2005). Blam is positioned as a mediator between the past and the present, between Jewish existence and the oblivion most starkly represented here by the empty "womb" of the synagogue. His position as mediator is emphasized further by flânerie as he weaves between the city's spectral Hungarian/German/Serbian layers, their cultural and mnemonic narratives.[49] Sherry Simon in fact equates translators and flaneurs: "translators are flaneurs of a special sort, adding language as another layer of dissonance, to the clash of histories and narratives on offer in the streets and passageways. Their trajectories across the city and the circulation of language traffic become the material of cultural history. Mediators are essential figures on the urban landscape, as Michel de Certeau reminds us. As intermediaries, shifters, connecting agents, translators, and dispatchers, they are the "anonymous heroes' of communication, making "social space more habitable" (Certeau 1983: 11)" (Simon 6). However, Blam has no interest in becoming a cultural mediator between Jewish Novi Sad and it present. At the same time, his movements undeniably lay bare the overlay of the city's linguistic and cultural palimpsests that link a Jewish past to its absent present. His returns to specific sites and architectural spaces such as the Jewish Street and

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[49] As Simon argues, translators are "flaneurs" "adding language as another layer of dissonance to the clash of histories and narratives on offer in the streets and passageways. Their trajectories across the city and the circulation of language traffic become the material of cultural history (Simon 79)."

synagogue are concerned with their survival, or, more precisely, the binaries of memory and forgetting that will determine the city's future relationship to its violent past. In this way, as a Jewish survivor, Blam's flânerie makes an implicit connection between mediation and cultural survival as I discuss in the introduction to this dissertation, while also problematizing the possibility of carrying over Jewish memory for an amnesiac society bent on forgetting the events of the war and the Holocaust.

The loose ends of the narrative contribute in turn to Blam's acceptance of failed transmission. While Blam is concerned about the erasure and appropriation of Jewish topographies in the city, he likewise rejects the baton of Jewish survival and seeks instead to cut the line of Jewish inheritance, and with it, its transmission belts of memory and neurosis. Blam has no child of his own, and instead his daughter Mala ("Little One") is the product of Janja's affair with a fascist collaborator who usurped Blam's role as father. Robert Eaglestone refers to these loose-ends as "stasis as resistance," a narrative device that actively resists any self or narrative progression as well as working through the past, something Eaglestone observes in the works of Hungarian author and Holocaust survivor Imre Kertész's *Kaddish for an Unborn Child*[50]:

"….so strong are the two linked forces of the movement of memory and the narrative drive, so all-pervasive across collective and personal biographies, literary, testimonial, and historical works, and so engrained in expectations that the refusal to become engaged in the process of 'working through' turns out to be a complex and demanding endeavor at the level of form, plot, and character. Stasis-as-resistance—an aesthetic, literary, memorial, biographical, and historical term—is achieved only with great effort, swimming upstream against a strong current, and perhaps is doomed to fail" (Eaglestone 187).

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[50] Tišma was interested in the shared themes found in Kertész's work, even translating of his Nobel Prize winning novel, *Fatelessness,* the first in Kertész's Holocaust trilogy about a young boy from Budapest, György, and his experiences in Auschwitz-Birkenau. *Kaddish for an Unborn Child* in turn is György's internal meditations on why he refuses to have a child and the breakdown of his marriage. As Eaglestone argues, his resistance to having a child is also a refusal to work through the past, similar to Tišma's Miroslav Blam.

For Blam, working through the past also means patching up the fragmentation of self and identity, something the narrative ultimately refuses to resolve as the self is fragmented beyond repair.

In doing so, Blam's stasis also resists the postwar period's homogenization of difference and essentialization of identity. In the section of the novel titled "Lili's letters," the translated letters of Blam's cousin and prewar love interest circulate in the postwar postal vacuum as lost objects that never reach Blam. Lili, a camp survivor, and postwar refugee in Germany, writes to Blam after the war with the hopes that he will join her abroad to start a family, however, the letters are sent to the Blam's former home which had been aryanized and then sold on the postwar real estate market, as well as under the German rather than Serbian spelling of his name, *Blahm*. The fact that these lost letters are marked as "translations from German" additionally suggests Blam's inability to translate the self over into postwar society as he experiences an analogous sense of loss and displacement, resisting any interpolation into oversimplified versions of mono-national/ethnic/religious/lingual- based identities.[51] In comparison, in one of the letters, Lili compares her German repatriation to rebirth:

"The people I meet on the train, in the street, the *Grammophonegesellschaft*—they're all so open and optimistic and full of energy, and even though there's rubble everywhere, there's also building everywhere, the streets are full of life, the shop windows full of goods, the service in taxis, on the phone, and in cafés is excellent. And the language! after all that murky Swiss dialect I am finally hearing the pure, flowing German my dear departed mother taught me. I feel revitalized, reborn (Hamburg, 7 June 1949)" (175).

Here, the rubble of Hamburg—a city that suffered some of the most intense carpet bombing during the war—where people were physically burnt into the concrete from the waves of fire that

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[51] Blam is also resistant to Leon Funkenstein—the only other Jew that Blam encounters in the novel—and his plans to emigrate to Israel. Emigration to Israel would also mean adopting a national frame for identity and memory of the Holocaust. The return to a motherland, or mother tongue more precisely, is also the conclusion of his novel *The Use of Man,* as the main protagonist Vera Kroner, who is of both Jewish and Volksdeutscher background, leaves Novi Sad to join her mother in Germany. This return is a pessimistic one since, despite being a camp victim, Vera ultimately accepts her German and, by extension, perpetrator identity.

ensued from the bombing (see Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction*)—is juxtaposed to the reconstruction and rebirth of the city. Recalling Sebald's *On the Natural History of Destruction,* Lili's letters from Hamburg also denote how postwar reconstruction served as a screen that concealed the traces of violent histories from aerial bombing, the violence of the raids and Nazi genocide from the landscape. In Sebald's words, "destruction, on a scale without historical precedent, entered the annals of the nation, as it set about rebuilding itself, only in the form of vague generalizations" (Sebald 4). For Sebald, new constructions served as conspirators of silence in the postwar period. In postwar Yugoslavia, reconstruction innocuously covers up the uncomfortable facts of ethnic cleansing and genocide during WWII, as the intersection of the Boulevard of National Liberation with the spectral space of demolished Jewish homes demonstrates. While Hamburg and Novi Sad are quite different from one another with different wartime experiences, the connection between these two cities' reconstruction in the novel provokes the reader to consider what type of society will be formed from the ruins. For Lili, reconstruction is received with optimism. Yet, for Blam postwar reconstruction not only upheld conspiracies of silence but also filtered out alternative forms of identification and belonging that were produced in Novi Sad before the Holocaust. The connection between the gramophone store that Lili works at, and the concert hall suggests a form of silencing and willingness to tune out the past.

By comparison, Blam's wanderings through the city instead invoke the lost dialects, accents, the individual manners of speech and local expressions from Yiddish, Hungarian, to "Slavic mishmash" of Novi Sad multilingual composite. As flaneur, Blam mediates through the linguistic traffic of the streets (Simon). His memories bring forth what Simon calls a "sensory texture" (Simon 41), of Novi Sad's linguistic pasts while he moves through the streets and

returns to the topographies that are visual, spatial, and material markers of the city's former linguistic medley. For Benjamin, translation laid bare the "kinship" between all languages. Translation brings language to "pure language" that rekindles a likeness to one another based on endless supplementations and renewals of language (Benjamin 257). Translation likewise produces harmony not within a single language, but within many as harmony is achieved "only by the totality of their intentions supplementing one another (Ibid.). In *The Book of Blam,* architectures and streets draw out the many languages inhabiting shared urban zones. While translators and the translation of cities can make them more "habitable" as Sherry suggests, it can also pluralize them as Tišma does, evoking the many languages and fragmentary matter of the streets' and built world's linguistic soundscape—dialects, mixed languages, even expressions that are part of the texture of space—that once created a sense of urban "harmony." These are the ambiences and rhythm that will be lost, now that the heart of the Jewish Street has been demolished to give way to a streamlining, homogenizing city devoid of Jewish presence. For Blam, the built world invokes a cultural landscape that cannot be carried over into the city's present and future.

V.   Intersecting Pasts in Sarajevo: "Apocalypse in the Synagogue"

As a Jewish citizen of Yugoslavia, Tišma uses these spaces to address the burden of having to carry the torch of Jewish memory after the Holocaust. For others outside this immediate community in turn, like Miljenko Jergović, who is not Jewish and writes in a period even further removed from the Holocaust in the post-Yugoslav era, the haunting emptiness of Jewish architectures and landscapes draw in and implicate those who interact with them through everyday spatial practices as Jergović initially suggests in his encounters with the absent memorial in front of Lea Deutsch's former home. In *Ruta Tannenbaum,* Jergović's concluding

flânerie attached to the novel is a moving form of historical research that uncovers the spectral layers of the built world. In comparison to *Ruta Tannenbaum* which is set in the Croatian capital, Zagreb, Jergović's impressive textual memorial to the city of Sarajevo, *Sarajevo: Plan Grada/Sarajevo: A Map of the City* (2015) weaves the author's own personal memories of his hometown with historiography through his reuse of flânerie as literary and mnemonic device. While I will only comment on a short story from this text "Apocalypse in the Synagogue" ("Apokalipsa u Sinagogi") that bears relevance for my discussion on the afterlives of Jewish heritage, this story importantly reflects on architectural spaces from the post-Yugoslav period as sites of intersecting histories of violence in Sarajevo from WWII to the Siege in the 1990s.

As historian Tony Judt noted, Sarajevo was perhaps the only truly "cosmopolitan" city left in Europe following the Second World War, even after witnessing the vying for ethnonationalist determination among Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosnian Muslims under the NDH (Judt 684). This multicultural idyll managed to survive the second world war as a result of entrenched notions of a Sarajevan identity as locally and civically defined, the result of active participation by the city's Jewish, Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim communities and institutions (Greble 14). In this way, the identification of the *Sarajlije* or "Sarajevans" came to be a purely urban one that cut across diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious affinities. Sarajevo's celebrated multicultural identity and that of the *Sarajlije* would be shaken irreparably to its core during the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s and has yet to recover from the trauma of ethnic cleansing, genocide, and urbicide.[52] Jergović was a true child of Sarajevo: born in the late 1960s to an ethnically mixed family, he grew up in the vibrant Sarajevo culture and counter-

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[52] The Dayton accords of 1995 effectively ended the war by splitting Sarajevo and Bosnia into ethnic (Croatian, Bosniak, Bosnian Serb) enclaves, a move that continued the prevailing international security policy since WWI that views heterogeneous societies in Europe as the root of the conflict and ethnic homogeneity as its solution.

culture scene that came to an abrupt end in the 1990s. During the Siege of Sarajevo, he fled to

Croatia where he remains today. Although considered a Croatian writer, his resistance to ethnic

containers and canonization is self-evident in his works which often unearth the excesses of

nation-building project while also reflecting nostalgically on the loss of Sarajevo's pluralism and

cultural liberalism.[53]

Jergović's *Sarajevo: A Map of the City* explores how the meshing of individual,

collective, and cultural memories cemented locally defined codes of identity among Sarajevo's

diverse ethnic, linguistic, and confessional communities, as he recalls how one could tell an old

Sarajevan like his grandparents by how they referred to street names.[54] In staging a textual map

of the city, Jergović explores the nooks and crannies of the city's history, drawing attention to

individual, familial and collective urban memories in the process. While *Ruta Tannenbaum* is his

only work to focus specifically on the Holocaust, *Sarajevo: A Map of the City* also 'maps' the

physical and spectral remnants of WWII within the city grid, revisiting topographies that bear

mnemonic significance for the Nazi occupation and Ustashafication of the city from 1941 to

1944. In "Apocalypse in the Synagogue" Jergović uses the Sephardic synagogue in Sarajevo not

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[53] Jergović is very interested in the legacy of the NDH and the Ustasha to which his family's history was also intimately tied. His uncle Mladen joined the Ustasha following the occupation of Sarajevo and was promptly killed in battle. This trauma operated as a familial secret that Jergović was obsessed with as a child. His family has often served as the main inspiration for his works as in his large-scale family memoir *Rod/Kin,* as well as *Mama Leone* which frames the legacy of the Yugoslav national project through a child's eye.

[54] "and when Nona would tell the taxi driver his address, he would know whether the person driving him was an "Old Sarajevan," or someone who had long settled in Sarajevo. An old Sarajevan would reply in memory of Miladina Radojević street, Septarevac? Yes, Septarevac. That was memory. It was extraordinarily important to my Nona that people had memory. He didn't have anything against the others, those who forgot, or those who came from somewhere else, it was only important to him that he was surrounded by people who remembered as well. It made him even happier that the taxi driver looked at him with that slanted taxi-driver look and said, Septarevac? instead of silently driving him home to Mila Radojević Street." (*"....i kada bi taksistu rekao svoju adresu, znao bi vozi li ga neki stari Sarajlija ili netko tko se u Sarajevo doselio. Stari Sarajlija bi na spomen ulice Miladina Radojevića upitno uzvraćao Septarevac? Da, Septarevac. Bilo je to sjećanje. Mom Nonetu je bilo neobično važno da ljudi imaju sjećanje. Nije imao ništa protiv onih drugih, onih koji su zaboravljali ili su se odnekle doselili, samo mu je bilo važno da oko njega postoje oni koji se sjećaju, i bilo mu je draže da ga taksista pogleda onim kosim taksističkim pogledam i kaže: Septarevac? nego da samo šuti i vozi ga u Mile Radojevića ulicu")* (Ibid.11).

to remember the Holocaust per se, but the Siege of Sarajevo, implicitly staging an encounter with two legacies of violence and attempts at forging ethnonationalist purity within Sarajevo's mixed multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional cultural space.

"Apocalypse in the Synagogue" combines individual memories with the cultural history of the Sephardic Synagogue of Sarajevo, a beautiful Neo-Moorish building constructed "when the Hapsburgs and Europe came to this city," (Jergović 169). As Jergović records, the synagogue is the Sephardic community's response to its sudden confrontation with the more educated and wealthier Ashkenazi immigrants to Sarajevo in the mid-1800s who built their own synagogue down the road. In comparison to the Hungarian secessionist Synagogues of Vojvodina, the neo-Moorish style of the Sephardic synagogue in Sarajevo continued the trend initiated by German architects in the 19th century that stressed Jewish otherness, their non-European and Oriental links. The style, initially derived from the Moorish architecture in Southern Spain, further established a sense of cultural continuity for the Ladino-speaking Jews of Sarajevo who had settled in the Ottoman Empire following their expulsion from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492. While the style symbolized a nostalgic glance at the distant cultural roots of the Sarajevo Sephardim, it also physically and spatially embodied their desire for "acculturation, integration, and modernity" within Sarajevo (Rajner 182).[55] Jergović's temporal equation between the construction of the synagogue and the arrival of "Europe" to Sarajevo represents the ways in which this self-reflexive Orientalist gaze, enacted through an architectural language designed by

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[55] As Mirjam Rajner writes on the Il Kal Grandi Synagogue in Sarajevo, "The use of the very same style, along with modern innovations, enabled the Sephardic community in Sarajevo to be part of the united (Ashkenazic and Sephardic), predominantly Zionist Yugoslav Jewry while preserving its specifically Sephardic distinctiveness" (Rajner 175). While called Moorish, it was actually an amalgamation of various styles considered by Western standards to be "Oriental:" Ottoman Turkish, Byzantine, Moorish, etc. (Ibid. 182). Continuing the discussion on the linguistic "texture" of place, it should also be noted here that in the main (Ashkenazi) synagogue of Sarajevo is one of the only places where the Ladino language can still be heard in religious ceremonies in the Balkans.

Viennese and German architects, also paradoxically integrated Balkan Jews and the city of

Sarajevo into Central European/Austro-Hungarian frameworks of cohesion (Ibid). This

framework would later be replaced following the Kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs

following WWII, during which the Karađorđević rule symbolically integrated its Jewish

communities into a unifying South Slav one.[56] During WWII, the synagogue suffered significant

damage when the Nazis occupied and shelled the city in 1941 with the help of the Croatian

Ustasha who assisted with the further destruction and looting of Jewish property before the

deportation of Sarajevan Jews to concentration camps in the NDH like Jasenovac, the Italian-run

island of Rab, and other camps abroad. Because nearly 80% of the NDH's former Jewish

population was murdered during the occupation and deportations, the small congregation could

not justify their need for such a large space, and it was handed over to the city.

　　Following the war, the Sephardic Synagogue also served as movie theater for American B-

movies that Jergović use to attend regularly growing up in Sarajevo. While Tišma is critical of

this commercial repurposing, here, Jergović's individual memories and connections to this space

as a movie theater also shows how repurposing, although no less problematic, invests spaces

with new meaning and mnemonic significance for those who encounter it in different ways.

Jergović further reflects on how the sediments of architecture and the experience of space

embody conflated individual, collective, and cultural memories, as well as past, present, and

future temporalities. While watching *Apocalypse Now* featuring the American actor Marlon

Brando, Jergović writes that his young self was in fact watching a film of his future; "Rather, the

film was about you, who was watching this film for the first time; a film about a commander,

about Valkyrie- helicopters and about the war that was going to come to Sarajevo, shown late

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[56] For instance, King Aleksandar Karađorđević laid the cornerstone for a memorial in the Sephardic cemetery in Belgrade commemorating the Jewish victims "who fell for the fatherland" from 1912-1919.

Spring of 1981 in the desacralized Sephardic Synagogue to those rare Saturday theater goers"

(Jergović 171). The scenes of hyped-up masculinity and renegade violence are in fact Sarajevo's

lived reality during the Siege, images packed in typical Hollywood appeal that appears in

Jergović's early memories before he became aware of their significance. In many ways Jergović

completes Tišma's vision of renewed violence during the concert in the Novi Sad synagogue (if

not directly inspired by *The Book of Blam*), a work that first laid bare the foundational role that

violence played in the remaking of the Yugoslav community, the latent nature of which would

surely reemerge in renewed conflict and the targeting of new victims and Others.[57] Here

Dvorak's symphony and its representation of the Romantic idyll is simply replaced with

Hollywood's glorification of violence, the overt sensationalism that Western media would bring

to its coverage of the Yugoslav dissolution wars and Yugoslavia's violent transition into an

unchecked consumerist society.

The Siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s also resulted in severe damage to the city's intrinsic

image as a bastion of multiculturalism and its architectural heritage bore the initial brunt of

symbolic and real violence. When Bosnian-Serb paramilitaries bombed the Austro-Hungarian

building of Sarajevo's City Hall during the Siege (constructed around the same time and in a

similar style to the Sephardic Synagogue), it became an enduring symbol of genocide's intent to

not only destroy human bodies but also violently erase all evidence of their cultural existence.[58]

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[57] Of course, Tišma was not the first to see the connection between the built world as a monument of "barbarism." Walter Benjamin famously wrote that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (Benjamin, Thesis VII in "On the Concept of History/Theses on the Philosophy of History").

[58] The attack on cultural by all sides demanded revisions to earlier protocols on the destruction of cultural heritage during conflict in Europe initially established after the mass destruction of WWII. Because of the targeted attack on cultural heritage in the Balkans during the dissolution wars, international actors were forced to revise the original 1954 Hague convention on the protection of cultural property (Badescu, Baillie, and Mazzucchelli 5-6). The ICTY began to recognize the destruction of cultural heritage within practices of genocide (Bevan 2016). However, both ultimately failed to locate the destruction of cultural heritage as "an intrinsic method of achieving genocide—part and parcel of genocide itself" because genocide sets out to erase all evidence of a particular ethnic group, their history, and identity (12).

The collapse of Sarajevo's identity as a bastion of multicultural coexistence during WWII is brought to bear on the collapse of brotherhood and unity, the foundation of a supranational Yugoslav identity in which the destruction of Sarajevo represents the ultimate cost of this collapse. Thus, it is not accidental that Jergović chooses to remember the dissolution of Yugoslavia from the Sephardic Synagogue. In doing so, he remembers the Siege through a space whose emptiness symbolizes the first collapse of Sarajevo's multicultural legacy during WWII. As in Novi Sad, the emptiness of the Sephardic Synagogue, divested of its former function and transformed into a movie theater, represents the failures of this integration. At the same time, the space critically refracts the ways in which these same processes helped construct a necessary Other that would be targeted for expulsion from the nation during WWII.

The short story ends in the antique bookstore where Jergović remarks "rarely do places in Sarajevo maintain the illusion of temporal continuity, the memories of previous buildings and people. This bookstore was in fact one of these places" (Jergović 172). The short story thus reveals itself to be centered around time; it begins with Jergović's memories of the building where his grandfather used to get his watch cleaned, then to the synagogue/movie theater, the hollow, cold interior of which generates a "time warp" to an antique bookstore on the adjacent Boulevard of National Liberation (as the street was called then), further highlighting the ways in which Jergović uses spatial juxtapositions to excavate the layers of memories and history within Sarajevo's urban grid. The antique bookstore on the former boulevard of National Liberation is another of these spaces that generates these heterochronic spaces of remembrance in the city, as an archive of "previous buildings and people" in space and time. Here, the mnemonic significance of the watch store, the Sephardic Synagogue, and the antique bookstore bear traces

of the city's history, creating a sense of continuity even when rebuilding the city produces

ruptures, erases, and significant revisions. The ability for architecture to create links between a

city's past, present, and future is also suggested in Jergović's placement of Ruta Tannenbaum's

memory within the old Austro-Hungarian buildings of Zagreb. In this way, architectures are not

only invested with memory but are productive of memory due to how they create entry points to

the past within the present. And in returning to the past, Jergović suggests through the

Synagogue's intertwined temporal planes, we can also glimpse our future.

VI.   Concluding Thoughts on Spatial Archaeologies

This chapter describes spatial archaeologies as a process of pulling back the layers of the

city to locate its obscured Jewish traces within still-standing architectures such as synagogues or

the imprints of these former spaces. They invoke the Jewish cultural landscapes that exist as

what Henri Lefebvre might define as "representational space:" "Redolent with imaginary and

symbolic elements, (representational spaces) have their source in history—in the history of a

people as well as in the history of each individual belonging to that people (…) Representational

space is alive: it speaks. It has an affective kernel or center: Ego, bed, bedroom, dwelling, house,

or: square, church, graveyard. It embraces the loci of passion, of action, of lived situations, and

thus immediately implies time" (Lefebvre 41). Representational space "overlays physical space,

making symbolic use of its objects" (Ibid. 39). Spatial archaeologies thus operate in the realm of

imagination as Jewish cultural landscapes are palimpsests over the lived spaces of cities,

mediated and remediated within the domain of art and imagination.[59]

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[59] Spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre divides space into three different categories: the conceptual, lived, and
representational. "Conceptualized space" is "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers,
and social engineers "Representational spaces" such as those Jewish cultural landscapes analyzed above are
"directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of inhabits and uses, but also of some
artists and perhaps those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who escribe and aspire to do no more than escribe.

This chapter has also identified two central forms of mediation that accompany spatial archaeologies. The first of these is the memorial bricolage exemplified by Bogdan Bogdanović's monument to the Jewish victims of fascism and fallen fighters in Belgrade's Sephardic Cemetery which physically gathers the rubble of the ruined Jewish neighborhood of Dorćol into a heterochronic and heterotopic space of remembrance. The second is the device of flânerie used in Tišma and Jergović's literary works that reinvests spaces that are unmarked, repurposed, or absent with memory as they traverse the city grid. For Tišma, Jewish architectures and hidden cultural landscapes in Novi Sad are sites for mourning his community, a self-narrative that had been attached to this community and that was irreparably fragmented during the Holocaust. The repurposing of the synagogue and bulldozing of sections of the former Jewish Street point to disavowed mourning and the hasty closures enacted over the traumatic past in Novi Sad's collective memory. As a response, Tišma conjures the material and immaterial fragments of Novi Sad's Jewish past to stage haunting reappearances that disrupt the status-quo. His returns to important spaces in his own and the city's biography briefly reoccupy them, laying bare the traumatized body and "remnant" of the city's Jewish past. Jergović's brief flânerie in *Ruta Tannenbaum* similarly draws attention to Zagreb's spectral Jewish past by attending to the lack of memorials in the city, even assuming a "stumbling block" in the absence of one in front of Ruta's home. The short story "Apocalypse in the Synagogue" in turn incorporates an important site of Jewish heritage in Sarajevo into a more personal mediation on the role of the city's architectures in creating temporal continuity following the violent ruptures in Sarajevo's history. The temporal meshing that takes place in the synagogue brings intersecting pasts to bear on one

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This is dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate." (39).

another, both the Holocaust and the second (and much more destructive) collapse of Sarajevo's cosmopolitan identity during the 90s dissolution wars. In each case, the focus on destruction and excavating the remains of violence, from the rubble of Dorćol to desacralized synagogues, provoke important questions regarding the present and future of communities that suppress, erase, and sanitize the traces of violence. These archaeologies lay bare the violent pasts obscured by postwar reconstruction or revisionary memory politics, confronting the fact that violence never really goes away but remains imbedded within the social fabric.

As I have also argued, spatial archaeologies also renegotiate the terms of postwar communities and the failures to reckon with the reverberations of genocidal pasts in the present. In response, Tišma, Bogdanović, and Jergović all transform Jewish architectural heritage into new sites of collective remembrance. In this way, they not only reconstruct Jewish pasts, but also create a new space in the process of reconstruction. As Kirschenblatt-Gimblett argues, "heritage is not lost and found, stolen, and reclaimed. It is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past … Rather, heritage is a new mode of cultural production, and it produces something new" (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 370). This "something new" dismantles the privatization of memorial space to open up the very definition of heritage as an ongoing process of negotiation and renewal of memories centered within and around these spaces.

Chapter 2

Postcards from Bor: Miklós Radnóti and the Creation of Transnational Holocaust Memory in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav Art

Figure 3.1

Memorial to Miklós Radnóti at the site of the mass grave from which his body was exhumed in 1948 in Abda, Hungary. Photo by author.

"P.S. It is better to be among the persecuted than among the persecutors."

Danilo Kiš, *Hourglass* (Kiš 274)

I.   Transnational Holocaust Memory in Bor

While Serbian journalists have been tracking the inhumane working conditions of Chinese and Vietnamese workers in the mining town of Bor, Serbia, for some time now, an article published in *The New York Times* in the Spring of 2021 brought these concerns to international attention.[60] An earlier report from *Balkan Insight* details how the Zijin Mining Group shuttles workers in from Asian countries and locks them in crowded barracks— a rather dangerous situation in the thick of the Covid pandemic—where they are overworked, starved, dehydrated, and barred from exiting the facilities.[61] [62] Workers who have managed to speak out claim that they are "prisoners" there.[63] The operations of the Zijin Mining Group in Bor have been shrouded in secrecy by both the Chinese and Serbian governments, who, over the past decade, have been increasingly friendly with one another in the purported interest of boosting the Serbian economy. The operations in the mine, however, have instead wreaked havoc on the environment surrounding Bor: as a result of pollution stemming from early operations in the mine beginning in the 1900s to more recent developments, the area has become one of the most polluted in the Balkans. The soil, rivers, and air are poisoned with a toxic combination of arsenic and other harmful chemicals. Locals also report daily tremors that have cracked the walls in their homes due to explosions set off in the mine.[64]

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[60] www.nytimes.com/2021/03/27/world/europe/serbia-chinese-companies-pollution.html

[61] www.danas.rs/drustvo/borani-ugrozeni-rudarskim-radovima-traze-reakciju-ministarstava/

[62] novaekonomija.rs/vesti-iz-zemlje/kineski-radnici-u-boru-se-žale-na-uslove-rada-koronu-i-zabranu-kretanja

[63] balkaninsight.com/2021/01/26/kao-zatvorenici-kineski-radnici-u-boru-se-zale-na-eksploataciju-i-zabranu-kretanja/?lang=sr

[64] www.danas.rs/drustvo/zidjin-koper-preduzela-mere-za-smanjenje-buke-i-potresa-izazvanih-miniranjem/. https://balkaninsight.com/2021/10/21/bor-serbias-pollution-crisis-in-pictures/

What journalists researching the catastrophic living conditions in Bor have omitted, however, is that over 80 years ago, the mine had accommodated yet another history of exploitation, the reminders of which have been imprinted into the landscape by a network of Yugoslav-era memorials in Bor. A memorial dedicated to the Hungarian modernist poet Miklós Radnóti (1909-1944) can be found on the banks of the Bor Lake. While the immortalization of famous poets and writers in European cities and towns is a ubiquitous practice, these types of monuments usually serve to mark a national figure's birthplace or a former place of residence. Radnóti's relationship to Bor, however, is much more tragic. He was a forced laborer in 1944 in one of the most extensive systems of Nazi labor camps centered around the Bor copper mine. His last work of poetry, *Bori notesz/The Bor Notebook,* testifies to the brutal working conditions in the camps and the desperate situation of the laborers as they were forced to march across Yugoslavia and Hungary in 1944 ahead of the Red Army and Yugoslav partisan advancement. *The Bor Notebook* is widely considered one of the most exceptional works in the Holocaust literary canon as it records the very final moments up until the poet's murder in 1944 near the Hungarian border in Abda.

The poems were published decades later, in 1971, by the Hungarian publishing house Helikon Kiadó under the title *Bori notesz/The Bor Notebook* during a period of loosening silence surrounding the Holocaust in Hungary. Across the border, in Yugoslavia, certain poems from the collection had already been circulating in Hungarian language school textbooks. While Radnóti had no physical connection to Vojvodina, *The Bor Notebook* was canonized as a "Yugoslav-Hungarian" work due to its connection to Yugoslavia in both place and name. Furthermore,

Radnóti, as a socially engaged antifascist poet, was easily absorbed into the official Yugoslav memory culture of the time. Krisztina Rácz affirms this, writing that *The Bor Notebook* was a textual site of Hungarian-Yugoslav cultural identity formation in Vojvodina in the postwar period because it "thematized the antifascist struggle," the predominant narrative of the Second World War in Yugoslavia (Rácz 48), thereby allowing the Hungarian minority to graft their memory of the Second World War onto the overarching Yugoslav master narrative of antifascist resistance (rather than the legacy of the Hungarian occupation, irredentism, and fascism). In turn, Aleksandar Tišma's and Danilo Kiš's translations, some of which were first published in the 1960s in a translated collection of Radnóti's poetry, *Strmom Stazom/The Steep Road,* opened Radnóti's poetry to a wider, Serbo-Croatian speaking audience in Yugoslavia.

In 1979, Kiš translated the entire text of *The Bor Notebook* into Serbo-Croatian. Its publication by the Narodna biblioteka, Književna omladina and SIZ kultura coincided with the unveiling of the monument dedicated to Miklós Radnóti in Bor (created by the same sculptor, Imre Varga, and nearly identical to the one in Abda depicted above). Decades later, in 2018, the Serbian artist Aleksandar Zograf published a graphic novel rendition of *The Bor Notebook* (also published by the Bor National Library). Zograf's graphic novel contains three distinct sections: Zograf's thoroughly researched narrative of Radnóti's imprisonment in Bor and *The Bor Notebook's* conception ("O borskoj beležnici"/ "about the *Bor Notebook*"), Kiš's 1979 translation, and a work of literary criticism by scholar Zoran Paunović that draws connections between Radnóti's and Kiš's respective oeuvres.

This chapter subsequently focuses on the continuous circulation of Radnóti's *The Bor Notebook* in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cultural memory space via its translation from Hungarian into Serbo-Croatian and across genres from poetry to graphic novel. Through

translation, both interlinguistic and intermedial, *The Bor Notebook* has become a "travelling"

site, which in Astrid Erll's concept of "travelling memory," denotes how memory moves via

carriers, contents, medias, forms, and practices (Erll 2011). Translators are carriers that transpose

texts across languages and cultures, contributing to their survival in new cultural and historical

contexts. Kiš's translation and Zograf's graphic novel in turn are media of memory that transport

the original text into new languages, signifying system and/or modes of narrativization such as

the graphic novel which relies on visual and textual "clues."[65] In what follows, I argue that the

afterlives of *The Bor Notebook* not only allow the text and the site of memory to survive and be

carried over into different languages, genres, and historical contexts but also generate new

meanings for audiences in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav space. For Kiš, a child survivor of the

Holocaust who spent the war disguised as a Christian boy in the Hungarian countryside but

would subsequently lose his father, a Hungarian-Jew from Vojvodina, in Auschwitz-Birkenau,

translation becomes a way of engaging with this early trauma that would define his oeuvre and

writings on new manifestations of state terror in the latter half of the 20th century. Radnóti's

confrontation with Hungarian fascism and ethnonationalism during WWII in *The Bor Notebook*

generates a particularly salient site for dealing with individual trauma but also for contesting

reemergent ethnonationalisms during the 1970s and 1980s (when Kiš's published his translation)

and which culminated in the extreme violence of the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s.

Translating from Hungarian also allowed Kiš, a bilingual and multihyphenate

Hungarian/Jewish/Montenegrin/Yugoslav writer, to further interrogate the exclusionary politics

of ethnonational and monolingual identity formation that he observed as a child on the borders of

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[65] Karin Kukkonen's work on reading comics suggests that visual and textual narratives are read via "clues:" "considering textual feature as "clues" that give rise to "effects" in the inferential processing allows us to account for glitches and oversights in the reading process and it allows us to connect the textual analysis of comics with considerations of larger issues such as intertextuality, song worlds, and fictional minds" (Kukkonen 21).

languages and ethnicities in Novi Sad and fascist Hungary, and with which he finds kinship in Radnóti, who grapples with his disenfranchisement and expulsion from the nation as a Hungarian Jew through language.

Zograf's graphic novel in turn supplements present lack of knowledge surrounding the site with various moving parts, from archival materials and witness testimony to Radnóti's poetry to reconstruct the Bor labor camps and Radnóti's time there. It acts as a hypermedial archive of *The Bor Notebook* as text, preserving its mediations and remediations across space and time. Its hypermediacy further engages three different positions of witness in relation to the Holocaust: that of the complete witness, i.e., Radnóti, the child survivor (Kiš), and the post-memorial, post-Holocaust generation as represented by Zograf who expands on the graphic novel's self-reflexivity to consider the ways that histories of the Holocaust can be approached in the present. As I further demonstrate, the graphic novel produces multiple meanings and associations generated by the reader's engagement with this history to facilitate multidirectional memory whereby the mine becomes an intersecting site of extreme nationalism, genocide, and capitalist exploitation represented acutely by the exploitative labor in the Zijin mining complex and Bor's status as one of the most polluted places in Europe. In this way, Zograf's re-mediation of *The Bor Notebook* importantly draws attention to the mine as a recurrent site of extreme violence and exploitation that produces a "multidirectional landscape" of enmeshed histories in both Yugoslav as well as post-Yugoslav memory (Rothberg 2013).

II.   **Bearing Witness in Translation**

The monument to Radnóti is part of larger mnemonic system that marks the extensive site of the former Bor labor camps and the thousands of forced laborers who perished there and afterwards in the forced march across Yugoslavia and Hungary. A *spomenik* in Bor erected

during the Yugoslav period— an abstract white symbol—commemorates all the labor

servicemen of different nationalities who were interned in Bor during WWII. Additionally, a

small cemetery with the bodies of Hungarian Jehova Witnesses who were also sent to Bor as

forced laborers can be found in the area (Csapody 2011). The former system of camps, however,

is unmarked and largely overgrown by plants as can be seen in the picture below. The building

used as the Gestapo headquarters in Bor sits in the landscape like a post-industrial ruin, despite

the fact that the Bor mine is still operative today.

Figure 3.2
The former grounds of Camp Heidenau, where Radnóti was interned. Photo by Tamás
Csapody (2011).

In 1943, Hungary and Nazi Germany signed an agreement which dictated that Hungary would receive raw materials if they sent Jewish labor servicemen to work in the Bor mine, where the Nazis had already established a system of nearly 33 labor camps between Bor and Žagubica, each named after a city in the Third Reich (*Heidenau, Innsbruck, Wein*, *Brünn*, *München, etc.*) (Csapody 1). Initially built by a French company in 1904, Bor had modern infrastructure, and its location in a copper-rich region of the Balkans made it readily exploitable for the Nazi effort following the invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 (Ibid). During the initial stages of the occupation, the Nazis brought Yugoslav, Czech, French, Greek, Polish and Romanian (and later Italian) forced laborers to work in the mine.[66] Starting in 1943, 3,000 Hungarian Jewish laborers arrived in Bor, a number which would grow steadily until 1944, whose task was to build a railway East (Ibid.) This project was never finished.

Leading up to WWII, Hungarian political elites designed the Hungarian labor service (*zsidó munkaszolgálat*) as an attaché unit to the Hungarian army for those who couldn't be "trusted" with weapons. In lieu of combat, laborers were to be tasked with construction projects to help the war effort (Braham 287). While at first, only non-ethnic Hungarians (Slovaks, Romanians, Serbs) and communists were targeted for conscription, the labor service soon became a solution for the "Jewish question" in Hungary (Ibid.). In 1940, with the solidification of the Nazi-Hungarian alliance, the Hungarian government, presided over by prime minister Pál Teleki and Regent Horthy, declared that Jews were no longer allowed to serve in the Hungarian army and instead, all able-bodied men over the age of 18 were to be drafted into the Jewish labor service. As the Holocaust historian Randolph Braham succinctly explains, "the origins of the Hungarian labor service system go back to the practices of the counterrevolutionary regimes established in

Hungary after the overthrow of the proletarian dictatorship of Béla Kun in August 1919. The wartime organizational structure and objectives of the system, however, were clearly related to the dramatical political military initiatives of the Third Reich in the late 1930s" (Ibid. vii). As the terms of the labor service became increasingly discriminatory towards Hungarian Jews over the course of the war, Jews were stripped of their army uniforms, forced to wear arm bands marking them as Jews, and those who were formerly exempt from conscription, such as decorated Great War heroes or Catholic converts like Radnóti, were also forced into the Jewish labor service.[67]

The Bor labor camps were a brutal assignment. The Hungarian guards, most infamously Ede Marányi, tortured and subjected the Jewish servicemen to cruel punishments: many of the Jewish laborers became ill, the work in the mines was hard on their bodies and those who resisted or attempted to run away were tortured or killed in public executions. While in Bor, Radnóti worked in Camp Heidenau where he began writing his final collection of poems, *Bori notesz/The Bor Notebook,* in a contraband notebook. His poems composed from the barracks of camp Heidenau and the later march across Yugoslavia and Hungary bear witness by producing snapshots of scenes surrounding him as the "razglednica" cycle does, while other poems question notions of homeland, identity, survival, and the role of poetry against a backdrop of extreme dehumanization. The "Seventh Eclogue," for instance, describes the laborers' imprisonment and desire for the unattainable world beyond the barbed wire. In this poem, the image of the barbed wire functions as the physical and temporal dividing line between the outside world and the camps, present and past, while also depicting the impossibility of return after the Holocaust. The barbed wire is transcended only in a dream that casts a nostalgic glance back at these intersecting spatial and temporal planes of life before and beyond the camps. The poem, "À la recherche"

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[67] Catholic converts were called "Catholic Jews" and were required to wear a white armband distinguishing them as such (Braham viii).

contemplates the omnipresence of death and the possibility for poetry to hold onto lost voices, a sentiment that will be echoed in his own desire for his poetry to testify to the lives that that and will be lost, including his own. The poem is dedicated to those "who traveled in cattle cars sealed shut, those who stood numb and unarmed in mined fields, and those who left on their own accord, a gun in their hands, silently…."[68] There is also a tender poem and other lines dedicated to his wife, Fanni Gyarmati-Radnóti, detailing his love for her and their life together before the war ("Letter to My Wife").

Radnóti continued writing poetry on the death march. In September 1944, the SS and Hungarian army forced the first group of men to leave Bor and begin the march across Yugoslavia for the Hungarian border, which included Radnóti's Heidenau unit. Had Radnóti been ordered to stay behind in the second group, which was set to leave a few days later, he would have been liberated by the Yugoslav partisans. The death march from Bor is detailed in the final poems of the notebook "The Forced March" and the "Postcard" cycle. The brief, sparse lyrics detail the author's and other laborers' bodily decline and death along the way as they succumbed to starvation and illness, while others were murdered by the commanding Hungarian and SS soldiers if they could not keep up or disobeyed orders (even to drink water). Those who managed to survive the death march were then deported to various concentration camps in Germany, including Flossenburg, Ravensbruck, and Sachsenhausen. Radnóti's fate remained unknown for a year following the conclusion of the war. It wasn't until 1946 that Radnóti's wife, Fanni Gyarmati-Radnóti, finally received the news that her husband's body had been found in a mass grave in the Hungarian town of Abda. Witness accounts collected after the war offered

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[68] „Volt, ahová lepecsételt marhakocsikban utaztak, dermedten s fegyvertelen álltak az aknamezőkön, s volt, ahová önként mentek, fegyverrel a kézben, némán, mert tudták, az a harc, az az ő ügyük ott lenn, s most a szabadság angyala őrzi nagy álmuk az éjben" (Radnóti 244).

evidence as to how Radnóti was murdered: Radnóti, in too poor a state to walk, was put on the medical cart. Arriving in Abda, Hungarian soldiers forced the half-dead labor servicemen to dig the mass grave into which they were then shot.[69]

During the exhumation of the mass grave in Abda, the manuscript of Radnóti's final poems was found in the poet's pocket, soiled with blood and earth. The poems testified to the days leading up to Radnóti's death: his final poem, "Razglednica 4" (Postcard #4), dated October 31, 1944, in Szentkirályszabadja, captures the murder of a fellow labor servicemen, to which the poet presciently remarks, "shot in the back of the neck/ that's how they'll finish you off too."[70] Due to his exhaustion, drastically wreaked health, and knowledge that he might not survive the forced march, Radnóti entrusted sections to his friend Sándor Szalai and wrote a note in five different languages in the journal he kept with him in his pocket with the hope that someone would find the notebook and deliver the final poems to Gyula Ortutay, a literature professor in Budapest. Szalai was liberated before the second march from Bor and delivered sections of *The Bor Notebook* to Ortutay in 1945. After Radnóti's body was exhumed from the mass grave in 1946, an editor and a close friend of Radnóti, Tibor Szántó compiled the *Bori notesz* with the final poems from the forced march that were salvaged from the exhumed manuscript. The edited version of *The Bor Notebook* comprises the following poems: "The Seventh Eclogue," "Letter to my Wife," "Roots," À la recherche," "The Eighth Eclogue," "Postcard," "The Forced March," "Postcard 2," "Postcard 3," and "Postcard 4."

Before turning to an analysis of Danilo Kiš's Serbo-Croatian translation, I first want to suggest that translation is already built into *The Bor Notebook* as a "structural device." Rebecca

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[69] See Tamás Csapody's extensive research and collection of eyewitness testimonies on the Abda exhumations in *Bori munkaszolgálatosok.* Budapest: Vince Kiadó, 2011.
[70] "Tarkólövés,—Így végzed hát te is" (249).

Walkowitz has coined the term "born translated" to discuss texts that "have been written for translation from the start" (Walkowitz 4). However, Walkowitz frames "born translated" as an opportunistic maneuver that writers employ to reach the global literary market. In my adaptation of the term, I use "born translated" to refer to the "thematic, structural, conceptual, and sometimes even typographical device" of translation that Walkowitz observes to also encapsulate how Radnóti's testimony is written with the intent of translation, that is, of being carried through intermediaries and bearing witness in place of the author. To return to my dissertation introduction, Brodzki argues that the survival of texts and bodies is predicated on translation: "to cross the threshold from life to death and from death to afterlife *is to be translated, to be in translation* (Brodzki 6), as Radnóti's work does— first exhumed and then pieced together and published. Texts that are born translated "have a past as well as a future" in Walkowitz's terms, which I also see essential to the production of witness testimonies of the Holocaust due to the all-encompassing violence and destruction that genocide supposes.[71] In this way, I am suggesting that translation in fact underwrites the very genesis of *The Bor Notebook* from where it then undergoes multiple levels of mediation.

In a similar vein, Peter Davies has argued to make visible the essential role of translation in producing knowledge about the Holocaust. Davies' study explores how witness testimonies undergo various levels of mediation that shape, navigate, and situate the Holocaust within new cultural contexts (Davies 2018). This approach is also central to my analysis of how translators and memory agents (namely, Kiš and Zograf) position *The Bor Notebook* and its multiple translational traces within their respective Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav contexts. In what

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[71] In fact, Davies writes that "almost everything we know about the Holocaust is gained through translation. Unless one can read with fluency and cultural sensitivity in at least twenty languages in which documents, testimonies, and literary texts have been produced, then one is utterly dependent on translation … without translation, there would be no Holocaust" (Davies 2-3).

follows, I demonstrate how *The Bor Notebook* is hybridized and lent new dimensions in its Serbo-Croatian translation that subsequently transform it into a transnational and transgenerational site of Holocaust remembrance.

III.   Travelling Homelands: Danilo Kiš's Translations of *The Bor Notebook*

When Danilo Kiš translated Miklós Radnóti's testimony into Serbo-Croatian, he most likely thought about his father, Eduard Kiš, who also disappeared during the war. Sometime in 1944, Eduard Kiš and Radnóti would have crossed paths during the mass deportations of Hungarian Jews to concentration camps. Like Radnóti, Eduard Kiš never returned, yet in this case, the family never located his body. Much later, as an adult, Kiš learned that he had been murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Kiš was born in Subotica in 1935 to a Hungarian Jewish father and Montenegrin mother. His early autobiographical, or "family cycle" trilogy, *Bašta, pepeo/Garden, Ashes* (1965); *Rani jadi/Early Sorrows* (1970) and *Peščanik/Hourglass* (1972) are centered around the profound sense of loss that he experienced as a child during the Holocaust. Following the Novi Sad raids, a three-day massacre perpetrated by the occupying Hungarian army against Jewish, Serbian, and Roma civilians in 1941, his family was forced to flee across the border into southern Hungary, to Kerkabarbarás, which, up until 1944 at least, was safer than occupied Yugoslavia. Kiš managed to survive the war with his mother and sister in hiding, meanwhile Eduard, who was mentally ill, disappeared without a trace and was later deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. In *Hourglass,* Kiš would use the letters and documents that Eduard Kiš left behind to retrace his father's final steps.

Kiš's narratives have primarily been acknowledged as documentary and intertextual, drawing from various histories that may or may not have happened (Crnković 22). Kiš drew these plots, sections, and fragments from literary texts as well as documentary material, such as

letters and newspapers. The basis of his novel *Psalam 44/Psalm 44* (1960), for instance, is

derived from a newspaper story about a couple who gave birth to a child while in Auschwitz,

while, as indicated above, his father's personal letters generate the narrative of *Hourglass.* The

extent to which Kiš derived his documentary material, textual transpositions, voices, and

histories from working in his other languages through translation, namely Hungarian, has

received less attention in scholarship despite being a critical component of the way he

reconstructed the experiences of others during Holocaust (such as his father's), as well a

postmemorial narrative of his own experiences during the war when he was a child.

    Kiš began translating Radnóti's poetry when he was young, at 26, around the time he was

finishing *Hourglass* (Čudić 2010: 60). He also translated Radnóti's other collections of poetry,

such as *Meredek út/The Steep Road* into Serbo-Croatian, *Strmom stazom* (1961) which contained

many of the poems that would later be compiled in *The Bor Notebook* following its official

publication in Hungary in 1971. A newspaper report from a Hungarian language press praises

Kiš for his superb rendition of Radnóti, noting that the success of the translation was due to not

only his lyrical skills but also what the reviewer observed to be an excellent command of the

nuances of the Hungarian language.[72] Kiš's translation of Radnóti from Hungarian to Serbo-

Croatian thus reveals the alternative translational space that the multilingual and multiethnic

Yugoslav cultural space enabled, as bilingual writers like Kiš helped circulate texts within rather

than beyond its borders into Yugoslavia's many minority languages.

      As Zoran Paunović claims in his essay written for Aleksandar Zograf's graphic novel,

there were various "Radnótis" that recur in Kiš's work, which is why he was particularly suited

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[72] Danilo Kiš átültetésének magas színvonala költői és fordítói tehetségének, valamint kiváló magyar nyelvi ismeretinek tulajdonítható…" (Kenyeres Kovács 1979).

to the task regardless of his command of the Hungarian language. Paunović's remarks that

certain lines from *The Bor Notebook* "could have" been written by Kiš in *Grobnica za Borisa*

Davidoviča/ A Tomb for Boris Davidovich, a collection of seven short stories including

consisting of a fictional revolutionary's constructed biography (Zograf/Paunović 60). Here,

Paunović further points at how translation intersects with the author's own writing, expanding on

or even leaving their imprint on their texts via intertextuality and dialogism. In his article on

Kiš's translations of Radnóti, Marko Čudić suggests that translating his poetry enriched Kiš's

own writings on the Holocaust in his autobiographical trilogy, particularly *Hourglass* (Čudić 52-

3). In a collection of translations and essays by Danilo Kiš, Ivan Ivanji and Ivan V. Lalić, *Nova*

mađarska lirika/New Hungarian Poetry, Kiš wrote that "Miklós Radnóti's poetry, much like

Attila József's, rings of a grossly endangered humanity and his classical lyrics bespeak a

concealed terror—the Jewish terror about which Tuvim also sang" (Kiš qtd. in Čudić 64). As

Čudić suggest further, the ways in which Radnóti depicts his anxieties and fears, and the horror

of accepting his sudden disenfranchisement as an assimilated Hungarian Jew, later helped Kiš to

articulate the profound sense of anxiety his father must have suffered leading up to his death (a

state of anxiety that Kiš would label the "Central European Jewish neurosis") (Ibid.). Thus, Kiš's

translation work cannot be separated from his writing because it is an integral part of it. Both

Paunović and Čudić gesture to a means of seeing translation as a way of enriching a writer's own

oeuvre as the histories that he translated would expand his understandings of the Holocaust and

other manifestations of extreme violence. Scholars in the field of translation studies, such as

Susan Bassnett, have more affirmatively argued for this approach, stating that "the downgrading

of translation distorts its importance as a source of innovation and renewal for writers through

the ages. Through translation writers can access works produced in other cultures and at other moments in time, and so expand their own poetic universe" (Bassnett 2009: 84).

While translating Radnóti offered a way to confront his father's death in Auschwitz, it also became a means for working upon his own childhood trauma. As I argue, Kiš's translations of Radnóti offer a lens to interrogate various positions of witness to the Holocaust. There are two distinct positions of witness that are at play in Kiš's translations of Radnóti's testimony: one is what Agamben would refer to as the "complete witness" who bore full witness to the Holocaust, i.e., Radnóti, whose poetic testimony is often upheld as the epitome of the complete witness. Additionally, there is also the position of the child witness, Kiš, who could not assimilate the traumatic event at the time of its occurrence. This child (Kiš) has now grown up with the desire to reconstruct that traumatic event that has left an indelible mark on his sense of identity and self-narrative. Susan Suleiman describes child survivors as members of the 1.5 generation, a term which encapsulates those who were children during the Holocaust and for whom the trauma occurred during or after the "formation of a stable identity that we associate with adulthood, and in some cases before any conscious sense of self" (Suleiman 277). For child survivors, whose experiences vary from deportation, hiding, to the loss of parent(s), "the wartime experience and its aftermath played a major role in the formation of personal identity and sense of self" (Ibid. 290). The primary underlying experience of the 1.5 generation experienced is an overwhelming sense of "helplessness," "premature bewilderment," and "premature aging, having to act as an adult while still a child" (Kestenber and Brenner, 1996 qtd. in Suleiman 277). Suleiman notes the extensive number of fictional and nonfictional writers who emerged from this particular generation and whose testimonies and autobiographical writing, such as Kiš's, are markedly

different from those who were adults during the time due to sense of prematureness: both the "premature bewilderment" and premature aging that permeates their works.

Suleiman, a child survivor herself, further describes the 1.5 generation as a generation of "readers" about the Holocaust to piece together the gaps in memory and knowledge of what had happened. As child survivors grow up and are left with questions that are largely referential "what happened? When? where? How did it feel?" (Ibid. 567), they seek out the answers to these questions in other texts. Like many members of the 1.5 generation, Kiš was also compelled to write down his own autobiography as he does so in his early works, creating a form of testimonial fiction that he later employs in the reconstruction of others' biographies, as in *A Tomb for Boris Davidovič* (see Vervaet 2018, Ch.5).[73] Kiš's compulsion to translate and obsession with creating fictional histories from historical documents (newspaper articles, biography, letters, and testimonies such as Radnóti's) is precisely the autobiographical compulsion that Suleiman recognized in herself because it is reconstructive, mediated, and seeks to fill in gaps in knowledge. For Kiš, translating the "concealed terror" of Radnóti's lyrics filled in the absences and unanswered blanks that his father left behind and which he attempted to reconstruct in his fictional works such as *Hourglass,* that incorporates his father's final letters to his sister. Thus, as opposed to Aleksandar Tišma's protagonist Miroslav Blam discussed in Chapter 1, who comes to age during the Holocaust and therefore mourns the distortion and irretrievable loss of the coming-of-age narrative, the 1.5 generation seeks to reconstruct a narrative of the past.

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[73] Vervaet argues that the fictional template that Kiš applies in his early works is expanded on to draw transnational parallels between the Holocaust and the Gulag (Vervaet 2018: 88). I am only mentioning this briefly here, as I will deal with this subject in Chapter 3 on Kiš's engagement with the corrective labor camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur.

The crises that Radnóti experienced in his poetry were not exclusive to Kiš's father's generation. As I explored in Chapter 1, the Holocaust generated a specific identity crisis among the assimilated Central Europe Jewry, which was inherited and passed down among generations after the war. Kiš spent the war under Hungarian fascism, which had a profound effect on his sense of identity and relationship to language. Kiš would later muse on the "troubling strangeness" of his identity, of existing both within and outside the bounds of nations, ethnicities, and languages. In a personal essay entitled "Birth Certificate," he writes:

"When I was four years old (1939), when the anti-Jewish laws were enacted in Hungary, my parents had me baptized in the orthodox faith at the Uspenska Church in Novi Sad, which saved my life. Until I was thirteen years old, I lived in Hungary, in my father's land of birth, to where we fled in 1942 after the hell in Novi Sad. I worked as a farmhand for a rich peasant, and I listened to the catechist and catholic biblical exegeses in school. The "troubling strangeness" that Freud calls *Unheimlichkeit* would be my basic literary and metaphorical stimulus; when I was ten years old, I wrote my first poems, in Hungarian; one was about hunger, the other was a love poem *par excellence* (Kiš 4).

Later in his career, Kiš would more firmly reject the zero-sum logic of national identity formation. Kiš was ardently anational and a self-proclaimed cosmopolitan, in the sense that he refused to accept any frame that would encapsulate his identity in stable form. His antinationalist convictions grew even stronger during the 1970s and 1980s as the rising tides of nationalism began to chip away at the plaster of Yugoslavia's multiethnic "brotherhood and unity." During this time, Serbian cultural institutions accused Kiš of not being a "good Serb" as his works were centered predominately on Jewish suffering.

In response to the accusation hurled at him by an increasingly stagnant Serbian culture establishment, Kiš wrote an essay in *Homo Poeticus*, "Gingerbread Heart,"[74] which draws from his experiences during the war as a child refugee to reject the nationalist appropriation and

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[74]The title of the essay refers to the Croatia/Serbian fight over the national origin of the popular holiday decorative pastry, i.e., the gingerbread heart.

reduction of culture to kitsch symbolism. Rather, in this essay, Kiš debunks his complex

relationship to language, writing and authorial identity, stating that he wrote in Serbo-Croatian

simply because it was the best language for him (Kiš 32). Additionally, he was critical of

defenses of national language and the gatekeeping undertaken by cultural and literary institutions

to uphold their national language as the best and "most beautiful" (Ibid. 30). Kiš argues that

those same nationalist safeguards that seek to defend the purity of their language also cheapen

and distort language. While living in southern Hungary, Kiš recalls how he absorbed Hungarian

language and its myths, which he recognizes as the same linguistic constructions and myths that

he then encountered at his grandfather's home in Cetinje, Montenegro, where the "bazsarózsák"

of Hungary were simply exchanged for the red peonies of Kosovo polje, and the "honvédok" for

the "domovoj" (a literal translation of both these words would be the "homeland protectors.")

(Ibid.28).[75] For Kiš, literal translation between his two languages bares the translatability of

supposedly untranslatable national myths that usually employ "various secretive maneuvers

symptomatic of a cultural posture that simultaneously forecloses its meaning beyond its own

internally erected boundaries and performs a kind of desperate nationalism to resist

globalization" (Longinović 2002: 7). The very act of Kiš's translations from Hungarian to Serbo-

Croatian question the concepts of a native speaker and a mother tongue that nationalism seeks to

preserve. His works collapse linguistic borders in literature by participating in a multilingual

space of literature, something that Walkowitz's notion of "born translated" also encapsulates,

"refusing to match language to geography, many contemporary works will seem to occupy more

than one place, to be produced in more than one language, or to address multiple audiences at the

same time. They build translation into their form" (Walkowitz 6).

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[75] The Hungarian "honvéd" is also a term for the army, while the "domovoj" refers to a spirit that protects the home in Slavic cultures.

As Kiš puts forth in this essay via his own memories at the borders of language and identities, the constructs of identity and mother tongue are extremely porous. This porosity in turn demands new forms of identification in which individuals participate, instead of being interpolated into. Kiš reflects on how the travestied dictum of "a szép magyar nyelvünk" (*our beautiful Hungarian tongue*), made him acutely aware of his position on the margins of this Hungarian possessive "ours" (Kiš 25). Rather, under the guise of an unsuspecting Hungarian "farmhand and village orphan, yet with the world view and habits of a city boy (that is, aware of not belonging, of being out of my element" (Ibid. 24), he recognized his own "troubling strangeness" and disruption of an increasingly nationalistic picture of homogenous and monolingual Hungarian identity: "I was still sick at heart, because even as I stood singing "Shepherds, Arise" on the village doorstep I knew I was there only thanks to the schoolmistress's indulgence and intervention" (Ibid.). However, when he "moved back home" to Yugoslavia after the war, to his grandfather's home in Cetinje, Montenegro, he was then teased and called a *Mađar* (Hungarian) because he did not know the local dialect and had forgotten words in Serbo-Croatian during the war. Even though he had believed he had returned home, any hopes of "being cured" were dashed once he settled back home in his Serbo-Croatian mother tongue (Ibid). Rather, Kiš invokes the fate of the "wandering Jew" (*Jevrejina lutalice)* to describe his feelings of statelessness that emerged from the war (Radić 2005). However, instead of effacing this Jewishness or assimilating wholeheartedly to a Yugoslav identity, Viktorija Radić notes that Kiš instead opened a dialogue with his Jewishness, posing it not as a social or religious category, but as a "spiritual" genealogy that he locates in a lineage of writers (Radić 25).

Radnóti was one such of these literary kinships that Kiš established through translation, whose poetry very closely intersected with Kiš's own personal biography. Central to my analysis

thus far has been the ways in which translation can form "textual sites" for performing positions of witness to the Holocaust. Writing on Primo Levi's translations (here, the *Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner*) Lina Insana argues that "Levi's translation of Coleridge becomes a textual site where processes of testimony and aspects of the survivor's condition are explored in complex and traumatically repetitive ways, mirroring the trauma of the experience itself" (Insana 57*).* However, as opposed to Insana's observations on Levi's translation work, I will also argue that for Kiš, translation opens up possibilities for the liberating practices of language and writing that propose alternatives to nationally and ethnically construed identities, using translation to model alternative connections to language, literature, and cultural memory.

Hungarian was the language within which Kiš was forced to suppress his Jewishness as the family attempted to survive Hungary's precarious and rapidly changing policies towards Jewish citizens, and as Kiš bore witness to the nationalist fervor in Hungary that the ascendent Arrow Cross party would seize upon in 1944. The Arrow Cross committed various crimes in the name of the Hungarian nation and are remembered for their sheer brutality against civilians: the extreme nature of their violence was rivalled perhaps only by the Croatian Ustaša. However, instead of abhorring the language within which he was forced to confront traumatic ties to identity, and which cemented his abhorrence to any form of nationalist expression, he instead cultivated a deep love for Hungarian language and literature which he expressed through literary translation (Radić 27). This move puts forth an alternative to the zero-sum logic of ethnically and linguistically defined identity that instead sees belonging as an active engagement with literature and language. This alternative, as I will show below, is also explored in Radnóti's lyrics, written from the position of a racialized body suddenly targeted for exclusion from the nation.

Radnóti's poetry also attempts to preserve his affective ties to Hungarian language, culture, and nation by closing it off from its distortions, which Kiš later located in the reduction of language to kitsch nationalist symbolism and its weaponization as sacrificial "cannon fodder" in the defense of an obscure ethnonational ideal. The "Razglednica" cycle for instance depicts the destruction and exploitation of the human body reduced to bare life. The cycle inverts both the "postcard" that is usually associated with travel and leisure, as well as the classical image of the bucolic, a form that was heavily used during the respective romantic nationalist awakenings in Europe to depict a national idyll: one that promoted a national space based on ethnic and linguistic homogeneity rather than the alternative affiliations that might complicate such singularity. The bucolic landscape corroborated this quest for ethnic and racial purity, far away from the ethnically and culturally mixed spaces of cities. In Radnóti's poetry, the animals that usually occupy the frame of the bucolic are replaced with the laborers who become animalized subjects reduced to failing bodily functions: "the oxen are foaming blood at the mouth/the humans are urinating blood…."[76] Radnóti's inverted bucolics thus show the collapse of this search for the national idyll, drawing instead a landscape of war, death, and the violent conclusion of this quest.

The Bor Notebook depicts Radnóti's deep internal struggle with his identity as a Jewish-Hungarian poet. Poems such as "Hetedik Ekloga" ("The Seventh Eclogue") question what the nation and national belonging now meant to a Jewish-Hungarian writer amidst its grotesque distortions. In a line from "Hetedik Ecloga," Radnóti asks whether "home" can still exist:

"Ó megvan-e még az az otthon?

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[76] "Az ökrök száján véres nyál csorog, az emberek mind véreset vizelnek" (249).

Bomba sem érte talán?

s *van*, mint amikor bevonultunk?"[77]

"Does *that* home still exist?

The bombs haven't gotten to it yet?

And is it the same as before we were marched away?"

In this poem, Radnóti grapples with the concept of home, both the private and the national, encapsulated by the double meanings of the Hungarian word "otthon." The private home is at risk of being physically destroyed by Allied carpet-bombing campaigns, "the bombs haven't gotten to it yet?", while the other "otthon" for Radnóti no longer exists in its former meaning due to its destruction by Hungarian nationalism and fascism. The poem questions further whether there was a home where poetry could still be understood: "Mondd, van-e ott haza még, ahol értik e hexametert is?" ("Tell me, is there a homeland where they still understand hexameter?") (240).

Radnóti's poetry illustrates his attachment to and absorption of the Hungarian romanticist as well as the classical European tradition. Radnóti wrote himself into both the Hungarian and European tradition, applying various localisms to larger classical frames. The question of whether poetry could still be understood is posed from the portending ruins of a shared cultural and artistic legacy. Rather than rejecting the possibility of the collapse into barbarism, Radnóti poses the question as to what this cultural collapse will mean for further iterations of the Hungarian nation, language, and identity as bounded categories. Thus, Radnóti's lyrics respond to the Hungarian Jewish community's abrupt confrontation with the fact that ties between language and nation were tenuous. As these bonds disintegrated, Radnóti holds fast to his poetry

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[77](Radnóti 240).

to preserve a rapidly disintegrating image of the individual home and the literary/national

tradition in which he had made his home as a writer and to which he could only return to in

liberating dream ("az is így szabadul csak, megtöretett testünket az álom, szép szabadító oldja fel

és a fogolytábor hazaindul ilyenkor") following its physical and metaphorical destruction (240).

When Kiš translated "The Seventh Eclogue" he translates the stanza from above (Does

that home exist?) as the following:

"O, da li postoji još dom?

Nije li ga razorila bomba od časa kad ga napustismo?

Onaj što s desne strane mi stenje, i ovaj što s leva leži

Da l' naći će svoj dom? I ima l' domaje gde heksametar ovaj razumeju?"[78]

The translation of the second line translates the Hungarian *bevonultunk*, which is a term often

used for soldiers who are "called up" and are mobilized to a location. The Serbo-Croatian

translation is much more neutral, as Kiš uses the verb *napustismo*, "leave": "The bombs haven't

gotten to it in the time since we left?" This more general "leave" encapsulates broader

movements away from the spaces of the home. There is a reversal of subject-positions that takes

place here in translation. As Radnóti longed for home, Hungary, Kiš was looking back in the

opposite direction in Hungary, wishing to return home to Yugoslavia, the homeland that he had

in turn left in 1942. When Radnóti was forced back across the border of Yugoslavia and Hungary

during the death march in 1944, he discovered that his worst fears were true as the Nazi

Occupation and the establishment of Szálasi's Arrow Cross changed the homeland beyond

recognition. In 1946, as Kiš and his mother and sister made their way home to Cetinje,

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[78](Zograf/Kiš, 23).

Montenegro, Kiš would find that *that* home was not really the home as he had envisioned it, as the war had marked him accented and an outsider. While through his mother's stories he had absorbed a version of homeland that existed on the level of myth as is denoted by his use of an elevated version, the *domaja* "homeland" (as opposed to the more frequent *domovina*), his return laid bare the illusion of national entities which are built on monolithic terms of identity. While in Kerkabarbarás, Kiš first became aware of his otherness, but it was in his return to Cetinje, that this troubling otherness was cemented. Kiš's translation of the Hungarian *haza* (homeland) to *domaja* stages the trauma of identity and homeland via fateful national mythologies that are dissolved in translation.

Drawing from James Clifford's concept of a conjunctural versus authentic identity, Crknović writes that Kiš

"promoted a cosmopolitan identity, one that is not "authentic but rather conjunctural", according to James Clifford, and that is based on multiple dialogues with others and on the nation that the identities of "others" and "ourselves" are not enclosed within such firm and well-defined boundaries as nationalists would have us think. These identities overlap or change each other by engaging in a dialogue and we should thus think of their interaction not as external relation between closed firm bodies but rather as a communication of multicentered spaces, whereby the centers of one space might also be the centers of another space" (Crnković 18).

Kiš's translations from Hungarian, the language of his childhood trauma, also open possibilities for creating literary and linguistic homelands outside the bounds of the nation state just as Radnóti attempts to do in his preservation of the "home" as an affective space that is shielded from destruction and oblivion in his poetry. Kiš's translation from *The Bor Notebook* in turn establishes intersecting glances back "home" that negotiate this subjective space, its affective ties, and traumatic associations. The traumatic encounter of the two homelands: the Hungarian *haza* and the Serbo-Croatian *domaja*, importantly put forth the possibility of having multiple

"homelands" and affiliations that are negotiated internally via his participation in literature and literature *as* memory.

Kiš ultimately uses translation to interrogate the boundaries of national identity and instead promote alternatives that stress the liberative potential of language and literature. His translation of *The Bor Notebook* challenges the assumption that there are native readers of any national literature, gesturing back to the "born translated" quality of Radnóti's testimony. In turn, Kiš juxtaposes how nationalism employs mythical, unattainable, and moreover, violent visions of a homeland to the possibility of having multiple homelands defined on his own terms via literature. Kiš's defiance of the hermetic confines of identity and national memory in his translation of *The Bor Notebook* from Hungarian to Serbo-Croatian will become even more significant following the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and establishment of largely ethnically homogenous nation states and memory cultures. Kiš's translation and working upon Radnóti's Holocaust testimony shows not only how memories move across linguistic, national, and generational borders in translation, but also how transnational solidarities can be forged across these divides.

IV.   *The Bor Notebook* in the Post-Holocaust Age: Aleksandar Zograf's graphic novel

Aleksandar Zograf (the pseudonym of Saša Rakezić) is one of the most recognized graphic artists in the former Yugoslavia. He rose to recognition with his 2007 graphic novel, *Regards from Serbia: A Cartoonist's Diary of a Crisis in Serbia*. In *Regards*, Zograf appears as a character in his own graphic novel, reflecting on his personal experience during the wars in Yugoslavia and 1999 sanctions and NATO bombing of Serbia. As Stijn Vervaet observes, *"*based on the experiences and observations of the author, Zograf's comics are more personal, even introspective at times. Consisting of a series of discrete episodes told in an anecdotal

manner, Zograf's work refrains from offering a sustained historical narrative. Instead, the fragmentary quality of his work seems to suggest that the tangibleness of the traumatic reality that he portrays resists being integrated into a single, overarching historical narrative" (Vervaet 2011: 164). To this, Vladislav Beronja adds in an article on Zograf that "Rather than acting as a traditional historical witness to the catastrophic events taking place around him, Zograf instead takes the role of a dream watcher documenting the collective fantasies of wartime Serbia through the medium of comics" (Beronja 2).

Zograf's more recent work, however, has moved away from the more introspective, personal approach that he established in his autobiographical *Regards.* In comparison to *Regards,* Zograf's most recent works such as *Borske beležnice*[79] experiment with the archive to approach microhistories of violence that are beyond the purview of his—as well as entire generation's—own personal experience. In *Borske beležnice,* he deliberately calling attention to documentary and historical narrative as a form of creative investment.[80] Responding to polemics inherent within post-Holocaust representation, Zograf demonstrates an intrinsic and necessary relationship between the creative and performative aspects of graphic novel and archive: *"While creating the comic, I did research into the situations in the labour camps in Bor, through the testimonies by survivors and other documents, at the same time observing the fascinating artistic figure of modernist poet Miklós Radnóti. He seemed so alive, almost as if I had met him personally. The conditions in the camps became more than just the abstract thought of them. I felt that, while working on this story, I really learned something…"*[81] *Borske beležnice* sets out to

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[79] I will refer to Zograf's graphic novel by its Serbian name to avoid any confusion with Radnóti's original text or Kiš's translation.
[80] Alongside *Borske beležnice,* in 2018 Zograf also published a graphic novel rendition of the letters of Hilda Dajč, a Jewish teenager who perished in the Sajmište concentration camps: *Pisma Hilde Dajč.*
[81] https://missingstories.net/artist/aleksandar-zograf/

immerse the reader in the history of the Bor labor camps and reanimate Miklós Radnóti's as an artistic figure whose fate was tragically intertwined with wartime Yugoslavia.

Zograf's strips are the product of images and events imbedded within Radnóti's poetic testimony accompanied by extensive historical research and archival documents, some of which has an implicit presence in the graphic novel strips. The images and text do not entirely attempt to transcribe Radnóti's poetry into image, but act to supplement history, reinscribing the traumatic terrain from which *The Bor Notebook* was conceived from Camp Heidenau to the death march. Its contextualization of a forgotten history and site of memory importantly makes memory accessible to those who have very little knowledge of Miklós Radnóti as a poet, the Bor labor camps, and the Holocaust in general.[82]

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[82] As I pointed on in the Introduction, Holocaust education in present-day Serbia is problematic and negligible at best.
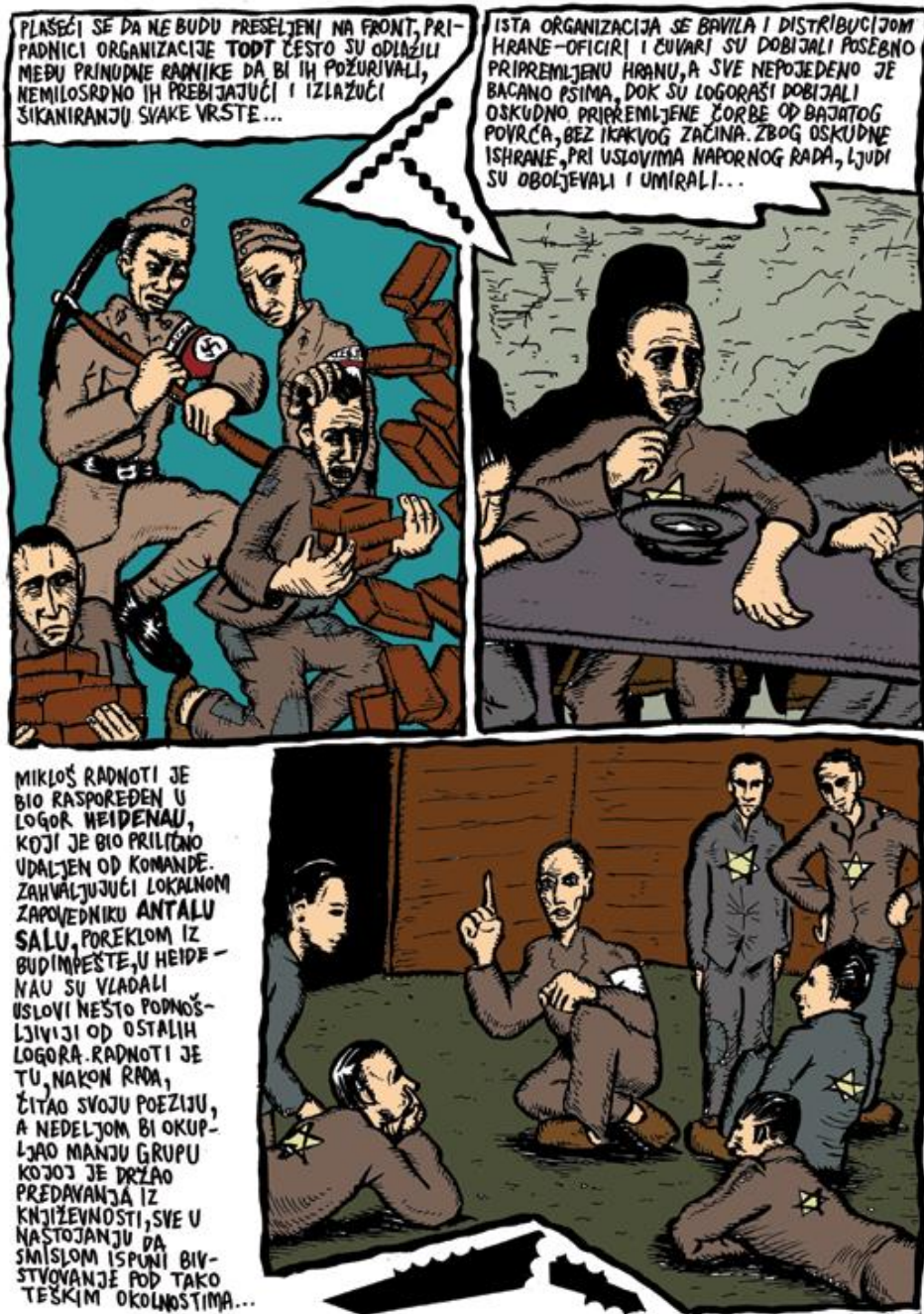
Figure 3.3

Strip from *Borske beležnice.*
1: Afraid that they would be sent to the front, the members of the Todt Organization often went among the laborers and forced them to make haste, unforgivingly beating them and harassing them in all sorts of ways. 2: The same organization also took care of food distribution—the officers and guards received specially prepared; whatever they didn't, eat they tossed to the dogs while the camp prisoners a thin soup made from stale vegetables without any flavoring. Because of the lack of nutrients, people became sick and died while performing forced labor. 3: Miklós

Radnóti was placed in camp Heidenau which was especially far from the command. Thanks to the local commander, Antal Sal who was from Budapest, the conditions in Camp Heidenau were somewhat different than in the others. After Radnóti finished his work, he read his poetry aloud. On Sundays, he would get together with a small group who held readings from literature, all of which endeavored to accomplish a semblance of existence under such difficult circumstances.

Unlike Kiš, Zograf has no direct relationship to the Holocaust. In an interview with *Portal Novosti* (a Croatia-based Serbian minority newspaper), Zograf states that the main impetus of the graphic novel was to excavate Radnóti's individual history and the Bor labor camps. Zograf claims that for his generation (he was born in 1963), WWII always existed on the level of myth; thus, the actual events of the Holocaust and its remaining topographies in the Balkans were forgotten in the annals of history. For the post-memorial generation—such as Art Spiegelman, the author of *Maus* whose parents were Holocaust survivors—as well as representatives who fall broadly within the post-Holocaust generation, comics are a productive mode of remembrance precisely because of how they remember through images and imaginative performance, rather than direct experience (Hirsch 4). No matter how documentary they assert to be, as drawings they are "evidently staged, built, made images as opposed to "taken" (Chute 389). Zograf's *Borske beležnice* in turn calls attention to this staging on two levels: both the making of images and the making of the text.

The strips recontextualize a forgotten history and site of memory, thus, performing a type of memory-work that stands in stark contrast to official Holocaust memorial efforts, such as the memorial museum at Jasenovac, that push the actual site of violence to the margins and forgo detailed descriptions on everyday life and the administration of the camps. Zograf uses his comics to excavate the site of the camps, laying bare the entire infrastructure and interworking of the camp system. As can be discerned from the strips shared above, he details the conditions that prisoners faced, while also naming the Hungarian guards so that there is no confusion as to who

ran the camps. At the same time, Zograf focalizes on the fate of singular victims there, Radnóti

as well as a few others interned there to create a fuller picture of the Bor labor camps.

Figure 3.4

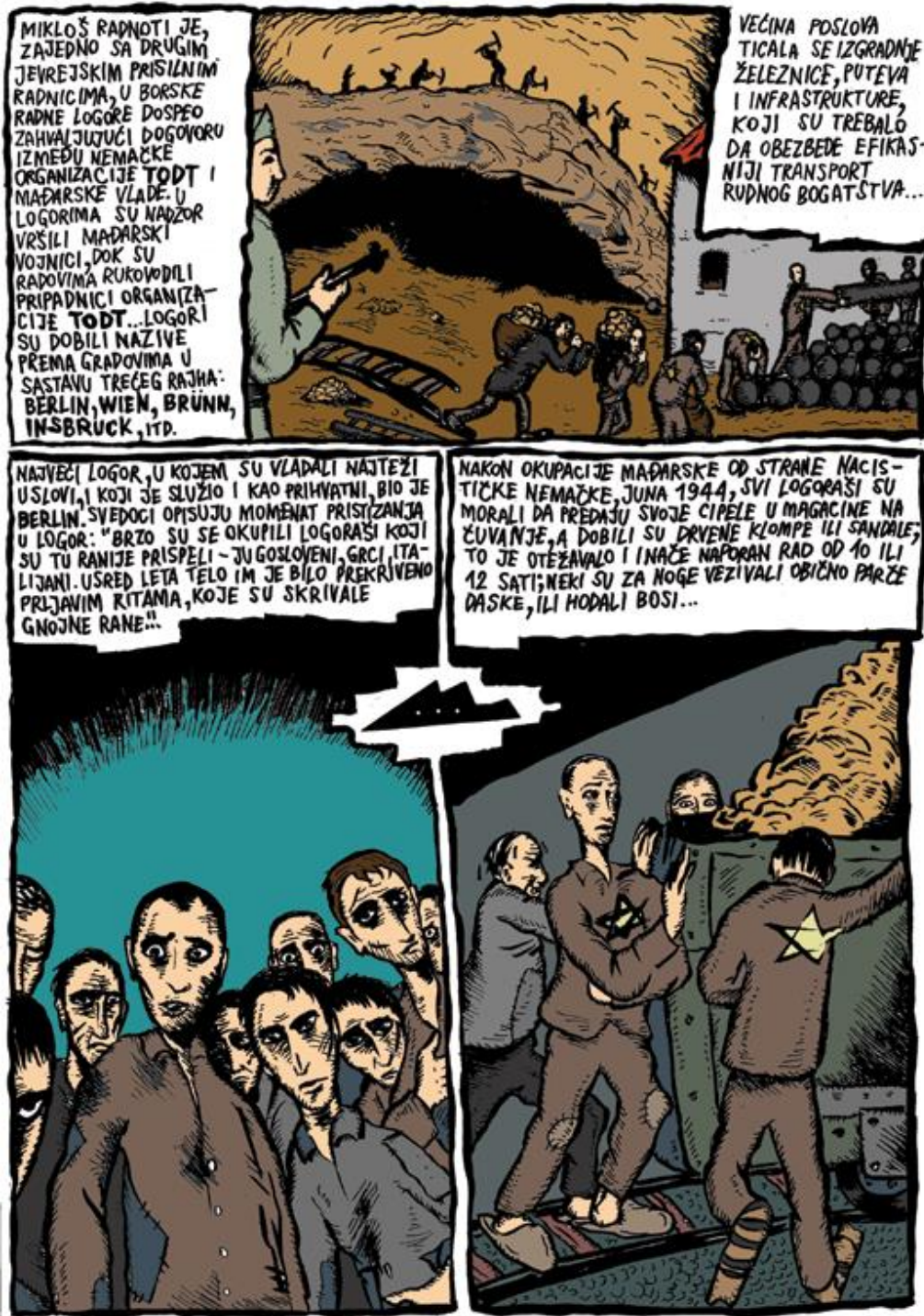Strip from *Borske beležnice.*

1: Together with other Jewish slave laborers, Radnóti arrived in the Bor labor camp thanks to an agreement between the German Todt Organization and the Hungarian government. Hungarian soldiers surveilled the camp while members of the Todt organization directed labor. The camps were named after cities in the Third Reich: Berlin, Vienna, Brünn, Innsbruck, etc. 2: Most of the

work concerned the construction of a railway, roads, and infrastructure that were required to ensure the transport of raw materials from the mine. 3: Berlin was the largest camp with the most difficult working and living conditions. Witnesses recorded the moment of their arrival in the Berlin camp: "prisoners who had been there before us gathered quickly—Yugoslavs, Greeks, Italians. Even in the middle of summer their bodies were covered with dirty rags that covered their oozing wounds. 4: After the Nazi occupation of Hungary in June 1944, all the prisoners were required to hand their shoes over to a warehouse and were given wooden clogs or sandals instead which made their already exhausting 10-12 hour work a day even more difficult. Some of the prisoner's tied pieces of wood around their feet, or even went barefoot.

His extensive research also draws from scenes that Radnóti would have seen and that seeped into his poetry. Another of these implicit episodes was the brutal torture and murder of the artist and illustrator Albert Csillag with whom Radnóti held artistic events in the camps. Csillag, who was only 26 at the time, drew a caricature of a notoriously cruel Hungarian guard in the camps, Ede Maranyi, and was subsequently tortured and killed for it. As can be seen below, Zograf archives a retrospective painting of Csillag's murder by a Jewish slave laborer in Bor, Ferenc Redo, "A kikötés" "the hanging:"
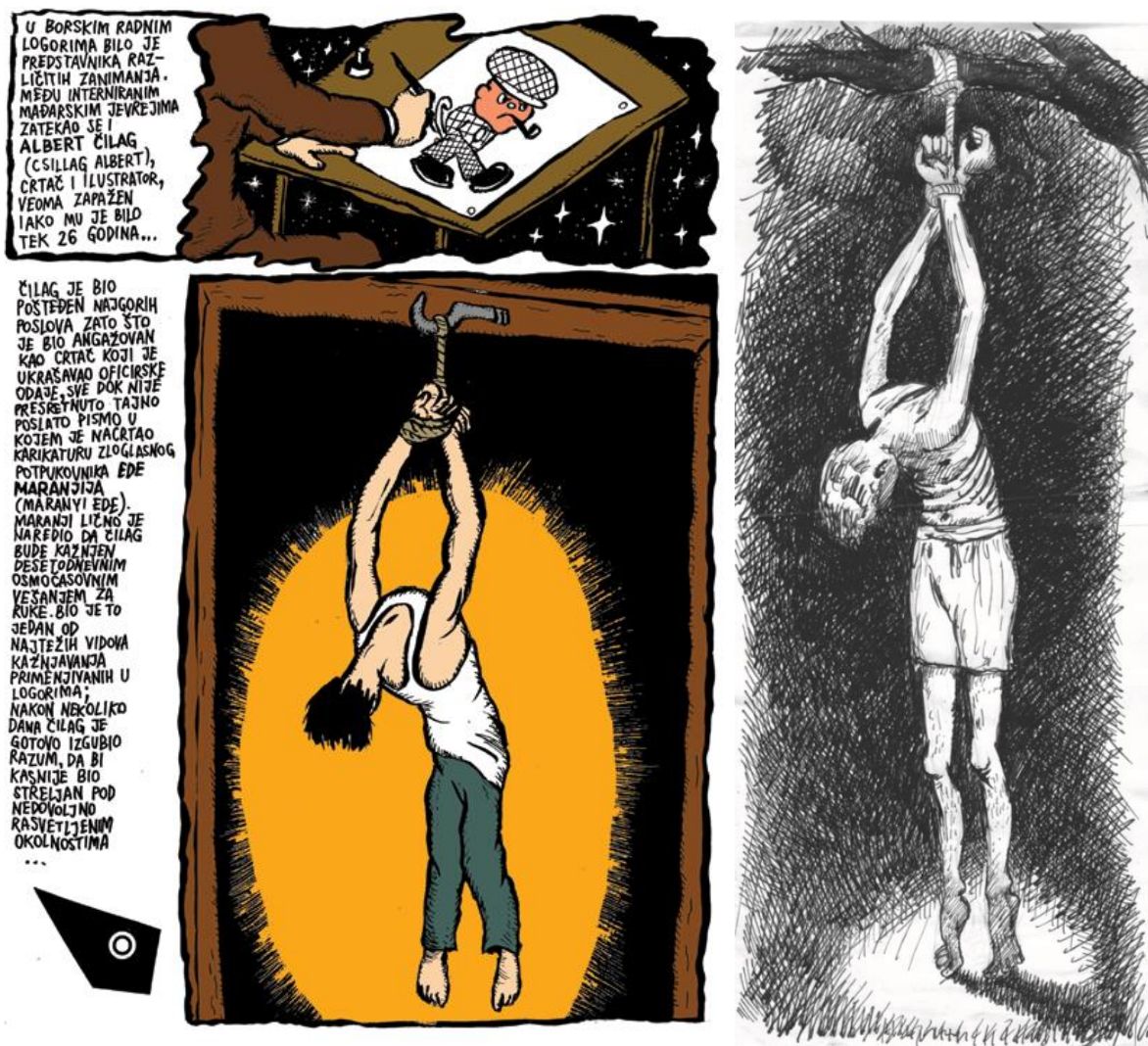
Figure 3.5. (Left)

Strip from *Borske beležnice.*

1: The prisoners were representative of various professions in the Bor labor camps. Among the Hungarian Jewish slave laborers there was also a young artist, Albert Csillag, a graphic artist, and illustrator who was extremely talented for his young age at only 26. 2: Csillag was spared from the most difficult labor because he used his drawing skills to decorate the officers' rooms. When they found a secret sketch that he sent to the others in which he caricatured the Hungarian general Ede Maranyi, Maranyi, who was known for his cruelty, personally saw to Csillag's punishment. Csillag was strung up by his hands for ten-days, eight hours at a time. This was one of the most brutal punishments in the camps; after a few days Csillag lost his sanity and was shot under unknown circumstances.

Figure 19

Figure 3.6 (Right)

"A kikötés" by Ferenc Redő, 1980. Photo from Csapody (2011).

While it's important to differentiate Zograf's documentary work from his more creative and personal comics depicting his experience during the Yugoslav wars, the documentary format of the graphic novel still employs several creative maneuvers to engage with this history through practices of counter-inscription and reverse-ekphrasis. Counter-inscription is the way that the interplay between text and image reinscribe the recorded eyewitness testimony of Radnóti into the site of the Bor labor camps and Camp Heidenau. According to Chute, the medium of the graphic novels memorializes the past via counter-inscription: the "graphic narratives that bear witness to authors' own trauma or those of others materially retrace inscriptional effacement; they repeat and reconstruct in order to counteract" (Chute 98). The particular "architecture" of the graphic novel, with its "juxtaposed frames alternating with empty gutters—a logic of arrangement that turns time in space on the page" (Chute 105)— also creates an architecture of memory that materializes the spectral traces imbedded within landscapes that otherwise bear very little evidence of the extreme violence that occurred there as can be discerned in the photograph I included of the camps' overgrown grounds. Through this architecture and spatial logic, graphic novels such as *Borske beležnice* can mediate traumatic memories that exist in fragmented forms and trace-remains. As Ulrich Baer writes on the landscape photos taken of Bergen-Belsen massacre grounds that have been taken back by nature, such images assume a gap between what can be "seen" and what can be "known" (Baer 2).[83] In this way, the act of inscription renders landscapes of violence and the embodied experience of these spaces visible again.

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[83] Ulrich Baer argues that the spectrality of landscape photos of massacre grounds around concentration camps also implicate the viewer who now bear the responsibility to invest the photograph which those histories that operate between the lines. See Baer, Ulrich. *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

The second of these creative maneuvers is reverse ekphrasis, which allow the graphic

artist to reconstruct spaces and events that have very few (if any) images to serve as evidence,

something that particularly holds true in the case of the death marches from Bor to the Austrian

border in 1944. The death marches are so complex to memorialize as they do not have any

topographical "site" of memory. As some scholars argue, the marks of the death marches are

bodily as opposed to spatial inscriptions: the death marches were "the physical and emotional

assault of the evacuations on the already vulnerable body through direct exposure to military

fronts and landscapes of violence" (Gigliotti, Masurovsky, Steiner 262). As such, there are very

few witness testimonies or documentary evidence of the marches as the majority of those on the

march fell ill or were murdered, resulting in their marginalization in the broader history of

deportations and the camps. Radnóti's "Razglednica" cycle is a rare testament to the death

marches, one that also depicts the severe bodily degradation of the labor servicemen. Its

ekphrastic snapshots, as implied by the title "postcard"— the transformation of the visual into

the verbal—even stand in for the lack of photographic evidence and witness testimony. In the

graphic novel, Zograf reverses the poem's ekphrasis; he "literalizes" images of pain and extreme

dehumanization, transforming the verbal ekphrasis in Radnóti's "razglednica" cycle back into

visual form (Chute 309).
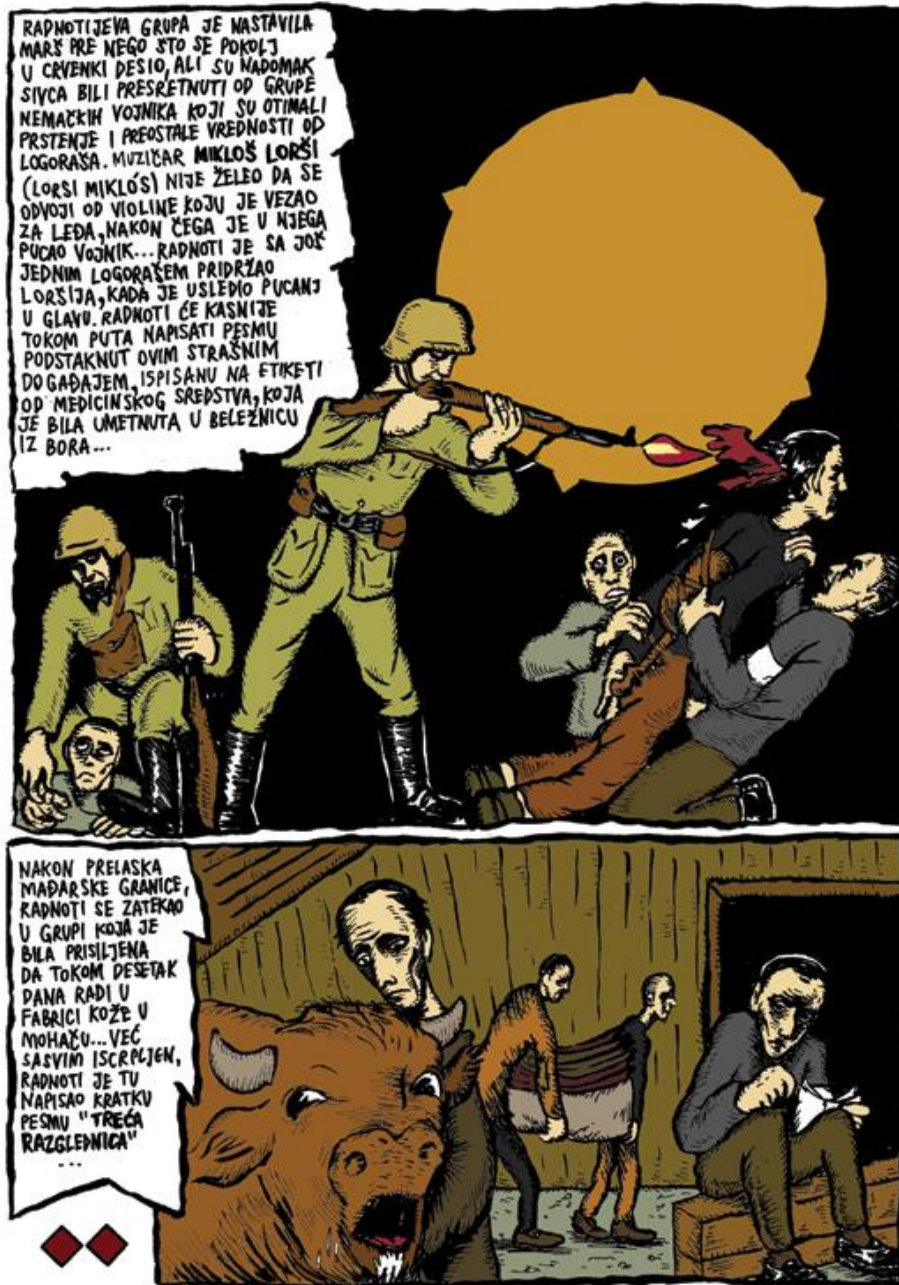
Figure 3.7

Strip from *Borske beležnice.*

1: They forced Radnóti's group to march before the massacres in Crvenka happened, where, just in reach of Sivac, they were intercepted by a group of Nazi soldiers who stole the laborers' rings and other valuables. The musician Miklós Lorsi (Lorsi Miklós) wouldn't part from the violin strapped to his back, so the Nazi soldiers shot him… Radnóti and another laborer held him as they shot Lorsi in the back of the head. Later, Radnóti would write a poem en route onto the label of a bottle of medicine inserted in his notebook that was inspired by these terrible events. 2: After they crossed the Hungarian border, Radnóti was part of a group of laborers who were

forced to work for ten days in a leather factor in Mohács….although he was dead-tired, he managed to compose a short poem, "Razglednica 3.'"[84]

The graphic novel memorializes in situ through these acts of counter-inscription and revisualization. Zograf approaches the question of Holocaust representation with acts of creative reinterpretation that restores modes of visuality to the only way we can *see* the Holocaust in a post-Holocaust age—through mediated images, second-hand witnessing, and creative investment. The focus on Radnóti's story in turn responds to the translational impulse of *The Bor Notebook* as a work of testimony, emphasizing the primacy of art in overcoming the totalizing violence of genocide and its mission to erase all evidence of the act. This is why the graphic novel section of *Borske beležnice* is titled "O borskoj beležnici" ("*about* the Bor Notebook"), because it does not desire to appropriate or identify with Radnóti's suffering in the camps but engage with this history from the certain distance established between the Holocaust and the post-Holocaust generation. Instead, it recognizes the gaps between complete witness and received testimony, while also suggesting that creative investment can also emerge from these gaps. The combination of creative investment and archive, in which the strips follow the spectral imprint of bodies in space, also makes possible embodied knowledge of the Holocaust.

V.   Recurrent Technologies of Violence: The Mine

The hypermediacy of Zograf's graphic novel succeeds in closing the distance between the Holocaust and the present in connecting three levels/generations of witnessing: that of the complete witness (Radnóti), the 1.5 generation (Kiš), and the post-Holocaust generation (Zograf). The graphic novel lays bare the process of memory-making as one of reinvestment and

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[84] As if the march from Bor wasn't physically taxing enough, in Crvenka, the SS and Hungarian command forced them to run aimlessly in place of rest. The following day, the SS then massacred an estimated 700-1,000 labor servicemen (see Braham 1994, Csapody 2011).

transformation as it traverses different mnemonic communities. Zograf's decision to include Kiš's translation alongside his graphic novel rendition establishes linkages between past and present forms of memory-making for these different generations, reminding of the ways in which Radnóti's poetry generated deep associations for those like Kiš who encountered it and used it to further confront renewed manifestations of the racialization and exploitation of bodies in successive concentrationary worlds from the Holocaust to the corrective labor camps of the 20th century. In mapping memory's travels across these generational boundaries, the graphic novel ultimately suggests that the position of post-Holocaust witnessing is one that bears responsibility to both past and present. In this section, I argue that the act of 'looking at' the Holocaust through the medium of the graphic novel provokes a reevaluation of relationships to past and present histories of violence, further permitting concurrent histories of totalizing violence to encounter one another. I trace the graphic novel's resonance in post-Yugoslav Serbia through the lens of Michael Rothberg's multidirectional memory, a concept which encapsulates how legacies of historical violence present in wider domains of cultural memory are necessary remembered through and in connection with one another (Rothberg 2009).

But before doing so, I first wish to establish how graphic novels generate multiple associations on the level of narrative, but also on the metatextual level, i.e., the discursive practices taking place around the production of the graphic novel and its subsequent reception. Karin Kukkonen has made the case for a cognitive approach to reading comics, arguing for a shift from "codes to inferences" that are established via the relationship between text and reader engagement (Kukkonen 50). This approach allows us to see comics as a medium of "multiple meaning potentials and cognitive complexity" which "are part and parcel of our cognitive engagement with the text not some exceptional add on" (Ibid. 38). While Kukkonen is more

interested in fictional comics and I am analyzing a documentary graphic novel, I find it useful to

when thinking about how a text's readers might infer and make mnemonic associations to

historical memories operative within the same cultural memory space. The multidirectionality of

Borske beležnice can be established via the site of memory (Bor), the spatiality of the site (a

mine), and the narrative of racializing violence and exploitation (i.e., Miklós Radnóti) which

produces multiple associations for the reader relating it to other memories in Yugoslav and post-

Yugoslav memory. Approaching the graphic novel in this way imbeds *The Bor Notebook* within

a larger history of the war related to forced labor that is still resonant within present day Europe

and its infrastructure, thereby linking the past to present in webs of implication.
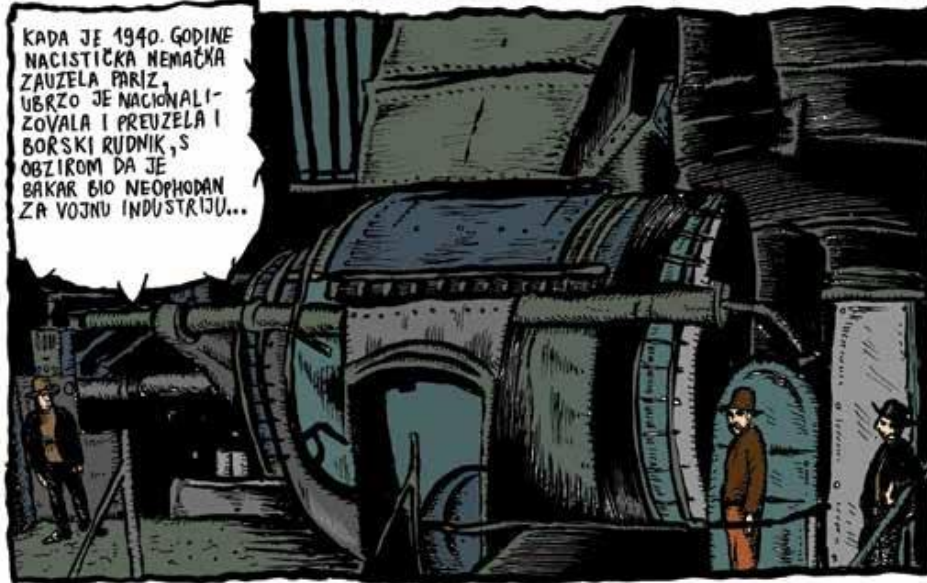
Figure 3.8

Strip from *Borske beležnice.*
1: The area around the city of Bor in Eastern Serbia has been associated with the exploitation of copper-ore since prehistoric times. 2: Beginning in 1904, a French company began to exploit copper there and built a mining complex in Bor. In this once rural area, labor power arrived from all over Europe. 3: When the Nazis occupied Paris in 1940, they quickly nationalized and took over the Bor mine given the necessity of copper to the war industry."

Zograf's graphic novel focuses on a particular microhistory of the Holocaust, i.e., the

history of forced labor. Up until the late 1980s and 1990s, the history of forced labor during

WWII was an extremely marginalized subject, despite the fact that the labor of foreign workers propped up the German wartime economy. In the 1990s, renewed research into the history of forced labor during WWII, and what Sehmid and Pissarri aptly locate as its "producers, consumers, and consequences," was initiated in tandem with lawsuits by former Jewish slave laborers and the establishment of the German Foundation "Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft" (Remembrance, Responsibility and Future) to compensate victims (Schmid and Pisarri 6-7). In Yugoslavia, the memory of Jewish slave laborers coexisted alongside the necessity of this copper-rich mine for the postwar economy. The Bor labor camps are thus a mere dot on the map of an extended history of forced labor spanning the continent, the traces of which are manifested today in crucial European infrastructure as the bodies of Jewish labor servicemen and laborers from occupied nations built central highways such as the Autobahn, factories, and mines. Infrastructure as a site of extreme violence is difficult, if not impossible, to physically mark. Mines are everyday necessities as sites for the extraction and production of raw materials, heating, and electricity. Due to the dire situation of the postwar economy in Western Europe, the crimes of former Nazi companies such as Mercedes Benz, BMW, and Siemens to name a few, dissipated almost instantaneously until the collective reckoning with their 'dark' pasts in the 1990s (Judt 355-56). As I have already mentioned in this chapter, in Yugoslavia, there were official memorials to the Jewish slave laborers to which Radnóti became victim par exemplar. Yet, this memory is no longer officially memorialized in annual local commemorative ceremonies following the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the history of the Bor labor camps are unfamiliar to most.[85]

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[85] Memorial efforts in Bor are mainly grassroots today. Each year, a group of memory actors (mostly ethnic Hungarians from Hungary or Vojvodina) gather in Bor to read Radnóti's poetry. From there, a group also retraces the forced march all the way to Abda in a type of memory pilgrimage.

In the case of the history of forced labor during WWII, Erll's concept of travelling

memory cited in the Introduction, best maps the interactions between memories that become

shared as a result of war, as well as colonialism, emigration, and globalization. The memory of

forced labor is necessarily transnational: Hungarian Jewish slave laborers were transported to

Serbia, while Yugoslav laborers were sent across the Reich to work in various factories such as

Daimler-Benz (today's Mercedes-Benz), or as far North as Norway. Zograf's *Borske beležnice*

emerged from a collaboration with a group of artists from the former Yugoslavia, Romania, and

Germany; "Missing Stories: Forced Labour under Nazi Occupation. An Artistic Approach." The

project's aim is to document the transnational history of forced labor across Europe during

WWII from Hungarian Jewish labor servicemen in Bor to Serbian forced laborers in Austria and

Bavaria. In doing so, these projects succeed in revealing the spectral mark of genocide upon

contemporary European infrastructure from the Autobahn to economic giants such as Mercedes

and Siemens,[86] Zograf as well as other artists working on the "Missing Stories" project, draw

attention to the continuous reuse of these sites for both socialist and (neoliberal) capitalist labor

and production which has rendered these spaces mute as sites of testimony and memory. The Bor

labor camps were a Todt organization (OT) operation, the same organization that also initiated

the construction of the German Autobahn and Bor workers were de facto employees of Seimens,

a German industrial manufacturing giant still operative today (Csapody 17). Because

corporations such as Mercedes-Benz and Seimens have not (as in the case of Mercedes) or have

only recently acknowledged their complicity in forced labor during WWII (in the case of

Siemens), projects like Zograf's are significant. By layering the labor of Jewish servicemen in

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[86] Other notable post-Yugoslav engagements involved in the "Missing Histories" project include Lenka Đorđević's audio-visual installation, *EXIT*, which includes segments from the testimony of a Montenegrin forced laborer, Hasena Sulojdžić-Terzić, who was imprisoned in a German concentration camp, Ludwigsfelde, where she was forced to work in the Daimler-Benz (today known as Mercedes-Benz) munition factory.

Bor over the economic landscapes of contemporary Europe, Zograf uncovers the individual

histories of forced labor that produce counter-memory capable of reckoning with deeply

imbedded networks of violence that have allowed these companies to reap the wealth and

prestige that they maintain to this day.[87]

The graphic novel rendition of the fate of a Hungarian poet and Jewish slave laborer

during WWII in the Bor copper mines also finds resonance in the 1990s and the present as the

mine continues to figure as a site of exploitation and spatial violence.[88] Just as Germany had its

collective reckoning with their corporate giants, and with it, the Holocaust's direct link to

capitalist modernity, these "technologies of violence" were used again to destroy designated

Others during the Yugoslav dissolution wars.[89] In the same interview with *Portal Novosti* cited

in the previous section, Zograf suggests that the problematic lacunas in Yugoslav Holocaust

memory led to the tragic failure to recognize the reusing of these same technologies and

spatialities of mass murder during the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s.[90] As he alludes to

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[87] In 1961 and 1998, Seimens began compensating former slave laborers after lawsuits by the U.S. and victims. Its company page now includes the following statement in its corporate history:

"Siemens acknowledges its past. This also goes for the company's actions during the time of National Socialism. The fact that Siemens allowed people to work against their will during a time when the company was an integral part of the wartime economy of the national socialistic rogue regime is something that the company's current top management and employees deeply regret. Based on an awareness of this history and to take responsibility before it, the company is committed to engaging this past in a variety of ways."

[89] This is not to say that the Bosnian genocide and Holocaust unfolded in the same way. There are certainly differences.

[90] „Oni su bili bliže nekim savremenim idejama, ali ono što je zaista falilo bila je pažnja koja bi bila usmerena na dešavanja na tim mestima. Nije se dovoljno bavilo beleženjem i to naučnim beleženjem onoga što se zbivalo u logorima, bilo da su u pitanju logori eksterminacije ili radni logori. To je veliki problem. Nemamo izgrađenu svest o tome šta se ovde dešavalo tokom Drugog svetskog rata i to se ispostavilo, naročito u ovoj sredini, kao tragična okolnost jer su se 1990-ih ponovile mnoge od tih tehnika ubijanja. Oni koji su bili žrtve sad su upotrebili istu tehniku eksterminacije da bi se obračunali sa svojim neprijateljima, a to se desilo zahvaljujući tome što smo potiskivali prošlost" https://www.portalnovosti.com/aleksandar-zograf-ne-mozete-ponistiti-ljudsko-bice

here, it is difficult for the intended audience today in the former Yugoslavia to read the story of

Miklós Radnóti in Bor without drawing lines of association between the Holocaust and the

breakup as mines again became concentration camps again and the former Yugoslavia a

landscape of mass graves, missing bodies and objects left behind by those lives as their only

markers of identification. Zograf's interview with *Portal Novosti* indicates how the *The Bor*

Notebook also confronts the enforced blind spots of Serbian official memory which refuse to

recognize these spaces' violent histories and continued bearing on the present. [91] Yet, there are

also continued associations with the mine as a site of exploitation following Serbia's post-

communist transition to a neoliberal economy that has quite literally sold the country to the

highest bidding international buyer, including Bor. The recurrent spatiality of the mine as a site

of violence and exploitation thus suggests that it is one that continues to enact forms of spatial

violence in the present: in Prijedor, the Omarska mining complex became a site of genocidal

murder against Bosnian Muslims during the breakup of Yugoslavia, while in 2004, the

international steel conglomerate ArcelorMittal bought the Omarska mining complex, allowing on

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[91] In another interview conducted by *Portal Novosti*, Radnóti's time in Bor, Kiš's translation of the *Bor Notebook,* and the Prijedor ethnic cleansing campaigns form a particular charged connective link between memories of extreme violence. The interview explores a recent novel by Darko Cvijetić, *Schindlerov lift/Schindler's Lift,* also published in 2018 (the title is a reference both to the company that installs elevators throughout the Balkans and Central Europe as well as a play on of Steven Spielberg's well-known Holocaust film, *Schindler's List*), which chronicles the descent of the Prijedor mining town into a concentration camp during the 1990s through the life and death of a multiethnic panel house community. After Cvijetić recalls a writer's meeting in 1990, where Dobrica Ćosić and Aleksandar Tišma were also present, the interviewer then asks if a sort of mnemonic circle had come full circle when Cvijetić later brought *A Tomb for Boris Davidovič* to the stage "Nedavno smo razgovarali sa Aleksandrom Zografom koji je pravio strip-priču o mađarskom pjesniku Miklošu Radnotiju koji je završio u borskom logoru, čije pjesme je opet prevodio Kiš, a po njegovom romanu 'Grobnica za Borisa Davidoviča' na 20-godišnjicu njegove smrti u prijedorskom ste kazalištu igrali predstavu. Krug se zatvorio?"[91] (A little while ago we spoke with Aleksandar Zograf who did a graphic novel about the Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti who worked in the Bor camps, and whom Kiš also translated, and now Kiš's *A Tomb for Boris Davidovič* has been adapted the stage on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of his death in the Prijedor theater. Has it come full circle?")
https://www.portalnovosti.com/darko-cvijetic-u-soliterima-su-bukvalno-susjedi-napadali-susjede

occasion the family of victims there to perform ceremonies and search for their dead. In Andrew Herscher's words, the cooptation of former sites of extreme violence such as mining complexes like those in Prijedor indicate how in fact "the war continued, in other words, not least by explicit denial of its violence and implicit acceptance of its results. Postwar reconstruction has extended the war's continuation, with the architectural history of this reconstruction exposing the blurry boundaries between wartime and postwar conditions" (Herscher 464). As described in the opening of this chapter, the Chinese company Ziijn copper currently owns the Bor mine and the grounds where Radnóti and other Hungarian Jewish labor servicemen were once imprisoned and has committed several human rights abuses as well as produced ecological disaster in the region.[92]

The memory-work that Zograf's graphic novel attends to in its 'return' to Bor is thus concerned with these recurrent "spatialities" and "landscapes" which describes how cultural memories of the Holocaust are constantly renegotiated alongside other memories that exist within, alongside or around it (Rothberg 2013). With direct reference to the role of space and more specifically, spatialities, in the formation of multidirectional memories, Rothberg locates the role that recurrent landscapes like the mine as a site of violence across Europe and Africa, can root "implicated modes of relations" that "encompass bystanders, beneficiaries, latecomers of the post-memory generation and others connected 'prosthetically' to pasts they did not directly experience (see Hirsch, 2012; Landsberg, 2004). These subject positions move us away from overt questions of guilt and innocence and leave us in a more complex and uncertain moral and ethical terrain—a terrain in which many of us live most of the time" (Rothberg 2013: 40).

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[92] More recently at the time of writing, the intentions of the Rio Tinto to build a lithium mine in Serbia led to massive protests in Winter 2021 from citizens threatened with property expropriation and others worried about the severe toll that lithium exploitation will take on the surrounding environment and health of Serbian citizens.

Rothberg traces these concerns through the spatiality of the mine in the works of W.G. Sebald and the Jewish South African visual artist, William Kentridge, which links various histories of extreme violence from the Holocaust to colonialism and neocolonialism across Europe and Africa. The multidirectionality of the mine as an omnipresent space of oppression forces the recognition of a specific community's implication within a constellation of historical violence. As Rothberg also argues, images are particularly adept in staging multidirectional landscapes because of the way that overlay the past and present so that multiple historical images might impinge upon one another. In this way, multidirectional landscapes draw together a constellation of histories of extreme violence that exist simultaneously as centered around the mine as a symbol of oppression (Ibid. 47). The "horizontal" movements across this space in turn "establish networks of complicity and connection while forgoing the vertical descent into the depths that might signal identification with either perpetrators or victims of genocide" (Ibid.).

The hybridization of space and memory brings me back to my previous point, namely, that the remediation of *The Bor Notebook* across space and time necessarily latches onto intersecting histories of extreme violence. Because of these recurrent spatialities and technologies that overlap in and outside the frames of the graphic novel with the mine, I argue that Zograf's remediation of *The Bor Notebook* also stages a multidirectional landscape, where the memory of past and present forms of historical violence that occur in disparate times and spaces can be confronted through analogous spatialities as well as sites due to the ways that the Bor mine continues to figure as space of exploitation and violence. Zograf's graphic novel transports the legacy of the Bor labor camps to a 21st century, post-Yugoslav Serbian readership, prompting further conversation about how these technologies of racial, ethnic, and capitalist violence continued to be used against bodies. Although the Yugoslav dissolution wars or Bor's

buyout by the Zijin mining company are not represented or mentioned in any way in Zograf's graphic novel, I am suggesting that the graphic novel stages a form of multi-directional memory due to its focus on the mine as a spatiality of genocide, exploitation, and historical erasure. The "horizontal movements" Rothberg tracks above establish lines of continuity with embedded systems of oppression rather than the victims and perpetrators themselves. As I have argued, the focalization on a singular victim, i.e., Radnóti, does not suggest forms of identification, but an embodied way of receiving history and recognizing spaces of violence. The constructed images promote these horizontal movements for the Serbian audience who will receive *The Bor Notebook* as it forces a certain self-reflexivity into their own responsibility to multilayered histories of violence and the continued systems of oppression that the Bor mine and forced labor's expansive mnemonic infrastructure represents. The remediation of *The Bor Notebook's* various mediations in turn, from graphic novel to translation further lays bare this site as one that absorbs intersecting histories of ethnonationalist politics, genocide and neoliberal capitalism that extend deep lines of association between the Holocaust, the Yugoslav dissolution wars of the 1990s and post-Yugoslav Serbian society.

The Bor Notebook and the legacy of a Hungarian poet in the Bor labor camps thus presents an unexpected case of memory that has managed to traverse the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav divide—one that in fact links various mnemonic cultures and positions of witness to the Holocaust. Given the overwhelming dominance of ethnonationalist politics in contemporary Central Europe and the Balkans that seek to contain memory within the confines of the nation-state, *The Bor Notebook's* movements importantly demonstrate that the most productive forms of memory are those that transcend ethnic, linguistic, national, and generational boundaries. The movement and transformation of *The Bor Notebook* via translation and remediation has created a

transnational community of readers within the space of the former Yugoslavia. With each

movement across time and space, this memory is necessarily mediated in the process;

transformed by language, localized, and hybridized as it reaches different readerships who make

new associations to *The Bor Notebook*. In Kiš's case, translation served as a site for exploring

childhood traumas and forging a way out of the ethnonationalist binds to language, identity, and

memory that became increasingly omnipresent in Yugoslavia towards the 1980s and 1990s. For

Zograf's generation, the landscapes of violence encountered in *The Bor Notebook* are

multilayered, where the act of 'looking at' the Holocaust forces us to analyze our own

relationships and responsibilities to Holocaust memory, its individual histories, and recurrent

modes of violence that resonate Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslavia's mnemonic landscapes. This

chapter subsequently makes a case for studying how medias move and transform memory in

productive ways— even reusing or referring to others in the process as Zograf's *Borske beležnice*

does—in order to think beyond the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav rupture that dominates studies

on post-socialist memory dynamics.

Chapter 3

Mediating Gendered Landscapes of Pain and Trauma: Women's Testimonies from Goli otok and Sveti Grgur

Figure 4.1

Andreja Kulunčić, *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, drawing, chalk on packing paper, 2020.[93]

I.   **Women's memories of the Yugoslav Informbiro period and corrective labor camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur**

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[93] Photos reproduced with Andreja Kulunčić's permission.

The use of forced labor as a method of dehumanization did not end with the Holocaust in Yugoslavia. Only three years after the official end of the war, the Tito-Stalin split of 1948 initiated a period of repressive de-Stalinization in Yugoslavia during which the Yugoslav secret police (UDBA) purged the communist party of real and imagined Stalinist supporters and political enemies, otherwise referred to as the *ibeovci* (Cominformists). The purges resulted in a series of arrests and the creation of prisons and corrective labor camps throughout Yugoslavia, the most notorious of which were located on the Adriatic islands of Goli otok and Sveti Grgur where around 17,000 men and 860 women were imprisoned from 1949-1956.[94]

This chapter maps the production of gendered memory on the Informbiro period and re-educative camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur in Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav memory. I more closely examine the relationship between spaces of extreme violence and the body, focusing on embodied strategies of memory that women employ to self-narrate their unique experiences of oppression, pain, and trauma. In comparison to men who began publishing testimony and literary works on their experiences in the camps by the 1970s, women did not verbalize their experiences publicly until the 1990s. The reasons for women's silences were complex, imposed externally by the state as well as internally: UDBA continued to surveil former prisoners and threaten them and their families, while at the same time they suffered deep psychological trauma and shame which prevented many women from speaking openly of their experiences on the islands. In addition, women did not have the same political and social agency as men did in Yugoslavia despite the initial promises of the revolution, which further impacted their feelings of self-worth

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[94] Other prisons and camps were located on the islands of Ugljan, Rab, Vis and Korčula, and in prisons in Bileća, Stolac, Ramski Rit, Požarevac, Stara Gradiška, among others (Jambrešić-Kirin 2013:39). Also see for reference Banac, Ivo *With Stalin against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.

and value in society after their release from the camps (Jambrešić-Kirin 2014). While men were later upheld as dissidents in the ethnonationalist and anti-communist memory regimes that emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s, women's memories of the camps were not granted nearly the same attention and have been marginalized within larger discourses surrounding the legacy of state-sanctioned violence in Yugoslavia. As Renata Jambrešić-Kirin summarizes, "They (women) were not a part of the narratives of Yugoslav domestic dissidents or political victims, and thus not exaggerated or re-used in symbolic nation-building processes during the 1990s. Official communist denial of "rebellious women" as equal political prisoners has its echo in the recent rejection to understand those women as "survivors of totalitarianism" or to incorporate them within a specifically female discourse of victimization during and after the war in the nineties" (Ibid. 37).

As I explore here, women's belated testimonies on the camps are both narratives of witness as well as recovery and reconstruction that confront the all-encompassing violence of the camps on the physical body and self. The obsession with modelling 'desirable' biographies in the Yugoslav communist party, one that emphasized a "cultivation of values" based on revolutionary archetypes (namely partisan heroes) and their desired traits, transformed into something much more sinister during the purges as the biographies of the accused were systematically pulled apart and twisted in order to mark them as betrayers of nation and party (Ibid. 49). One's former biography, regardless of how exemplary it had once been by revolutionary standards, was replaced with a distorted version written by and under the sign of the state. Prisoners were then sent to perform socially beneficial labor as "re-education" in corrective labor camps. This corrective labor, however, was merely extended physical and psychological torture framed as reeducation with no other goal than impressing upon the prisoners their new identities as political

delinquents and undesirables. In focusing on women's testimonies, autobiographies, and self-narratives on their experiences, we can see the extent to which the camps irreversibly affected the outcome of their lives as well as the role their imprisonment played in shaping perceptions of self and identity. Much like female Holocaust survivors, the biographies of former prisoners of Goli otok and Sveti Grgur contain gaps and omissions produced by concentrationary violence.[95] Additionally, because former prisoners of the Yugoslav corrective labor camps were never rehabilitated, individual rehabilitations—whether in written or spoken form—are critical forms of self-recovery (Jambrešić-Kirin 2004). As I demonstrate here, women's testimonies reveal a desire to retrieve an entire life's history that had been deconstructed by the state during the purges as they respond to the camps' erasure of self and identity with self-narration, blending testimony with autobiography.

The task of reconstruction is not merely a verbal one, as I will show here, as the translation of one's life into narrative form, particularly a traumatic one, also foregrounds embodied forms of memory that respond to the camps' long-withstanding physical and symbolic violence against women's bodies and identities. As Jambrešić-Kirin argues, the testimonies of former female prisoners of the Yugoslav labor camps create feminist counter-archives that do not simply transmit information but also produce new forms of embodied and affective knowledge of the past (Jambrešić-Kirin 2021).[96] The focus on the speech act of testimony has traditionally elided these corporeal and affective terrains of women's memory that serve as critical counterpoints to

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[95] Drawing from an interview with Israeli writer Nava Semel, Lentin shows how women maintain this acute sense of having "come from another world" and the constant and oppressive presence of that world through autobiographical gaps as Semel compares her mother's narrative to a "black hole" which stood in stark contrast to her father's more "heroic" presentation of self and his survival (Lentin 185).

the repression of female bodies and their enforced erasure from official memory of the camps.[97] In turn, I show how embodiment in women's testimonies lays bare the body as the site of state repression and silencing while simultaneously working as an agent of memory production that counters erasure and rewrites women's pain back into traumatic landscapes—particularly those from which they have virtually been erased as represented by the absent memorial at the site of the former women's camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur.

In this chapter, I focus on two women's testimonies who were the first to publicly reckon with the legacy of the camps in a documentary series produced by Yugoslav author Danilo Kiš and Aleksandar Mandić in Israel. The documentary, which was released in 1990, features the testimonies of two Yugoslav-Israeli emigres, Eva Panić-Nahir and Ženi Lebl, who broke nearly half a century of collective silence on their experiences during the political turmoil in the late 1940s and 1950s.[98] The documentary, titled *Goli život/Bare Life* after the island Goli otok (which translates literally to the "bare island"), aired on Yugoslav television in 1990. In this documentary, the women's experiences are mediated through a male interlocutor, i.e., Kiš. Kiš's mediation is far from passive, however, as it actively directs the women's narratives to a larger discussion on persecution, Jewishness, identity, and a lineage of concentrationary worlds from the Holocaust to Goli otok and Sveti Grgur since both Eva Panić-Nahir and Ženi Lebl

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[97] See also Mandel, Naomi. *Against the Unspeakable: Complicity, the Holocaust, and Slavery in America.* Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006. Mandel argues that the reception of testimony in human rights discourse and scholarship overwhelmingly privileges the speech act in the verbalization of trauma and problematically renders genocide into the realm of the unspeakable.

[98] Milka Žicina is understood to be the first woman to write a book on her experience in the labor camps in the 1970s, however she kept the manuscript in a kitchen cabinet, and it was only published in Croatia in 2002 as *Sve, sve, sve…(Everything, Everything, Everything.* See for reference Katarzyna Taczynska's article "Diskurs o logoru Goli otok—ženska perspektiva." Književnost, no4. Filološki Fakultet, Univerzitet u Beogradu, 2014, pp. 131-142.

experienced the purges and interment in various prisons and labor camps throughout Yugoslavia less than a decade after surviving the Holocaust. In this way, I argue that Kiš assists in moving the corrective labor camps from a temporally fixed exemplar of "communist terror" as they continue to be upheld in official memory paradigms and into an extended lineage of state violence against bodies targeted for exclusion during disparate periods of nation building in Yugoslavia.

Following the documentary series, Lebl would go on to publish *Ljubičica bela: vic dug dve i po godine/White Violets: A Joke that Lasted Two and a Half Years*, a mix of her autobiography and testimony in 1990, first in Serbo-Croatian and later Hebrew, where it found a larger audience among its Israeli audience than in Yugoslavia. Panić-Nahir was the subject of several documentary series, including an Israeli documentary in which she returns to the former campgrounds on Goli otok (present day Croatia) with her daughter and granddaughter (*Eva* 2002). As Yugoslav-Israeli emigrees, their personal narratives have an added layer of self and group negotiation. Although Lebl and Panić-Nahir were not specifically targeted for being Jews, their internal expulsion from the Yugoslav national project in the late 1940s and 1950s and cycles of exclusion led them to consider emigration despite having much stronger ties to their Yugoslav identities than Jewish ones. Their testimonies subsequently lay bare the ways in which memory and testimony are shaped by emigration and the subsequent renegotiations of the self and identity that take place as a result of these movements across national spaces and languages. I use the concept of self-translation in my following analyses to examine the relationship between trauma, autobiography, emigration, and multilingual narration. Self-translation both reconstructs and amends gaps in linguistic selves (Bassnett 2013:16), while also putting the "self-translator" in a position to reauthorize the self, as can be seen in how Ženi Lebl forges a

route *back* to her life narrative through Hebrew, as well as the processes of self-translation between these two languages in the Israeli documentary *Eva*. The documentary shifts between Serbo-Croatian to Hebrew as Eva re-narrates her biography to her daughter and granddaughter and returns to Goli otok to recover an identity, including that of a mother, which she 'lost' when she was sent to the camps.

Thus, in analyzing these three testimonies together, I map the various levels of mediation that women's memory of the camps has undergone. Starting with the role of the male interlocutor (Kiš), I then move to individual acts of testimony, autobiographical reconstruction (*White Violets*) and self-translation (*Eva*). With the Israeli documentary *Eva,* I further analyze the implications of transgenerational mediations that layer traumatic recall with the voices of others (in this case Eva's daughter and granddaughter). In the following discussion, I first provide a brief history of the women's camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur, from where I move to an analysis of the ways in which Kiš's documentary film *Goli život* and Lebl and Panić-Nahir's testimonies each confront this site of memory.

II.   Women's Experiences on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur

The purges of the Yugoslav communist party following the Tito-Stalin split employed tactics drawn straight from Stalin's own playbook of state terror to persecute suspected Stalinist supporters and spies.[99] Prisoners were tortured physically and psychologically for months in UDBA prisons where they were coerced into confessing to anti-Yugoslav crimes. As historian Ivo Banac observes, it is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of true Cominformists in

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[99] Following Yugoslavia's split with the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslav political elites went on to pursue socialism through a "third way" which ultimately initiated trade with the West and established the non-aligned movement (formally established in 1956). This split also initiated the possibility for artistic creativity as discussed in the Introduction and Chapter 1 in connection with Bogdan Bogdanović, who forged a uniquely Yugoslav architectural aesthetic that departed from orthodox Soviet Socialist Realism.

Yugoslavia (Banac 1988). Allegiances to the Soviet Union varied across individuals and federal republics in Yugoslavia (Montenegrins and Serbs were over-represented in the camps). Later filmic and literary representations as well as testimonial materials from the camps would later capitalize on how seemingly trivial comments on the political schism could mark them as Stalinist supporters, as is the case in Emir Kusturica and Abdulah Sidran's celebrated film *When Father was Away on Business* (1985) when the protagonist's father is convicted for a sideways comment to his mistress about the absurdity of choosing a side in the political chaos. While the film approaches this complex and tumultuous period in Yugoslav history from a child's perspective, it also showcases the absurdity and pettiness of the adult world, the absurdity of Tito's repressive power regime and pettiness among men when denouncing one another became a way to climb the political career ladder and get rid of sexual rivals. It further depicts the extreme misogyny of political repression during this time when the boy's father sent to Goli otok returns and in revenge for his humiliation, rapes his mistress, who later tries to hang herself.

Ženi Lebl, for example, was arrested for recounting a joke about Tito that she had first heard from a male colleague, Vojo Đukić, who was also an informant. The reason for her arrest was not revealed to her at first and many possibilities were raised during the proceeding interrogations in jail, including fascist collaboration. Her ultimate "sin" against the party turned out to be a joke about Yugoslavia winning a prize for a thousand-kilogram white violet (a joke playing off the well-known partisan song "Druže Tito, Ljubičice bela, tebe voli omladina cela…" (Oh Comrade Tito, all the youth love white violets, all the youth love you…."). The male colleague, Đukić, had been pursuing Lebl romantically up until then, yet in a swift turn of events, he provoked her in order to remove his competition at the newspaper. After Lebl's arrest, he swiftly advanced to a foreign posting.

Even though Lebl had an exemplary revolutionary biography, joining the partisan movement

as a teenager and advancing into a successful career as a journalist at a major Yugoslav

newspaper, *Politika,* in 1949, she was nevertheless convicted of anti-Yugoslav activities and

sentenced to hard labor for her imagined crime.[100] The Cominformist purges bore many traces of

residual sexism and patriarchal attitudes within Yugoslav political practices. Men attacked

powerful women and female intellectuals as Cominformists as the case of Ženi Lebl

demonstrates, and many other women were misogynistically targeted as the wives, sisters, and

daughters of men convicted of anti-Yugoslav activities (Jambrešić-Kirin 2014). To borrow from

Hannah Arendt, "guilt by association is the main tool of the Purges" (Arendt 323) as spouses,

family members, friends, and colleagues were all expected to denounce the accused and bring

forth information on their anti-Yugoslav activities. Wives were advised to denounce and divorce

their husbands, sisters their own brothers. [101] When Eva Panić-Nahir's husband Rade Panić was

arrested and convicted for anti-Yugoslav activities despite having also been a dedicated partisan

fighter, he committed suicide in his jail cell. Eva Panić-Nahir was also a *partizanka* who fought

with and spied for the partisans with her husband.[102] Following Rade's suicide, however, Eva

was also arrested and urged to denounce him publicly as a traitor of party and nation. After

months of physical and psychological torture as well as a failed suicide attempt, Eva had still

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[100] The journalist contest that landed Lebl her job at *Politika* was held by Yugoslav statesman Milovan Dijlas, a detail that will become important to the trajectory of her life later on. When Đilas dissented in 1956, UDBA came again to the Lebl family apartment in Belgrade most likely with the intention to arrest her, however, she had already emigrated to Israel.

[101] One of the higher profile political prisoners in the women's camps was Miljuša Jovanović, the sister of Arso Jovanović, a top official in the Yugoslav national army who planned a military coup against Tito. After Arso was killed trying to cross the Romanian border in 1948, shortly after the Tito-Stalin split, Miljuša was arrested and sentenced to two years of hard labor on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur despite being a war invalid (she suffered frostbite while fighting in the partisans which permanently disabled her legs).

[102] Later, Eva would find out that they were arrested by mistake; rather, an actual NKDV agent falsely reported them and various others. When UDBA learned of this, they released Eva from the camps.

refused to denounce her husband and was subsequently deported to the women's camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur for her and her husband's "betrayal" of state and party.

The rendering of women as betrayers of state and party and the formation of spaces for "re-educating" delinquent female bodies represent the excesses of Yugoslavia's failed emancipatory project. The camps were a space for molding obedient female subjects while simultaneously un-making the heroic wartime *partizanka* and revolutionary woman. Coinciding with the existence of the women's camps, in 1953, the Yugoslav statesman Milovan Đilas gave a speech officially (self)dissolving the Women's Antifascist Front (AFŽ)—one of the most important feminist organizations in Yugoslavia in 1953—under the pretense that gender equality had been successfully achieved in Yugoslavia. Despite the national liberation movement's significant emphasis on women's mobilization and participation, the roles of former female *partizanka*s became more and more symbolic over time in comparison to men who participated actively in the government (see Batinić 2015). In turn, women continued to be significant underrepresented in the party and party leadership positions, while purges in the late 190s and 50s successfully removed a number of female intellectuals from their positions as powerful women were deemed suspicious and politically untrustworthy (Jambrešić-Kirin 2014).[103] Women were given the gender-coded designation of the *izdajnice* (betrayers) of the nation and party (Jambrešić-Kirin 2010) which further captured the inherent contradictions and implicit sexism of the Yugoslav communist party's gender politics.[104]

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[103] Women made up only 19.99 % of the Yugoslav communist party in 1948, according to Sabrina Ramet. See Ramet, Sabrina P. *Gender Politics in the Western Balkans: Women and Society in Yugoslavia and the Yugoslav Successor States*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999.

[104] While the Yugoslav communist party made strides in its commitment to gender equality in comparison to the interwar regime, the foundations of socialist gender equality in Marxist-Engels *općeljudska emancipacija*, denied women from talking about real equality (Loránd 52). Yugoslav feminists were often criticized for pointing out gender discrepancies and for organizing feminist organizations as party leadership perceived their actions to be a challenge to the communist party and its inherent mission to promote gender equality (Ramet 92).

Ultimately, the major failure of communist gender policies in Yugoslavia was its ineptitude in dismantling entrenched gender roles and patriarchal attitudes not only at home and in the family but in its mode of governance. In fact, the party merely replicated a patriarchal familial model during its persecution of political enemies. The state's expectation that Yugoslav citizens denounce their kin and show devotion to the larger familial structure that was the Yugoslav communist party acutely demonstrates the communist party's paternalistic mode of governance, in which the state assumes the position of the patriarch in the extended kinship model (or *zadruga* in South Slavic culture).[105] During the Tito-Stalin break, this familial mode of governance was inscribed into the very vocabulary of the party as the central committee of the Yugoslav government bore the code names *ćaća* (father), the Cominform *djed* (grandfather), the party *familija* (family) and the party congress *svadba* (wedding) (Jambrešić-Kirin 2010: 233) The Tito-Stalin break was thus phrased as a divorce with the Communist International, merely resulting in the formation of a smaller Yugoslav family with Tito replacing Stalin as the patriarchal head (Ibid. 234).

Following their conviction, the accused were sentenced without trial, and thus, without the opportunity to defend themselves, to "socially beneficial labor" at various labor camps across Yugoslavia, the most notorious of which were the camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. They were not told where they would be sent, though many had vague notions of an island for political prisoners. They were moved from prison cell to cattle-cars with other prisoners—an experience that has drawn many comparisons to the deportations to concentration camps during WWII.

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[105] Katherine Verdery's work introduces the notion of gender regimes to describe the East/Central European adoption of a patriarchal suprafamilial structure. See Verdery, Katherine. "From Parent-State to Family Patriarchs: Gender and Nation in Contemporary Eastern Europe." *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 8, no. 2, University of California Press, 1994, pp. 225–55.

From train cars that departed from prison cells and labor camps on the mainland they were

loaded into the hold of a boat on Krk, the *Punat*, which ferried prisoners over to the islands.

In July 1949, the first 1,200 (male) prisoners arrived on Goli otok (Jambrešić-Kirin 2010:

232).[106] Current estimates concur that nearly 17,000 male and 860 female prisoners were

sentenced to "socially beneficial labor" from 1949-1953 (društveno-koristan rad) (see Banac

1990 and *Hrvatski Leksikon* 1996 cited in Jambrešić-Kirin 2010). The camps were segregated by

gender; one side of Goli otok was reserved for women and the other for men. An additional camp

for women was also established on the nearby island of Sveti Grgur. Before their transformation

into labor camps, Goli otok had previously been the site of an Austro-Hungarian POW camp,

while Sveti Grgur was the site of a camp for Italian partisan POWS—the remnants of which

could still be seen with slogans such as "con Tito" ("with Tito") in Italian and "building

Yugoslav socialism" written on the walls. These remnants appeared to mock the new arrivals

who were there because of their offenses against Tito. Female prisoners testify that Goli otok

was the more brutal of the two camps because Sveti Grgur had a better climate with lusher

vegetation. The camps were not equipped to handle the extreme weather as the Mediterranean

boras (strong winds and storms) often uprooted what little existed of the camps' architecture and

the lack of rain made for extremely harsh living conditions on the islands during their initial

years. As Lebl and Panić-Nahir's testimonies in *Goli život* reveal, the conditions in the camps

were much worse in the beginning as better medical care, and stable barracks only became

available later on (Kiš/Mandić 116-17).[107] When they arrived, prisoners recall how those already

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[107] After the dissolution of the re-educative camps as relations improved with the Soviet Union in 1956, Goli otok became a juvenile delinquent detention center.

on the island would "howl" at them from the shore with phrases such as "Down with the *banda*,"

the *banda* being a derogatory term that referred to those who conspired against Tito. From there,

they were thrown into the water and forced to wade to shore and approach the unknown. As both

Lebl and Panić-Nahir would later compare their first impressions of the island in *Goli Život,* it

was as if they had reached an island of wild beasts ("divlje zveri"). These "wild beasts" revealed

themselves to be emaciated women with shorn heads and uniforms that looked like

"scarecrows," as Panić-Nahir recalls.

The emphasis on re-education through labor meant that the state would 'graciously' grant

prisoners a chance at redemption if they proved themselves through physical labor and self-

correction. The allegory that appears most frequently in men's and women's testimonies refers to

their tasks as Sisyphean: prisoners were forced to haul stones up and down a hill for hours on end

in the heat of day for no reason other than punishment. In short, socially beneficial labor was

actually physical and psychological torture framed as "reeducation," with no goal other than

impressing upon the prisoners their new identities as political delinquents. This self-correction

further manifested in camp "theaters" during which prisoners were expected to purge themselves

of their crimes regardless of whether they had committed them in the first place. Other self-

corrective work included letter writing in which they rewrote a version of their life history in

which they acknowledged the crimes they had committed and/or enemies of the state with whom

they were associated, otherwise known as the *raskritikovanje* (self-criticism). Prisoners were also

required to watch performances and listen to readings from party approved works that were

supposed to reflect Yugoslav political values.

The camps were also notorious for their internally imposed hierarchies among prisoners.

Certainly, hierarchies existed within the camps of National Socialism (such as between

muselmanner, Kapos, and other prisoners), however, in this case, prisoners were almost entirely

self-governed by the island's own version of "Kapos" as many women referred to them (see

Vera Winter interview and Eva Panić-Nahir testimonies in *Goli život* and *Eva*). [108] As later

testimony and autobiographical writing on the women's camps by female prisoners all reveal, the

women's camps were segregated into two internally maintained hierarchies: the *banda* and the

brigada. The *banda* consisting of new arrivals and those who had yet to be reeducated, or the

revidirke (women who had already been re-educated by 'proving' themselves to camp guards).

The *brigada* in turn consisted of the *revidirani/revidirke* and therefore held much more authority

in the camps' governance. In Eva Panić-Nahir's word, the re-educated were those who had

"proved to the collective that they hated Cominform enemies" (Mandić 76). The *banda* was

required to do most of the hard labor and suffered brutal physical abuse; they were often beaten

and even forced to run through a human tunnel, the notorious *špalir* where they would be beaten

by the other prisoners. Additionally, there were hierarchies within the banda itself and the lowest

rung in this category was referred to as the "boycotted." Panić-Nahir recalls that she was

boycotted for most of her time on the island because of her refusal to denounce her husband and

beat other prisoners. Prisoners who were boycotted were given even less food and water than

usual, deprived of sleep, and forced to work 12 hours a day. To transfer from the *banda* to the

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[108] Kapos were concentration camp prisoners who had special privileges and power over other prisoners. The muselmanner (a problematic term with racist implications) also refers to a particular category of prisoners that towed the line between the dead and the living in the camps. In Primo Levi's study, the muselmanner is the true witness of the camps as they are the ones who did not survive and thus witnessed the full horrors of the camps. A recent anthropological and sociological study by Michael Becker and Dennis Bock has reexamined the muselmanner, showing how the invention of this prisoner identity is shaped by more complex homosocial relations at extremes as well as preconceived notions of masculinity. See Becker, Michael, Bock, Dennis. "Muselmanner in Nazi Concentration Camps: Thinking Masculinity at the Extremes." *The Holocaust and Masculinities: Critical Inquires into the Presence and Absence of Men,* edited by Björn Krondorfer and Ovidiu Creanga, State University of New York Press, 2020, pp. 129-146.

brigada, prisoners had to prove that they had been re-educated by enthusiastically participating in the physical abuse of other prisoners. The testimonies of several prisoners (see for example, Vera Winter and Eva Grlić) reveal how prisoners were forced to participate in the *špalir* beatings to avoid being beaten themselves.[109] Not only were prisoners expected to beat and humiliate each other, they were also expected to provoke and spy on one another, thereby creating an environment in which solidarity among prisoners was nearly impossible, present rarely and only among individual as later testimonies would reveal.

Thus, the system of self-governance and hierarchies of authority in the women's camps formed a particular type of "gray zone" in Primo Levi's terms that evade easy judgment of prisoners' behaviors (Levi 1989). The camp system of beatings, oppression, and surveillance among fellow prisoners generated a vicious cycle of complicity based on shame and fear in which no group, neither the *banda* nor *brigada* can be seen as truly privileged. Thus, everything about the camps was set up to make one feel as they were truly national traitors from the physical labor, beatings, and public humiliations to the camp hierarchies. Such a system amplified the women's sense of shame after the fact and their resistance to verbalizing their experiences which would admit wrongdoing towards others.[110]

The intricacies of gendered experiences during state-sanctioned terror have long occupied a marginal position in European/global cultural memory of both the Second World War and postwar totalitarian regimes. Much of early scholarship on the Holocaust contended that bodies were essentially de-gendered, targeted as Jews rather than as women. However, feminist scholarship has countered this misnomer. Such works include Marianne Hirsch and Leon Spitzer's article on the presence and absence of women in the major documentary work *Shoah*

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[109] See Eva Grlić's memoir *Sjećanja* and the Vera Winter interview with The Goli Archipelago project.

by Claude Lanzmann, as well as Marianne Hirsch's subsequent studies on the implication of gender in Holocaust memory that amend the assumption that the Holocaust was not a gendered experience. Likewise, the testimonies of women who passed through the camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur in the late 1940s and 1950s ultimately reveal the profoundly different experiences that women had. Taken to separate camps from men, they traded sexual favors to male guards for protection, and were even raped. Their memories focus more succinctly on the deterioration of the body such as the lack of menstruation, and disability caused by severe malnutrition and hard labor. Panić-Nahir and Lebl's descriptions of the women as "wild beasts" cited above captures this severe degradation and even animalization of women's bodies in the camps. This animalization of the women's bodies maps onto what Agamben conceived of as "bare life," or politicized life that is targeted for exclusion from the sacred body of the nation. "Bare life" inhabits the "no man's land of the state of exception" which transforms into the concentration camps as "the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule" (Agamben, 168-9). However, the concept of bare life does not necessarily erase sexual and racial difference in its reduction of bodies to a singular entity, i.e., bare life, as other scholars have argued in their revisions to Agamben's work.[111] Bare life in the women's camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur created bodies which could be abused and violated inconsequentially. Sexual

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[111] Ewa Plonowska-Ziarek points out that Agamben's study does not adequately take into account gender and race, nor the ways that violence takes on different forms with respect to racial and sexual difference as the concept of rape and genocide would essentially cancel out his definition of bare life: "Agamben ignores the way bare life is implicated in the gendered, sexist, colonial, and racist configurations of biopolitics. If we argue that bare life emerges as the aftereffect of the destruction of the symbolic differences of gender, ethnicity, race, or class— differences that constitute political forms of life—this means that bare life is still negatively determined by the destruction of a *historically specific* way of life. Thus, another paradox of bare life is a simultaneous erasure of the political distinctions and negative differentiation retrospectively produced by such erasure" (Plonowska-Ziarek 93).

violence was present in both camps yet took place in different power hierarchies. Male rape was common among prisoners in the men's camp, whereas sexual violence and abuse of women was more often committed by camp guards. In *Goli život,* Lebl also reveals that certain guards had a "harem" of women, and although she does not go into further details, she implies that the women maintained his good grace through sexual favors. Lebl would also reveal being raped by a male doctor when she went to him for medical care.

The camps were also sites of reproductive violence that had long lasting effects on the women's social and political agency after the camps. Up until the creation of rape camps for Bosniak women during the Yugoslav dissolution wars, the women's camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur were the most extreme manifestation of systematic misogyny and gendered violence. The vast majority of female prisoners were in their prime childbearing years (Panić-Nahir recalls being one of the oldest women there at 33) and the years of strenuous labor and malnutrition in the camps damaged not only women's health, but also many women's reproductive capabilities (Jambrešić-Kirin). In a patriarchal system of governance that defined women's roles as producers and reproducers for the state, a woman who could not reproduce was rendered dysfunctional and thus further marginalized within Yugoslav society. Consequently, this patriarchal configuration of biopolitical control enacted in the space of the women's camps rendered women into non-being—not only their bodies and the biological capabilities of that body— but also through a form of symbolic death in which women would not actually be granted reentry into society despite the implicit pact between the state and prisoners' self-correction. Political prisoners of the Yugoslav camps were never publicly rehabilitated, most likely because Tito would remain in power until 1980, well after the dissolving of his camps. Former prisoners of the Yugoslav corrective labor camps were forced to re-enter society

enveloped in fear, suspicion, and continued surveillance. However, this continued repression was not experienced equally among men and women, as exemplified by women's long-lasting silences on their experiences.

Following their release from the camps, many women record being forced to give up their career aspirations and retreating into the home and family life. For men, this wasn't necessarily the case as several important Yugoslav writers and intellectuals such as Danko Grlić[112] (an important member of the Yugoslav Praxis group and Korčula summer school) and Dragoslav Mihailović (author of *Petrija's Wreath* and *When Pumpkins Blossom*) to name a few, were former prisoners on Goli otok. Dragoslav Mihailović's testimony would ride the tides of Serbian nationalism in the 1990s and his testimony on the camps, *Goli otok,* is symptomatic of what Tijana Matijević briefly refers to as the male-dissident "totalitarian paradigm" (Matijević 60). The dissolution of Yugoslavia would later allow some women to speak openly of their experiences without fear of repercussion (see, for example, interview with Vera Winter). For others, emigration or the dissolution of the Yugoslav multi-national project prompted them to

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[112] In comparison, Danko Grlić's wife, Eva Israel-Grlić, spent three years on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur as well, however, her autobiography *Sjećanja/Memories* (1998) reveals the shared disillusionment that women faced after their experiences in the camps that led her to focus on her family life and advancing the career of her husband. Eva Israel-Grlić's autobiography is another extremely important work to Jewish-women's writing in Yugoslavia, however, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will only be making brief mentions of it and intend to include it in a larger study. Eva Israel-Grlić was born in Budapest to an Ashkenazi Jewish mother from Hungary and a Sephardic father from Sarajevo. She grew up in Sarajevo where she became interested in the communist movement. She later moved to Zagreb. She and her mother escaped the Ustaša reign of terror and deportation of Jews in the NDH to concentration camps by joining the partisans however her first husband Rudolf Domanyi and father were murdered by the Ustaša. Her mother was presumably killed, however, Eva never found out how or where. After the war she married Danko Grlić who would later become a famous philosopher. They had a son Rajko Grlić, who is now an award-winning Croatian filmmaker. In 1949, Danko was arrested for anti-Yugoslav activities and sentenced to hard labor on Goli otok among other work brigades (including the highway of brotherhood and unity). Eva was also arrested and then released. She was arrested again in 1950 after making a remark to an UDBA officer that had confiscated their apartment that the Ustaša did the same thing to her family during the war. She presumes that this led to her three-year sentence on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. When she returned, she felt that she had no significant future as a woman and former prisoner and instead devoted herself to her husband and his work as a philosopher and integral member of the *Praxis* group.

salvage and preserve individual and collective histories. I now turn to the emergence of women's testimony in the 1990s with Danilo Kiš's *Goli život,* the first work to open the floodgates for women's memory in the 1990s.

III.   The Gendered Dynamics of Mediation: *Goli život*

Despite being terminally ill with lung cancer, Kiš arrived in Israel in 1989 with a small film crew to shoot a documentary series with Ženi Lebl and Eva Panić-Nahir. He had first met Lebl and Panić-Nahir, both Israeli emigres, when he was a guest at the Van Leer institute in Jerusalem in 1986. There, the women impressed upon him the urgency of bringing their stories to light as both felt that Kiš would be the ideal interlocutor for their testimonies (Mandić/Kiš 7). After their decade-long silences on their experiences, they entrusted their voices to a male mediator which granted them greater visibility; *Goli život* remains (even today) the most widely recognized work on women's memories of the re-educative camps that preempted the wave of biographical accounts that would emerge in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Before Lebl and Panić-Nahir's appearance in the 1990 documentary *Goli život*, women had very few representative models that would help them frame their testimonies and experiences. According to Jambrešić-Kirin, "unlike their male fellow sufferers, members of the cultural elite, who gradually claimed their right to publicly discuss Goli Otok by writing romanticized memoirs, documentary novels, theatre plays, stories ... women had neither a model nor a framework for the narrativization of their 'dissident' communist experience" (Jambrešić Kirin 2007: 15). In comparison, the traumatic reckoning with the Holocaust among the generation of survivors and child survivors (the 1.5 generation) provided a model for confronting the perpetuation of totalitarian violence and its concentrationary worlds in the 20th century. As Stijn Vervaet argues, Kiš applied the autobiographical frame first used in his Holocaust trilogy

(*Hourglass*, *Garden and Ashes*, *Early Sorrows*) to the Stalinist Gulags in *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. Additionally, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* was largely inspired by the memoir of Karlo Štajner, an Austrian-born Yugoslav who experienced the Soviet Gulag and published his account *7,000 Days in Siberia* in 1971. According to Jambrešić-Kirin, the emergence of male accounts of political oppression in Yugoslavia in the 1970s corresponded to wider cultural movements throughout the Eastern bloc as the experiences of the Stalinist Gulags began to surface in the *samizdat* and *tamizdat* and more open publication venues in Yugoslavia (Jambrešić-Kirin 2004). Some women's testimonies recorded in the late 1990s and 2000s appropriate received experiences and images of the Holocaust into their descriptions of their own experiences of the Yugoslav corrective labor camps, however, these comparisons are mostly generalizations that do not build significantly on previous work by Yugoslav women about their experiences in concentration camps during WWII.[113] The surfacing of women's experiences in the Stalinist Gulags is also a more recent phenomenon and women's testimonies on the camps have not received the same critical attention as men's accounts such as Aleksandar Solzhenitysn's *The Gulag Archipelago* which won the Nobel Prize in 1970.

While Kiš was hesitant to write a book about the camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur, he decided to record the women's testimonies in a documentary series, a medium that arguably

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[113] Widely-read and important novels on gendered experiences of the Holocaust by men include Kiš's *Psalm 44* and Aleksandar Tišma's *The Use of Man* and *Kapo* (see Chapter 1)—*Psalm 44* is based off a newspaper article about a woman who gave birth in a concentration camp, while *The Use of Man* and *Kapo* explore sexual violence and rape in the camps by both Nazis and fellow Jewish prisoners. Đorđe Lebović's *The Heavenly Squad* also raises important points about gender in the camps. Works by women writers include Frida Filipović's lesser-known film *Bitter Herbs* also deals with forced prostitution in the camps and was later published as a book in 2000, while one of the more significant works by a female author on the Holocaust, *The Ninth Circle* by Zora Dirnbah, received widespread critical acclaim after it was turned into a film by Slovenian director Franjo Štiglić. As I show in my next chapter, Judita Šalgo's works also deal with the relationship between gender and Holocaust memory. Her traumatic separation from her mother that was deeply impressed in her writing and as a response, she sought to rework her experience of wartime maternal substitution into representations of gender, linguistic, and ethnic fluidity.

granted the women's voices much more agency. In Kiš's words, *Goli život* was to become "our Shoah" ("naš Šoa"), a reference to Lanzmann's groundbreaking 1985 Holocaust documentary (*ibid*). The filming of *Goli Život* takes place in Tel Aviv, Haifa, the Kibbutz Shaar Haamakim, and its adjacent beaches.[114] The backdrop of sea and beach establishes a sense of topographical continuity with the women's camps on Sveti Grgur and Goli otok, while also creating an implicit tension between the otherwise leisurely activity of sitting on the beach and the women's testimonies on the brutal conditions on the island camps.[115]

Unfortunately, Kiš never got a chance to see the final product as he died in France shortly after concluding the documentary. *Goli život* was subsequently aired on Yugoslav television in 1990 as a four-part series. As Mandić recalls, it was one of the last programs that Yugoslavia would watch together as a nation, since by 1991 Yugoslavia had descended into civil wars that would result in national collapse by the end of the decade. Interestingly, the last thing that Yugoslavia would watch together as a nation also signaled a collective reckoning, albeit brief, with the violent foundations upon which the multi-national project was constructed. The documentary confronts the blurred lines between state-imposed amnesia and societal willingness to turn a blind eye to the oppression and dehumanization of Yugoslav citizens happening just offshore. Recounting the details of her release, Ženi Lebl recalls how they were forced to disembark from the *Punat*—the same boat that first brought them to the islands—in the pitch black of night. When the prisoners entered a few settlements on the coast, there was an apparent

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[114] Because the documentary series was presumably destroyed or misplaced in the 90s wars, very little of it can be found today. There are a few clips that I've been able to locate on YouTube; however, most of my analysis is informed by the script Aleksandar Mandić published in 2020.

[115] After suffering from muscle dystrophy in her hand due to the hard labor he was forced to perform in the camps, the doctor advised her to strengthen it by swimming in the ocean. As she recalls, the last place on earth she wanted to be was by the sea after Goli otok.

blackout as neither the houses nor the streetlights had electricity. Once they left the settlements, however, the lights immediately went back on. "They didn't dare see us," Lebl says (Mandić/Kiš 109). The documentary was received positively, although its impact was largely forgotten amid political turmoil and violent war and the film itself was physically lost, presumably during the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 which destroyed the Avala Tower and television headquarters.

In Kiš's words, *Goli život* was to be Yugoslavia's *Shoah,* a statement that merits further attention here due. As mentioned above, like *Shoah, Goli život* confronts societal willingness to turn a blind eye to state violence. And like *Shoah*, *Goli život* uses testimony— as the ultimate document of history—to generate the narrative. The documentary importantly records their voices for hours without interference by voice-overs or the distraction of place (there is no return to Goli otok in this documentary). In contrast, however, *Goli život* grants much greater visibility to the experiences of women during periods of state terror and more significantly here, explores the dynamics of gendered memory which would provide a template for many more women to come forth and speak of their experiences. The differences between gendered memory in the two documentary films, *Goli život* and its model *Shoah,* comes down to the power granted to women to produce testimony and with it, historical narrative. As Hirsch and Spitzer argue, in *Shoah,* the female subjects are reduced to linguistic go-betweens, background roles (the weeping women) or merely narrative fabric (women as affective subjects in the men's testimonies) (Marianne Hirsch and Leon Spitzer 1993). The necessity of gendered memory on the camps is unimportant to Lanzmann's documentary because in his view (as well as that of many scholars of the Holocaust) gender did not seem to be a significant factor for persecution; thus, it does not merit special attention even though more women and children were killed in the gas chambers than men due to their inability to prove their value as workers (see for reference Duchen & Bandhauer-Hoffmann

2000). *Goli život* in turn, reverses the gender roles of mediation and narration established in *Shoah*, where it is in fact a male mediator who serves as the women's interlocutor, and it is the women who remain the producers of testimony and historical narrative.

But even as a mediator, Kiš does continue to play a rather active role in the progression of the narrative as he directs and redirects the women's memories. He often asks them to elaborate on details of the camps (faces, names, numbers, the time of day), without attempting to fill in the gaps or impose superficial frames of understanding on their traumatic experiences. Kiš's mediation distills the fragmentariness and nonlinearity of testimony and traumatic recall, which on another level, also critically stages interactions between two histories of state violence within the women's personal biographies: both the Holocaust and the corrective laor camps. In *Goli život,* Kiš emphasizes the intersection between the state's gendering of bodies in the late 1940s and 50s with the racializing violence of the Holocaust in such a way that do not make facile equivalences between these two events, but rather confronts a much a much larger matrix of concentrationary worlds and state violence.

While Kiš could have feasibly completed a documentary that focused solely on the women's camps, the documentary's narrative fabric weaves the women's witness accounts on the brutality of the corrective labor camps together into a larger conversation on Jewishness, antisemitism, and emigration—questions that interested Kiš personally. His discussion with the women probes the borders of national belonging and mnemonic identities as both women were Yugoslav partisans (or "partizankas"), who fought in the antifascist struggle and contributed to the founding of the SFRY as a national project yet were ultimately forced to disavow their revolutionary biographies and contributions to the nation. Davor Beganović argues that Kiš's mediation of the women's testimonies in *Goli život* is a continuation of sorts on recurrent

subjects that he dealt with in his oeuvre related to Jewishness, identity, antisemitism, and the interworkings of totalitarian terror in the 20th century (Beganović 284). As I would add, the documentary expands on his critique of the nation as a central site of violence something which stems from his personal experiences during WWII in occupied Novi Sad and fascist Hungary that I explore in detail in Chapter 2. Expanding Kiš's confrontation with totalitarianism in the 20th century, the documentary also raises the critical question regarding how the experiences of state-sanctioned terror and camp worlds "after Auschwitz" should be approached and remembered.

In what follows, I focus more pointedly on the ways in which *Goli život* places the camps within an extended lineage of violence and bare life politics in the forging of the nation as the Holocaust necessarily underlines and interacts discursively with recurrent manifestations of state terror and concentrationary violence in the women's testimonies. This overlay of concentrationary worlds in the women's testimonies subsequently challenge their containment; rather, their testimonies of the collective labor camps are multilayered, or even "palimpsestic", as Max Silverman and Griselda Pollock call attention to in their definition of "concentrationary memory." Silverman and Pollock argue that the haunting spatiality of the concentration camps and its attached universe of violence is as much of a site of memory as it is an agent of memory that actively shape our relationship to past and present legacies of genocide, state violence, and their concentrationary worlds.[116] Proposing concentrationary memory (as opposed to merely

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[116] In Chapter 1, I establish architecture as a memory "agent" that shapes our relationship to the past. Mnemonic actors did not merely imbue Jewish heritage with significance, but rather, the fragmentation of Jewish streets, synagogues and cemeteries also reproduced the fragmentation of urban cosmopolitanisms after the Holocaust. The spatiality of the camps as a frame for postwar cultural memory operates in a similar way in Silverman's formulation of concentrationary memory.

traumatic memory) as the dominant force of cultural memory that is continuously brought to bear

on our present, they define concentrationary memory as:

"an agitated, agitating, anxious memory, heavy with fears that a terrible event initiated a
repeatable possibility in human history. It recognizes that what was generated in the
concentration camps in Germany and the countries Germany occupied during World War II must
not be buried under the ruins of destroyed crematoria at Auschwitz or effaced from mind by the
transformation of innumerable concentration camps into gardens of memory in Germany. It is a
memory that purposively erodes divisions between past and present, using specific histories to
become a constant probe with which to interrogate the present for any current affinities with
absolute horror and aspirations towards total domination….If total domination was the ambition
of those who created the horror of the concentrationary system, 'concentrationary memory' is the
necessary counterforce to that system" (Silverman and Pollock 2014: 1).[117]

Concentrationary memory "does not simply bring back the memory of one specific event (in

fact, it counters the very idea of the singularity of the event); instead, it puts each event into

contact with a complex history" (Ibid. 56). In staging these interactions between the Holocaust

and the corrective labor camps as they emerge in the women's biographies, the documentary

importantly confronts society's 'container culture' of sorts that sees the camps as confined

spaces of extremity. Rather, it expounds upon Agamben's argument that the camps are "not an

anomaly belonging to the past (even if still verifiable) but in some way (as) the hidden matrix

and *nomos* of the political space in which we are still living" (Agamben 166).[118] It places the

women's experiences of Othering during the Holocaust and the purges in an extended lineage of

violence that lays bare the nation's continued "search for new racialized and gendered targets of

exclusion, for the new living dead" (Plonowska-Ziarek 92). Despite the direction that Kiš's

questions seemingly take at first, the violent lineage that the women's testimonies trace over the

course of the documentary as I map below, do not locate antisemitism or even racial politics as a

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[117] See also Silverman *Palimpsestic Memory: The Holocaust and Colonialism in French and Francophone Fiction and Film.* 1st ed., New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.

[118] Agamben argues that the camps are in fact the "permanent spatial arrangement" of a society where "the state of exception begins to become the rule" (Agamben 169).

common denominator for persecution; rather, they underline the nation as the central locus of bare life politics and the camps as its consequence. Kiš thereby reframes the legacy of the Holocaust in relation to the Yugoslav camps and vice versa, repositioning the women's individual memory of persecution at the intersection of successive national projects that have legitimized themselves through the creation of concentrationary worlds for the destruction of undesirable bodies. It dissects the process of Othering and its unmaking of the Other's biography and identity.

The very first episode in the documentary series takes place in Tel Aviv, the city that Ženi Lebl now calls home after nearly 40 years in emigration. Kiš begins by asking Lebl to talk about her life starting with her birth in Aleksinac and gymnasium years. The second question that Kiš proceeds to ask is "When did you come to the realization that you were Jewish, and did you come to this realization in your childhood? What did it mean to you?" (12). Lebl responds that she first realized that she was Jewish in primary school when a teacher asked them to state their name and religion. Because all her other classmates in Aleksinac were of Serbian Orthodox faith, she also claimed to be Serbian Orthodox to which her teacher responded that "with a name like that" she was certainly Jewish. Lebl recalls how she ran away from school that day with the intention of never returning, believing that being Jewish was something terrible. Lebl then describes how she was a teenager when the Nazis occupied Belgrade and began to dismantle Serbian Jew's rights overnight with the assistance of Nedić's antisemitic quisling government. Over the course of the documentary, we learn that she escaped Belgrade just before she would have been interned with her mother in the former Sajmište fairgrounds which functioned as a concertation camp for Belgrade's Jewish and Roma citizens. At only 14 years old, she ran away from home after witnessing a Nazi officer shoot their family dog (and realizing this would be

their fate as well) and boarded a train full of refugees from Šabac and Novi Sad where she heard whispers of the horrors that had taken place there.[119] She ended up in Niš, a city in southern Serbia near the Bulgarian border. Her mother was later murdered in the duše-gupke vans that the S.S. drove through the streets of Belgrade from Sajmište. These vehicles, which were outfitted with Zyklon gas, were the precursor and more "costly" version of the gas chambers. Meanwhile, as Serbia was officially declared "Judenfrei" in 1941, Lebl changed her name to the Serbian-Orthodox Jovanka Lazić. In Niš, she joined the underground partisan press until her group was betrayed and they were imprisoned by Bulgarian police who beat and tortured them. The Bulgarian police then handed them over to the Germans where they were interred in a camp for prisoners of war. She was then sent to a Gestapo prison in Berlin and sentenced to death for her communist activities (as her adopted name Jovanka Lazić did not betray her Jewish roots). The Gestapo transferred her from prison to prison in the chaos of National Socialism's final days and these transfers ended up becoming the only thing that kept her alive until Berlin's liberation by the Red Army in 1945. At the end of the war, she managed to return home to Belgrade where she was reunited with her father and brother who survived their interment in various concentration and labor camps, and partisan brigades.

Eva Panić-Nahir's response to the same questions reveals a much different relationship to Jewishness. For Panić-Nahir, her Yugoslav identity eclipsed all other markers of identity that she found unnecessarily complicated. Eva (because I also discuss her husband Rade Panić, I will call her Eva to avoid any confusion) was from a well to do Hungarian Jewish family from Čakovec, a

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[119] Chapter 1, 2 and 3 have all explored the 1942 Raids in Novi Sad, where the occupying Hungarian army massacred the city's Serbian, Jewish and Roma citizens on the banks of the Danube, an event that essentially foreshadowed the violence yet to come. Jewish refugees had gathered in Šabac from across Central Europe, particularly Austria, starting in 1939. In 1941, the Nazis occupied the area and massacred all male Jewish refugees and deported female and child refugees to concentration camps in occupied Serbia.

borderland town near the present-day intersections of Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia. Despite being a native Hungarian speaker, she never betrays this, not even to Kiš who comes from a similar linguistic background, using Serbo-Croatian as her primary language. Eva reflects on the Jewish community in Čakovec, one that consisted largely of Hungarian-born socialists who were forced to flee Hungary after the failure of the brief Soviet Republic established in the country in 1919. Many of these socialist emigrees settled just behind the border in former Hungarian lands that had recently joined newly formed nation-states, such as Čakovec in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, where they formed what Eva saw as a rather progressive, left-wing Jewish community. Like Lebl, Eva claims that she didn't encounter antisemitism in Yugoslavia until WWII; her in-laws, who were extremely poor Serbian peasants took no issue with the fact that their son was marrying a Jewish woman. Rather, the marriage generated much more controversy in Eva's family, who only agreed to let them marry in 1939 when the town's rabbi advised her father to do whatever he could to "save at least one child" (Mandić/Kiš 20). Eva's parents were later deported and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Because of their persecution by various domestic and occupying fascist forces, both women became devoted revolutionaries who grafted their sense of purpose as well as identity onto the building of the Yugoslav socialist project. However, in the end, this identity was torn out from under them when they were imprisoned for so-called anti-Yugoslav activities and sent to the camps. In the first segment in which she appears in the documentary, Eva recounts a certain May 8th, Women's Day, on Sveti Grgur in 1954, during which the women were forced to line up and sing the lyrics of a well-known song, "And we will soon be on the front, us women, and we are going to build our nation, work, work…And every day will be even better and one step closer to freedom. I'm setting out on the only path that Tito leads us down." This song, sung from the

women's camp on Sveti Grgur, reflects the painful distortion of the Yugoslav national project as an emancipatory ideal to which all ethnicities, both men and women would contribute. Rather, these women were forced to sing their allegiances as part of their re-education, now that they had become the *izdajnice* upon which the state's totalizing authority had been inscribed. These bodies were still "building" Yugoslav socialism in a way, but now as the expendable lives of the national-revolutionary project. The juxtaposition here confronts the foundational myth of Yugoslavia, showing how this 'building' of the national project is always to be founded on some form of violence against bodies.

The ensuing segments of the documentary provide the women with a space to discuss the brutality they experienced in the camps, drawing attention the camp hierarchies and systems of humiliation and torture discussed earlier. In Beganović's analysis, the precision with which Kiš devotes to his role as interlocutor not only gives the women the chance to relate their suppressed, traumatic experiences in the camps but also counters their dehumanization as he pushes them to provide specific details on their experiences as well as explain the camp jargon that dots their testimonies. In demanding that they translate the camp jargon, Kiš deconstructs the very language of the women's dehumanization (Beganović 292).

The interpolation of the women as Jews during the purges and in the camps is broached in the documentary, as both women recall how UDBA and fellow prisoners in the camps singled them out as Jews as they were simultaneously accused of being fascist collaborators. Eva recalls how the *brigada* once forced her to perform a Nazi march despite her protests that she was Jewish. The women both agree that UDBA used Jewishness and their suffering during the Holocaust as a means of "hitting a nerve" in Lebl's words, rather than explicit antisemitism, as their narratives of survival and resistance were distorted (if the rest of their family was murdered,

how did they survive? They must have been collaborating with the Nazis; Why didn't you

emigrate to Palestine if you're a Jew?) (Mandić/Kiš 120). Yet both women ultimately deny that

they experienced any true antisemitism in Yugoslavia after the Holocaust. Instead, they argue

that their denigration as Jewish fascist collaborators, betrayers of party and nation was a means

of unmaking their revolutionary and individual biographies to assert power over their bodies—

something their personal narratives will also critically address. The deconstruction of the

symbolic Other, whether as Jew or betrayer of nation and party, thereby legitimizes their

expulsion from the nation.

The documentary is bookended by this discussion of Jewishness, opening with Kiš's

question directed at the women on how they first came to the realization that they were Jewish

and ends with a consideration of how the trauma they experienced in the camps influenced their

decision to emigrate to Israel, asking whether the antisemitism they experienced in Yugoslavia

forced them to leave. Such a question capitalizes on the predominate experience of Jewish

emigration to Israel following centuries of pogroms, Jewish persecution, the Holocaust in

Europe, and the antisemitic purges that took place across the Eastern Bloc. However, both

women again counter this assumption, capitalizing on the often-blurred lines that lead to

emigration, and the acceptance of new homelands and identities. The women's forced expulsion

during successive periods of nation-building in Yugoslavia fragmented their sense of self and

collective identities. While both women ultimately believed themselves to be "Yugoslavs" to the

core, they later emigrated to Israel and embraced a more definitive Jewish collective identity in

emigration.

IV.   "Freedom is just further punishment:" Ženi Lebl's *Ljubičica bela*

Figure 4.2
Andreja Kulunčić, *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, on-site intervention as part of the project: stone inscription of the former detainee Ženi Lebl, Sveti Grgur Island, 2021. Photo Credit: Andreja Kulunčić.

Shortly after concluding the documentary series, Lebl would go on to publish a written

testimony in Israel at Kiš's urging. While the documentary importantly gave women the chance

to break their silences on their experiences and verbalize the obliterative violence of the purges

and corrective labor camps, their later efforts emerge as more personal acts of self-recovery and -

reconstruction. Citing the words of an anonymous prisoner, Lebl writes in the introduction to her

personal memoir *White Violets* that:

"We had to remain silent. The terms for release from Goli otok were that you swore you'd never say a word about what you saw or experienced there. There was something else, too, which I won't tell you" (Lebl 10)[120]

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[120] "Mi moramo da ćutimo. Uslov za odlazak sa Golog otoka je bio da zakuneš da ništa nećeš da govoriš o onome što si video i šta si doživeo. I još nešto, što neću da ti kažem" (Lebl 10).

For Lebl that elusive "something" which the speaker refuses to name, also sums up the reason for decades of silence imposed both externally as well as internally among the women. The refusal to name that elusive "something" that is actually the "center, the focus" (Ibid.), acknowledges the lacuna between silence and speech and the impossibility of bringing totality to the camps as they constantly emerge and reemerge in her present. As Matijević suggests in her reading of women's silences on the corrective labor camps in a literary work by Ildiko Lovaš, the gesturing to this inability to speak through the silence as Lebl does in *White Violets* above in fact "speaks of the silencing" (62). Lebl's narrative *White Violets,* by responding to that "something" that could not be told memorializes the "black hole" that Goli otok and Sveti Grgur represent in both her individual as well as collective narrative.

The main impetus of Lebl's *White Violets* seeks to reconstruct a body and self destroyed by such all-encompassing violence while also accounting for self-censorship and active silencing to counter state violence's negation of their bodies and expungement of their voices from the historical record. As Jambrešić-Kirin puts it "contrary to the basic idea of communist emancipation, according to which oppressed people and proletarians began to manage their own time by narrating their own history for the first time, former prisoners signed a formal pact of silence in order to regain their freedom but also be written out of the history of Yugoslav communism" (Jambrešić-Kirin 2014: 41). Given the violence enacted on women's autobiographies and identities, mediums of self-narration are critical modes of recovery and potent sites of resistance. The act of self-narrating for former camp prisoners is also particularly important due to the ways in which their biographies were distorted beyond recognition by the state as well as the ways in which the act of re-writing their biographies was used in routine torture on the islands in the *raskritikovanje* to further distort and negate women's sense of self

and identity. In Scarry's words "torture converts the vision of suffering into the wholly illusory but, to the torturers and the regime they represent, wholly convincing spectacle of power. The physical pain is so incontestably real that it seems to confer its quality of 'incontestable reality' on that power that has brought it into being. It is, of course, precisely because the reality of that power is so highly contestable, the regime so unstable, that torture is being used (Scarry 27)." Pain is so powerful because it is language-breaking, obliterating the tortured body's entire world of experience in the process: "one cannot betray or be false to something that has ceased to exist and, in the most literal way possible, the created world of thought and feeling, all the psychological and mental content that constitutes one's self and one's world, and that gives rise to and is in turn made possible by language, ceases to exist (Ibid)." In this understanding, pain and torture not only break down the body, but also the symbolic world of that body. The forced confession "objectifies" the pain of the body for the regime which further inscribes that body with its mark through extended systems of torture from prison cell to camp and continued regulation after their release. This inscription in turn erases all former markers of self and identity.

Lebl more succinctly narrows this obliteration of self and world in the prisons and camps down to "automortography" (automortografija), a term she introduces in a work of poetry attached to her memoir. Automortography, as a combination of the prefix *auto* (self), *mort* (death), and -ography as a form of writing or representation which I read as a play on autobiography, encapsulates the obliteration of prisoners' revolutionary biographies, as well as individual and collective identities. Automortography was a double-edged sword for partisan fighters like Lebl whose sense of identity and purpose was deeply imbedded within the Yugoslav revolutionary project—which for Lebl, began as soon as she was forced to wear the yellow star

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(recall she joined the movement at 14). Details of their autobiographies were distorted; as Lebl also discussed in an earlier testimony with Kiš, her interrogators took her survival during the Holocaust and transformed it into an act of betrayal, suggesting that she must have had a beneficial liaison with a Nazi officer, etc. The end result of this distortion and system of torture was that its hierarchies, beatings, backstabbing, pointless labor, public confessions, and further physical and psychological abuse, cancelled out of their autobiographies and replaced them with one written by and under the sign of the state.

White Violets lays bare the ways in which such totalizing violence of self, identity, and body defined her post-camp life, as this bodily and self-erasure eroded the borders of the camps across time and space, from the extreme peripherality of the camps (in a physical sense, as the camps were located inhabited islands far off the coast of the mainland) to the center; from the extremity of the camps to the banality of daily life as illustrated above. Following her return from Goli otok and Sveti Grgur, Lebl would soon realize that the state's mark of identification for her, that of the traitor, was permanent. Furthermore, the distortion and subsequent obliteration of her revolutionary wartime biography, that of "Jovanka-Ženi Lebl," a name that she kept even after the war which demonstrates the extent to which her sense of identity was grafted onto the revolution, also resulted in significant identity trauma and loss. Former prisoners were continuously surveilled by UDBA, to whom she was also expected to report any anti-Yugoslav activities as part of her continued self-correction. She was unable to find a job; when she returned to the newspaper to ask for an assignment (not as a writer as she had formerly been, but any position they could possibly offer) her colleagues declared that she was "worse than a war criminal". When she then reported to UDBA that she couldn't reassimilate back into society because everyone saw her as a prisoner, they asked her "what did you expect"? After this, she

never again reported to UDBA, realizing there was no point in attempting to prove her self-correction as she would never be granted entry back into society. Rather, the society she confronted operated as an extension of the camps as "freedom was only further punishment." She then sought permission from the Yugoslav Jewish Federation to emigrate to Israel, however this request was also denied for three years because the Federation questioned her decision to claim Jewish identity now when all those who wanted to emigrate had already left immediately after WWII. She became an alcoholic and considered committing suicide before finally receiving work in a rare act of kindness from a man who sympathized with her despair when she broke down during a job interview.

As Lebl also demonstrates in *White Violets*, the camps continued to affect and impinge upon the present. Many years after her ordeal on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur had seemingly come to an end, Lebl recalls how a friend of hers in Israel made a joke about Ben-Gurion, the first prime minister and founding figure of modern-day Israel. Her friend's joke produced a knee-jerk reaction of horror for Lebl who had been sentenced as an enemy of the state for her joke about Tito. With the everyday action of making a political joke, the trauma of the camps reemerge within her present. For Lebl, leaving Yugoslavia for Israel does not necessarily leave behind the trauma experienced in the homeland as trauma is, of course, not contained geographically. Women's silences on their experiences in the camps thus gesture to the long-reaching hand of state violence and its imprint on the body that extends far beyond its original sites and experiences.

In *White Violets,* she writes that her life had been marked by two erasures ("nestajanje"—the act of being missing). The first occurred during the Holocaust when she was marked for death in the Sajmište concentration camp and a Gestapo prison, fates she only narrowly escaped by

becoming Jovanka Lazić. The second occurred when she was arrested in 1949 and effectively "vanished" again. While not a space of mass death, the Yugoslav camp system essentially created a designated spatial arrangement for the enforced vanishing of dissident bodies. People who suddenly went missing were presumed to have been arrested, for instance, Lebl's father and brother were not told where she was, only that she was participating in labor brigades (a completely normal activity for the time) across Yugoslavia. Even more demonstrative of this are the bodies of those who died in the camps were never returned to their families. Lebl recalls the case of woman whose main artery in her leg was accidentally punctured carrying a barbed wire fence. They never found out what happened to her, whether she received care at a hospital on the mainland or was buried somewhere on the island. As I have demonstrated, the camps were also a space of a symbolic violence that negated their individual autobiographies during the *raskritikovanje* and confession theaters, which forced them to admit to activities and to knowing people they'd never committed or met in their lives, not to mention the continued torture that inscribed the identity of traitor upon them. This enforced erasure also rendered them into social-nonexistence because they were denied jobs and apartments among other benefits upon release—all essentially markers of citizenship in a socialist state, thereby suggesting that such repression enacted a form of social-death. For Lebl, this was amplified by the state's continued power over dissident women and their failed reintegration into society after the camps. Like many Yugoslav-Jews, she overcame this sense of absence wrought by the Holocaust after the war by grafting her sense of self onto the building of the Yugoslav multi-national project, which made her return from Goli otok and Sveti Grgur much more difficult now that she was stripped of any sense of purpose or overarching narrative that would fill in the gaps left by the camps. Instead, with all

narrative agency stripped from her, the state rewrote her identity as that of traitor of nation and party.

This necessity of rewriting the self in one's own words is necessitated by the trauma of the camps as well as the trauma of emigration in Lebl's case. Border crossings produce forms of identity and linguistic loss, but also new frameworks for identity. For Jewish emigres to Israel, this meant the adoption of a nationalized Jewish identity that may or may not have been a defining fixture of identity in the past as discussed above. It meant coming to terms with the 'lost' world and homeland, and the violence that rendered that former idea of homeland impossible. Expressing herself in Hebrew, a language she had to learn later in life following her emigration, triggered Lebl's fears of miscommunicating—a fear instilled in her by her prolonged torture in which her words were deliberately misconstrued—and initially led to further self-censorship. However, emigrating to Israel and learning Hebrew also forced her to confront her silencing long before she wrote *White Violets.* By the time Lebl published *White Violets* she had already become a recognized historian of Balkan Jewish history in Israel. After moving to Israel and confronting the initial shock and disillusionment of emigration, she eventually began to recover her sense of confidence, self-worth, as well as identity as a Yugoslav-Jew once she realized she could write and express herself in another language. This revelation occurred after she attended a conference abroad and had to relate her experiences back to her Israeli colleagues in Hebrew, something that was initially daunting, but her colleagues would find her voice to be engaging and witty. She then began to publish more short stories for newspapers in Hebrew, an act of writing and self-affirmation which eventually forged a route back to Serbo-Croatian and

Yugoslavia as she began working as a self-taught historian.[121] Her contributions to Jewish

historiography in the Balkans are quite significant and she is credited with initiating the first

serious studies on Jewish life and artistic culture in Serbia (see Rožman 2017). In this way, Lebl

reworked the fragmentation of language and identity through historical narrative. Thus, while

scholars such as Katarzyna Taczynska read Lebl's work as a historian as a means of negotiating

the world she lived in "suspended between Israel and Yugoslavia" (Taczynska 69), I would add

that we can go further to see her work as a historian as a means of asserting her agency as a

producer of historical narrative rather than passive victim.

White Violets in turn bears the mark of her identity as historian in interesting ways: it opens

with a letter by a member of the Macedonian Jewish community thanking her for shedding light

on their once vibrant community and their experiences during the Holocaust. In other parts of her

autobiography, in lieu of family photos which most often accompany autobiographical

narratives, she includes archival photos of sites of Jewish heritage around Belgrade such as the

Nova Sinagoga and Jewish cemetery. Lebl includes these most likely to show how her work as a

historian eventually came to define her, rather than her experience as a prisoner in the Yugoslav

labor camps. For Lebl, recording and reconstructing a Yugoslav-Jewish past in emigration

allowed her to recover a narrative voice that repositioned her individual trauma within a larger,

transnational narrative of loss, silence, and political silencing that Kiš first initiated in *Goli život*.

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[121] Lebl's works include: *Jevrejske knjige štampane u Beogradu 1837–1905, Jerusalimski muftija Haj Amin i Berlin*, *Do konačnog rešenja; Juče, Danas: Doprinos Jevreja sa teritorije bivše Jugoslavije Izraelu.* She was also a prolific translator and translated many works from Hebrew into Serbo-Croatian.

As Lebl writes, "I have a lot of *ersatz* for those lost years: I work on the past. But not my own. Not *that* past. I work on our people's past in the land of Yugoslavia" (166).[122]

In this way, these additions to her individual archive express her desire to recover and reconstruct individual and collective pasts. As Jasmina Lukić argues in her article on Eva Grlić, the decision to self-narrate in the instance of former Goli otok/Sveti Grgur prisoners is "an act of personal empowerment, part of an effort to articulate a new position of self-conscious subjectivity" that negotiates individual and group identities (Lukić 2004). *White Violets* re-writes her narrative as a means of reasserting a semblance of agency that was stripped from her in the camps. However, this re-writing does not just work on the level of the individual, but through a crossing of individual and collective silences, Jewish and gendered memory. In the conclusion of *White Violets,* Lebl writes:

"…. I wouldn't write about Glavnjača, Ramski Rit, Zabela (the VIII pavilion), both ends of Sveti Grgur and Goli otok if they had already been acknowledged and written about, resounded, and apologized for. But they are not. Even today, after more than forty-five years, the hundreds of women who passed through these sites live in silence and fear" (200).[123]

White Violets is thus written for the hundreds of women who passed through the extended topography of the Yugoslav camp system, from the prison cell in Glavnjača to various labor camps across Yugoslavia (Zabela, Ramski Rit, Sveti Grgur and Goli otok). This memory is further rooted in solidarity as a means of countering the continued repression and silencing of marginalized bodies in official memory. To return to the quote cited in the beginning of my

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[122] "Imam puno erzaca za svoje izgubljene godine: bavim se prošlošću. Ali ne svojom. Ne onom. Prošlošću svoga naroda na tlu Jugoslavije" (166).

[123] „….ne bih pisala o Glavnjači, Ramskom Ritu, Zabeli (VIII paviljon), dve strane ostrva Sveti Grgur i Golom otoku da je to stvar znana, opisana, opevana, prežaljena. Ali ona to nije. Stotine žena koje su kroz njih, kroz sva ta mesta, prošle – ćute, osećaju strah i danas, posle četrdeset i više godina)" (Lebl 200)

analysis of *White Violets,* Lebl's use of the words of another prisoner to define her own silences illustrates how this trauma must be negotiated in dialogue with others. In doing so, Lebl further reverses the camps' foreclosure of any sort of solidarity and community among prisoners as mandated by bare life politics.[124] The multiple crossings (between subject positions, individual and collective memory; the Holocaust and the Yugoslav labor camps) in *White Violets* ultimately lift Lebl's narrative from the position of repressed victim of the state, appealing instead to the emancipatory potentials of recovering individual and collective histories from oblivion.[125]

V. Self-translation and Re-Embodied Returns in *Eva*

In comparison to the men's camps which have become a site of dark tourism with tours on golf carts running daily through the former barracks, the women's camps on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur do not have an official memorial that marks their former grounds. Rather, in 2020, a group of grassroots activists led by Renata Jambrešić-Kirin, an anthropologist and foremost authority on women's experiences in the camps, and artist Andreja Kulunčić created a site of critical intervention within the barren landscape that memorializes women's difficult relationships to sites of extreme violence. These efforts include physical intervention via "exhibits" and memorial plaques reinscribed into the stone, contemporary dance performances and performance art performances.[126] The project, titled *Vi ste partiju izdale onda kada je trebalo da joj pomognete* ("You betrayed the party when you were supposed to help it)", translates women's

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[124] See Ziarek, Ewa Płonowska's article regarding the ways bare life politics attempts to foreclose solidarity and how women's resistance has confronted this. "Bare Life on Strike: Notes on the Biopolitics of Race and Gender." *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 107, no. 1, Duke University Press, 2008, pp. 89–105

[125] *White Violet* perhaps opened the floodgates for Lebl to write about her personal experiences of the Holocaust as well as she later published *Odjednnom drukčija, odjednom druga (Suddenly different, suddenly other)* and *Dnevnik jedne Judite* (*The Diary of One Judita*).

[126] I am immensely grateful to Renata Jambrešić-Kirin for sharing her materials on her ongoing research and memory activism with me.

relationships to sites of extreme violence, pain and trauma into an embodied counter-memorial that upholds women's bodies as producers of memory and historical narrative rather than simply bearers of traumatic pasts.[127] In one of Kulunčić's performances, *Razlomljena tijela* ("Fractured bodies"), she hunches on the side of a rocky hill, her back facing the cerulean blue sea and the ruins of a former barrack. Her hands work quickly to mold a handful of clay onto the rock in front of her. The viewer's attention is drawn to the movement of her hands shaping the clay into indiscernible figures that she then imprints into the otherwise unmarked landscape. The clay can be seen as representing the "fractured bodies", while the attention to the movement of Kulunčić's hands makes reference to the harsh labor, and visibility of the body as the instrument of labor and site of oppression, as the primary "weapon of re-education, but also resistance—individual resistance and means of survival" on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. [128]

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[127] See additionally, The Women of Goli Archipelago Goli at https://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info.

[128] "tijelo je bilo glavno oružje preodgoja, ali i opstanka—pojedinačnih otpora i taktika preživljavanja." See https://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/intervencije/performativna-izvedba/

Figure 4.3
Andreja Kulunčić, *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, in situ artistic intervention, Goli Otok, Croatia, 2021. Photo Credit: Ivo Martinović.

As can be seen here, Kulunčić and Jambrešić-Kirin's project seeks to reinscribe both the

embodied aspects of women's testimony back into an affective landscape of violence and

enforced forgetting. On other parts of the island, the words of individual women are etched onto

the rocks, which physically and symbolically performs the re-inscription of women's memory

back into the former campgrounds.
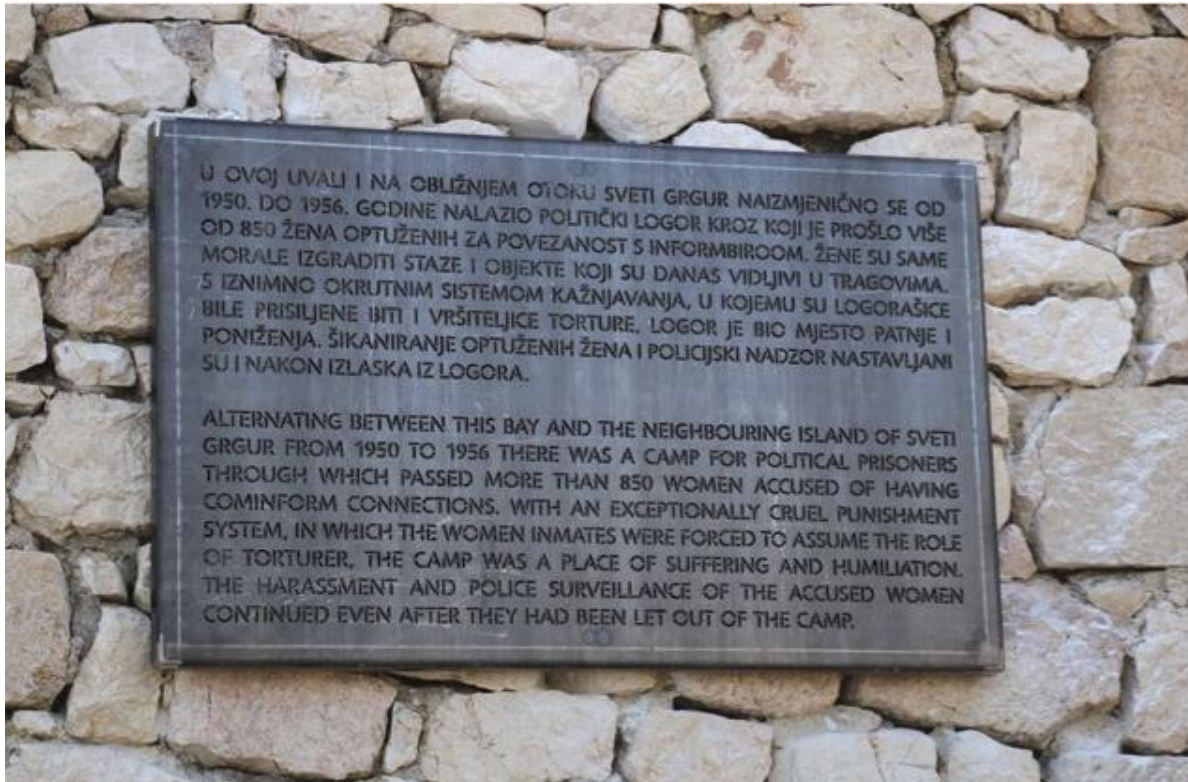
Figure 4.4

Andreja Kulunčić, *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, information board installed on the camp site as part of the project, Goli Otok, Croatia, 2020. Photo Credit: Andreja Kulunčić.
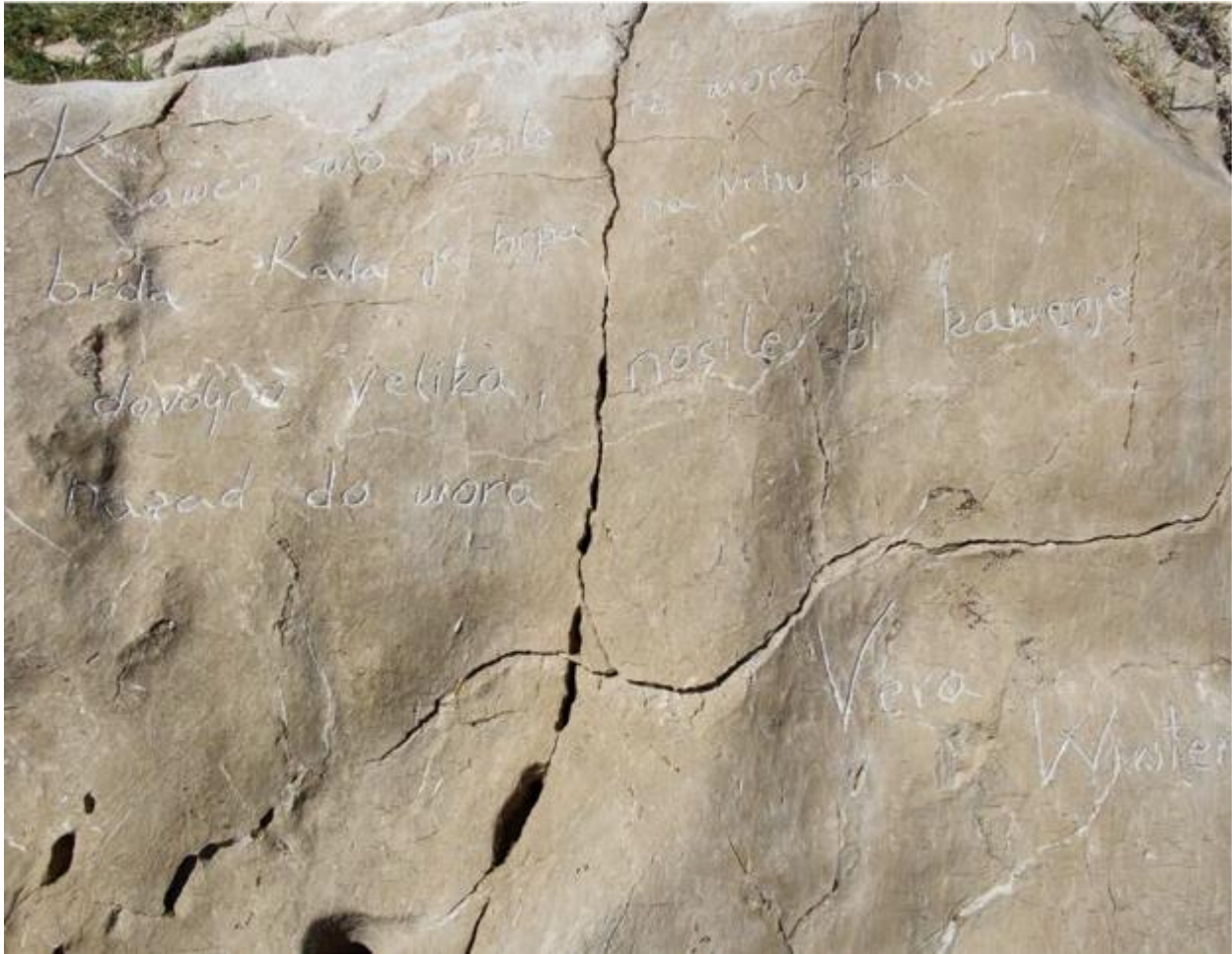
Figure 4.5

Andreja Kulunčić, *You Betrayed the Party Just When You Should Have Helped It*, on-site intervention as part of the project: stone inscription of the former detainee Vera Winter, Goli otok Island, 2020. Photo Credit: Andreja Kulunčić. "Kamen smo nosile iz mora na vrh brda. Kada je hrpa na vrhu brda bila dovoljna velika, nosile bi kamenje nazad do mora" (We carried rocks from the sea to the top of the hill. When the pile was sufficiently big, we would carry them back down to the sea."

As discerned from Ženi Lebl's personal narrative in *White Violets,* the camps are represented by a gaping absence in her biography to which she does not wish to return in order to resist granting it more power, however at the same time, with her testimony in *Goli život* and *White Violets* she addresses the necessity of returning to the site of her erasure even if from a distance, on the shores of Tel Aviv, as she re-writes her trauma back into her life narrative. Jambrešić-Kirin and Kulunčić's "spatial intervention" at the site of the former women's camps addresses how women's memory, long absent from the space, should be approached in ways that avoid the

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obvious politicization and touristification of the men's camp on the other side of Goli otok. How

can memory of such trauma and the violence that occurred there be re-inscribed onto the

landscape that bears little to no trace of what happened there? Such memorialization necessitates

features whose instability and impermanence embody complex mnemonic relationships to this

space.[129] This is why the project seeks to facilitate a discursive site of memory that is activated

via physical and performative acts of memory (dance, the "installations," and simply reinhabiting

space discussed above) gestures to histories of violence and trauma that resist spatial and

temporal containers. Whigham affirms this link between body and sites of memory remembering

genocide and state-sanctioned violence. Because "resonant violence is an embodied force; its

effects infuse our being and impact the ways we interact with others. By activating the body of

the viewer to engage with the memorial space, counter monuments highlight this embodied

presence of past violence, while at the same time giving the body a tool for responding to that

violence through engaging with the counter monument itself" (Whigham 73). The performative

site of memory on Goli otok likewise reactivates the body as producer of memory and agent for

confronting the violence of state-sanctioned terror beyond static forms of monumentalization.

Women's affective and corporeal ties to traumatic sites of memory are also clearly

framed in a 2002 documentary, *Eva,* in which Eva Panić-Nahir returns to the former women's

camp on Goli otok with her daughter, granddaughter, and an Israeli documentary crew who films

her confrontation with the trauma she experienced there. Similar to Lebl's *White Violets,* Eva's

confrontation with this space is motivated by the desire to recover a self and identity that was

'lost' in the camps. *Eva* is structured on the archetypal return journey that links important sites of

memory in Eva's personal biography. Eva begins her journey in Belgrade where she visits the

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[129] See https://www.zene-arhipelag-goli.info/intervencije-na-lokalitetu/

site of the UDBA prison where she held for months and where her husband Rade committed suicide; her birthplace in Čakovec (present-day Croatia) where she visits her family's former apartment before they were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Lendava (present-day Slovenia) where her daughter stayed while Eva was in the camps, Goli otok) and finally her husband's grave in Serbia before returning to her present-day home on the kibbutz Shaar Haamakim in Israel. While Eva is a loquacious and animated narrator—something that also comes across in her earlier testimony with Kiš in *Goli život*— her confrontation with specific sites of memory elicits emotional and bodily reactions that add new layers to Eva's spoken narrative.

The documentary can be read as a self-translation of Eva's testimony and autobiography. In comparison to *Goli život,* which takes place in Serbo-Croatian, the dialogue of *Eva* is largely conducted in Hebrew. Recounting her life story in Hebrew is necessitated by the act of leaving the homeland and confronting trauma in a different national, linguistic, and social context. Like all translation, self-translation is a form of rewriting that is marked by various additions and omissions as it attends to national and linguistic difference. Bassnett argues against the term "self-translation," claiming that it suggests an original. Instead, she prefers to use the term re-writing. However, I find self-translation a useful term in thinking about how Eva re-narrates and reconstructs her life-history and the self in another language. As I posed in the previous chapter on Miklós Radnóti's *The Bor Notebook,* testimony is always produced with an inherent orientation towards translation so that it may be heard, read, survive, etc. Additionally, traumatic recall does not bring forth the totality of the original event of trauma, but reconstructs it in a non-linear, fragmented way marked by difference and additions with each retelling.[130] Thus, the traumatic nature of her biography also challenges any assertion of an "original." Each narration

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[130] Bassnett also sees reconstruction as a central process of self-translation (20).

of Eva's life has its own implications for reconstructing her sense of self and identity, in this way producing a different "text."

As Bassnett writes, re-writing can acknowledge "an identity shift," and "create another original," something that is also taking place in the documentary *Eva,* which, although recounting many of the same details as in *Goli život,* is markedly different and focuses on Eva's maternal image. According to Mehtap Ozdemir, a self-translation of autobiography can amend a (self)image, often modifying and/or omitting certain facets to consolidate that self-image for a new linguistic and national audience (Ozdemir 2017).[131] One of the main goals of the documentary *Eva* in comparison to *Goli život* is to recover the loss of a specific self-image and/or identity, that of a mother, as it works through the transgenerational trauma of the camps as represented by Eva and Tijana's broken mother-daughter relationship. On one hand, this desire to reconcile Eva's and Tijana's relationship is conditioned by gendered expectations on women's responses under extreme duress. Zoe Waxman argues that societal expectations regarding women's roles have often been imposed on their testimonies from the Holocaust, thus, the stories of women who behaved as heroic and dutiful mothers have been made paradigmatic. However, there are also cases of "failed maternity", mothers who abandoned or even killed their newborn children under duress which are actively suppressed because of the horror they invoke. Testimony, as Waxman acknowledges, often involves "the rediscovering of an identity—be it witness, survivor, Jew, loving mother, or dutiful daughter, to name but a few," as testimony is always "mediated by the present" (Waxman 674). Likewise, in *Eva,* the documentary seeks to

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[131] I develop this thought from Mehtap Ozdemir's "Self-Translation as Testimony: Halide Edib Rewrites *The Turkish Ordeal"* in Castro, Olga, et al., editors. *Self-Translation and Power: Negotiating Identities in European Multilingual* (2017).

recovery an identity, that of a mother, that was supposedly "lost" when she abandoned her

daughter for the camps.

We learn that Eva had a choice before she was sent to Sveti Grgur: if she denounced her dead

husband Rade as a traitor on the front page of the widely read Yugoslav newspaper, *Borba,*

UDBA would allow her to return home to her daughter. Additionally, she would be able to keep

her apartment and job. If she did not, then she would be sent to the camps. Tijana, who was eight

years old at the time, was subsequently sent to live in Lendava with her mother's sister, an event

that affected her greatly not only because her mother was suddenly absent from her life without

explanation, but because her aunt was a cruel woman who psychologically abused her. In one

scene, Tijana walks around the empty apartment in Lendava, she shows us the apple cellar in

which they locked her as punishment. Tijana acknowledges that her mother's abandonment hurt

her significantly, and that she responded to it by acting out. When her aunt and uncle, unable to

deal with her behavior, locked in the cellar, she would march back and forth singing "I want you

to die" for them to hear. Her aunt and uncle, as Tijana puts it, were "ruins of human beings,"

concentration camp survivors who both had lost their former spouses and children and thus, as

Tijana remarks, certainly did not want her, a child who reminded them of their own lost children.

Tijana's return to the space that symbolizes her abandonment and personal trauma is emotionally

charged as her movements throughout the apartment, the touching of keys and doorknobs, etc.

trigger bodily and emotional reactions as she becomes visibly upset and begins to cry.

From Tijana's point of view, Eva's decision to protect her husband's name instead of

returning to her was unforgiveable. The emotional return to the apartment in Lendava culminates

in a dialogue between mother and daughter that switches between Hebrew and Serbo-Croatian in

which Tijana asks Eva whether she would have done things differently had she known the pain

her sudden departure would inflict on her daughter. Eva defends her decision, however, and she does not deny that her love for Rade proved stronger than her love for her daughter in the end. Eva tells Tijana matter-of-factly that of course she loved her father more than her, "I could have many of you, but there was only one of him," a revelation that was perhaps not surprising for Tijana, yet nonetheless is visibly painful for her to hear. While Eva continues to voice her decision and reasoning rather pragmatically, the return to the apartment where Tijana was abandoned produces visceral reactions to the space and one another brings the space's oppressiveness and traumatic layers into visibility.

Certainly, the documentary *Eva* is directed at a much different audience than Kiš and Mandić's *Goli život.* In *Goli život,* the trauma between mother and daughter after Eva's return to the camps only briefly touched upon when Eva mentions that her daughter didn't recognize her when she returned. In the documentary *Eva,* we are presented with a much more gendered frame for viewing the effects of this trauma across generations. The dialogue and interactions between Tijana and Eva, the presence of their bodies and their reactions to spaces of return generate the narrative. *Goli život's* motivations were to tell the women's story through their own words— albeit with the help of a mediator—whereas the transgenerational dialogue of the Israeli documentary is conducted and refracted through the voices of others, namely Tijana, who also suffered because of her mother's ordeal and fills in certain gaps and omissions in Eva's narrative. Thus, despite the fact that women maintained public silences about their experiences in the camps, the corporeal and affective dynamics of memory cut across the dichotomies of individual and collective memory. As is lain bare here, the memory of the camps was transferred transgenerationally within families, either through the direct sharing of these memories and/or through an awareness of the traumatized subject's bodily reactions which maintained the deeply

imbedded traces of physical and psychological violence (from physical disability to PTSD, outbursts of anger and depression). Tijana reveals that the camps not only traumatized Eva, but also herself even though she did not experience them directly. Her mother's anger was often directed at her, and Tijana feels that she was verbally abused by her mother after the camps. In turn, the oppressive weight of her mother's trauma and the rift between them prompted Tijana to leave Yugoslavia for Israel to get away from her mother. Thus, women's silences, discerned from the mother-daughter exchange that structures *Eva*, operate as an agitated language within families.

Eva embarks on this journey with her daughter Tijana and American granddaughter Emily in a transgenerational maneuver that adds to and even reworks Eva's individual narrative across collective memory paradigms. In the context of postmemory, Marianne Hirsch sees the recurrent trope of the return journey as an effective vehicle for transmitting memory transgenerationally through processes of embodiment and re-embodiment. Expanding on Aleida Assmann's theories on the relationship between place and memory objects, Hirsch writes that:

"Return journeys can have the effect of such a reconnection of severed parts, and, if this indeed happens, they can release latent, repressed, or dissociated memories—memories that, metaphorically speaking, remained behind, concealed within the object. And in doing so, they can cause them to surface and become reembodied. Objects and places, therefore, Assmann argues, can function as triggers of remembrance that connect us, bodily and thus also emotionally, with the object-world we inhabit" (Hirsch 292).

Return to place reanimates the corporeal and affective landscapes of place, memory, and transmission that likewise re-activate trauma, something we see quite clearly with Eva and Tijana's emotional and physical responses to each site: "Embodied journeys of return, corporeal encounters with place," Hirsch argues, "do have the capacity to create sparks of connection that activate remembrance and thus reactivate the trauma of loss" through "gestures and its affects" (Hirsch 212). Hirsch further demonstrates how affective spaces and objects become re-embodied

by others so that can be transferred transgenerationally. Likewise, the documentary *Eva* shows how spaces of individual trauma are re-embodied in relation with others, as Eva, Tijana, as well as her American granddaughter take this journey together. In reactivating this trauma through the return journey, the documentary further gives Eva the chance to work through her trauma on an individual and postmemorial level, seeking to reconcile a difficult image of failed maternity as it brings Tijana and Eva together so that they might understand each other's traumas and ultimately forgive one another.

The return journey assists with the symbolic recovery of Eva's identity as a mother at the site of its loss, as the three women then embark on a small speedboat for Goli otok. As her granddaughter Emily tells us early in the documentary, this confrontation will be the most difficult for her grandmother and one from which she fears she won't recover. Eva is clearly perturbed as they approach the rocky outcrop in the middle of the Adriatic, closing her eyes and holding onto her daughter for support. When they arrive, they wander among the ruins of the women's camp which consists of stairs, piles of rocks, and a hut. Eva's testimony on the camps is acted out physically as she reenacts what the other prisoners shouted at her and how they abused her, switching between Serbo-Croatian and Hebrew—Tijana assisting with some of the English and Hebrew translations for Emily and the film crew. This scene on Goli otok cements the two forms of translation taking place in the documentary: the first being Eva's self-translation of her testimony and narrative into Hebrew, which reasserts her agency as Eva becomes the "protagonist" in her own narrative that she mediates between languages—a position of authorial authority previously denied to her when the state distorted her biography and

identity.[132] The second level of translation is the translation of the language of the body which is facilitated via these performative gestures that reinscribe an embodied memorial in the empty, ruined space of the former campgrounds. Eva's rather animated narration accompanied by hand and bodily gestures is necessary to supplement the gaps between languages as she attempts to relate her experience there in Hebrew—a third language that she learned later in life—but also the challenges that trauma poses to language. The memories triggered in the physical space of her trauma take on a much more emotional and bodily form of transmission rather than a linguistic one as she moves around the space reenacting her memories: she performs the head guard, recalling the words of abuse she would hurl at her; she shouts, gestures with her hands, and reacts emotionally to the space, supplementing the speech act of testimony with the language of the body, which is both productive of and reinvigorated by memory here.

The moment of catharsis comes when Emily encourages her grandmother to gives stones to Tijana, count them, and then pass them to Emily who will throw them into the into the sea. Emily instructs Eva to count in whichever language she'd like. Eva chooses Serbo-Croatian and as Emily throws the last stone into the sea as Eva shouts the word "devetnaest" (19), the women cry and embrace one another. The documentary takes place in many languages, including Hebrew and English, languages that are necessitated by displacement, migration, and familial rifts. The return to the site of trauma also facilitates a return to the language of both the home and the trauma that took place in the homeland. Although Serbo-Croatian was not exactly Eva's "mother language" per se, this dissertation has problematized the supposedly natural links

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[132] Ilan Stavans remarks that the self-translator is also a protagonist of the narrative being re-translated: "the translator would become the protagonist of the book, not only in terms of content but also in terms of form" (Stavans 6).

between language, nation, and ethnicity. Instead, Serbo-Croatian is the language Eva "chooses" to reauthorize her identity, her past, and her biography in the end.

This action also affirms the movement of Eva's trauma between the three women, as the exercise of repair requires each of their involvement. The throwing of stones from the island visualizes women's physical relationships to landscape of extreme violence and pain, similar to the installations of the Goli Archipelago Project mentioned above. In this collaborative gesture and re-inhabitation of the space by the three generations of women, the landscape is re-embodied to facilitate first and secondhand witnessing and confrontations with the past. The documentary subsequently concludes with shots of Eva's everyday life back on the kibbutz in Israel. The final scenes of the documentary end with Eva sitting in front of her computer while she reads aloud a letter from Tijana, translating Serbo-Croatian into Hebrew. The letter from Tijana is hopeful, hinting at the fact that Tijana has finally begun to understand her mother's decision after their journey.

As I have illustrated throughout this chapter, the testimonies of Ženi Lebl and Eva Panić-Nahir in both *Goli život* as well as their personal narratives (*White Violets* and *Eva*) recover a body and life history cancelled out by state-sanctioned violence in ways that reactivate the opening of individual, collective, and cultural memories of concentrationary worlds and state-sanctioned terror. Thus, while the memory of men's experiences has been contained to a specific site of memory as an exemplar of "communist terror" and anti-communist dissent, women's memories— albeit forgotten and omitted from official memory— have proven to be much more malleable. As I conclude in the following chapter, women's mnemonic labor defies the coagulation of memories within spatially and temporally contained discourses, instead promoting a productive confrontation with complex pasts in ways that also affect the future.

Chapter 4

The Imagined Spaces of Memory: Alternative Jewish Homelands and Female Utopias in Judita Šalgo's *Journey to Birobidzhan*

"Na svetu ima toliko nerealizovane, neusmerene ženske emocije da može da se stvori čitav jedan kontinent"

(Šalgo 1997:151)

I.   The Holocaust as Identity

In Judita Šalgo's personal memories of her experience as a very young child during the Holocaust's final stages in Hungarian-occupied Vojvodina, she recalls how her mother hid her with a Hungarian woman named Marika: "you will call her mother…no one can know that she's not your real mother." Šalgo was barely three years old when she was entrusted with the difficult task of referring to a completely foreign woman as her mother, a case of life or death that she couldn't possibly comprehend at that age. She would survive the rest of the war disguised as Marika's daughter, a Christian-Hungarian girl in the village of Palić near the Hungarian border. Her mother Jelisaveta Abraham Manhajm survived the camps and returned to collect her at the end of the war. Šalgo recalls the day her mother returned along with other Jewish survivors and the subsequent confusion her reappearance caused for her: "When one of the neighbor women told us the news that the transports had arrived, Marika and I ran down the streets of Palić until we caught up with the line of thin, unpleasant-looking men and women. A woman stepped out of the line and came towards us. Not daring to come any closer, she just stared at me, dressed in my best clothes—when Marika said, "well, your mother has returned." And I allegedly replied

(because I don't remember, this memory swallowed by a dark oblivion): "you were

prettier before you left."[133] For Šalgo, the mother who has returned from the camps is not the

mother she remembers. The camps created an insurmountable rupture in their intimacy that

instills in her the sense that mothers are replaceable, that her world and that she, too, is

replaceable: "If my mother was replaceable, then the whole world was replaceable, including

myself and everything that comprises my identity."[134]

Judita Šalgo went on to become an integral figure of the experimental neo-avant-garde

movement that took root in Vojvodina in the 1960s. She wrote poetry, novels, essays, and

contributed to performance art and radio productions in Novi Sad until her premature death from

cancer at the age of 56 in 1996. While her so-called "mother tongue" was Hungarian, she wrote

primarily in Serbian, taking advantage of the Vojvodinian (neo) avant-garde's inherent

bilingualism (Hungarian and Serbian) and their experimental play with language and genre that

were encouraged by the borderland region's cultural hybridization and arbitrary relationships

between language and ethnic identity.[135] In her work, she often drew from her experiences as a

child survivor of the Holocaust to accept that the search for any nationally, religiously, or

linguistically defined identity was a futile endeavor. Forced to assume the identity of a Christian-

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[133] I read and translated this excerpt from *Da li postoji život/Van-e élet* in the Hungarian language, Vojvodinian journal *Híd* április/május 1984, pp. 403-4.

[134] "Ako je mati zamenjiva, onda je sveta svetu zamenjivo, pa i ja sama i sve što čini moj identitet" (Šalgo 2000: 135).

[135] Bilingualism was one of the defining characteristics of the neo-avant-garde circles that emerged in Vojvodina (Novi Sad, Subotica, Zrenjanin), as representatives wrote in either Hungarian or Serbo-Croatian (among others), while also mixing languages in their works (Šuvaković 2). The neo-avant-garde was a movement that emerged in the late 1960s and 1970s and expanded on the experimental artistic practices of the interwar Yugoslav avant-garde and its local interpretations in Vojvodina, Zagreb, Belgrade, etc. (Ibid. 1). It proposed aesthetic and stylistic experimentation in place of hard-core socialist realism and Yugoslav modernism, often pushing the boundaries of genre and media by combining visual art with literature and theory (Ibid.). Unlike previous movements that rejected politics as a form of subversion, the Yugoslav neo-avant-garde combined literature with political criticism. Šalgo was a significant presence within the neo-avant-garde group based in Novi Sad. She was the director of the *Tribina mladih* (*The Youth Tribunal*) in the 1960s until she was forced to step down in 1972 due to the anti-establishment direction that the neo-avant-garde groups took there. Other members of the group (Miroslav Mandić and Slavko Bogdanović) were even arrested and imprisoned during this period (Ibid.).

Hungarian girl and a new mother to survive the Holocaust, she surmised that all forms of identity-markers including language were ascribed, a theme that plays out repeatedly in many of her autobiographical and fictional works.[136] Šalgo likewise acknowledged her ambiguous relationship to Jewish languages, religious practice, and rituals. Rather there was only one thing that underlined her sense of Jewishness: that of a Jewish fate (*Jevrejska sudbina*) that encapsulated the enormous absence in her life produced by the Holocaust.[137] [138]

While Šalgo's oeuvre resists easy categorization as Jewish writing (see Dražić 2013), she undertook the task of writing her "Jewish novel" with her final work before her death, *Journey to Birobidzhan.* The novel appropriates the real geographical space of Birobidzhan—the failed Jewish homeland project in Siberia established during Stalin's rule in the 1930s—as a repository of Jewish history, tropes, symbolism, and the purely imagined space of the female utopia/continent/island. In comparison to the Jewish homeland project of Birobidzhan, the once-promised alternative to Palestine, the female continent represents an entirely deterritorialized and postnational space formed by a community of women who answer the call of a female Messiah (*Mesijana*). Šalgo's use of Birobidzhan departs from the spatial mediations of Jewish and Holocaust memory examined thus far in this dissertation mainly because this space is imagined, shot through with utopian longing and elements of the fantastical. Although Birobidzhan is in fact a real place, the author undermines the stability of space to allow for mobility and transformability, something she further extends to processes of memory and identity formation in the novel. The novel does not make direct aim at the Holocaust, rather, the Holocaust represents

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[136] Other important representatives from Šalgo's oeuvre not discussed in this chapter include *Trag Kočenja* (1987), *Život na stolu* (1986)*, 67 minuta, naglas* (1980).

[137] "(jevrejska sudbina) više kao praznina no punoća, više kao sumnja nego izvesnost, više kao odsustvo nego prisustvo" (Šalgo 2000: 130).

[138] Šalgo also lost her father, the psychoanalyst Šandor Manhajm, in the Holocaust. He was killed as a Hungarian Jewish slave laborer on the Eastern front.

an implicit space of absence and undefined point of trauma that returns in various guises throughout the fragmented narrative. As I see it, the fragmented narrative structure attends to the stakes of Holocaust remembrance in the post-Holocaust era, mapping routes through the co-dependent processes of forgetting and remembering.

As her "Jewish novel," the narrative of *Journey to Birobidzhan* anachronistically meshes the Old Testament, Zionism, the Holocaust, and transgenerational trauma into a narrative structure that can be best described as a collage of fictional narrative threads and fragmentary strands consisting of real and imaginary material centered around the quest for Birobidzhan. *Journey* (as I will now refer to the novel from here) narrates two primary storylines: The Roth family saga and Berta Pappenheim's travels. The narrative weaves different point of views, voices, perspectives as well as genres: while the family saga is mostly narrated in third person (the narrator is unknown), some sections are narrated through the impressions of members of the Roth family, or even in first person in the final chapter of the novel. The family saga includes the genesis of Birobidzhan, its alleged founding by the wealthy Rothschild family, and the Novi Sad Roth family's attachment to the promise of Birobidzhan as an alternative Jewish homeland. The Berta Pappenheim section in turn mediates the German-Jewish feminist's impressions of her travels through the Balkans and Middle East campaigning against white slave trafficking and the prostitution of Jewish girls. Historically, Berta Pappenheim was also Freud's patient Ana O., a hysteric from whom Freud and Joseph Breuer "invented" the famous talking cure. In the novel, Šalgo reimagines Berta Pappenheim as a female Messiah who will lead syphilitic and oppressed women to the promised land, a female utopia/island/continent. Other narrative threads are linked by unexplained disappearances or death, like the suicide of a Jewish writer from Novi Sad, Nenad Mitrov (Alfred Rosenzweig), under the Hungarian occupation during WWII. It also

contains two significant archival threads that are woven into the main narratives: the Rosenberg trial, the couple who allegedly spied for the Soviet Union and were executed by the American government; and the Finaly brothers, the high-profile case of two Jewish children stolen by their French Catholic caretakers and hidden by the Church until the 1950s. The narrative concludes with a return to the Roth family, to Olga and Nenad Roth in the chapter "Šuma mučenika." The final chapter is also a collage of voices as it mediates Nenad and Olga's experiences of postwar society, as well as those of two other women in Israel and Novi Sad. The novel subsequently "ends" with Šalgo's musing on the role of fantasy, illusion, and dream in post-Holocaust society.[139]

This chapter analyzes the specific work of memory that Šalgo's use of space achieves, expanding on previous scholarship that read her gendering and deterritorialization of Jewish history and Birobidzhan through a feminist lens (see for example Dražić 2013, Beleslijin 2013, Matijević 2021). Following Tijana Matijević who notes that the female continent is a clear alternative to the disintegrating patriarchal system of socialist Yugoslavia and the militaristic ethnonationalism of its successor states, I examine how Šalgo's imagined space of memory subverts nationalized memory structures and their phallocentric logic. Birobidzhan figures as an object of desire in the various identity quests undertaken in the novel, both the search to resolve questions of Jewish identity in the Balkans and Europe at large, but also the search for a specifically female identity that she posits through the unresolved quest for the female utopia (Dražić 150).[140] At the same time, according to Dražić, the novel is as much about the search for

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[139] Šalgo died before the novel's publication. Although the book is cut short by her untimely death, the editor of the book, Vasa Pavković ensures that it is indeed finished. Šalgo's husband, the writer Zoran Mirković, later published the sequel to *Journey, Kraj Puta/The End of a Journey,* which resolves some of the loose ends in *Journey's* narrative, yet contrary to its title does not resolve the quest for the female continent.

[140] Dražić argues that "Judita Šalgo deconstructs the way that motherhood has been configured in culture, questioning the belief that female subjectivity comes from the fact that they have a uterus, because they can bear

identity as it is a subversion of it, something that stems from her early experiences during the Holocaust (Dražić 90-92). In my reading of *Journey*, I posit that the narrative performs an anti-monumentalizing of memory that disrupts the binds between memory and space that take place on the stages of national memory and identity formation. The imagined spaces of remembrance that Šalgo creates in *Journey* project unrooted, mobile, and transformative forms of (counter)memory that work beyond the "site" as the only codifying system of remembrance. The unresolved quest for Birobidzhan as both Jewish homeland and female continent in the novel refutes all attempts at unified meaning making, something that is further achieved in its narrative fragmentation, inconclusive plots, and sudden disappearances. I place Šalgo's implicit engagement with the Holocaust and the dissolution of Yugoslavia—the period from which the novel was written—within the legacy of feminist resistance in the 1990s, which denied the closures enacted over the past and the abuse of trauma taking place in ethnonationalist memory spheres. Her use of Birobidzhan as an unattained, utopian ideal responds to the collapse of Yugoslav socialism and its utopian project, while at the same time asking whether there is a way for the legacy of antifascist, antiwar, and feminist resistance to intervene in a pessimistic future following Yugoslavia's demise. As I argue in what follows, Šalgo's critical deployment of the archive is not the work of nostalgia, but a consideration of how the emancipatory potentials of the 20th century might be propelled onward in the light of the breakup and discarding of past values.

II. Birobidzhan from Jewish utopia to female continent

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children (…). Led by their bodies, their wandering uteruses, and their hysteria, women discover their own space, their own female continent in which preconceived oppositions are erased or neutralized" (Ibid.)

The Jewish autonomous region of Birobidzhan was a real territory established by Soviet authorities and Jewish leaders following the successful Bolshevik revolution in the late 1920s. Until the late 1930s, Soviet Jews from major Russian cities as well as the former Pale of Settlement (present-day Lithuania, Ukraine, Poland, and Belarus) settled in the hitherto uninhabited region of Birobidzhan, a region situated on the Chinese-Soviet border and named for its location between the rivers Bir and Bidzhan. Imagined as a socialist Jewish utopia, the reality was far from it. Birobidzhan became more dystopian than utopian project given its location in a boggy wasteland that was hostile to farming and life. Settlers were quickly discouraged due to the inhospitable climate, poor living conditions, lack of food, as well as rampant disease, leading many to abandon the project shortly after arriving. At the same time, a vibrant Yiddish-language cultural scene from theater to literature would flourish for a period amid this otherwise unwelcoming terrain thanks to Jewish artists who were encouraged to settle there and build Birobidzhan's cultural infrastructure from the ground up. However, this too would come to an abrupt halt in the 1930s during The Great Terror when Stalin's murderous security apparatus arrested and executed Jewish leaders and artists for their real or imagined anti-Soviet activities. Today, the Yiddish language plaques and monuments to Jewish cultural figures in the town square gesture instead to the ironic absence of Jews in Russia's official Jewish autonomous region as only 1% of the current population can claim any Jewish background.[141]

Birobidzhan is thus a space in which people and languages (Yiddish) exist only spectrally. The Birobidzhan appropriated into Šalgo's novel *Journey* utilizes its spectrality as a way to displace the excesses of memory that are otherwise denied visibility in official spheres.

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[141] For an engaging and comprehensive history of Birobidzhan and its Yiddish cultural scene in English see Masha Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't: The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan, the Autonomous Jewish Region.* New York: Penguin Random House, 2016.

As I examine in later sections of this chapter, Birobidzhan is a space for reappearing people and elements of the past that have been disappeared by the violence of forgetting. Šalgo's reterritorialization of Birobidzhan expands on the extreme binaries and dualities inherent within the existence of the Jewish autonomous region, finding creativity in the blank spaces that have relegated this space to oblivion. Dražić summarizes Šalgo's Birobidzhan as a "a place of desire, a place of hope and escape, yet at the same time a place far removed from reality, a place of forgetting" (Dražić 120). Both extremes are possible, something that can be further discerned in Šalgo's laying out of Birobidzhan as conceptual space below:

> "Female continent or island?
>
> Birobidzhan is an unknown, repressed kernel of the self (consciousness?)….the embodiment of a landlocked kernel of neurosis.
>
> Birobidzhan is a land without killing.
>
> (…)
>
> Birobidzhan is THE FINAL SOLUTION (Hitler's secret plan before he invaded the USSSR).
>
> Birobidzhan is an ideal city (utopia)
>
> Absolved:
>
> B. is a homeland on reserve/reserve homeland.
>
> B. is a swampy greenhouse of new Jewish seeds (New Sion?)
>
> Birobidzhan is the last bastion (in the world) of active magical thinking and living.
>
> Šalgo's Birobidzhan emplaces the initial optimism upon which the second Jewish

homeland project was built; one that would not dispossess in the process of its formation, nor be forged out of war and conflict. Yet at the same time, the Jewish space to which Soviet-Jews were taken to resettle eventually becomes one from which they are forcibly taken away and disappeared. In this way, Birobidzhan is a trace of utopian desires and repression; a utopia (a "land without killing"), to a space of oblivion, ("THE FINAL SOLUTION), and concentration camp, all of which reflects Birobidzhan's real legacy: "the autonomous Jewish territory became a

zone of ethnic neutrality, regular deportations, a large concentration camp envisioned by Lavrenty Pavlovitch Beria" (Šalgo 12).

In *Journey,* Birobidzhan's origins are the basis of myth; the accidental creation of the wealthy Jewish Baron Edmond Rothschild, a member of the famous Rothschild's, whose inkwell accidentally dripped and left a blot on an empty space between the Bir and Bidzhan rivers in Siberia. This mythic origin of Birobidzhan is interlaced with the narrative's otherwise factual narration of Birobidzhan's founding in Siberia in the beginning of the novel. The weaving of real and fictional histories and materials within the major narrative strands, such as encyclopedia entries, census, and newspaper reports from Birobidzhan, contributes to the collage-assemblage of *Journey's* narrative while also laying out the author's deconstruction of archive, reality, and myth. According to Dragana Beleslijin, Šalgo's collage of fact and fiction, archive and myth draws from the avant-garde tradition which held that reality "could neither be a stable entity nor the subject of artistic observation" (Beleslijin 72). This meshing further subverts the fetishization of the document as the absolute bearer of the past, privileging instead the gaps, blank spaces, and margins of hegemonic systems of knowledge production. While Birobidzhan has been entered into the annals of history as a fragmented footnote in the history of Jewish homelands, utopias, and "world conspiracies" (Šalgo 43), Šalgo expands on the role of narrative as a creative endeavor against erasure. Rather, failed utopias are not consigned to terminality, but elevated to the level of aesthetic: "Unrealized utopias (…) simply change their shape and genre[142]" (Šalgo 2000: 171.).

Šalgo was skeptical of utopia as a social project, highlighting its pitfalls in both *Journey* as well as an essay from *Disposable Essays* (*Jedenokratni eseji*) on utopia that more explicitly

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[142] "Narednih godina Autonomna jevrejska teritorija postaje zona etnički neutralne, standardne deportacije, veliki konclogor po viziji Lavretija Pavloviča Berije" (Ibid).

points out the way utopianism becomes a concept based on exclusion, policing, and ideological purism: "The utopian imagination is that of a purist: it doesn't allow for duality, or the coexistence of women and human beings. Utopia is incredibly discriminatory; it desires closure or nothing… Every utopia is finished, and life that is founded on its system of closure ends in oblivion" (Ibid. 2000)."[143] Due to her negative critique of utopia, Šalgo does not offer her own version of an "ideal city (utopia)" in *Journey* as the novel rejects all points of closure on the level of meaning as well as narrative.[144] As many analyses of *Journey* have ascertained, the unresolved meaning of Birobidzhan and endless movement towards Birobidzhan is a critical expansion on avant-garde and neo-avant-gardist techniques, namely what Aleksandar Flaker refers to as the "optimal projection," or the "the orientation towards a future in the name of reevaluating the past, negating the present, in which the attribute of an optimal understanding is the possibility to choose between different potential projections" (Flaker 67).[145] In *Journey*, the abandoned Jewish homeland project of Birobidzhan is constantly invested and reinvested with new meaning, a process not of 'either or,' but movement that yield options and possibilities as demonstrated above. The juxtaposition of real and imagined spaces elevates the imagined space as an alternative to the real, such as the "land without killing." The fluidity of Birobidzhan furthers the avant-garde practice of what Flaker refers to as "motion as choice" ("kretanje kao biranje") with which Matijević sees Šalgo's work in dialogue.

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[143] "Utopijska misao je misao čistunica: ona ne dopušta dvostrukost, istovremeno bivanje ženom i ljudskim bićem. Utopija je nepomirljivo diskriminantna, ona hoće savršenstvo ili ništa… Svaka je utopija savršena, a život izložen njenim sistemima usavršavanja završava u ništavila"

[144] The "sequel" of *Journey*, *Kraj Puta/The End of the Journey*, was also published posthumously and contrary to the title, offers some closure to certain protagonists' journeys yet never resolves the meaning of Birobidzhan or the search for the female continent.

[145] Flaker's concept of the "Optimal projection" stems from the search for the "optimal variant" in the avant-garde, a term first coined by Soviet literary theorist Yuri Lotman. See also for reference Matijević 2021 and Dražić 2014 which make use of Flaker's term.

Šalgo's narrative is structured on Jewish themes to produce this movement, represented here as Exodus, wandering, diaspora, displacement, and disappearance. Šalgo further saw movement as one of the underlying impulses of the Jewish narrative, writing that "if my characters wander, float around, travel, it can only be for one or two reasons: either because they are Jewish or because I'm a bad writer" (Šalgo 2000:131).[146] Dražić makes the observation that in Šalgo's work, her Jewish characters reflect rootless and unrooted identities, modeling ways out of fixed identity-making in terms of individual, national, and religious categories (Dražić 99). As I also add, Šalgo experiments with Jewish identity through spatial memory, represented here by Birobidzhan which performs this rootlessness and sense of absence. The space's construction on movement subsequently refutes the monumentalizing of memory. Because Birobidzhan is a dynamic space, it subverts the impulse to 'fix' memory to space and time and in the process, is free to transform and take on new meanings. Birobidzhan's failure to become a Jewish homeland "on reserve" allows it to approximate new utopian projections, namely the quest for the imagined female utopia in the second half of the novel.

The "Female Continent" (*ženski kontinent*), also referred to as the female utopia and island in the novel, is the embodiment of female hysteria, a disease attributed to women by male medical professionals in the 19th century who believed emotional disturbance to be the result of the uterus "wandering" through the body. Later feminist thinkers attached to French poststructuralism like as Luce Irigaray would reappropriate "hysteria or the hysteric as a figure which links images of the body and discourse" in *écriture féminine* (Marven 27). In feminist discourse, hysteria is the embodiment of women's desire to 'speak' and express their unheard, suppressed desires with and through the body. In Irigaray's words: "…in hysteria there is at the

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[146] "Ako moji književni likovi lutaju, lebde, putuju, to dakle može da bude samo iz dva razloga: ili za to što su Jevreji, ili što sam ja slab pisac" (Ibid. 2000: 131).

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same time the possibility of another mode of "production," notably gestural and lingual, but this is maintained in latency. Perhaps as a cultural reserve yet to come…" (Irigaray 138), a future possibility that is reproduced in Šalgo's novel as the female continent: "there are so many unrealized, undirected female emotions that you could create an entire continent with them" (Šalgo 151).[147] The female continent embodies the long-suppressed language of female desire, "the embodiment of a landlocked kernel of neurosis" that cannot be articulated verbally, but through the body, as is further represented by a hysterical "female language" (*ženski jezik*) through which only women can communicate.[148] The "female language" will resound across the world and lead oppressed women to emancipation—one that is still abstract, a product of movement, rather than fixed ideal: "Every journey is an attack of hysteria" (Šalgo 1997:94).[149] Hysteria is likewise described in the novel as "movement, wandering (exodus) in place" (Šalgo 63), a play on the uterus's "wandering" through the body, and an optimal projection that, through women's own Exodus, approximates a future space of their own. In this way, the narrative not only performs Jewish identity through the quest for Birobidzhan, but simultaneously pursues the quest for a female position in history as well as in an emancipated future (Dražić 93).

In making the German-Jewish feminist Berta Pappenheim the female Messiah, she is subsequently inserted into two phallocentric traditions: that of Judeo-Christian culture as well as Freudian psychoanalysis. Berta Pappenheim— also known as Ana O., the legendary Hysteric recorded in Freud and Joseph Breuer's *Studies in Hysteria*, is removed from historical obscurity

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[147] "na svetu ima toliko nerealizovane, neusmerene ženske emocije da može da se stvori čitav jedan kontinent"
[148] The influential French poststructuralist feminist Helene Cixous wrote a manifesto laying out what would be called *écriture feminine* in her 1975 essay "The Laugh of the Medusa," which called for women to break into the male domain of writing. Cixous outlined women's writing as the inscription of the body into the text, of "signifying with the body," to create female-sexed texts that express desires denied by masculine authority without replicating phallocentric logic (Cixous 881).[148] This challenge to language's phallocentrism is also critical to Šalgo's experimentation with a female language.
[149] "Svako putanje je histerički napad" (Ibid.)

in Šalgo's novel and positioned as the originator of *écriture feminine*: "Ana O., whose young hysteria laid the foundation of the celebrated psychoanalytical tradition; the fantasy which rested upon her seismic, extremely untrustworthy uterus that becomes female hysteria, but also signified so-called female emancipation…"[150] Berta's charity visits to hospitals for syphilitic women and campaigns against female sex trafficking and prostitution in the Austro-Hungarian Empire reawaken her own latent hysteria as she witnesses the suffering of female bodies and male authority's dismissal of their pain and desires. The Berta Pappenheim narrative is critical to Šalgo's rewriting of Judeo-Christian Messianism given that she is positioned as a female Messiah who will lead suffering women to the female utopia in Birobidzhan: "God wouldn't allow this if he were a woman, or at least had a sister, mother, or wife. This hogwash. The bearded Messiah will not come. It's only worth it to them to prevent the Great Mother from coming from Egypt and pulling us out of this shit. And she will come. My sisters from Warsaw to Istanbul and Alexandria all know this. She will lead us to a new land."[151] Female messianism communicates through the female language, one that is immediately translatable as a language communicated corporeally rather than linguistically. The female language also offers the possibility of a gendered, deterritorialized modes of communication that transcend national languages ascribed by the phallocentric logic of the nation-state:

"How did Berta suddenly understand Hungarian? … or rather, she understood the conversation not only without the help of language but despite language, which in this case had transformed into a non-language, or a universal female language without words or a dictionary. Instead, it is a language of innate knowledge known to all those of the female sex. Just as there exists an insect language, so too, exists a female language that isn't only made to seduce, or for sex and motherhood, but for interpersonal discourse and mutual understanding between women. It is a

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[150] Ana O. čija je mladička histerija kamen temeljac proslavljene psihoanalize, fantazije koja leži na seizmički vrlo nepouzdanoj materiji kakva je ženska histerija, ali je indikativno za takozvanu žensku emancipaciju…" (113)

[151] Da je bog žensko, ili da bar ima sestru, majku ili ženu, ne bi dopustio ovo. Ovakve svinjarije. Bradati Mesija neće doći….Važno im je samo da spreče Veliku majku da dođe iz Egipta i izvuče nas iz govana. Ali ona će doći. To znaju sve moje sestre od Varšave do Istambula, do Aleksandrije. Odvešće nas u novu zemlju" (Ibid. 1997: 106)

language that is felt intuitively; however, one that can do more than simply relay emotion and instincts, but with which women can relay important concepts and ideas …

An attack of Hysteria is a means of communicating between women, a medium for sending messages; it is the most authentic means of knowing the world and oneself. Through hysteria are conveyed the most important knowledge, discoveries, and emotions which pulsate between entirely different and unrelated women, the power of an interpersonal understanding of the world (Šalgo 106-7).[152]

The female language is "felt intuitively," immediately translatable, while at the same time able to

transfer larger concepts which alludes to feminist networks of translation that facilitated the

transference of foundational feminist texts across languages, but also the building of a feminist

vocabulary into which to translate concepts, ideas, and theories.[153] In addition, as translation

scholar Sherry Simon has argued, feminist translation and re-translation was a critical form of

intervention into patriarchal representations of the past (Simon 1996). Translation through a

feminist lens is one of the underlying endeavors of Šalgo's rewriting of history which works on

the level of both language and rewriting. For instance, the noun *Mesija* (Messiah) is rewritten

with a feminine modifier to become *Mesijana*, the female Messiah, feminizing a figure that has

always been figured as male. In doing so, Šalgo sees narrative as a way to remove women like

Berta Pappenheim from their existence in the margins while further investing their hidden

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[152] "Otkud sada odjednom Berta razume madžarski?... ili je razgovor razumela—ne pomoću jezika, nego uprkos njemu, jer se po svoj prilici vodio na nekom nejeziku, ili univerzalnom ženskom jeziku bez reči, rečnika koji se urođeno znan svim pripadnicama pola. Kao što postoji jezik insekata, postoji i jezik žena koji nije usmeren samo na zavođenje, na seks i materinstvo, već i na saobraćanje , dogovor, sporazumevanje žena međusobno. Jezik intuitivnog sporazumevanje, kojim se, međutim, mogu saopštavati i izvesni pojmovi, ideje; ne samo emocije I nagonski porivi …. Histerični napad kao komunikacija medu ženama, sredstvo za prenošenje poruke, najautentičnijih saznaja o svetu i sebi. Kroz histeriju se prenose najvažnija saznaja, otkrića, emocije koje struje među sasvim različitim i međusobno gotovo nepoznatim ženama, moć međusobnog razumevanja sveta."

[153] For instance, American first-wave feminists re-translated the Bible, calling out male translators for purposely emphasizing the wicked and negative traits of women and glorifying male figures that in their eyes led to centuries of male superiority and authority to oppress women. See for reference Simon, Sherry Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission. New York: Routledge, 1996.

biographies with creative potential that does not simply rewrite to memorialize, but also employs narrative as a site of possibility and imagination.

In comparison to the cartographic certainty of Birobidzhan with its borders and municipal institutions, in Šalgo's novel the possibility of the female continent exists only in the domain of imagination. It is a space that affects and is affected by the women's desires for salvation and a better future as I explore in more detail in a later section. Matijević argues that Birobidzhan "is the "solid object of imagination" and "place outside history which is both a deliberately defeatist refusal to participate in the history of late and dissolving Yugoslavia, and a possibility of an alternative" (Matijević 240). The female utopia is directly juxtaposed to the Balkans, the male continent (*muški kontinent*)—a comment Berta Pappenheim makes as her train passes through the tunnel in Fruška Gora, the dividing line between Pannonian Vojvodina and Mitteleuropa, and between what Tomislav Longinović refers to as the post-Oriental melancholy of formerly Ottoman Serbia where violence is reenacted in response to the traumatic past (Longinović 2011). This melancholic violence indeed metamorphosized into toxic extremes during the Yugoslav dissolution wars when women were stripped of their agency and their bodies coopted by the nation-state which "explicitly connected issues of family, sexuality, femininity and masculinity with the nation in creating spheres for the performance of national identity" (Lukić 407). The most extreme manifestation of this equation of women's bodies to the nation-state was the mass rape committed by Bosnian-Serb paramilitaries against Bosnian-Muslim women.

With the dissolution of the Yugoslav multi-national project thus also came the drastic reversal of women's positions in society from workers who were in theory "equal," yet for whom true emancipation had been thwarted by the patriarchal model of governance. Yet, in the dissolution period, women now faced what Lukić has outlined as "institutionalized misogyny" in

official and media representations of women's roles. Written from this tumultuous period,

Journey reanimates the emancipatory potentials of feminism and *žensko pismo* as an alternative

to misogynistic representations of women, their reduction of their agency, and

instrumentalization of their bodies in ethnonationalist discourse. Šalgo's oeuvre—not just

Journey—was fundamentally interested in performances of gender, identity, and power through

the body—themes that she did not work on individually, but as part of an overarching

confrontation with authoritarian power and its essentialization of the body politic in national

master narratives and amnesiac memory politics. It should be noted here that Šalgo spoke out in

a critical moment against the repressive mechanisms of power employed by the disintegrating

patriarchal regime of Yugoslav socialism and the rising ethnonationalist dictatorship led by

Slobodan Milošević. As Šalgo argued in an essay read aloud to the Vojvodinian literary council

in May 1989 following the election of Milošević and the state's motion to reduce the political

sovereignty of Yugoslavia's formerly autonomous and more multiethnic regions (Vojvodina,

Kosovo-Metohija), collective memory was now suspended between two extremes: that of

"bloody remembrance, and even bloodier forgetting" through state-imposed amnesia. In her

analysis, citizens were being brainwashed into remembering memories that had supposedly been

suppressed under Tito's Yugoslavia, while simultaneously discarding others in the negation of

Yugoslavia's past and future. In the same essay ("Politička priča") Šalgo would emphasize

"women's writing" as the only possibility for resisting the repressive mechanisms of an

authoritarian regime that imposes the notion of collective "we" as a method of control and

policing the national body (see Rosić 2016).[154]

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[154] Šalgo's public criticism of the ascendant regime is not to be taken lightly. Feminists who opposed the masculine enterprise of war in Serbia were subject to harsh collective animosity and even physical violence following Milošević's rise to power. See Jasmina Lukić for an analysis of the Serbian media's representations of feminists in "Media representations of men and women in times of war and crisis: the case of Serbia." *Reproducing Gender:*

In her article of feminist antiwar resistance, Tatjana Rosić reads Šalgo's essay not only as an act of resistance in writing, but one of performance due to the exposure of the self and her body as she read her piece aloud to the Vojvodinian literary council. Additionally, Athena Athanasiou writes of Yugoslav feminist antiwar resistance in the 1990s as performances of the body where female activists exposed their selves and bodies in public "as a performativity of constituting a bodily space for combating collective cultures of political amnesia" (Athanasiou 182). Šalgo's dissecting of power in language, that is, the authoritarian use of power "in our name" finds kinship in the slogans employed by the Women in Black (*Žuc*), *ne u naše ime* ("not in our name"), who also resisted national performances of mourning that rested on the patriarchal gendering of women as mothers of a nation configured in terms of ethnic kinship.[155] The creation of performed "bodily space" by women during this period as suggested by Athanasiou places the female body in a position of vulnerability. Rosić further argues that the performativity of Šalgo's "political essay" likewise lays bare the body as the site of subjugation yet also resistance, investing "women's writing" with political potential, that of a bodily space within which to combat state violence, the root of which—as I explored in Chapter 3 on the women's labor

Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism, edited by Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, Princeton University Press, 2000, pp.393-423. For a wider study on misogynism in Serbia, refer to Marina Blagojević *Mapiranje Mizoginije u Srbiji: Diskursi i prakse*. In Croatia, there was also a particularly high-profile attack on women who spoke out against the war: The Croatian media vilified Vesna Kesić, Dubravka Ugrešić, Slavenka Drakulić, Rade Iveković and and Jelena Lovrić as "witches" (*vještice*) due to their condemnation of the war and Croatian nationalism.

[155] Rather, as Athanasiou's documenting of the *Žuc* movement ascertains, *Žuc* sought to "mourn otherwise," that is, to mourn the murdered Others who were forbidden from entering the political arena in Serbia in the 1990s. The women continue to hold vigils for Srebrenica—the site where Bosnian Serbs committed genocide against Bosnia Muslim men and boys—and the massacres of Serbia's designated Others and national enemies, who are forbidden to be mourned in nationalist commemorative spheres.

camps and the misogynistic politics that came into play during the Cominform purges—is

patriarchy (Rosić 2016).[156]

 The alternative and imagined space of Birobidzhan can also be seen as a targeted social

critique that deconstructs the processes of collective memory formation during the dissolution of

Yugoslavia, but also post-Holocaust society as I argue in a later section of my analysis. The

emphasis on movement in the novel rejects the hegemonic processes of state building that

essentialize identities within grand master narratives, which in Serbia during the breakup period

were catalyzed through political institutions, academia, and media outlets, and fortified by

nationalist symbols from Jasenovac to Kosovo. Memory coagulated within a version of a

'Serbian' past established through repetitive performances of historical trauma that affirmed a

homogenous Serbian body politic at the expense of its heterogeneous reality. Instead,

Birobidzhan represents a space where the excesses of the nation can be confronted, onto which

its extreme binaries (dystopia/utopia, memory/oblivion, multicultural tolerance/ ethnic neutrality)

are projected. As Matijević has pointed out, the female continent is the antonym of Yugoslavia

as an anti-national, gendered space, i.e., the female utopia and "land without killing," which

presents a stark contrast to the militaristic, patriarchal state. In Matijević's words, the female

continent is "a separatist proposal, a possible radical alternative to the patriarchal and

authoritarian society made not only through a reproductive labour of women, but whose very

social reproduction is dependent on the naturalization and instrumentalization of gender"

(Matijević 241).

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[156] The masculine authoritarianism of the 1990s is further exemplified by the fact that women's representation in government significantly dropped during this decade in comparison to previous decades (Kajošević 1995 cited in Lukić 399).

The fragmented spatiality of Birobidzhan and its refutation of unified meaning-making

subverts how the state manipulates temporal and spatial frames of memory to impose collective

amnesia. Anticipating the cultural spaces of post-Yugoslavia, the narrative of *Journey* rejects the

closure enacted over the past and its emancipatory potentials. Rather than discarding these

legacies in response to their negated present and future, they are continuously recirculated in the

narrative which functions analogous to a current.[157] Matijević elaborates on this, arguing that

"what is even more important is that Šalgo's novel is in truth not endable: it is built on a flowing,

indefinite journey in search for the imagined female continent. That the journey hasn't been

completed does not imply that it would not be finished at some point: the end of the journey is

"everywhere and nowhere" (Šalgo). The figure of going in a circle is also critical: it is an ideal

expression of both the repetitive impossibility to change something, and ceaseless motion

forward" (Matijević 254), unrestricted by the political constraints that corrupt and coopt utopia

into national/ideological discourses. [158] The possibility of unrooting memory from a patriarchally

defined national space and its staging of identitarian belonging is brought into sharper relief in

Šalgo's fragmented snapshots of post-Holocaust remembrance to which I now turn.

III. Missing Children and Vanishing Memorials: Šalgo's fragmented snapshots of post-Holocaust society

Šalgo addresses the unresolved trauma caused by genocide, state violence, and

authoritarianism while at the same time using Birobidzhan to counteract the use of memory and

trauma in national discourses. Her reflections on practices of post-Holocaust remembrance in

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[157] Šalgo's novel mentions currents, both natural and electric currents, in numerous places, often using them to explain miraculous happenings and disappearances.

[158] Matijević's manuscript, *From Post-Yugoslavia to the Female Continent: A Feminist Reading of post-Yugoslav Literature* picks up precisely where Šalgo's *Journey* leaves off. As Matijević explores in her analysis of post-Yugoslav literature's kinship with the heritage of the neo-avant-garde, *Journey's* re-evaluation of 20th century utopian, feminist, and countercultural emancipatory traditions allows it to find further relevance across space and time, ultimately serving as a bridge between the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav counter-cultural scene.

turn expand the novel's desire to project mobile and unfettered practices of memory as it grapples with dominant frameworks of Jewish memory after the Holocaust. While her early memories cited in the introduction to this chapter spell out the ways that trauma can inform identity, something that she ties to the notion of a Jewish fate (i.e., the Holocaust), *Journey* also works to subvert the role that lineages, roots, and fate play in the making of individual and collective identities in the process. Šalgo proposes a radical anti-monumentalizing of the past, a proposal that plays out in remediation of a specific Holocaust memorial site, the Forest of Martyrs in Western Jerusalem that features as the subject of the novel's final chapter "Šuma mučenika" (Forest of Martyrs). This chapter is more directly focused on Holocaust memory in comparison to the others and interrogates Jewish and national identities in Israel and Yugoslavia at the end of the 20th century. Šalgo uses the memorial park to problematize the ways that official memory uses trauma to affirm assertions of nation, identity, and remembrance which was achieved through explicit symbolism attaching memory to soil. As I explore below, the novel reworks the genre of the Jewish family narrative and traumatic genealogies that accompany it to destabilize practices of asserting identity through lineages and roots.

The novel begins first with the origins the famous Jewish Rothschild family, the retelling of which evokes the Biblical Genesis: "According to one negligible relative, the Genesis of the Rothschild family goes like this: When God made man, he named him Mayer Amschel Rothchild. He lived until he was 70 years old and fathered five sons who were sent out across the five centers of Europe. Amschel's son Nathan, the notable London goldsmith and financier of the Battle of Waterloo, had a son named Lionel, the financier of the Suez Canal and the British parliament…." and on go the achievements of the Rothschild family sons, from zoology to the

founding of funds for the Jewish homeland in Palestine and later Birobidzhan.[159] The

Rothschild's are similar only in name to the Novi Sad Roth's. The Roth's have a much more

traumatic point of origin, their story beginning with a pogrom in the Bavarian town of

Rothenberg during which the town's Jewish population is violently murdered. Only one Jewish

resident manages to survive and flees, bearing a shortened version of the town's name, "Roth"

(Serbianized as "Rot" in the novel). The Roth scion seeks refuge in the Southernmost border of

the Austro-Hungarian empire in Novi Sad and bears sons, none of whom have the same talents

as the illustrious Rothschilds. The only connection between the Roth's and the Rothschild's is

their draw to Birobidzhan. The obsession with Birobidzhan will begin with Leopold Roth, now

an immigrant living in New York City who learns of the Siberian Jewish homeland in connection

with American Zionist movements. He then plants the seed in his younger brother Emil's head.

Emil's son, Stephan, marries Olga, a Zionist youth whose ambitions are cut short by her

marriage. While Birobidzhan is figured as a masculine endeavor in the novel, Olga is the first of

the Roth women to be entranced by Birobidzhan after her honeymoon night in which her new

husband invents for her a poetic image of a sunset over Birobidzhan. The Roth's are deported to

concentration camps in 1944 where Emil Roth perishes, while Olga and Stephan survive along

with their son Nenad whom they hid before their deportation. When they return from the camps,

Stephan abandons his wife and son, taking off for Israel with his secretary in a clichéd cop-out

from familial duty. Left behind in Novi Sad, Olga collects money for the Forest of Martyrs

memorial with her son and often locks herself in her room suffering from hallucinatory

symptoms that reawaken her desire for Birobidzhan. The Roth family lineage concludes in the

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[159] Po jednom marginalnom potomku, ovako glasi Geneza porodice Rotšild: "Kad Bog stvori čoveka, nazva ga Majer Amšel Rotsild. Ovaj požive sedamdeset godina i rodi pet sinova koje razasla u pet evropskih centara. Londonski sin Natan, zvani zlatan, finansijski pobednik bitke kod Vaterloa, rodi Lajonela, finansijera Sueckog kanala i britanskog parlamentarca…."

1990s in the post-Yugoslav rump state of Serbia, a reference that is made obvious by the character's positioning in an empty airport in which all flights have been grounded save for one, a departing flight for Birobidzhan.

Šalgo reenacts a Jewish patrilineal saga not to continue this literary tradition, but to deconstruct the narrativization of Jewish fate and the cycles of retraumatization that structure literary family lineages, as well as Jewish memory paradigms following the Holocaust. Šalgo seeks to reconfigure transmissions belts of trauma and fate that structure Jewish identity and the pathologies of cultural neuroses that the Freudian psychoanalytic tradition foregrounded in the 19th century and would significantly shape theories on Holocaust trauma, including on a cultural level. The Roth family narrative plays on various Jewish mythologies and origin stories from the "genesis" of the Rothschild family, as well as a rewriting of the 'Lost Tribes' (The Tribes of Israel) from which Jewish (patri)lineage is established.[160] The trauma that structures the Roth family narrative, beginning with a violent pogrom in medieval Germany, the Holocaust and bookended with the Yugoslav dissolution wars in the 1990s, provides a re-reading of Freud and more specifically Freud's packaging of Jewish identity within a framework of traumatic repression. In *Moses and Monotheism* (1939), one of Freud's last works written at the onset of the Austrian Anschluss and Freud's forced emigration to England, Freud posits that the root of a specifically Jewish neurosis is predicated on the collective repression of a traumatic event, the murder of the first Moses (the first father), and replacement with another before the Exodus. According to Cathy Caruth's famous reading of *Moses and Monotheism* in her seminal work on trauma *Unclaimed Experience* (1995), Freud's theses is a way of formulating his departure from Austria, just as the Jewish past is "a departure that is both a radical break and the establishment

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[160] The Tribes of Israel: Asher, Daniel, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulun

of a history" (Caruth 14). For Freud, the possibility of memory and history is in its departure, one that functions as retraumatization; something Šalgo reworks here in her manipulation of the narrative frame of Exodus and the endless, unresolved journeys undertaken by the various characters. While Freud sees his departure as a reenactment of this foundational trauma, Šalgo sees departure as a way out from the cycles of repression and traumatization. Birobidzhan functions as the central, unresolved "destination" towards which the characters and narrative are orientated but never reach, this space rendered instead as an absence that is performed repeatedly through sudden, unexplained, and miraculous flights and disappearances through tears in the narrative net.

Šalgo's Jewish family narrative withholds the sense of closure usually afforded to the genre and its resolution of identity by ending with a challenge to the Roth patrilineage. The challenge to the systems of knowledge that structure individual, collective, and cultural identity and memories culminate in the character of Nenad Roth who fantasizes about being one of the many missing Jewish children who was unwittingly transplanted into another family following the Holocaust.[161] Nenad Roth spends his free time accompanying his mother Olga door to door on her mission for the Jewish federation of Yugoslavia to collect money for the Forest of Martyrs, one of the first Holocaust memorials in Israel to which each European nation would contribute funds for tree saplings to be planted in a memorial park dedicated to the 6 million murdered Jews. In Yugoslavia, the gathering of funds for the park was undertaken by the Jewish federation and coincided with the five memorial projects to the Jewish victims of fascism and fallen fighters that I discuss in Chapter 1 (see Kerenji 2008). The memorial projects in Yugoslavia initiated during this period mapped Jewish experience onto the overarching

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[161] As Dražić argues, Šalgo tells her own story through the character of Nenad Roth (Dražić 2013: 157).

mnemonic framework in Yugoslavia, while the action for the Forest of Martyrs furthermore

initiated a physical connection to Israel, to where many remaining Yugoslav Jewish community

after the Holocaust would emigrate by the early 1950s. In Israel, there were practical

implications of the park which physically "rooted" Holocaust memory to the land as tree planting

symbolizes the natural connection of the Jewish people in resettling this land (Young 219).

James Young argues that the goal of the Forest of Martyrs memorial is to remember "both the

martyrs and the return to land. Memory of the victims is cultivated in the founding of the state: in

taking root in the land, the memory of the martyrs binds rememberers to the state itself (Young

241). These literal forms of rooting memory to national landscapes are what Šalgo questions in

her novel, as she demonstrates how Holocaust memory in fact demands radically different forms

of remembrance given the roots of genocidal violence are in exclusionary practices of blood and

land kinship. Šalgo more sharply problematizes the repetition of nationalist identity and memory

paradigms through the recurrent figures of missing and stolen Jewish children.[162]

As Nenad Roth collects money for the trees with his mother, he suspects that his

presence, as a growing teenager, serves as a painful reminder for the residents of Novi Sad who

lost their children in the Holocaust:

"(My presence) said: here you are my dear friends, this is what your son or your grandchild
would have looked like, or: this is how big they would have been had they survived, that's why
you should buy a sapling for them and let them grow. I was living proof that the money they
invested would ensure the return of those lost, 300 dinars for the return of one life, for your
relatives or your child, *I was a model for feasible immortality who simultaneously elevated the
status of their own mother. My presence said: believe in the woman who successfully saved one
son, from whom you're not just buying a memorial or phantasm, but a life*" (Šalgo 1997: 162)[163]

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[162] In fact, according to Young, memorials are defined in terms of the natural landscape in Israel. Nature is defined
as "landscapes and relics of the country's past" (Young 220).

[163] "Ono je govorilo: evo dragi prijatelji ili prijateljice, ovako bi gledao, ili: ovoliki bi bio vaš (tvoj) sin ili vaš (tvoj)
unuk ili nećak da je preživeo, zato uplati jedno drvo za njega i on će nastaviti da raste. Bio sam živa garancija da će
uloženi novac obezbediti povratak svojih bližnjih ili svoj vlastiti, *bio sam uzorak dostižne besmrtnosti, a usto*

Here, Šalgo plays with the official language of the initiative by the Jewish institution B'nai B'rith which phrased the park as "a living memorial to the 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust" (see Young 270). Nenad in turn appropriates this symbolism to explain his own identification with each sapling that represents a murdered child of the Novi Sad Jewish community now to be planted in Israel. Unlike the children who are to be symbolically reincarnated into a pine tree and planted in Western Jerusalem, Nenad survived; yet Šalgo also emphasizes in her autobiographical essay how survival is also accompanied by a certain identity crisis. Here, Nenad's identity crisis takes shape within his overactive imagination as he begins to question his identity and memories of the war. One of his Jewish schoolmates, Sonja, recently discovered that the people she believed to be her parents were instead her Aunt and Uncle and that her parents had perished in the Holocaust along with her older brother. When Sonja kisses Nenad during one of his visits to her house, Nenad begins to believe that he is not his parent's real child either, that he too is a misplaced child, that he is not the son of Olga and Stephan Roth or even a Roth at all. Instead, he believes that he replaced his parent's real son, Danijel, who died in the Holocaust. He reimagines how Danijel must have looked, spoken, etc. and even plans to commit suicide on the anniversary of Danijel's death at 17 years of age, though, as a busy teenager with too much Serbo-Croatian homework and an assignment to read *War and Peace* and *Dead Souls,* he eventually decides to put it off, carving "NO" and then "YES" into a tree marking his and his brother's simultaneous existence: "we were written into that tree, I, who

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podizao ugled i cenu svojoj majci. Moje prisustvo je govorilo: imajte poverenja u ženu koja je uspela da sačuva jednog sina, ono što od nje kupujete nije samo uspomena, nije opsena, već sam život (Ibid)."

abnegated and he, Danijel who confirmed, agreed. I didn't decide against it, I merely put it off.

The tree needed to remember" (Ibid. 169).[164]

While it is an exaggerated fantasy of substitution that plays Nenad's story, the

exaggeration also serves to pinpoint the very real experience of child survivors and the children

of Holocaust survivors like Šalgo who, in Marianne Hirsch's words, see the missing child as "the

phantasmatic figure shared by all children of survivors who tend to think of themselves as

'memorial candles'—stand-ins for another lost child who become responsible for perpetuating

remembrance, for combating forgetting, for speaking in two overlapping voices (Hirsch 214).

The memorial candles are embodied physically and spatially in *Journey* as trees that will fill in

absences in the land. Like others of this generation, Nenad uses a highly mediated framework of

trauma within which to rework his own identity, appropriating the figure of the missing child

from stories around him including circulating in the media to build a picture of his own

fragmented memories of the war. Not only does his friend Sonja's revelation enable Nenad's

own narrative of being a substitute child, but so does the intense media scrutiny around the

disappearance of Robert and Gerard Finaly.

These mediated narratives eventually usurp facts and evidence for Nenad: "Never mind

the documentation and witness testimony of Katica and her family about how they hid and kept

me safe, about how they ultimately sent me back alive and well to my parents after the liberation.

This only strengthened my belief that I was a part of some parallel reforestation-obfuscation

mission. Why should my fate be any different than Sonja's? Death is always more certain than

life, a lie formed from truth. In those months, the newspapers and my house were constantly

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[164] "Bili smo upisani i ja i moj brat Danijel, ja koji poričem i on koji potvrđuje, saglašava se. Nisam odustao, samo sam odložio. Drvo je trebalo da pamti" (Ibid.169).

talking about the search for the Finaly brothers …" (Ibid. 167).[165] The case of the Finaly

Brothers was one of the highest-profile case of missing/stolen children following the war and

merits further attention here due to the repetition across the novel's strands, and particularly for

the Nenad Roth storyline. Born to Austrian-Jewish refugees in Vichy France, Robert and Gerard

Finaly's parents entrusted them to their French Catholic neighbors before their impending

deportation to concentration camps. Their parents never returned and in the postwar chaos the

brothers were transferred to the care of a Catholic woman, Antoinette Brun, who baptized them

and was the main player in concealing the children from their remaining Jewish relatives in

various boarding schools and monasteries across France, Switzerland, and Basque country

(controversially, the Pope supported Brun's custody of the children and urged her in private

letters not to return them to their Jewish family). The boys' relatives eventually located them

with the help of a cross-border police search, and they resettled in Israel.[166]

The juxtaposition between the real, as represented by the archival (the Finaly brothers),

and the imagined (Nenad's fantasy), refute any unified reading of identity and narrative in

Šalgo's novel. Nenad's fantasy is presented as an alternative to the real, legitimizing the

imagined, the "could haves," and possibilities within the real, epitomized by recurring figures of

missing children. As Nenad's identification with the Finaly brothers and his own embodiment of

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[165] Uprkos dokumentima i svim mogućim svedočenjima Katice i njihove rodbine o tome kako su me krili i čuvali i najzad živog i zdravog vratili roditeljima nakon oslobođenja, samo su me učvrstili u uverenju da sam i ja deo neke paralelne akcije pošumljavanja, akcija zabašurivanja. Zašto bi se moja sudbina razlikovala od Sonjine: smrt je uvek verovatnija od života, laž od istine. Novine su tih meseci pisale, a i u našoj kući se o tome puno govoriti o potrazi za braćom Finaly..." (167).

[166] The case played out on a postwar theater which blurred nation, family, and ethnic identity. It polarized the French Catholic community, French secularists, and Jewish leaders who lobbied for the children's welfare. The case of the Finaly children in *Journey* is used to demonstrate how children's identities were instrumentalized during the massive identity crisis that ensued across Europe following WWII, particularly among Jewish children who had been separated from or lost their parents in the Holocaust.[166] Zahra writes that "(Rather), the dispute revolved principally around *which* collective—Jewish, French, or Catholic—had a rightful claim to these orphans. The affair not only inflamed longstanding domestic tensions between secular and Catholic camps in France, it went to the heart of ongoing international debates over which families and nations displaced children belonged to, and what those terms meant" (Zahra 140).

the missing children of Novi Sad represent, the figure of the child is easily appropriated because of its familiarity and universal innocence. In an anecdote on Aleksandar Tišma, Hirsch records how Tišma sent a well-known photograph of a Jewish child from the Warsaw Ghetto holding his hands in the air to the German newspaper *Die Zeit* in lieu of a photograph of himself as they had requested: "I send you instead the photograph of another that I actually consider as my own … I immediately saw that the boy with his hands up in the right-hand corner of the picture is me. It's not only that he looks like me, but that he expresses the fundamental feelings of my growing up: the impotence in the face of rules, of humanity, of reality. I recognize myself in him, in him alone" (Tišma cited in Hirsch 141). Hirsch analyzes Tišma's identification with the child in the photograph as a form of simplification and distortion "as to foreclose a more oblique, critical, or resistant retrospective look" (Ibid. 142). The appropriation of the image of the child retraumatizes as it seeks out a possible frame to encapsulate one's experiences. As Hirsch argues, the post-memorial generation often appropriates highly mediated images of the Holocaust, which "wound" and retraumatize as they try to make sense of their parents' experiences (Ibid). The appropriation of meditated images and histories is a way of coping with a trauma that could not be apprehended at the time of its occurrence and still evades comprehension, but at the same time has entered collective consciousness on a mass-scale via media coverage and circulation.

In *Journey,* the Finaly Brothers and Nenad embody the universal and symbolic figure of the missing child, onto whom the Novi Sad community projects its hopes for the impossible return of their own missing children, onto whom their grief and collective mourning is projected. The Nenad Roth narrative reckons with the fundamental questions of identity and self-knowledge following the Holocaust.[167] The explosive international media attention that the

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[167] The motif of the missing child has also been repeated in Yugoslav Jewish literature by authors of the post-memorial generation, most notably the Jewish writer Filip David. David's two novels, *Porodična Hronika: Kako*

Finaly affair received, as well as the involvement of various national, supra-national, and religious institutions, ultimately reflected the burning question of the immediate postwar era regarding identity, namely, "how the terms 'nation' and 'family' should be defined in the aftermath of Nazism" (Zahra 138). Not to mention how postwar expulsions of minority groups in Central Europe and the Balkans' multiethnic borderland regions underscored how family and nation were going to be redefined in terms of homogenous units—ones that failed to reflect the complicated nature of families, individual, and collective identities.[168]

Šalgo thus uses Nenad to model scenarios of postmemory, playing with desires to understand both their parents' experiences and their own, but also their desire to be rid of inherited trauma and guilt in light of the impossibility of reconciling with this trauma. Nenad's fantasy of being a missing Jewish child is given further significance when the trees in the Forest of Martyrs memorial park marking the 6 million murdered Jews miraculously disappear overnight according to the testimony of one of Olga's friends, Sara Alkalaj, in Israel. The trees head towards Birobidzhan, transforming and changing into new trees in the process: "and just like that the pines are now heading for the boats, after the trees the fruits, which step by step, root by root will

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smo spasavali/Family Chronicle: how we were saved, Kuća sećanja i zaborava/The House of Remembering and Forgetting, as well as his screenplay based off a short story from the latter novel "When Dawn Breaks" with director Goran Paskaljević. I mention David's work here alongside Šalgo's *Journey to Birobidzhan* because both Šalgo and David use the motif of the lost, stolen, and/or abandoned child to explore questions of Jewish identity, though Šalgo uses the missing child to interrogate identities at large including national ones. Kowolik's article demonstrates how the film and David's short stories also use elements of the fantastical to interrogate questions of Jewish identity and trauma. As Eva Kowolik argues on David's work, in the film adaptation *When Dawn Breaks,* fantasy is a projection of the protagonist's survivor's guilt as he imagines otherwise impossible reconciliations with his parents murdered in the Holocaust. Their impossible reconciliation is imagined in terms of a fairytale, as the protagonist envisions his parents and him meeting in the snow on the former Sajmište campgrounds. See Kowalik, Eva. "The Motif of the Hidden Child in Goran Paskaljević's Film *Kad svane dan* and Filip David's Novel *Kuća zaborava i sećanja. Jewish Literatures and Cultures in Southeastern Europe - Experiences, Positions, Memories*, Renate Hansen-Kokoruš and Olaf Terpitz, Bohlau Verlag, 2021, pp. 251-164.

[168] Not to mention how homogenous identities were forcibly imposed on groups in multicultural regions of Central and South/Eastern Europe after the war, as ethnically homogeneity was upheld in archaic visions for national harmony. This framework remains a dominating guiding principle in international policy, as can be seen during the international community's bid to "resolve" the Yugoslav conflict in the 1990s by supporting the former Yugoslavia's division into ethnic enclaves and ethno-nation-states.

become lemon, fig, orange, olive, and finally eucalyptus and cacti trees will grow into the stone"
(Šalgo 175).[169] The fantastic also performs this co-dependent relationship between remembrance
and forgetting for Holocaust survivors and their kin, the pain of remembrance and oblivion of
forgetting, as Birobidzhan offers the possibility of both (Dražić 159). The act of disappearance is
deliberately disruptive as the vanishing trees reinscribe the absences that have been replaced,
ameliorated, and appeased with the creation of the park. It is also disruptive in the sense that it
unroots the ostensibly stable trees from their "natural" surroundings, suggesting instead that
there is nothing natural about the ways in which memories are rooted to space in the shape of
memorials and monuments. Rather, it is ascribed, the process of "reforestation"
("pošumljavanje") a word Nenad also uses to describe the process of identity formation. Their
spontaneous unrooting in turn imagines a scenario where memories might also be unrooted,
move, and transform as it poetically captured by the transformation of the pine trees to new trees.

The figure of the missing child and the vanishing trees ultimately symbolize the impossibility
of recovery or providing a sense of wholeness to the traumatic past. At the same time, the figure
of the missing child questions the naturalness of identity that is in fact ascribed to us. Whether or
not Nenad's 'realization' about his identity is true is entirely unimportant to the narrative. Rather,
his identification with the trees, the missing children, and the Finaly brothers affirms how the
ability to truly know oneself and one's identity were irreparably fragmented after the
Holocaust—something that Šalgo also experienced following her mother's return from the
camps. As Šalgo prompts us to ponder in her transference of this memory into the Roth family
narrative, how are we to ascribe pasts and memorial inheritances on the basis of identity if it is

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[169] "I eto, za brodovima su sada krenuli borovi, za borovima će plodovi, korak po korak, koren po koren, onamo će
poći stabla limuna, smokvi, narandži, maslina, najzad i eukaliptusi i kaktusi urasli u kamen" (Ibid. 175).

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something so profoundly unstable, socially conditioned rather than a fact of nature?[170] Nenad's

questioning of his individual identity is a fantasy, but also one that challenges the authority of the

adult world that orchestrates these "obfuscation missions": "Wouldn't you like to buy your

parents?" as he asks instead. [171] While the world believes that the boys' fate is ostensibly

"resolved" once they are returned to their real families, Nenad breaks this false sense of closure,

commenting on the conclusion of the Finaly affair that "There is no such thing as a successful

hand-over/substitution….(168).[172] Rather, the children's return to the Jewish community will not

resolve their identities as it will always be complicated by authorities (whether parental,

institutional, national, etc.) that attempt to ascribe wholeness to this fragmentation.

The Nenad Roth narrative ultimately enacts a reversal of positions of authority and self-

knowledge. It continues what Dražić observes in Šalgo's works as the creative potential of

forgetting, in which "forgetting becomes a metatextual frame through which life becomes

text."[173] This invented self-narrative helps to reconstruct Nenad's early memories and a past that

he cannot remember, a process that is based on imagination and fantasy rather than reality. The

reenacting of a family narrative and family mythology in *Journey* serves as a foil to the linear

trajectories of identity that shape understandings of self in terms of individual and collective

(familial) belonging since Nenad's identity quest can only play out in the domain of imagination.

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[170] As Tara Zahra provokes, what if the Finaly brothers grew up as French Catholic orphans, never to know their parents perished in the camps? What collective mnemonic inheritance would they have, as Catholics, as French, as stolen Jewish children? This question is also raised and problematized by another important representative of post-Yugoslav literature, Daša Drndić, and her 2007 docufiction novel *Sonnenschein,* which reworks the Julian March's complicated history during WWI through the fictionalized story of a Jewish woman, Haya Tedeschi, who has an affair with a Nazi SS officer during the occupation of Trieste. The son born out of his affair is stolen from her and put up for adoption in a Lebensborn institution in Austria where he only learns of his true identity following his adoptive mother's death. In this work, Drndić also uses the figure of the stolen/lost child to complicate national identities and refute the terms of homogenous nation-state building.
[171] "Pa hoćeš li da uplatiš za svoje roditelji?" (Ibid. 168)
[172] "Želeo sam da se pokaže pravo stanje stvari. Nema uspešne zamene, nema utehe, svako neka skapa, ostane utamničen u svom samostanu."
[173] Dražić draws from Šalgo's meditations on the subject in her diaries (Dražić 159).

This quest gives way to neither self-understanding nor resolution, only the recognition that these terms are irreconcilable in the real world. In this way, Nenad can leave the terms of identity open to negotiation. The flight of the trees in the Forest of Martyrs further cements this desire to leave open the search for identity, as their disappearance unfetters it from the memorial structures and institutions that seek to bring closure to this quest. The vanishing trees displace memory and the norms of monumental landscapes: the trees' move towards Birobidzhan, a space of ambiguity, that suspends the closures enacted over Holocaust memory and releases it from its nationalization and politicization exemplified by the Israeli initiative in the Forest of Martyrs. As I suggest here, Šalgo enacts disappearance to disrupt the stability of the monumental landscape and represent absence with absence.[174]

V.   Affective communities and the pursuit of freedom

After her return from the camps and departure of her unfaithful husband, Olga is afflicted with migraines that cause hallucinations, often locking herself in her dark room and chanting "to black Birobidzhan… (16)." The trance-like state within which Olga experiences post-Holocaust life in Novi Sad is attributed to Birobidzhan, the projection of her abandoned hopes to emigrate to a Jewish homeland. It is also a projection of her impulse to remember— something that is further represented by her involvement with the Forest of Martyrs action—but also to forget and alleviate the pain of the past (Dražić 160). For Olga, Birobidzhan still figures as the potential for a utopian future that is intangible, yet somehow more optimistic than her current life. When her friend, Eva Berger, suddenly returns to Novi Sad from Israel in the 1950s, Olga uses Eva's relief at returning 'home' to validate her own decision to stay rather than emigrate, yet the dream of

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[174] I borrow this notion from James Young's understanding of the counter-monument, which he uses to describe the self-effacing and abstract memorials to the Holocaust that appeared in Berlin in the 1990s (Young 1990).

Birobidzhan still haunts her, mimicking an attack of hysteria, the physical manifestation of the pain and emotions suppressed in the postwar period now externalized in her unexplained migraines and illness.

The experience of postwar society as a hallucinatory and hysterical emotional state is intensified by the brief anecdotes of three Jewish women that can be found in the final chapter "The Forest of Martyrs:" Olga Roth, Eva Berger, and Sara Alkalaj. Eva Berger repeats the statement "I thought I'd never wake up" (171) since she first woke up with a bullet in her side in a pile of bodies in Bergen Belsen in 1944, after disinfecting herself upon returning home to Vojvodina, after reaching Israel, and after fleeing her husband and Israel to Novi Sad in 1954 when she announces herself in Olga's kitchen with "Here I am! I've returned home! I thought I'd never wake-up!" (Ibid.)[175] At the same time, Eva's dream-state reveals the truth of reassimilation after the camps, one that is destined to fail whether in her supposed hometown of Novi Sad, or ascribed homeland of Israel (see also Dražić 159).

Eva's dream-state deconstructs the myth of belonging, instead representing a liminal state between consciousness and unconsciousness, between the real and the imagined. Dreams can also represent the threshold between forgetting and memory, as sleep reproduces oblivion and even death, while dreams are snapshots from the everyday, albeit often exaggerated or added to with layers of fantasy and imagination. Long after the planting of the trees in the Forest of Martyrs, Olga receives a panicked message from a Yugoslav-Israeli émigré Sara Alkalaj that the trees in the forest of martyrs have disappeared from the park. Sara's hallucination also replicates an attack of hysteria, embodying her inner desire to free herself of the painful memory that the

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[175] "Od onoga trenutka kada se u septembru 1944. sa metkom u slabini i polomljenih rebara probudila u gomili mrtvaca u Bergen Belsenu, nije prestajala da beži iz jednog sna u drugi, bolje reći iz jednog buđenje u sledeće. Kada se u proleće 1945.obrela u palićkom kupatilu, izišavši gola iz dezinfekcione kupke, rekla je: „Mislila sam da se nikada neću probuditi" (Ibid.170).

trees represent as the lost children of Novi Sad and the trauma that creation of the park attempted to enact closures over through an explicitly nationalist framework: "Maybe I am ill, here (in Israel), everyone is more or less ill…." (174). At the same time, as I discussed in the previous section, Sara's vision of the empty park creates a much more adequate memorial to the Holocaust that uses the absence of the trees to represent traumatic absence rather than filling in these gaps with empty symbolism. The women are not believed, and their husbands and sons attempt to assuage their anxiety and emotional outbursts without success. Yet hysteria lends the women a shared language in which their collective pain and discontent with the present appears within and through the body. Birobidzhan becomes an imagined space for reappearing the traces of lives and hopes that were extinguished, yet one that does not operate within the borders of a nation-state.

Sara Ahmed's work on the cultural politics of emotions discusses the ways in which certain bodies come to be portrayed as emotional bodies, while others are not. "Emotions", she notes, "are associated with women, who are represented as 'closer' to nature, ruled by appetite, and less able to transcend the body through thought, will and judgement (Ahmed 2). It is precisely the emotionality of women's bodies that Šalgo reasserts and reconfigures in new terms through the female utopia. Hysteria, once a disease to be cured by male doctors in the 19th century, now becomes a language that voices the suppressed discontents of the present. It is an anational language that forms a community of women seeking deliverance from the violence of the present in future space of the female utopia. Birobidzhan is mainly an affective space, circulating as an object of desire, hope, and a symbol for the pursuit of freedom throughout the novel. While Birobidzhan does not have a unified meaning, what it shares in common is its projection of a future that is preserved in the domain of imagination, illusion, and dream. Matijević also reads

the female continent in this way, outlining how Šalgo projects it as a fact of emotion, rather than

a physical possibility with mappable borders. As Matijević argues, the ambiguity of Birobidzhan

as "an intention, and not necessarily a materialized reality" leaves Birobidzhan open to endless

possibility, and thus "paradoxically enables the discourse of utopia" in its orientation towards an

open-ended future:

"The possibility of reaching a female continent in Šalgo's novel—regardless of its unfinished story—remains open. A female continent is a matter of speculation, an intention, or even a belief, and not necessarily a materialized reality: "If/when the female continent is discovered, it will be, it is, an emotional fact—the truth of emotion." (Šalgo 1997: 151). However, the ambiguity—inscribed not solely in the discourse of the psychoanalysis, but in the very feminist writing of the story—paradoxically enables the discourse of utopia: "If there is anything certain, that is Birobidzhan." (Ibid. 174) For, this ambivalence is not only a sign of disillusionment; it is a constitutive element of a non-essentializing discourse, existing parallel with the themes of belonging and identity, and a female commune on a remote island as their central figure" (Matijević 240).

Emotion thus becomes a way to project the possibility of a future politics of hope without

essentializing it within hegemonic discourses that patrol the concept and possibility of utopia.

    In this final section, I conclude my reading of the novel with a consideration of how

Journey's imagined spaces experiment with the terms of community and belonging. Dissatisfied

with the monumentalizing of identity and memory in Israel and Yugoslavia as discussed earlier,

Šalgo proposes the possibility of affective communities and terms of belonging that transcend

national boundaries. The return to *žensko pismo* presents anational modes of communication and

language that transmit emotion and bodily sensations, but also larger concepts that can affect

others into action. As Ahmed reminds us in her phenomenology of society, the word "emotion"

(*emocija* in B/C/S/M) comes from the Latin *emovere*, "to move:" "The relationship between

movement and attachment is instructive. What moves us, what makes us feel, is also that which

holds us in place, or gives us a dwelling place. Hence movement does not cut the body off from

the 'where' of its inhabitance but connects bodies to other bodies: attachment takes place through

movement, through being moved by the proximity of others" (Ahmed 11). Emotion is thus a form of movement that attaches. I find Ahmed's way of thinking about emotions a useful frame of further inquiry into Šalgo's experimentation with communities outside the terms of blood kinship, as she explores the ways emotions, feelings, and trauma connect bodies to other bodies across space and time. In *Journey,* emotions are "currents" of feeling that transmit sensations but also larger social movements that center around the desire for freedom and emancipation. Going off Ahmed's concept of a "sociality of emotion" which maps the ways "objects of emotion circulate, rather than emotion as such" through the movement and circulation of objects (Ibid.), I read the affective space of Birobidzhan as an "object" that incites and connects, pushing forward a politics of hope and the pursuit of freedom when it is lacking or openly suppressed.

Journey is critical of the way emotions are inscribed onto certain bodies, while at the same time capitalizing on emotion as a potential site of resistance. Such processes of inscription are to be found in a patriarchal lineage from Judaism to psychoanalysis as well as wartime Serbia in the 1990s where state media portrayed women as weeping and infantilized mothers of the nation, effectively resurrecting aspects of the Balkan epic tradition and its patriarchal gender roles (Lukić 394-395). To return to Athanasiou's study on The Women in Black (*Žuc*), the women's collective resistance in prominent spaces in Serbia also sought to displace these representations of women as mothers of the nation and to take back the figure of mourning in such a way as to evade the ethnonationalist configurations of community and kinship (Athanasiou 2017). Šalgo's contributions to feminist resistance in the 1990s similarly seeks to reclaim an affective space of resistance, recalibrating the patriarchal configuration of women's emotionality into a site of power and agency. As I argued in previous sections, the novel's implicit focus on trauma, including that of deeper cultural trauma related to the Holocaust and continued war, reanimates

affective archives of history as an alternative to the logocentric demands of society put forth by Freudian psychoanalysis. Anna. O, the true originator of the "talking cure" channels the speech act into Hysteria which resonates for different female characters across space and time in the novel. Eva Berger's dream-state likewise speaks to the dream-state of an entire society that blindly sleepwalked into renewed manifestations of violence, genocide, and war in the 1990s despite dictums of "never again."

These points of resistance in the novel do not pertain only to the female characters, however. In three chapters of the novel wedged between the Roth family saga and the travels of Berta Pappenheim, Šalgo returns to the unexplained suicide of Nenad Mitrov, the pen name of the Jewish writer Alfred Rosenzweig, following the Hungarian occupation of Novi Sad in 1941. While the reasons for Mitrov's suicide can only be speculated after the fact, Šalgo retraces Mitrov's final steps, investing the blank spaces of his biography with his pursuit of Birobidzhan. In the chapters on Mitrov, Birobidzhan figures as a symbol of utopian promise and the possibility of freedom in the abstract. Following Mitrov's interrogation by a Hungarian gendarme, he unexpectedly commits suicide, the reasons for which are a matter of speculation for his friends and literary historians who attribute his suicide to his humiliation and torture at the hands of a Hungarian gendarme, or perhaps a fateful miscommunication with another or himself. Another reason is also suggested in a preserved letter to a White Russian émigré in Novi Sad, Marija Aleksandrovna, with whom Mitrov had failed in his quest to connect body and soul, "the first to ignite the mistaken belief in him that he could unite the souls of distant and un-joinable bodies, that he could conjure love from afar, love for the unreachable, love for the untouchable,

unpossessable, for the unseen and unattainable..." (37).[176] In *Journey,* Marija Aleksandrovna is

linked to Larisa Reissner, a female Bolshevik fighter and close friend to Russian poets Anna

Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam. In the novel, Larisa's travels through Siberia in the Middle

East cross through Birobidzhan, the obsession which she will transfer to Marija Aleksandrovna,

and from Marija Aleksandrovna Birobidzhan reaches Nenad Mitrov just before he commits

suicide in 1941.

According to the disputed memories of the housemaster of the home on Dunav Kej 9, where

Mitrov owned an apartment, a crowd of refugees arrived in Novi Sad the night before his suicide.

Before this crowd of refugees, Mitrov appears at the window, reciting his last poem, flapping his

arms "like a bird" and calling for a "new Jerusalem" that will harbor the downtrodden of the

world.[177] The poem accordingly refers to Birobidzhan as a space of both emancipation and flight,

a cry for the liberation of the oppressed, and of Mitrov who 'escapes' that night through suicide.

The unexplainable and fantastical events of history are again juxtaposed to the real and tragic, as

the window from which Mitrov recites this poem overlooks the banks of the Danube—the site of

the Novi Sad raids which would take place there in 1942, one year after his suicide. The utopian

projection of Mitrov's pursuit of freedom and desire to establish alternative forms of

communication, kinship, and community are overshadowed by the dystopian fascist society of

occupied Novi Sad. Nenad Mitrov's final poem, the one recited from the window of his

apartment, is presumably destroyed during the Hungarian and Nazi retreat and their destruction

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[176]"Marija Aleksandrovna, kobna Ruskinja, koja prva u njemu zapalila grešnu veru da je mogućno spajanje duša nastanjenih u nespojivim telima, da je ostvarljiva ljubav na daljinu, ljubav na nedosegnuto, nedodirnuto, neposednuto, na neviđeno i nedoživljeno…." (Ibid.)

[177] "Svi vi anonimni ubogi, bedni i boni, Groteskne, odvratne parije, Jedan drugom zašto ne bi drugarski ruke pružili, Zašto se ne i mi udružili u falangu jednu čvrstu sabili i stisli, Zašto ne bi osnovali s one strane njihovih vidika, Opštinu našu, novi naš Jerusalim, grad zlehudnika i stradalnika, O zašto ne bi ujedinili i sakovali Sva naša bezbrojna raspeća"(42).

of all evidence of crimes committed during the occupation. It lives on only in the margins: in the

disputed imagination of the home's former housemaster who is discredited as a drunk, as well as

in the literal margins of a book located at the Matica Srpska. The poem suddenly reappears one

day in a collection of his poetry in scrawled, irregular penmanship, revealing Mitrov's final

pursuit of connecting souls and utopian possibility in the wake of a dystopian reality and the

failure of language in war.

During the trial of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg for their alleged espionage against the

American government, their hearing for the death-sentence is remembered in the novel as a mass

outpouring of emotional symptoms which mimic those of hysteria:

"A New York psychologist would write a few years later in his study on the major pandemics of
love throughout history, that in the first half of June 1953, just before the loss of the Rosenberg
couple, the entire Eastern half of the continent (somewhat less so on the West Coast) appeared to
be gripped by an executionary fever with entirely erratic symptoms: waves of irrational furor and
violence, a serious epidemic of a hitherto unidentified influenza, an unexpected, population-
swallowing whirlpool into which thousands of people disappeared without a trace, and lastly,
notwithstanding everything listed thus far, mass erotic exaltation ... Just before major tragedies,
war, crisis, earthquakes, and executions, the masses are stricken with love fever, the psychologist
contends" (53).[178]

Having become enamored with the Rosenberg's love for one another and their children, the trial

triggers a wave of erotic energy and sexual freedom among the American population: "In that

moment, the entire continent trembled in amorous anticipation. Men and women of long-stalled

libidos showered one another with heady words and threw themselves into each other's arms.

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[178] "Nekoliko godina kasnije jedan njujorški psiholog je, u svojoj studiji o velikim ljubavnim zarazama u istoriji,
napisao kako je u prvoj polovini juna 1953 pred pogubljenje bračnog para Rozenberga, u čitavom istočnom delu
kontinenta, a nešto manje i na Zapadnoj obali, vladala prava egzekuciona groznica koja se manifestovala na
nekoliko sasvim različitih načina: kao talas iracionalnog besa i nasilja, kao teška epidemija dotad nepoznatog gripa,
kao iznenadni demografski kovitlac u kojem je na hiljade ljudi nestajalo bez traga i najzad, nasuprot svemu
prethodnom, kao masovna erotska egzaltacija…..Uoči velikih nesreća, ratova, kriza, zemljotresa i egzekucija,
narode potresa prava ljubavna groznica, tvrdio je. Tako srce i put nastoje da shvate ono što izmiče
razumu…..Smrtnom ishodu bolesti prethodi kratak boljitak, a nasilnoj smrti—trenutak vrhunske ljubavi" (Ibid.).

Electric Orgasm!"[179] [180] Emotion is literally ascribed to a mass movement that connects people in

acts of love, erotic exaltation, and empathy. The "New York psychologist" records this event as a

type of "love fever," a clinical analysis also calls to mind the other side of fever and sickness,

that of cure and remedy. Yet, what the psychologist omits is how this spontaneous, "irrational"

emotional outpouring is really a current for communicating a collective politics when it is

suppressed or absent. As with the episode on Nenad Mitrov, emotion manifests as a collective

act of resistance in the face of state violence, one that in its brevity, highlights both the

possibility of social transformation and its failures. The juxtaposition between violence and mass

exaltation in the above quote further demonstrates their inextricability to one another.[181]

Šalgo's play and subversion of psychoanalytic theories becomes most clear in tracing the

circulation of Birobidzhan across the novel's many narrative strands. As one dream for freedom

is extinguished, it merely appears elsewhere, often in the shape of hysteria and other bodily

symptoms. In another narrative fragment, "Excerpts from a Working Diary on Birobidzhan,"

Šalgo reimagines a letter exchange between the Rosenberg's while they await their execution.

Interestingly, the letter exchange includes several untranslated Hungarian words all of which

denote emotion or are related to the word "hope" (the Hungarian is denoted in italics here as in

the original): *bizakodók* su ta pisma, *biztatnak* i daju snagu. Neograničena ljubav, znanje, ljudska

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[179] "U tom času čitav kontinent drhtao je u ljubavnom iščekivanju. Muškarci i žene davno zamrlog libida obasipali su se vrelim rečima i bacali jedno drugom u zagrljaj. "Električni orgazam!" (57).

[180] "Electric orgasm!" could have several meanings here: it is both a reference to the Yugoslav punk band Električni orgazam in the 1980s—a period remembered for its vibrant counterculture and alternative music scene—as well as the artistic experimentation with themes of sexual freedom in 1960s and 1970s Black Wave film heralded by Dušan Makavejev. Makavejev's films (*Love Affair, 1967; Man Is Not Bird,* 1965; *Mysteries of the Organism*, 1971; *Sweet Movie, 1*974) all played with Wilhelm Reich's theories on the liberating powers of the orgasm to critique socialist dogmatism and its repressive tendencies. Šalgo might be drawing from this tradition to equate erotic energy with the emancipatory drive, as it briefly frees the American public from the government's repression of citizen's rights and the culture of fear represented by the McCarthy era and the pinnacle of its anti-communist purges.

[181] As Ahmed suggests, "emotions may be crucial to showing us why transformations are so difficult (we remain invested in what we critique), but also how they are possible" (Ahmed 33).

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méltóság u razumevanje stvari prožima te redove." ("These letters are *hopeful*; they *give one hope* and strength. Infinite love, knowledge and human *dignity* suffuse these lines"). The Hungarian words here lay out the affective tone of the letter that Šalgo wishes to draw attention to; "hopeful (or, optimistic)," "dignity," "hopeful," "to give hope." The meshing of Hungarian with Serbian is disruptive because it forces the reader to either switch to another language or recognize that these are non-Serbian words. In my reading, the Hungarian words also expand on this attempt to remove language from its national binds, from where she uses the language in a linguistic montage of sorts where the insertion of one language into another might emphasize the emotional power of all languages and language's ability to affect and 'move' others.[182] Its presence in the middle of the novel between the Roth family saga and Berta Pappenheim's travels and the fragment's designation as a "working diary," further suggests the process of searching for and experimenting with a language that might transcend all communicative barriers whether linguistic, national, etc., something that is also present in the 'working' possibility of a female language.

Šalgo's experimentation with language and affective communities through Birobidzhan and its continued circulation across the novel's many strands and characters, across time and space echoes Arjun Appadurai's call for a language that might break the violent cycle of nationally informed communities and identities in the 1990s, "the vicious circle (of nationalism, primordialism, etc.) can only be escaped when a language is found to capture complex

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[182] Aneta Pavlenko has shown that bilinguals often experience different emotional selves, that is, differences in emotionality in their two languages (Pavlenko 2006). Mary Besmeres has also convincingly argued that translingual narratives prove that emotions are "culturally relative, rather than universal" (Besmeres 36). In my study on Šalgo, I argue that her use of Hungarian does not necessarily make a claim for the universality of emotion in language but instead underscores the capacity of language to *affect*. Šalgo's use of Hungarian, as I see it, promotes her desire for the emotional weight of language to transcend linguistic and national barriers. Pavlenko, Aneta. *Bilingual Minds Emotional Experience, Expression, and Representation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2006.

nonterritorial, and postnational forms of allegiance" (Appadurai 166). What Appadurai omits in his analysis of nationalism, imagination, and the possibility of deterritorialized identities is certainty the feminist networks that have sought to communicate this ideal outside the patriarchal spaces of the nation-state. Šalgo pursues the possibility of an anational language more deeply through a feminist orientation that creates new forms of space and time attachments articulated as the female continent. The novel offers a roadmap rather than a blueprint for pursuing these possibilities. *Journey to Birobidzhan,* cut short by Šalgo's untimely death, leaves the many concepts from Birobidzhan to the female utopia explored here open to further interpretation and experimentation. It calls forth the alternative worlds, communities and politics that have been pushed out by hegemonic systems of governance and their restrictive politics. Matijević aptly places *Journey* into what Jambrešić-Kirin terms "female heritage." According to Jambrešić-Kirin, "female heritage is not an inherited property but an inherited possibility, potential and freedom for (self-definition of historical lags in which we would like to be inscribed, that is, to use our "lien" for the benefit of the future." (Jambrešić-Kirin, cited in Matijević 254). *Journey to Birobidzhan* is a (counter)memorial exploration of trauma and history, in which the imagined spaces of memory are juxtaposed to the real to show what they have omitted, covered up, and where their failures lie. The imagined, 'potential' spaces of Birobidzhan are juxtaposed to the patriarchal national memory structures that consolidate the terms of identity and memory in the postwar period within monumental landscapes, where the imagined spaces model forms of memory that are unbound and unrooted from these containers.

Conclusion

The spatial mediations investigated in this dissertation pose and answer the following questions: What does it mean for a text assume the site of memory, that is, to become and stand in place of a memorial? How do texts piece together and reinscribe places erased from the physical landscape? What does it mean for dispossessed and traumatized bodies like Aleksandar Tišma's fictional Miroslav Blam or Eva Panić-Nahir to reoccupy the spaces of their dispossession and traumatization? How does the presence of these bodies reinscribe memory into a space devoid of a memorial or marker? At the same time, this dissertation also problematizes the other side of this equation. What are the implications of refusing memorialization in the physical sense? And is resistance to memorialization always a negative thing or can it be liberating—something that I explore in the novel *Journey to Birobidzhan* with Judita Šalgo's radical uprooting, in both the literal and metaphorical sense, of a Holocaust memorial in response to upsetting revivals of blood and land terms of kinship in Yugoslavia and Israel in the 1990s. The cultural memory scholar Ann Rigney argues that texts are powerful producers of memory, even becoming "portable" memorials, a concept this dissertation takes further in its exploration of how different mediums become memorials in their attempt to preserve, occupy, and inscribe space (Rigney 2012).

Some of the sites of violence that I explored in this dissertation may have come as a surprise to the reader. I wanted to work on spatial practices that mediate sites of memory primarily forgotten or neglected in official memory. Some sites were neglected because they were difficult to mark, such as the Bor mine which continues to operate as one of the largest

copper mines in Europe, while others were refused the possibility of being marked—such as empty synagogues many of which were promptly demolished or appropriated as restaurants, movie theaters, and concert halls after the war. Other sites of memory were shrouded in taboos under socialism such as the islands of Goli otok and Sveti Grgur. While some memories, namely gendered memories of the Holocaust and the Yugoslav labor camps of the late 1940s and 1950s, were pushed out of official memory arenas due to misogynistic politics and memory cultures. Yet the specter of violence still operates within these spaces and beyond. Violence resonates for a long time within individuals, across communities and generations mainly because genocidal violence and state terror continues to be perpetuated through the maintenance of power structures that led to such violence in the first place.

Take the beautiful Hungarian-secessionist synagogues of Novi Sad and Subotica, for instance, which once functioned as make-shift ghettoes in 1944, where Jewish citizens were held for days before their deportations to death camps abroad. When I visited the synagogues of Subotica and Novi Sad as part of my research for this project, I was struck by the lack of information on and around these sites that might have discussed how the Holocaust had been carried out in the region of Vojvodina, how the Hungarian guards concentrated the towns' Jewish citizens into the synagogues and then deported them from these very same spaces days later. The synagogues were subsequently sold to the city, and their renovation by the Hungarian government and Jewish federations in Hungary and Serbia has led them to become major tourist attractions in the region. I had read Tišma's *The Book of Blam* and *The Use of Man* long before I had a chance to visit the synagogues, which is why, perhaps, I experienced them as haunted spaces. Regardless, one gets the sense that the synagogues and their use as tourist attractions in Vojvodina, as well as other Central Europe cities that contain but a handful of its former Jewish

population, speak not to an effort to remember but to a problematic commodification of the region's former multiculturalism. Genocide did ultimately achieve its goal of disenfranchising the Vojvodina Jewish community of its cultural heritage and property because these spaces will never again only be used for their previous functions. Instead, the lost cultural landscape of Vojvodina's Jewish community is immortalized in Tišma's works which importantly lay bare the economic specter of genocide within the community.

Each of my case studies locate haunting chasms in collective memory and in doing so, confront the deeply entrenched violence of genocide and state terror that suffuses regimes of silence and erasure. This dissertation focused on the ways that memory actors managed to create alternative forms of spatial memory in response to the troubling absence of memorials, the ideological appropriation and later ethnonationalist abuses of Holocaust memory that has obscured collective knowledge about the Holocaust in the region formerly known as Yugoslavia. It investigated how media inscribe, inhabit, transform, and carry over sites of memory by locating the important links between memory, the built world, and visual, textual, affective and body archives of memory. It considered translation as a guiding framework for examining the relationships between the materiality of the built world, physical memoryscapes, and the act of mediating them across different signifying systems, across languages, cultural contexts, and generations. In the process of mediation, I have argued that sites of memory are renewed, transformed, and invested with new significance in contact with other memories and histories of violence. This is why I could not simply focus on the Holocaust as a contained history. Instead, I demonstrate the ways that Holocaust memory has interacted with other legacies of extreme violence in representatives of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav art, like Danilo Kiš's documentary *Goli život/Bare Life,* which considers the legacy of the Holocaust and the corrective labor camps

established just a few short years after the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau in a constellation of bare life politics. Other artists in turn reckon with the legacy of the Holocaust in the breakup and post-breakup era following renewed manifestations of ethnicizing and racial violence.

My case studies offer ways for thinking about memory as a productive counterforce, one that does not necessarily remain in its spatial or temporal boundaries, one that can travel, be reinvested with new meanings, and transform the present and future. These more productive approaches to traumatic memories in art importantly defy the ethnonationalist, ideological, and patriarchal memory paradigms that we continue to deal with in our present societies. The memorialization efforts I work on pinpoint patriarchal and ethnonationalist logic—two universal seats of power that often merge—as the reason for continued violence on local and global scales. Not only do they locate the major flaws of such logic, but they also map plausible alternatives. The critical intersections of affective and cross-linguistic memory in this dissertation provide alternative forms of community and belonging that resist monolithic constructions of the nation and collective memory. The feminist memory work taking place on Goli otok and Sveti Grgur as well as Šalgo's *Journey to Birobidzhan* counter patriarchal regimes with their affective, embodied responses to the past: the women of Goli otok salvage their own identities, yet also those of an entire generation of women's whose lives were symbolically extinguished by the state. *Journey to Birobidzhan* conjures points of resistance in which individuals and societies can be 'moved' and come together through collective emotional outpourings. Birobidzhan is an affective space bound together by anational and post-linguistic forms of communication, presenting a unique antithesis to the Serbian war state defined by closures, silencing, and violence against those outside the national body. These projects use affective memory as a form

of counter-memory that engages the body in the act of confronting and resisting oppression on an individual and collective levels.

The second alternative can be found in these networks of cross-linguistic exchange in the region which contributed to the pluralization of memorial space. The implications of multilingualism for memory studies highlights memory strategies taking place on national peripheries by marginalized groups, or quite literally on the borders between cultural memories like in Vojvodina. Multilingual memory facilitates forms of transnational memory that problematize national border patrolling and even renegotiates hegemonic power structures, divesting power from the public memory spaces they presume to control. Multilingual authors writing within and in-between their many languages have importantly shown the translatability of cultures to undermine ethnonationalist myths of superiority and uniqueness. While the collapse of Yugoslavia in ethnic conflict in the 1990s realized the end of the multinational project conceived from the ruins of WWII, the legacy of writers such as Kiš, Tišma, and Šalgo among many other continue to be a salient point of resistance because they refused to play the political games of ethnonationalism that interpolate and exclude citizens from what Benedict Anderson famously coined as an imagined space (1983). Driven by their own creative and imaginative thinking, they use their art to seek alternatives from the endless cycles of ethnonationalist violence, driven by their own creative and imaginative thinking. Multilingualism and translation networks in the former Yugoslavia have thus proved in this dissertation to be a site of knowledge production, counter-memory, movement, exchange, and above all, of tuning into the experiences and memories of others outside one's immediate milieu.

In conclusion, this dissertation illuminates an "archipelago" of sites of Holocaust memory across the former Yugoslavia. There are many more that are beyond the scope of this dissertation

in its current form. Future sites of inquiry will necessitate a more comprehensive mapping of the former Yugoslavia's terrain and the spaces of the Yugoslav dissolution wars, its concentration and mass rape camps, burial sites, as well as the contested landscapes of socialism left in shambles across the region. These future sites of inquiry will make use of but also challenge theories on trauma and genocide that use the Holocaust as their primary case study. Additionally, although my project looks at a facet of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav memory-making; overall, it is a study on how we locate memory within and as space, something that is relevant to a whole host of memory practices not just in the region of the former Yugoslavia. In the spirit of Šalgo's never-ending journeys, this dissertation must also be left open to propose yet-to-be journeys through the diverse terrains of spatial memory.

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