

Topographies of Suffering

**Encountering the Holocaust in Landscape,
Literature and Memory**

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I hereby declare that all of the work presented in this thesis is my own.

(Jessica Rapson, 5 June, 2012)

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Abstract

The 'ineffable' you hear so much about is only an alibi.

(Jorge Semprun, 1994).

As the Holocaust passes out of living memory, this thesis re-evaluates the potential of commemorative landscapes to engender meaningful and textualised encounters with a past which, all too often, seems distant and untouchable. As the concentration camps and mass graves that shape our experiential access to this past are integrated into tourist itineraries, associated discourse is increasingly delimited by a pervasive sense of memorial fatigue which is itself compounded by the notion that the experiences of the Holocaust are beyond representation; that they deny, evade or transcend communication and comprehension.

Harnessing recent developments across memory studies, cultural geography and ecocritical literary theory, this thesis contends that memory is always in production and never produced; always a journey and never a destination. In refusing the notion of an ineffable past, I turn to the texts and topographies that structure contemporary encounters with the Holocaust and consider their potential to create an ethically grounded and reflexive past-present engagement. *Topographies of Suffering* explores three case studies: the Buchenwald Concentration Camp Memorial, Weimar, Germany; the mass grave at Babi Yar, Kiev, Ukraine; and the razed village of Lidice, Czech Republic. These landscapes are revealed as evolving palimpsests; multi-layered, multi-dimensional and texturised spaces always subject to ongoing processes of mediation and remediation. I examine memory's locatedness in landscape alongside the ways it may travel according to diverse literary and spatial de-territorializations. The thesis overall brings three disparate sites together as places in which the past can be encounterable, immersive and affective. In doing so, it looks to a future in which the others of the past can be faced, and in which the alibi of ineffability can be consigned to history.

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Preface

On Tuesday June 7th 2011 Jorge Semprun, Spanish writer, political activist and survivor of the Nazi concentration camp Buchenwald, died at his home in Paris. Semprun's writing about his time in Buchenwald has been significant for my own project, and his death seemed to demand a return to the principles, desires, and frustrations which characterised its beginnings. A heartfelt requiem, by the French philosopher Bernard Henri-Lévy (2011), succinctly isolates the unique pull of Semprun's work:

I loved this beautiful idea of the writer, the post-Proustian idea that memory feeds upon itself and is increased by what it spits out and what is gleaned from it. I loved, and still love, the idea that books do not drain the memory but arouse it; I loved that he thought, and proved, that digging into one's memories does not exhaust them, rather it fertilizes them. I loved his rejection of this popular assumption of a massive, passive memory, waiting in limbo for one to come along and inventory its stock so it can be stored, once and for all, in the false light of a reliquary.

Levy here honours Semprun's approach to his own memory; in writing, he fed upon his own memories, fertilized them, rendering them productive and dynamic. Upon first reading, however, it struck me forcefully that Levy's description could also apply to what Semprun's work demands we recognize as scholars concerned with memory itself; that is, of collective memory after Maurice Halbwachs – the memories we gather, collect, and recreate for ourselves. Memory is not, as memory studies in the wake of Pierre Nora would have us believe, fixed in historical time and frozen in nation-place. As more recent practitioners (Confino and Fritzsche 2002, Erll and Rigney 2009) have hinted in increasingly reflexive theorisations, memory is always in production and never produced. It is always a journey and never a destination. When we, as actors, participate in memory, we simultaneously participate in this production.

This process is not necessarily delimited, doomed from its very outset, to be meaningless, even in relation to memories of the most troubling and atrocious events. Because scholars have propounded for so long the idea that extreme experiences, particularly those of the Holocaust,¹ are unrepresentable, a corresponding assumption that

¹ The term 'Holocaust' is deployed here, as it is throughout this thesis, to describe the murder and persecution of Jews and others by the National Socialist regime. I acknowledge that this is a broad use of a term with a complex

they deny, evade or transcend communication and comprehension has also become prevalent.² But the initial assumption behind this dictum is flawed. As Semprun (1994, 13-14) insisted:

you can always say everything. The 'ineffable' you hear so much about is only an alibi. Or a sign of laziness. You can always say anything: language contains everything. You can speak of the most desperate love, the most terrible cruelty. You can speak of evil, its poisonous pleasures, its poppy flavor. You can speak of God, and that's saying a lot. You can speak of the rose, the dewdrop, the span of a morning. You can speak of tenderness, and the infinite succour of goodness. You can speak of the future, where poets venture with closed eyes and wagging tongues.

You can tell about this experience. You have merely to think about it. And to set to it. And have the time, of course, and courage, for a boundless and probably never-ending account...

Just as experience, with time and courage, can be represented, I argue that it can also be communicated. Following the logic of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1963, 123-136), if something touches, something else is also touched. By its very nature, interaction is reciprocal. This is not to suggest that someone else's memories – Semprun's memories for example – can become my memories, as proponents of Alison Landsberg's notion of 'prosthetic memory' (2004) might have it; interaction is not osmosis, and the 'memories' I produce will not be the same those of someone else. I do not want, or think it possible, for the Holocaust to become 'real', for example, as Gary Weissman's *Fantasies of Witnessing* (2004) locates as a central – and potentially dubious – motivation for those who attempt to confront this history; I am not trying to enter into 'the Holocaust universe' as a lived experience (albeit an *imaginary* lived experience), as Lawrence Langer has described (1993). What I can do, with time and courage, is confront the memories of another in a way which means something, which is worth doing,³ which is not akin to the vicarious appropriation of so-called "unclaimed" experience (Caruth 1996), and in doing so I participate in a dialogue which fuels memory's dynamism.

history of application. My decision to employ it in these more general terms is made in line with widespread academic and popular usage.

² Perhaps the most cited source of this notion is Elie Wiesel's 1978 statement that "whoever has not lived through the event can never know it. And whoever has lived through it can never fully reveal it" (in Weissman 2004, 9). The subsequent turn, lead by Lawrence Langer, towards gaining a sense of understanding about the 'Holocaust experience' via the literature of survivors (1978), whilst marking a significant step to realising the potential of such works, as well as rightly warning against the use of redemptive rhetoric in representing the Holocaust, yet sets up a "contest over who really understands the Holocaust and honours its victims" (Weissman 2004, 100) which is perhaps not sufficiently open to the diverse ways in which individuals approach this history, and the potential value of such attempts. It is also worth noting, as Weissman does, that in his later work *Holocaust Testimonies* (1991) Langer revises his opinion of the value of literary representations, arguing that as mediatory texts such works raise "issues of style and form and tone and figurative language that – I now see – can detract our attention from... the event itself" (in Weissman 2004, 105).

³ As Weissman makes clear, the tension between the accessibility and inaccessibility of Holocaust memory opens up a space for the negotiation of the larger boundary that exists between the self and others (2004, 112).

But what is the nature of this productive, processual dynamism? How does it happen? I explore one possible answer to these questions in this thesis, in interrogating the potential of the *encounters* we may have with memory texts: be they literary forms from testimony to fiction, or specific landscapes, from memorials to unmarked mass graves. Beyond gaining an improved understanding of the dynamic between memory, literature and landscape, this thesis also aims to highlight, perhaps somewhat optimistically, the ethical potential of such encounters. Emmanuel Levinas's ontological model,⁴ a framework within which the relationship between the self and the other may be ethically formulated, is rooted in "*the phenomenology of the other*" (Wild 2007, 13). Reacting to existing ontology which relied on the reduction of the other to an "analogue of the self" (ibid), Levinas (1969, 38) asks how "the same, produced as egoism, [can] enter into relationship with an other without immediately divesting it of its alterity?" In Levinas's work the impossibility of knowing the Other resides in the nature of the desire for this knowledge.

The desires one can satisfy resemble metaphysical desire only in the deceptions of dissatisfaction or in the exasperation of non-satisfaction and in desire which constitutes voluptuousity itself. The metaphysical desire has another intention; it desires beyond everything that can simply complete it. It is like goodness – the Desired does not fill it, but deepens it.

It is a generosity nourished by the desired, and thus a relationship that is not the disappearance of distance, not a bringing together, or - to circumscribe more closely the essence of generosity and goodness – a relationship whose positivity comes from remoteness, from separation, for it nourishes itself, one might say, with its hunger. (Levinas 1969, 34)

Whilst Others may be unknowable, in Levinasian ethical parameters they remain inevitably "facing"⁵ us, bound up in relation, and this relation is constituted not by knowing but by "conversation", or dialogical language: "language accomplishes a relation such that the terms are not limitrophe within this relation, such that the other, despite the relationship with the same, remains transcendent with the same" (Levinas 1969, 39). Wild's introduction to *Totality and Infinity* summarises:

By communicating with the other, I enter into a relationship with him which does not necessarily lead to my dependence on him. Nor does he become dependent on me [...] I can strive for such an other without changing it, or losing my own integrity, just as I can

⁴ I use the term 'ontological' as it is loosely defined as the study of existence, although I recognize that this is complicated by Levinas's rejection of ontology as a "first philosophy" of injustice, a philosophy from which he attempts to distance his own model (see 1969, 46).

⁵ The 'face' in this context is specifically "an exteriority that does not call for power or possession, an exteriority that is not reducible [...] to the inferiority of memory, and yet maintains the I who welcomes it" (Levinas 1969, 51). It should be noted that, as Judith Butler argues, Levinas "makes use of the 'face'" as a communicative figure; "The Levinasian face is not precisely or exclusively a human face", but it does "communicate what is human" (2004, xviii).

respond to another person and engage in dialogue without jeopardizing his or my own being. (2007, 17)

It is through this relation, according to Levinas, that it becomes possible to avoid the “self-centred totalistic thinking that organises men and things into power systems, and gives us control over nature and other people” (Wild 2007, 17). The approach to the Holocaust I pursue here is thus one which purposefully avoids both a totalizing, essentially Cartesian, objectification of the other, whilst maintaining a reflexive refusal of complete ‘identification’. I suggest a way of entering into a dialogue with the Other of the past through landscape without assuming a sense of mastery: in encounters which touch us but do not complete us.

The particulars of this argument will be discussed in detail in Chapter One, on the Buchenwald Concentration Camp Memorial near Weimar, Germany. Subsequent chapters discuss the Babi Yar Ravine in Kiev, Ukraine, where a mass grave holds the remains of victims of an *Einsatzgruppen* massacre; and the site of the mass grave and razed village of Lidice, in the Czech Republic, also the result of an *Einsatzgruppen* operation. Before embarking on these three journeys, in the introduction to this thesis I unpack recent trajectories of scholarship on landscape and memory (both as respective and interacting topics). I outline a theoretical confluence between cultural memory and cultural geography that justifies the suitability of landscape to frame a Levinasian approach to Holocaust commemoration. Landscape is fundamental, not only to the experiences that shape memory, but also to the experience of such memories as they travel through interaction. Whilst an explosion of work on memorials and monuments⁶ has resulted in an identified climate of ‘memory fatigue,’⁷ I propound here that by refocusing attention on the larger landscapes which contain these structures and the processes that shape them, some vitality may be returned to the study of commemorative space.

⁶ See Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (2002, 1) for discussion of memory as a popular contemporary obsession and James Young (1994, 1-16) for a summary of the multitudinous nature of Holocaust memorials in particular Western society.

⁷ See, for example, Andreas Huyssen’s suggestion that “excess and saturation in the marketing of memory” has led to this sense of fatigue (2003, 3).

Introduction

Mapping the Terrain

Memory, Landscape and Literature

Landscape holds rich potential as a medium for the representation and commemoration of the Holocaust and its narratives. Scholars in military studies have noted the complexity and significance of the relationship between the violence of war and the physical environment (Tucker and Russell 2001, Russell 2001, Closmann 2009), and have examined the impact of militarization as process on “landscape features, including topography, vegetation and climate”; militarization, furthermore “operates *through* landscape which it changes or maintains, in both a physical and cultural sense” (Pearson, Coates and Cole 2010, 3, my emphasis). The fundamentally geographical nature of many of the events of the Holocaust in particular has furthermore been recognised (Cole et al. 2009), and the idea that its “narrative of extermination” is best expressed in geographical terms has arisen in commentary on concentration camp memorials (Koonz 1994, 258-80). That the Holocaust demands a *positioning* of the self in relation to this history (Baer 2002, 68-9) contributes to the notion that landscape offers compelling possibilities as a medium for Holocaust commemoration. Furthermore the “Nazis’ appropriation of the trope of landscape in their genocidal redefinitions of nation, home and *Heimat*” (Baer 2002, 77), and their practical harnessing of topography in processes of mass killing and burial, affected the way victims experienced the Holocaust as it happened. That visitors to Holocaust sites today can encounter these topographies of suffering – realms formerly inhabited by those with whom they may attempt to empathise – is crucial to the commemorative potential of landscape.

Landscape invites scholarship from many different disciplines across the social and natural sciences and humanities (see Thompson 2009, 7), resulting in a plethora of definitions and approaches. For the purposes of my own investigation into how the Holocaust may be encountered today, approaches from two of these disciplines may be

usefully harnessed: cultural memory and cultural geography. There is, furthermore, a notable confluence in the way these disciplines have approached landscape in recent years, which will be traced here to elucidate the model I pursue in this thesis. Alongside these influences from cultural memory and geography, this model integrates elements of ecocritical thinking. Be it in relation to literature – which, as will become clear, is central to the geographical cultural model of memory I propose – or more generally, ecocritical thinking is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between human beings and the worlds they inhabit, and with how this relationship may be represented, and as such is suited to an exploration into experiences of landscape. There is an ethical universality to ecocritical thinking that captures the spirit of this enquiry, which, as will be discussed further in this introduction, is predicated on a particular understanding of how memory culture operates in a global age. Thus my own interrogations of Holocaust literature – from testimony to fiction – pay particular attention to representations of encounters with the specifically ‘natural’ elements of the landscapes discussed. Some would argue that no literature can be seen as divorced from ecocriticism in the current global climate; “[e]ven if a Shakespeare sonnet does not appear explicitly to be “about” gender, nowadays we still want to ask what it might have to do with gender. The time should come when we ask of any text, ‘What does this say about the environment?’” (Morton 2009, 5). This thesis aims to demonstrate the potential of perceiving the ecological dimensions of Holocaust literature and landscape, particularly with a view to delineating a form of geographical cultural memory.

By ‘cultural memory’, I refer to the diverse and ever-expanding body of scholarship which has developed since a model of collective memory was propounded by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs ([1925] 1992 and [1950] 1980). Since Halbwachs’ innovation, memory scholars have considered ways in which individual memories become part of larger social and cultural frameworks, and vice versa. Halbwachs’ work rendered “the boundaries between [the collective and the individual] permeable” (Crownshaw 2010, 2), prompting a widespread tendency to see personal memories as existing in an inevitable dialogue with associated cultural texts, representations and media. Work which examines the interplay between memory and varied cultural frameworks, then, falls into the category of ‘cultural memory’ as I understand it; or, to differentiate further between this and Halbwachs’ model, “where ‘collective memory’ might imply some kind of shared essence, ‘cultural memory’ foregrounds the cultural means of its transmission” (Crownshaw 2010, 3). Thus, in my concern with landscapes and literatures that

potentially ‘transmit’ Holocaust memory to visitors and readers, I turn to the various existing theorisations of this cultural turn to define my own approach.

Halbwachs’ work implicitly prompts us to consider memory’s relationship to landscape by affirming the centrality of space and place to the way people think about the past; his discussion of ‘implacement’ (1980, 156-7) sees groups and their environments as “mutually responsive” (Browne and Middleton 2011, 40); implacement stabilizes groups via their inhabited worlds. The cultural turn in geography constituted a disciplinary transformation from ‘spatial science’ to more holistic considerations of ‘humanized space’ which notably echoes Halbwachs’ model of implacement. Formerly perceived as totalized universal containers, coherent, neutral and atemporal, spaces have gradually come to be seen as contextualised in and by human history (Tilley 1994). Furthermore, as Todd Samuel Presner notes, “while the discipline of cultural geography lies primarily outside of literary and cultural studies, there are a number of significant points of contact [...] not the least of which is the idea that culture is spatially constituted” (2007, 11). The aforementioned confluence between cultural geography – the study of how groups engage with and make sense of the landscapes around them (D. Atkinson 2005, xiv) – and cultural memory studies post-Halbwachs can be traced accordingly.

At the nexus of cultural memory and cultural geography lies scholarship on ‘difficult heritage’ (MacDonald 2009, Logan and Reeves 2009), ‘dark tourism’ (Lennon and Foley 2000, Sharpley and Stone 2009) and ‘tourists of history’ (Sturken 2007). A plethora of related work has considered both the experiences of visitors at sites of former atrocities, and the challenges faced by those who curate and manage these places. This body of work will be considered in further detail in this introduction, in order to more explicitly define my own model.

Nostalgia, nationalism and the logic of the archive

Founding texts on cultural memory and cultural geography bear significant similarities. Early practitioners in both disciplines commonly interrogated particular behaviours and attitudes within fixed national contexts, and did so through a predominantly nostalgic lens. Associated texts – landscapes, monuments, artworks – were considered according to a fixed logic of representation and subsequent interpretation. In embracing a markedly *nostalgic* approach to nationalism – indeed in some cases mourning for the loss of a

particular national past – there was a distinct research focus on remnants that seem to *fix or embody* that past.

French historian and founding figure in the study of memory cultures, Pierre Nora, developed his model of memory texts or sites [*lieux de mémoire*] in a strictly national context. This model was expressed in nostalgic terms; a turn to the past as a response to the bleakness of the future is a guiding principle of Nora's exhaustive seven volume essay assemblage of French sites.⁸ He was concerned with the “‘acceleration’ of history”, “the increasing rapid disappearance of things and the move into an increasingly uncertain future” (2001, xviii): “Resort to memory is a function of the darkening future [...] what will become of our traditional national memory when it fades and vanishes from lack of revitalization from its own memory?” (ibid.). Although concerned with a broad spectrum of social collectives, even Halbwachs originally conceived of collective memory within “the theatre” of his national society (1950, 50). Correspondingly, in early cultural geography W.G. Hoskins' influential nation specific study *The Making of the English Landscape* ([1954] 1985) mourned the post-World War II loss of Romantic rural vistas and ways of life; “Barbaric England of the scientists, the military men, and the politicians: let us turn away” (1985, 299). Carl O. Sauer, founder of the highly influential Berkeley School of Cultural Geography, was also concerned with landscapes as the fixed domain of national and/or cultural groups whose identities were grounded in ‘indigenous’ spaces (see Wylie 2007, 23). The works of Hoskins and Sauer, like those of Nora and Halbwachs, were instrumental in shaping the predominantly nationalised scholarly lens of the first phase of cultural geography.

It is worth noting at this stage that the intellectual origins of both early cultural geography and cultural memory's nationalistic tendencies have been traced back to nineteenth century German Romanticism, “from whence ideas about the particularity, value, and vitality of certain ‘cultural groups’ [...] first emerged”, later to “culminate in twentieth-century cultural nationalism” (Wylie, 2007, 22). Cultural critic Wolfgang Welsch has objected in particular to the notions of “social homogenization, ethnic consolidation, and intercultural delimitation” (1999, 287) which seemed to define Johann Gottfried Herder's understanding of culture;⁹ Welsch's thesis, and the significance of this ideological

⁸ According to Nora's definition, such ‘sites’ can be material or immaterial in nature and may include “true memorials – monuments to the dead [...] and objects as seemingly different as museums, commemorations, archives, heraldic devices or emblems” (Nora 2001, xix).

⁹ For Herder, “each nation has its centre of happiness within itself, just as every sphere has its centre of gravity” ([1774] 1969, 186). Concepts of *Volkscharakter* (national character) and *Volksseele* (national soul) are central to this ideology, as is the preservation of cultural traditions, folklore and song, religion and literature (Ustorf 2004, 119).

heritage for the Holocaust in particular, will be taken up in more depth later in this introduction.

The potential of landscape to “preserve the order of things” (Yates 2001, 17) was implicit in Halbwachs’ understanding of the relationship between collective memory and space:

Every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework. Now space is a reality that endures: since our impressions run by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in fact, preserved by our physical environment. (1980, 140)

A belief in landscape’s memorative potential dates back to ancient Greece, when public figures embraced a perceived correspondence between spatial order and accurate recollection when making speeches (Yates 2001); and indeed “we all know from experience that a place does call up associations” (ibid., 38). This sense of spatial preservation resonates with the static fixity of Nora’s *lieux*, in which the history of France is “crystallized” into specific sites and symbols (Nora 1989, 7). Nora’s “history of France through memory” (Nora 2001, xx) assumed the capacity of symbols and sites to “embody” memory. These texts can thus logically be read as “specific representations” of that memory (Nora 2001, xviii). This representational logic arguably set in motion a tendency in others to overlook the way in which memorial sites are subject to continuous evolution.¹⁰ Much American cultural geography of the 1980s echoes Nora’s notion of embodied meaning. J.B. Jackson, for example, influentially posited landscape as symbolic realm; as a “repositor[y] of myth, imagination, symbolic value and cultural meaning” (Wylie 2007, 44-5). Jackson opened the way for scholars to explore ‘readings’ of landscapes as texts, resulting in a rich body of work (for example Schama 1995, Iles 2003). However, the logic of this turn cast landscape as an archive, a system from which it is possible to retrieve and recuperate stable meanings, thus eliding recognition of the constantly shifting nature of both landscapes in themselves and the cultural systems of representation and interpretation in which they are implicated.

For Herder, cultural artefacts were by their very nature nationally defined. He furthermore saw national prejudice as healthy, as “good, since it makes you happy. It brings the nations to their centres, makes them more concise as a community, lets their character develop more freely, makes their desires and goals deeper and more passionate” (ibid.). He had an antipathy against travel; he considered “the age of desire for hopeful travels to foreign countries” as a “sign of sickness” (in Lützel 2000, 96). Nonetheless, the accuracy of Welsch’s judgements about Herder have been the subject of some debate; see Casey Hayes (2008, 317-326) who sees Welsch’s thesis as an inadequate reflection of Herder’s work as a whole.

¹⁰ Nora himself, in fact, was aware of the necessarily evolutionary nature of memory sites, stating that their capacity for metamorphosis is central to their existence (1989, 19) – although, even with this qualification, in Nora’s thesis memory is still *attached* to sites, whether material or immaterial.

This model, then, in which the text, or *lieu*, remains fixed, does not allow for an exploration of the processes which lie behind and constantly shape every representation, site, or landscape of memory; for, as Mark Dorrian and Gillian Rose argue, “the meanings of landscape, either historically or for the future, are never *simply there*, inherent and voluble” (2003, 17 my emphasis). This problem has been prevalent in discussions of ‘dark tourism’ – the phrase coined by Lennon and Foley (2000) to describe the increasingly popular phenomenon of tourist trips to sites of former atrocity, suffering and death, including concentration camps, mass graves, prisons, and the museums and monuments associated with them. The “sites and events” of dark tourism become “tourism products” (Lennon and Foley 2000, 3), a term implying both fixity and homogeneity, and, furthermore, casting the tourist as consumer. Recent scholarship continues to cast sites of ‘difficult heritage’ as *lieux de mémoire* (Logan and Reeves 2009, 2), reinforcing a dominant assumption that such places “harbour” memory. There is a tendency, in works on difficult heritage, to echo Nora’s connection between site and nation-state;¹¹ such sites have often become visitor attractions in the first place because they are perceived to have played a significant role in the construction – or destruction – of nation states and national identity.

Following Sauer’s example, much early cultural geography was primarily empirical, and focussed on the importance of shape, form and structure (Wylie 2007, 23); with the “ordered presentation” of visible objects as they exist in relation to one another (Sauer 1963, 97-98). Sauer’s interest in culture, therefore, extended only to its material manifestation in landscape, and did not engage with cultural processes in themselves (Wagner and Mikesell 1962); he is also criticised for assuming the fundamentally ‘superorganic’ nature of culture (Duncan 1980). Superorganicism sees culture as “both above and beyond the participating members” of that culture; its totality is “palpably greater than the sum of its parts [...] an entity with a structure, set of processes, and momentum of its own, though clearly not untouched by historical events and socioeconomic conditions” (Zelinsky 1973, 40-1). This definition, proposed by a student of Sauer’s, highlights the tendency of superorganicism to reify culture and grant it autonomy beyond individual or even group human participation and endeavour. Whilst anthropology, concerned by its very nature with human activity, perhaps encompasses more the approach I wish to pursue, as Neil Campbell has argued via the work of Paul Giles, a tendency to rely on “naturalized affiliations between subject and object” (in Campbell 2008, 3) has resulted in a similarly superorganic notion of identity.

¹¹ MacDonald (2009, 2) introduces a discussion of Nuremburg, for example, with a link between heritage (“the idea that places should seek to inscribe what is significant in their histories”) and European nation-making.

Furthermore, Campbell argues, this time in line with cultural studies pioneer James Clifford, “conventional narratives have ‘privileged relations of dwelling over relations of travel’” (in Campbell 2008, 2). A fundamentally visual approach has also generated the understanding that to perceive the world as landscape (either those we dwell in or travel through) is in fact an objectifying “way of seeing” in itself (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988), drawing attention to a pertinent ethical dimension of the perspective to which I now turn.

Objectivity, separation and observation

To “see with landscape” is to assume the privilege and mastery of detached vision germane to European elite consciousness (Cosgrove, [1994] 1998, 1), fixing a reductive division between self and other: “[t]he very idea of landscape implies separation and observation” (Williams 1985, 26). Landscape has been frequently seen as a duplicitous vehicle for transcendent redemption; suspicious of traditional imagery depicting a false harmony between nature and culture, the visual geography of practitioners such as Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels “implicated landscape images and texts within [notably Marxist] systems of cultural, political and economic power” (Wylie 2007, 153). The essentially “*always already*” representative nature of the Marxist approach (ibid., 68) resonates with the fixity of Nora’s symbolic *lieux de mémoire*; such a perspective may take past processes into account but refuses, or at least elides, the significance of those which are still taking, or yet to take, place.

There are further issues raised by following a representative logic to landscape in the context of the Holocaust and its commemoration in particular. It is first necessary to note that representation *in itself* is frequently called into question in the Holocaust context; because the extremity of original victim experiences has generated the notion that what happened to them was not really ‘experienced’ at all, but remained in some way “unclaimed” (Caruth 1996, 4), they cannot subsequently find adequate representation, be it in literature, the visual arts, or via interaction with place.¹² Thus we are left with the delimitation that “neither acts of remembrance or ethical action” can “provide a sense of

¹² See Elie Wiesel’s commonly cited remark that the Holocaust is “[t]he ultimate event, the ultimate mystery, never to be comprehended or transmitted” (John K. Roth and Michael Berenbaum cite Wiesel 1989, 3). Specifically in relation to place, Ulrich Baer, for example, refutes the possibility of landscape as access to the past with reference to the Holocaust landscape photography of Dirk Reinartz and Mikael Levin. Specifically, Baer uses Reinartz’ image of a landscape at former extermination camp Sobibór (taken 1995) and a strikingly similar photograph by Levin of German labour camp Nordlager Ohrdruf (taken 1997). Both show bleak clearings among trees with no obvious ‘unnatural’ material traces. I will take up Baer’s argument in more detail in Chapter 1.

what it was like to be there” (Bernard-Donals and Glejzer 2001, 2). Accompanying these delimitations is the associated warning that to aestheticize the Holocaust in representation risks redeeming it (Adorno 1965, 125-7), even to the extent that to write its history gives the events a redemptive significance (Friedlander 1993, 61).

Furthermore the idea of landscape as a ‘way of seeing’ reinforces a reductive power structure and an objectifying gaze; Martin Jay, for example cites landscape as “the dominant, even totally hegemonic visual model of the modern era; that which we can identify with Renaissance notions of perspective in the visual arts and Cartesian ideas of subjective rationality in philosophy” (1992, 179). The approach thus replicates a perspective which has been linked to Holocaust perpetration, in which the object of the gaze – including the human subject – is evaluated and scientifically classified, deemed other and objectified (see Milchman and Rosenburg 1998, 229-232). Following this logic, Zygmunt Bauman argues that the modern culture – founded on a Cartesian rationalist bureaucracy – is a “garden culture” (2000, 92); as Gerald Markle’s discussion of Bauman suggests: “If the Jews are defined as a legitimate problem, if the garden needs weeding, then there is a surely a ‘rational’ way to proceed” (1995, 128). There is a literal resonance to this metaphor with regards Holocaust landscapes, which were implicated in genocidal killing processes throughout the Holocaust; landscape, too, was evaluated according to its use-value.¹³ The centrality of the bounded nation and the intimate connection between *Blut und Boden* [blood and soil] to Nazi ideology cannot but recall the moral pitfalls of a nationalistic, superorganic lens. These are perspectives which must be acknowledged but not re-inscribed.¹⁴

Given the changing face of European politics since 1945, there has been an understandable and sustained focus on corresponding developments at memorial sites;¹⁵ such accounts provide a necessary interrogation of the effect of political factors on shifting modes of representation, a fundamental understanding of the national frameworks inhabited by the sites they discuss, and an essential background and context for new work on less visible elements. However, any analysis which emphasises *only* the political determination of memorials is correspondingly limited to revealing the “subjective experience of a social group that essentially sustains a relationship of power”; a focus only on “who wants to remember what and why [...] can only ever be partly illuminating”, and is

¹³ This argument will be demonstrated in all three chapters as the landscape histories of Buchenwald, Babi Yar, and Lidice are discussed in detail. A further consideration of Bauman’s logic also appears in Chapter 3.

¹⁴ This, again, is taken up in detail throughout the thesis chapters, which also consider the consequences of such repetition for those involved in curating and landscaping Holocaust memorial spaces; I consider certain issues raised in relation to curatorial activity in further detail in the next section of the Introduction.

¹⁵ See Young (1994, chapters 2 and 5), Claudia Koonz (1994), and Sarah Farmer (1995)

illustrative of a “tendency to reduce memory, which is fundamentally a concept of culture, to the political” (Confino 1997a, 1393). This is a criticism, not so much of those whose designs imbricate political rhetoric within commemorative sites, but of those who study them solely through a political lens.

How to move on, then, as I believe we must, from a purely ‘representative’ approach to the interpretation of commemorative landscapes as *lieux*? This question is considered in the next section on recent corresponding movements in cultural geography and cultural memory. Within these advances, I will suggest, the critical potential for a new landscape-memory model for Holocaust memorial spaces emerges, which focuses on three dynamic elements that structure visitor experience of site-specific commemoration: the natural environments of the places they visit, the experience of travelling to them, and the mediation and remediation of the relevant site in related literature.

Moving on: Process, Mediation, and the Transcultural Turn

From *lieux de mémoire* to landscapes of memory

Monuments and memorials are constantly subject to “shifting social frameworks” (Rigney 2008, 94). Material iconography ties memory down, when in actuality it is processual, performative, and dynamic (Rigney 2008, 94; Parr 2008, 1), “an active shaping force” (Samuel 1994, x). Memory is also “embedded in social networks”, a set of “practices and interventions” as opposed to a textual or representational medium (Confino and Fritzsche 2002, 5). The turn “from ‘sites’ to ‘dynamics’ within memory studies runs parallel to a larger shift of attention within cultural studies from products to processes, from a focus on discrete cultural artefacts to an interest in the way those artefacts circulate and interact with their environment” (Erll and Rigney 2009, 3). Memory is never static, as the texts around which it circulates are continuously involved in processes of mediation and remediation (ibid., 1-14). Cultural geographic approaches to landscape also echo this turn towards process. A new focus on movement and process led W.J.T. Mitchell to propose the notion that landscape “circulates as a medium of exchange” (1994, 1); or, in other words, that landscape itself “*travels*: not just that material landscapes might be literally transported, but that values, beliefs and attitudes that work through and emerge from specific landscape practices and ‘ways of seeing’ can be seen to migrate through spaces and times” (Wylie 2007, 122). This reversed the logic of cultural geography as conceived in the wake of Sauer, which looked only to the material manifestations of culture in landscape as fixed containers of meaning.

Even the word ‘site’ suggests a static object (Rigney 2008, 93), and as Adrian Parr notes, “monumentalizing the past immobilizes the social vitality of memory, defining and demarcating a limit interpretation to it” (2008, 7-8); “Landscapes are always in the process of ‘becoming,’ no longer reified or concretized – inert and there – [...] always subject to change, and everywhere implicated in the ongoing formulation of social life” (Schein 1997, 662). This thesis will work on the premise that both landscape and memory can be understood as something that is created through social processes, and this constant evolution prevents the delimiting fixity of Nora’s *lieux*. As Dorrian and Rose argue, “landscapes are always perceived in a particular way at a particular time. They are mobilised, and in that mobilisation may become productive: productive in relation to a past or to a future, but that relation is always drawn with regard to the present” (2003, 17). The same can be said of memory; always fundamentally presentist, both landscape and memories are dynamic in their very nature. Thus, whilst Confino and Fritzsche make a key

development in taking memory “out of the museum and away from the monument” (2002, 5), I return to these ‘sites’ of memory as landscapes; not as places which *embody* memory, but as co-ordinates in dialogue. This thesis will thus focus not only on ‘sites’ as they can be seen to represent political and institutional agendas, but as experiential frameworks. Clearly, the latter perspective exists in relation to the former, hence the value of existing work. Whereas the term ‘site’, as noted, implies fixity, this investigation will focus in particular on the ways memorials are continually undergoing processes of change. Hence it seems more appropriate to refer to them as ‘landscapes’, for where ‘site’ implies stasis, ‘landscape’ implies metamorphosis. In mobilizing landscape as a term in this way, I am mindful of Williams claim that “[t]he very idea of landscape implies separation and observation” and indeed of dictionary definitions that cite landscape to be merely a “picture representing a section of [...] scenery” (from *Webster’s Dictionary* in Spirn 1998, 17); but as Ann Whiston Spirn argues, “dictionaries must be revised, and [...] older meanings revived” (ibid.). These “older meanings” – based on the etymology of ‘scape’ from the Danish *skabe* and the German *schaffen* (“to shape”) – imply both the association between people and place which creates landscape and their “embeddedness in culture” (ibid.).

Natural processes in the mediated environment

In memory studies, concurrent with the embrace of memory’s dynamism came recognition of a key way in which this dynamic takes place; that is, through processes of mediation and remediation. This thesis will be concerned with how such mediation occurs, and what the particular impact of this mediation on visitor experience may be. I focus in particular on the following: the natural processes which shape Holocaust sites and inevitably shape our encounters at them, the curation of natural elements – from soil to trees – by those whose work it is to preserve these areas, and the various literary representations of the landscapes. This section deals with the first of these structural co-ordinates: nature. I argue that nature is pre-mediated in Western cultural consciousness in a way that renders it particularly affective in memorial spaces, hence its potential to mediate our own experiences in the commemorative environment.

A “return to nature” in Holocaust memorial space may seem conceptually appropriate as a way to lay the victims of industrialised processes to rest,¹⁶ yet extended studies of natural materials in these landscapes, and how visitors engage with them, are surprisingly rare. This is arguably a noteworthy absence, given the aforementioned recent scholarly recognition of the Nazi genocide’s fundamentally geographic nature. There has, however, been substantial general discourse on nature, memory and commemoration, which contributes to the creation of a platform for such scholarship.¹⁷ John Dixon Hunt has argued that landscape will always enjoy “a fundamental advantage” over other commemorative forms (2001, 16), not least because their natural elements have a particularly affective quality; “a life of their own”, unlike static visual representations, which cannot “register the passing of the seasons, the chiaroscuro of different times of day” (2001, 16). The vulnerability and transience of natural materials is also often perceived as powerfully symbolic, as Dixon Hunt outlines in the context of the memorial garden:

they offer themselves as symbols both of decay and endless renewal. Each yields its own perspective on the commemorative enterprise: either a pathetic sympathy between some lost humanity and the fragility of the natural world, of which man and woman are ineluctably part, or the consolation of seasonal renewal and regeneration (2001, 22).

Nature’s mutability – the fact that it is always in process – contributes to its affect in memory spaces, for it echoes memory’s dynamism. This is not to say that natural forms have a human memory; yet it is clear that the way they physically respond to their environments may encourage an anthropomorphic tendency, one which often allows us to perceive of them as witnesses to history. In *Landscape and Memory*, for example, Schama recalls his impression that the “fields and forests and rivers [of Poland] had seen war and terror, elation and desperation” (1995, 24). This anthropomorphic tendency is one of the ways in which we pre-mediate nature. Clearly when taken in a literal sense the logic of this notion is flawed. As Robert Pogue Harrison suggests:

nature and culture have at least this much in common: both compel the living to serve the interests of the unborn. Yet they differ from their strategies in one decisive respect: culture perpetuates itself through the power of the dead, while nature, as far as we know, makes no use of this resource except in a strictly organic sense. (2003, ix)

¹⁶ A definition of the industrial killing that characterised these acts as the “mechanized, rational, impersonal, and sustained mass destruction of human beings” can be found in the work of Omar Bartov (1996, 3-4).

¹⁷ Certain issues raised by the designation of material within landscapes as ‘natural’ should be noted at this stage; “[t]o call some landscapes natural and others cultural misses the truth that landscapes are never wholly one or the other” (Spirn 1998, 24). Kate Soper maintains that too little is left on Earth in the present day to truly warrant the sole use of the term ‘nature’ in any straightforward sense. She calls instead for close observation of “how it is thought about, talked about and culturally represented” for “there can be no adequate attempt to explore ‘what nature is’ that is not centrally concerned with what it has been *said* to be” (1995, 21).

Elaine Scarry provides an explanation for the human tendency to overlook this decisive difference:

The naturally existing external world [...] is wholly ignorant of the “hurtability” of human beings. Immune, inanimate, inhuman, it indifferently manifests itself in the thunderbolt and hailstorm, rabid bat, smallpox microbe, and ice crystal. The human imagination reconceives the external world, divesting it of its immunity and irresponsibility not by literally putting it in pain or making it animate but by, quite *literally*, “making it” as knowledgeable about human pain as if it were itself animate and in pain [...] A verbal or material artifice is not an alive, sentient, percipient creature, and thus can neither itself experience discomfort nor recognize discomfort in others. But though it cannot be sentiently aware of pain, it is in the essential fact of itself the objectification of that awareness; itself incapable of the act of perceiving, its design, its structure, is the *structure of a perception*. (1985, 288-9)

In our anthropomorphic pre-mediation of nature, we grant it perception, and likewise memory, for its design, structure and dynamism are akin to those of perception and memory. Whilst, throughout this thesis, I take seriously the affective results of this pre-mediation – which arguably results in our sense that nature has “sympathy” for us, as Dixon Hunt puts it – I also keep in mind nature’s intrinsic amorality and its purely organic response to human death.

The other side to Dixon Hunt’s explanation of the affectivity of natural growth in memorial landscapes is concerned with regeneration. To say that natural regeneration consoles us does not rely so completely on the anthropomorphic logic that grounds an assumption of sympathy, for we can be consoled by something without any agenda of its own. The affectivity of regenerative growth can usefully be unravelled further alongside a consideration of the rhetoric of ruins. Specificity must be maintained in pursuing such an argument; ruins are the remains of deliberately constructed human structures, worn down by the encroachment of ‘natural elements’ such as plant matter and meteorological conditions, but they are not to be conflated with them; ruins are constantly diminishing, whilst nature ‘grows’. Michael Roth et al. argue that ruins “embody the dialectic of nature and artifice” (1997, 5); ruins are often the ‘work’ of nature. The two together have affective impact; Susan Stewart notes that “inert matter is made increasingly meaningful by its juxtaposition to living forms. When we find the encroachment of moss on a brick or thyme on a rock appealing, we are pleased by the contrast between the fixity of the inert and the mutability of its natural frame” (1998, 111-112). I would suggest that there is a pastoral sensibility fundamental to the pleasure Stewart identifies. The term has stood in for different things over time; once simply a term for bucolic literature presenting readers with a “lived harmony between people and place” (Gifford 1999, 31), by the 19th century ‘pastoral’ was being employed to describe a particular state of mind which reduces the

complex to the simple (Peck 1992, 75), in other words a pejorative term (Gifford 1991, 2) which undermines the original belief that such a “lived harmony” has ever been possible. The pastoral is inevitably always-already elegiac, disrupted, contributing to a sense of unease and tension that may potentially heighten the uncanny affectivity of natural beauty at sites of destruction: “[Pastoral] takes the form of an isolated moment, a kind of island in time, and one which gains its meaning and intensity through the tensions it creates with the historical world” (Lindenberger in Peck 1992, 75). Young, similarly describes how “[o]ne’s first visit to [death camp memorials]” may create a sense of “shock” which is perhaps a response to these tensions:

not because of the bloody horror these places convey, but because of their unexpected, even unseemly beauty. Saplings planted along the perimeters of the camps, intended to screen the Germans’ crimes from view, now sway and toss in the wind [...] local farmers, shouldering scythes, lead their families through waist-deep fields to cut and gather grass into great sheaves (Young 1994, 120).

At several of the sites I discuss in this thesis, Holocaust history brings the pastoral into being, and throws that past into sharp and vivid relief. Thus I argue that, flawed though it is, the common Western association of rural nature with an ideal past – one which was destroyed by mankind – is central to comprehending the affectivity of nature and ruins at sites of memory; the pastoral, as a mode of elegiac consciousness, cannot exist without the past.

Nature, like the ruin, becomes a link to a past to which we might long to return and avert catastrophe ahead, a spatial and temporal marker – for natural growth records the passing of time – inherently tied up in Western cultural consciousness with human morality and responsibility (Soper 1995). Images of pastoral nature at sites of former atrocity may thus inspire a sense of collective guilt or responsibility which it may be possible to harness. It is often suggested that ruins take us *closer* to the events of history.¹⁸ I propose instead that ruins, precisely in their visible dialogue with nature, force us to realise the unbridgeable gap between the present and the past. Charles Merewether has suggested that “ruins collapse temporalities” (1997, 25); it would, I suggest, make more sense to say that ruins *reassert* temporality. Natural materials are central to this reassertion, unique as they are in their ability to record the passing of time.

The nature/ruins aesthetic thus seems to capture something crucial about the relationship between nature and mankind. A marriage once pleasing, in the context of

¹⁸ Young, for example, remarks on the common habit of “mistaking the piece [the artefact or ruin] for the whole, the implied whole for unmediated history” (1994, 127).

Holocaust landscapes, compels us to face the human capacity for destruction in the name of progress.

The total wars of the twentieth century have shaken our framing of ruins and shattered the notion that culture can exist as an innocent, floating fragment in a powerful sea of violence. In the wake of World War II, culture itself came to be cast as a ruin, as a troubled witness to the violence of humanity rather than as a spectator of the sublime powers of nature [...] the sentimental attachment to the ruin, *the contemplative gaze that finds some sign of renewal in nature's growth in a broken stone, has been shaken, diverted*. The promise of understanding the past and of the renewal or even redemption that this might provide seems empty or a lie in the wake of extremities (and the threat of nuclear annihilation) that turned a world into (potential) ruins [...] The regular rhythms of nature have been replaced in our time by the enormity of our capacity for ruination. (Roth et al. 1997, 20, my emphasis)

I suggest then, that ruins and the encroachment of natural materials on them, reassert an awareness of temporal distance; a key element of nature's potential for Holocaust commemoration:

Ruins, remains, and survivors place us within the Derridean logic of ghosts, the revenant or the spectre, that which cannot be so easily vanquished with the passing of time or with the writing of history but continues to return (*revenir*), haunt, and, most important, obstruct and refuse final mastery. (Presner 2007, 37)

Nature, which exists both before us and around us, forces us to recognize that, no matter how great the potential for landscapes of memory to make the past 'come alive', they always also embody the impossibility of collapsing our temporal difference from its events; in fact, they present us with the stark reality of this distance in a way that cannot be avoided or glossed over. This, I would argue, is the real memorative value of nature in the commemorative environment; our sentimental anthropomorphism of nature may render it affective, but it is in its indifferent growth – its very lack of agenda – that it situates us in relation to history.

In a departure from the study of memorial spaces as realms of representational fixity, then, I pay particular attention throughout this thesis to the 'natural' elements of landscape which are constantly in flux: plants, soil, topographical contours, weather and climate. I also isolate the processes of mediation that shape the affectivity of these natural forms in memorial landscapes – processes to which I now turn my attention. Perhaps unsurprisingly in light of the above discussion of nature's affective potential in the Holocaust context, despite the increase in the use of technology in Holocaust museums, the 'natural' areas of memorial landscapes continue to capture curatorial and visitor imaginations alike. Camps and mass graves were often located away from urban centres, and with the passing of time they increasingly lend themselves to integration with their surrounding natural

environments. Their management, as I will suggest at various points throughout this thesis, reveals a distinctive curatorial reliance on nature's memorative value, as something that can both sympathise and console. However, and not unlike its museum counterpart, the memorial landscape raises ethical issues for curators which warrant an attention that has so far been largely lacking in scholarship on the subject. Perhaps this is because theorists assume, as Sarah Farmer does, that "[u]nlike the writer of a book or the director of a museum, the custodian of a memorial site is not free to select what to tell and what to leave untold" (1995, 98); a suggestion I would largely refute.

In museums and art galleries, the curator manages, preserves and interprets collections (Lassey 2003, 136-7), all processes which significantly mediate experience in the museum environment.¹⁹ Curators create meaning, as well as simply organizing objects which are in themselves perceived as meaningful, and in doing so they narrativize the performance of the museum visitor; "everything one sees in a museum is a production by somebody" (Patraka 1999, 122).²⁰ Outdoor commemorative spaces are also curated with deliberation; evidence of intervention is often simply less obvious to the casual gaze. Spatial narrativization outside the museum, which involves similar mediatory processes of management, preservation and interpretation to those that occur inside, is largely the work of landscape architects, gardeners and other maintenance staff.²¹ Curatorial structuring can activate the existing potential of exhibited material to express curatorial/institutional political concerns, "by the use of processual and often participatory means" (Morland and Amundsen 2010). Their methodologies are often subject to intense scrutiny; Edward Linenthal (2001, 199) suggests, for example, that the presentation of artefacts linked to the Nazi regime in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) risks the contamination of commemorative space. Even unintended echoes of perpetrator ideology are subject to critique; elements of the USHMM's permanent exhibition display what Crownshaw has called "an unfortunate, unwitting, and ironic parallel with Nazi museology," in that within the museum, "all that survives of Jewishness are the artefacts of a past life, the salvage and exhibition of which are predicated on the extinction of that life" (2010, 208).²²

This rigorous interrogation of representative strategy has infrequently been applied to the natural landscapes that exist in dialogue with these museal structures,

¹⁹ On the museum as a mediatory environment see Oren Baruch Stier (2003, 126).

²⁰ also see James Young (1994, vii) on the 'narrative matrix' created by the sequence of objects in museum environments.

²¹ See Chris Keil (2004, 490) on the mediated nature of the outdoor memorial space at Birkenau.

²² Crownshaw's comments are made in consideration of the planned Nazi central museum in Prague, as discussed by Andrea Liss (1998, 79). Also see Stier, (2003, 128) and Young (1994, 133).

despite the fact that the ecological environment of the memorial is equally, if not more, subject to process and mediation. Chris Pearson argues that “[t]he environment as natural entity” is frequently overlooked in investigations into the construction of memorials and the way they are experienced, as is the way in which “memorials actively engage with their environment and in turn the environment naturally engages with them [...] Memorials thus create their own microenvironments while establishing their relation to a wider landscape” (2009, 152). A rare in-depth consideration of the management of nature at a Holocaust memorial site can be found in Andrew Charlesworth and Michael Addis’ study of Auschwitz and Plaszow (2002), which takes into account the effect human intervention, or its lack, may have on visitor experience. In terms of considering the extent to which management practices may constitute an unwitting parallel with Nazi ideology, they note that “[u]niform lawns are more likely [than meadows] to let us regard the victims as the authorities did, as ‘Figuren’, objects, a mass” (2002, 246). Furthermore, they suggest, with increased landscaping, it becomes “more difficult [for visitors] to experience [...] exploratory encounters” at places such as Auschwitz-Birkenau (ibid., 248). Throughout my own discussion, then, I take into account how Holocaust memory is being landscaped at sites of former atrocity, and maintain an alertness to the polemic associations that may arise from the processes used to harness nature’s affective potential. There is, however, another way in which landscape experience is mediated, to which I now turn: via related literature.

Literary mediation

Just as memory studies scholars have recognised the way in which literary material can substantially structure cultural memory and the experiences that contribute to the formation of this memory, increased attention to literature has begun to emerge in cultural geographies of landscape:

In the wake of insights from poststructural and non-representative theories, it may be argued that there is a new sense of a need to develop newly critical and creative means of expressing relationships between biography, history, culture and landscape [...] it could be argued that notions of landscape – the description of landscape, and the discussion of personal experiences of and attachments to landscape – are generally consonant with the literary genres of nature writing, travel writing, cultural history and biography. (Wylie 2007, 206-7).

Cultural geography’s embrace of literature brings to the fore the possibility of sharing stories via landscape experience (Lorimer, 2006), but also draws attention to the potential of landscape writing as a way into understanding experiences of “mobility, exile, distance

and non-belonging” (Wylie 2007, 211). For Wylie “to speak of landscape writing is to reintroduce [...] questions of subjectivity and the self – questions concerning the figure who writes, narrates and perceives” (ibid., 213). “[T]he tension, of landscape is a tension of presence. It is the tension of regarding at a distance that which enables one to see” (Rose and Wylie 2006, 477).

Attention to landscape is often notable as a component of Holocaust writing, not least because victim experiences were frequently diasporic; new landscapes were encountered throughout deportation and internment, and subsequent descriptions often foreground testimonial accounts. However, before exploring in full the potential of such literature as a source of productive mediation for readers and visitors, there are some obstacles to be considered and overcome. As noted previously, all representative forms meet a challenge in the context of the Holocaust, and authors attempting to represent the Holocaust in literature have faced major obstacles. In the case of literature by original witnesses,²³ there are undoubtedly problems of translation: how can experiences belonging to the past – experiences which only exist in memory – be effectively translated into language? This is fundamentally the same challenge any author may face, although the extremity of Holocaust experience may exacerbate and complicate the endeavour. Only the author of a particular testimony can attempt to judge to what extent their experience and their representation correlate. Some of the most critically acclaimed literary representations of the Holocaust are those that include an explicit authorial struggle to find this correlation.²⁴ Ethical questions also often plague discussions of Holocaust literary representation. This is in part due to a common perception of literature as an aestheticizing form, the assumption that literature inevitably transforms experience into linear narrative, and the idea that personal narratives invite personification.²⁵ Clearly, similar problems, particularly those concerning aesthetics, are also inherent to the production of Holocaust artworks.²⁶

²³ Such works become variously categorised as testimony, memoir, autobiography and, in certain specific cases, fiction, all of which carry specific implications. Therefore in this more general overview I avoid using these terms.

²⁴ Although there exists a general sense of reluctance to produce a canonical hierarchy of Holocaust literature, for example by those that teach the subject (Eaglestone and Langford 2008, 7), inevitably some texts have come to be seen as key. (Examples include Charlotte Delbo’s trilogy *Auschwitz and After*, various works by Primo Levi but particularly *If this is a Man*, Jorge Semprun’s *Literature or Life* and *The Long Voyage*, George Perec’s *W*, Elie Wiesel’s *Night*). The majority of these texts deal either explicitly or implicitly with the problems of the representational process.

²⁵ Berel Lang, for example, explores the moral consequences of literary representation and argues that “where impersonality and abstractness are essential features of the subject, as in the subject of the Nazi genocide, then a literary focus on individuation and agency ‘contradicts’ the subject itself” (in Levi and Rothberg 2003, 330). See Amy Hungerford (2003) for a full discussion of personification in this context.

²⁶ See Brett Ashley Kaplan’s introduction to *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (2007) for an overview.

Concerns about the ethics of representation become more explicit and divisive with regard to literature about the Holocaust created by those who *did not* experience it. Holocaust fictions, as Sue Vice notes, have frequently been judged as “scandalous”; apparently “to write Holocaust fictions is tantamount to making a fiction of the Holocaust” (2000, 1).²⁷ Throughout this thesis, my own interest in Holocaust literature – whether by those who experienced the Holocaust at first hand or those who did not – is not in concerned in particular with advancing the debate over which genres are appropriate or acceptable. Rather, I focus on the way this literature animates the events of the Holocaust in the imagination of the reader, in line with Young’s argument that “both events and their representations are ultimately beholden to the forms, language, and critical methodology through which they are grasped”; that “[w]hat is remembered of the Holocaust depends on how it is remembered, and how events are remembered depends in turn on the texts now giving them form” (in Levi and Rothberg 2003, 335). Such an approach “recognizes that literary and historical truths of the Holocaust may not be entirely separable”, that “the truths of the Holocaust – both the factual and the interpretive – can no longer be said to lie beyond our understanding, but must now be seen to inhere in the ways we understand, interpret, and write its history” (ibid.). In other words, many people studying the Holocaust have come to be interested less in discrepancies between ‘history’, ‘memory’ and ‘representation’, and more on the way these are intricately and intimately related. Huyssen, for example, argues:

Re-presentation always comes after [...] Rather than leading us to some authentic origin or giving us verifiable access to the real, memory, even and especially in its belatedness, is itself based on representation. The past is not simply there in memory, but it must be articulated to become memory. The fissure that opens up between experiencing an event and remembering it in representation is unavoidable. Rather than lamenting or ignoring it, this split should be understood as a powerful stimulant for cultural and artistic creativity. (1995, 2-3)

Based on such an understanding, I am interested here in considering the impact of literary representations on the creation of Holocaust memory by visitors to commemorative sites, as well as those produced by those who inhabited them as victims. I focus throughout not solely on the texts themselves or the processes that *produced* them, but on their relationship with the imaginative processes of memory they potentially *provoke*. Testimony should not necessarily be conflated with authority or authenticity in the strictest sense of the terms. On the title page of Charlotte Delbo’s ‘None of us will Return’ (1995), the following legend appears: “Today, I am not sure that what I wrote is true. I am

²⁷ Elie Wiesel famously pronounced “a novel about Auschwitz is either not a novel or not about Auschwitz” (in Lewis and Appelfeld 1984, 155). Fiction in this context usually implies imaginative literature by those who did not experience the Holocaust, although this division is far from clear-cut.

certain that it is truthful.” With this in mind, throughout discussions of literary material, I rely on the *truthfulness* of the authors rather than on their accounts as historical documents.

I turn now to the specific potential of Holocaust writing as a mediatory touchstone for experiences of landscape, both as inhabited space and spaces which are travelled through. In survivors’ testimonies and memoirs, both travel to, and experience at, topographies of suffering are often described in some detail. The experience of displacement was a common denominator for many victims of the Nazi regime, and subsequently is often dealt with either explicitly or implicitly in Holocaust literature. It has been argued, accordingly, that travel can potentially provide a framework for the consideration of both original experiences of the Holocaust and subsequent memory production. Kathryn Jones argues that both Delbo and Semprun “use the familiarity of the journey in order to engage with the uninitiated reader’s everyday experience[s]” (2007, 36), and furthermore that “[t]ravellers respond to previous writings and draw on their knowledge of works they have read, and these journeys to the camps are also structured by accounts given by others about the sites” (Jones 2007, 60):

The narrators’ journeys bring changed perceptions of the camps when their own experiences are contrasted with their previous knowledge, and by ascribing divergent meanings to the memorials they contribute to the interactive, dialogical relationship between Holocaust memorial and visitor. These accounts illustrate the extent to which the gaze of the narrators is structured by their previous knowledge [...] and existing representations of the camp. (Jones 2007, 61)

Significantly, Jones concludes her investigation of the journey in Holocaust memoir by underlining the way in which, at times, metaphors of travel may be “evoked solely in order to be negated”, serving only “to underline the irreducible gulf constructed by the authors between the reality they experienced in the camps and the knowledge of their addressees and readers who did not enter this world” (2007, 51). Thus she advocates the use of metaphorical associations as a way into accessing the experience of victims, but not as a way to make those experiences completely our own. Experience of memorial landscapes, travel, and displacement are mediated and remediated in and by literary accounts, and this particular form of ‘becoming’ – the productive interplay between memorial environments, literature and memory – is of key interest in this thesis.

To abbreviate substantially the arguments made so far, this thesis will look to a number of relevant processual co-ordinates surrounding Holocaust commemorative sites, focusing on: landscapes, with a particular focus on ‘natural’ features and the larger geographical contexts in which they exist and their mediation, both by curators and

throughout related literature. In some cases, the landscapes in question are those in which an atrocity took place, thus essentially dealt with as original, site-specific territories of atrocity. However, as the thesis progresses, I increasingly turn to landscapes which seem to travel far from their original geographical co-ordinates. In all cases, a scrutiny of mediatory and remedial processes, particularly those involving literary works, will be considered alongside the landscapes themselves. Throughout, I consider the potential of the landscapes in question to facilitate a meaningful relationship between the self and the other of history which does not rely on over-identification or the perceived appropriation of another's suffering. I now move on to consider another dimension of the aforementioned confluence between cultural memory and cultural geography, in which the same determination to preserve the other's specificity also underpins the pursuit of empathic connection; the turn towards transcultural thinking.

Transcultural landscape, literature and 'travelling' memory

The tendency to perceive cultures as organically linked to particular territories has, as Campbell suggests, led to a focus on "roots" rather than "routes", and on "dwelling" rather than travel (2008, 4). However, in harnessing approaches from Clifford, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, and Edward Said, Campbell also presents a way into overcoming this short-sightedness, pioneering a "mobile genealogy [...] a cultural discourse constructed through both national and transnational mediations, of roots and routes, with its territories defined and redefined (deterritorialized) from both inside and outside" (ibid., 8). Such a logic is also visible in a broader shift in memory studies and cultural geography; just as the fixity and nostalgia of former approaches has been disputed, the dominance of the national lens has been undermined by the reality of contemporary globalization. The bordered nation state, as far as memory culture is concerned, is no longer an appropriate analytical framework:

The form in which we think of the past is increasingly memory without borders rather than national history within borders. Modernity has brought with it a very real compression of time and space. But in the register of imaginaries, it has also expanded our horizons of time and space beyond the local, the national and even the international. (Huyssen 2003, 4)

Astrid Erll (2011, 7), echoing other key thinkers in a turn away from *lieux de mémoire*,²⁸ argues that Nora's focus on the nation state as bound to ethnicity constitutes an "old-fashioned concept of national culture and its puristic memory" which refuses the

²⁸ See also Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche (2002, 1-24), and Ann Rigney (2008, 93-4).

multiethnic and multicultural reality of contemporary life. A transcultural view allows for this reality, provides a lens through which we may comprehend “the sheer plethora of shared lieux de mémoire that have emerged through travel, trade, war, and colonialism” (ibid., 8).²⁹ In reference to earlier work by historian Aby Warburg, Erll traces a precedent for transculturalism in general and travelling memory in particular:

[Warburg] focuses on [...] the movement, the migration or travel, of symbols across time and space. And this is in fact how I would like to conceive of transcultural memory: as the incessant wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms, and practices of memory, their continual ‘travels’ and ongoing transformations through time and space, across social, linguistic and political borders. (ibid., 11)

Transcultural thinking was pioneered by Welsch as a methodological premise for literary analysis in reaction against Herder’s aforementioned intercultural delimitation. Cultural geographers, who had become wary about Sauer’s romanticized approach to bordered cultures (Jackson 1989, D. Mitchell 1998), also trace the source of their discomfort to Herder, and to his contemporary Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (Wylie 2007, 22). Herder’s attachment to nationhood does indeed seem to place him in opposition to transcultural thought. Following Welsch’s proposition that Herder’s notions of culture are “normatively dangerous” (1999, 195), Erll notes that “such delimiting thinking [...] generates racism and other forms of tension between local, ethnic, and religious groups” (2011, 8). This is borne out by arguments such as that of Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, that European Romanticism’s preoccupation with national traditions was key to the development of Nationalism in both Europe and America, and hence to imperial colonization, the notion of ‘manifest destiny’ and other instances of the “triumphant unfolding” of national power (1990, 416).

Yet Herder’s main focus was on the importance of maintaining strong cultural identification within groups of people who would preserve rich and unique traditions; his nationalism was culturally and linguistically, rather than politically, conceived: he was not an advocate of the nation state, as such, but of the cultural nation. His desire to preserve cultural specificity, I would argue, should be echoed in all forms of comparative analysis. To think transculturally means to recognize the nature and impact of interaction between nation and cultures, without assuming that unique traditions are erased in the process. Despite his advocacy of container culture, contemporary scholarship recognizes a fundamental cosmopolitanism in Herder’s politics (Forester 2010, 32). Michael Forester insists that Herder’s concern for the protection of the nation neither privileged one culture over another nor meant that he sought to “seal off nations from each other’s influence or

²⁹ Erll turns to Welsch’s earlier argument for transculturality, formed in reaction to Herder’s notion of ‘container culture’

keep them static". Furthermore "it did not lead him to advocate a centralized, militarized state"; for all his aforementioned short-sightedness on the subject of cultural prejudice, he denounced "military conflict, colonial exploitation, and other forms of harm between nations" (ibid., 43). For Herder, tradition and progress were not opposed or mutually destructive, as they have so often been characterized, but could be productive, evolutionary counterparts (Barnard 1969, 50-51). It is unsurprising, then, that Hayes sees Herder's views as fitting "more with the concept of transculturality than Welsch is willing to concede" (ibid., 317). Furthermore, Fred Dallmayr notes that "Herder was endowed with an uncanny talent for empathy or "sympathetic imagination" (1998, 25). Goethe's cosmopolitanism also has limitations of its own, as will be seen in chapter I. Whilst it would be reductive to imply that transculturalism originated within the Enlightenment tradition *per se*, elements of Herder and Goethe's respective approaches to cultural dynamics are also key to the transcultural turn: the opening up, or transcendence of, national borders; the possibility for empathy between diverse cultures in a turn towards others; and a cosmopolitan outlook characterised by a reluctance to either lose sight of or universalise cultural specificities.

The transcultural lens facilitates a focus on deterritorialization, a term which, as noted above, can generally be used to describe the "definition and redefinition of territory" (Campbell 2008, 8). In introducing the notion of cosmopolitan memory, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2006) mobilize the term, hyphenated,³⁰ to highlight the way in which site-specific atrocities may become "de-territorialized" from their original locations via related mediatory, commemorative and social processes, generating new global trajectories. Accordingly, the potential exists for a variety of memory texts to become more accessible to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, as new global geographic links place them at the centre of a dynamic creation of "new connections that situate [...] political, economic, and social experiences in a new type of supranational context" (Levy and Sznaider 2006, 10).³¹ Levy and Sznaider's use of the term de-territorialization resonates with its conceptualisation by Dorrian and Rose, who propose deterritorializing landscape as a term which describes "uprooting it from its location within fixed webs of signification and transporting it, trailing a set of potentialities which can produce effects in new domains. This is certainly not an argument for evacuating [...] the 'content' of the term" (2003, 16).

³⁰ In order to maintain a clear usage, when I discuss 'de-territorializations' of memory from landscape I adopt their spelling. When referring to an attempt to attach a fixed meaning to a particular landscape, I employ the term 'territorialization', although clearly if a series of territorializations take place a process of deterritorialization is implied, as the meanings 'attached' to the landscape are subject to multiple redefinitions.

³¹ As will be discussed in chapter 3, there is arguably a caesura between Levy and Sznaider's theory and memory practice in the real world; nonetheless, their contribution is notable in furthering the transcultural project.

When I suggest the de-territorialization of memory *from* landscape at various point in this thesis, I similarly maintain that neither landscapes nor the memories connected with them are necessarily evacuated in the process; indeed, such arguments rely upon this prior content “which confers imminence and underpins the performative effects” (ibid.).

Probing the way in which memory may appear simultaneously locally determined yet geographically uncontainable, Presner advocates a focus on how “language and the places of encounter [...] have become deterritorialized and remapped according to new constellations, figures and sites of contact.”³² This methodology results in “geographies of simultaneity or constellations of possibility” (2007, 12) and affirms that “nowadays [...] there is a general agreement that the Holocaust was not the inevitable telos of a long-term historical development”; thus the conceptual power of a cultural geographical approach is how it allows historical events to become nexuses rather than marked points on a chronological line. Consequently “any sort of long-term, explanatory questions that seek to elucidate the development of a certain ‘track’ [...] are disallowed”, which, rather than foreshortening possible lines of enquiry, allows “a new topology of concepts and problems to surface” (Presner 2007, 14). Similarly Campbell proposes thinking “rhizomatically” about space “beyond its function as national unifier”, as “unfinished multiple, and ‘open’ and to recognise that ‘beneath official histories there are other powers, actualized through other kinds of encounter and intervention,’ tracing divergent, entangled lines of composition that both interconnect and split apart constantly” (2008, 8); rhizomatic geography is one of “becoming” (ibid., 34), not completion.³³ Pursuing the possibilities of thinking rhizomatically under another name, Michael Rothberg urges us to “consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing and borrowing” (2009, 3). In taking Holocaust memory “in the Age of Decolonization” as the framework to develop his theory of multidirectionality, Rothberg’s work is a significant influence on parts of this thesis. I particularly focus on the ways in which multidirectional memory work is or is not performed in the public sphere, and to whose benefit and whose detriment, in Chapter II.

The transcultural turn, which as noted operates via a local-global, or “glocal” dynamic (Levy and Sznaider 2006, 10) is also fundamentally resonant with ecocritical logic. As Lawrence Buell notes, “environmental criticism’s working conception of ‘environment’ has broadened in recent years [...] to include [...] the interpenetration of the

³² As Presner notes, this conceptualisation of history stems from the work of Walter Benjamin “by virtue of its antihistoricist, materialist approach to studying cultural artifacts” (2007, 12).

³³ Campbell juxtaposes rhizomatic thinking with the “arboreal” as a metaphor for rootedness; this will be taken up again in more detail in Chapter 1.

global by the local” (2005, 12). Ecocritical attachment to the earth functions at these two interconnected levels, and embraces that interconnection. That we feel intensely for the local environments we inhabit and consequently strive to protect them may lead to a concern for the world in its entirety, for each local environment is a part of that larger whole. Ecocritical logic is sceptical towards “mythographies of national landscape [...] intensified both by mounting critique of the perceived ethnocentricity of all such myths and by the increasing awareness that the environmental problems the world now faces ‘are quite unaware of national and cultural boundaries’ (Claviez 1999, 377). National borders by no means regularly correspond with ‘natural’ borders” (Buell 2005, 81-2).

So far this introduction has mapped confluent development across cultural memory and cultural geography, observing certain key shifts: from a nationalistic nostalgia to transcultural cosmopolitanism, from site to landscape, from representational static fixity to a focus on process. Memory itself has been called a travelling concept, in terms of its migration “between disciplines, between historical periods, and between geographically dispersed academic communities” (Bal 2002, 24), and its constitutive and constituting texts are similarly mobile. As theories of transculturalism, cosmopolitanism, and multidirectionality have developed, the inherently processual, travelling nature of both memory and landscape has come to the fore. I have advocated a focus on site-specific landscapes in themselves as processual arenas, whilst simultaneously recognizing the many ways in which they may travel; for, as Susannah Radstone’s recent summary of the emergence of transcultural and multidirectional theories suggests, locatedness remains central to the experience, practice, and theory of memory (2011), in tension, perhaps, but not necessarily negating the ways in which memory travels. The next section moves from a consideration of the landscapes themselves to how they may be encountered; to the ‘consumption’ of space and literature – and considers the potential of such encounters for the pursuit of an ethical engagement with the other of the past.

Encounters: the Holocaust and the Others of the Past

Revising Consumption

The theorisation of landscape-as-travel, taken up by a plethora of geographers, recognised Western perceptions of landscape as complicit in imperialism. This notion was of key interest to postcolonial cultural geographers working on the interplay between landscape, perception and authority. Alongside such work emerged the notion that pursuit of the landscape experience played an inherent role in the acquisition of power. Perhaps accordingly, tourists travelling to see particular landscapes came to be seen as *consumers* (Urry 1990), a notion endorsed, as noted previously, by Lennon and Foley's model of dark tourism in which sites become products to be consumed.

In certain contexts this has been illuminating. Marita Sturken (2007), for example, demonstrates how a culture of fear and paranoia in the wake of specific acts of terrorism – the Oklahoma City bombings in 1995 and the destruction of the World Trade Centre in 2001 – has resulted in particular consumer behaviours motivated by desire for security and comfort. Sturken focuses on the role of such behaviours and corresponding products (in particular souvenirs and popular cultural 'icons') in consolidating specific forms of American national identity. The model presents a set of heavily mediated processes, embraced by the tourist in order to achieve certain ends of which they themselves may not be explicitly aware – personal desires for safety and security become inextricably involved in the construction of the American citizen as innocent victim; an identity which is then politically mobilized in the justification of aggressive military retaliation to terrorist acts. Sturken's 'tourists of history' work to absolve themselves of any personal or collective political culpability and complicity in the acts that may have initially involved their nation in the 'war on terror'. Whilst this analysis serves to further articulate ways in which tourism, memory production and identity are deeply related, it does not advance our understanding of the tourist beyond pre-existing assumptions about the base and self-serving nature of their motivations and apparent susceptibility to manipulation by capitalist systems. Furthermore, the unique context in which Sturken's analysis arose renders her conclusions of somewhat particularised value. As she states herself, her primary aim was to "use the traditional notion of the tourist as a metaphor to make sense of how American culture succeeds in creating a depoliticized and exceptionalist relationship to the broader issues of global history and politics" (2007, 11), rather than to discuss the full spectrum of potential tourist engagement.

The figure of the dark tourist as consumer has been prompted by both academic and non-academic debates fuelled by ethical concerns about the integration of sites of atrocity into tourist itineraries. Particularly notable is the implication that such integration potentially normalizes atrocious histories and provides, in some sense, a form of entertainment. A notable controversy concerned the addition of Auschwitz-Birkenau to 'stag' weekend itineraries in Krakow. Paul Luke, a tour operator responsible for one such itinerary, made the following statement:

People have told us they have had the best night out ever after they have been [to Auschwitz], because it almost makes you think, 'To hell with that, we have seen the worst humanity had to show' and then gone out on a major night on the tiles [...] although it makes some people cringe at the notion of these two things colliding, it is something that is very moving and extremely sobering. Then again, it does fuel a fabulous night out. (Luke 2010)

In drawing attention to how a trip to Auschwitz may "fuel a fabulous night out", Luke's defence does little to retrieve the situation. Karen Pollock, head of the Holocaust Educational Trust, states: "Over one million people were systematically murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau. It seems entirely inappropriate to advertise a visit to the site for stag groups in this way, alongside nights of drinking and clubbing." (NineMSN 2010). A tour operator added the following statement in the comments section of the site:

Our groups show nothing but respect when they visit Auschwitz and I am appalled by any insinuation that we treat this emotive subject lightly. [...] We have never had one single complaint from the staff at Auschwitz and they maintain that our groups are welcome so long as they continue to show absolute respect, which they have done without exception for over four years. ('Denzil', NineMSN 2010)

This is a less provocative argument than that put forward by Luke. Whether or not one agrees with the concept itself, it is nevertheless important to consider the motivations of and behaviour exhibited by the tourists in question. Outrage is understandable, but too frequently results in dismissal, which rarely advances discourse. "Controversy rather than canonization may be the most important factor in keeping memory alive. Only if it is vital to defining current identities will a monument be worth disputing and hence newsworthy. Consensus also leads to invisibility" (Rigney 2008, 94). The example of the Auschwitz stag weekend is paradigmatic of the sense of tension that surrounds the inclusion of visits to concentration camps in the tourism bracket; the called-for seriousness that must be hoped to characterise such visits sits ill within a category predominantly embedded in concepts of leisure, pleasure and relaxation. However, as Chris Keil suggests in a discussion of visits to Auschwitz-Birkenau as a form of secular pilgrimage:

a distinction can be drawn between behaviours within certain forms of tourism or sightseeing, a tension between polarities that can be described as, on the one hand festive, playful, hedonistic or pleasurable in one sense or another, and on the other, as serious, revelatory or transcendental; perhaps also sombre, commemorative or funereal. (2005, 479)

Keil disrupts a binary opposition between two touristic states; the perceived separation between pilgrimage (commonly understood as a sacred endeavour) and leisure (aligned with secularity and comparative profanity). He suggests, via the etymologic origins of the terms involved, that “the notion of leisure contains elements of purposefulness and dedication, while pilgrimage, the pursuit of the transcendent, also carries with it senses of travel, excitement and adventure” (2005, 480). Indeed, to further complicate the issue, Sturken acknowledges that “[m]any forms of contemporary tourism can be said to be guided by a self-consciousness about the potential superficialities of everyday tourism” (2007, 11). The many possible emotions that underlie the motivations of visitors to sites of former atrocities call for further scrutiny, as does the actual nature of the experience that follows; this practice is too complex to be understood merely as a means to a straightforward and predictable end. Keil’s conception of visitors as ‘memory pilgrims’, whilst raising issues about the sacralisation of atrocity, at least disrupts the stereotype of the ‘tourist consumer’. Perhaps, though, the most potentially valuable way of moving the study of ‘dark tourism’ forward is to re-focus attention on this activity as a form of travel; as exploration which exposes the self to the other.

A reinvigorated interest in the possibilities of tourism as a way of engaging with the other comes into play within the discourse of landscape-as-travel. Postcolonial theorists saw such attempts as superficial and self-serving; for example, based on analyses of travel writing Stephen H. Clark argues that:

travel is a way of having the encounter [with the other] while keeping it in the realm of otherness and fantasy [...] the desire is to see and know, to convert the otherness of the world into the familiar and homely, even to destroy the boundaries between self and world, so there will be nothing lurking in unexplored places, and the world will not terrify with the things it permits to happen. (1999, 167)

Yet there remains potential in the self-other engagements of travel. “To be a traveller [...] is to be constantly reminded of the simultaneity of what is going on in the world, your world and the very different world you have visited [...] it’s a question of sympathy [...] of the limits of the human imagination” (Sontag 2007, 228). Self-other engagement may indeed be a question of limits; yet as we have already seen, in the case of the Holocaust, some sense of limitation – an avoidance of totality – is essential.

Cultural historian Rudy Koshar (2000b, 103) has similarly defined tourism as “a cultural practice that requires and, to varying extents, instantiates, a hermeneutics [...] based on the interpretation of a multiplicity of texts and markers, all oriented to producing knowledge of Self and Other. Consumption operates within existing fields of reference, establishing “a *present* relative to a time and place” (ibid.). Here, again, it is possible to see the origins of Koshar’s notion of the ‘here and now’ of spatial experience, and tourism’s potential to produce ‘knowledge of the Self and Other’ which, as discussed in the introduction via the work of Levinas, is fundamental here; the model of memory I suggest is essentially one which aims to find empathic ground with others of the past without eroding their irreducible otherness.

Issues of performance and production are also prominent in Koshar’s model of touristic involvement, which is informed by Michel de Certeau’s depiction of the individual as constantly undertaking a “silent production” of reading.³⁴ De Certeau’s emphasis on the potential of everyday activities to transgress prescribed limits of meaning returns autonomy to the everyday producer; crucially, to be placed in a position of domination does not automatically result in subject docility or passivity, very much as the notion of collective memory does not necessarily imply the negation of individual recollection. De Certeau argues that behavioural studies should be complemented by examination of “what the cultural consumer ‘makes’ or ‘does’ during this time” (1988, xii). In other words, existing studies that tend towards a focus on representation have merely provided the background for further investigation of otherwise hidden – or at least less visible – elements. In this respect, de Certeau’s argument is reminiscent of Samuel’s insistence on the importance of interrogating “unofficial knowledge” and “public history” as sources of information to unravel the formation of memory (1994, 1-6). Consumption as de Certeau proposes it is open to subversion:

As unrecognised producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths in the jungle of functionalist rationality, consumers produce through their signifying practices [...] ‘indirect’ or ‘errant’ trajectories obeying their own logic. In the technocratically constructed, written, and functionalised space in which the consumers move about, their trajectories form unseeable sentences, partly unreadable paths across a space. Although they are composed with the vocabularies of established language, and although they remain subordinated to the prescribed syntactical forms [...] the trajectories trace out the ruses of other interests and desires that are neither determined nor captured by the systems in which they develop. (De Certeau 1988, xiii)

³⁴As Koshar has summarised in this context, “reading does not refer to the reading of literature only but to talking, dwelling, walking, taking pictures, watching television and cinema, spectating, shopping and cooking- in short, a whole connected set of life practices” (2000b, 5).

In using the activity of reading as an example of a situation where the subject is apparently passive but actually maintains autonomy, de Certeau also demonstrates the implications of his argument for the workings of memory. A reader's eyes, he argues, may wander over a text, unconsciously or subconsciously make substitutions, improvise. De Certeau's work suggests a reworking of common assumptions about the nature of the consumer as incapable of autonomous forms of response. Work on dark tourists has yet to fully embrace this perspective, but some valuable precedents are emerging. MacDonald, for example, in her in-depth review of tourism to Nuremburg, cites Stuart Hall's model of 'encoding/decoding' which recognizes audiences as "'active rather than passive' in the communication process" (2009, 147). In dedicating serious attention to the experience of individual visitors, MacDonald's methodology includes "participation-observation fieldwork" and interviews with history workers, as well as casual conversations which result from "the gloriously unavoidable nature of human interaction" (2007, 21).

In accepting de Certeau's argument, I see tourists as capable of forging their own paths through memorial landscapes, as MacDonald's work supports. But what can we say about the nature of this experience, beyond that it will be unique to the individual? I now turn to phenomenology – the way in which people experience the world around them – to suggest a possible framework for further investigation.

Phenomenology and landscape

Substantially influenced by the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, phenomenology has become a central concern for landscape studies (Tilley 1994, D. Abrams 1996, Ingold 2000, Cloke and Jones 2001, Wylie 2005, 2006). Phenomenological cultural geographers rejected abstract considerations of space as irrational, idealist, and divorced from human activities and events, as "decentred from agency and meaning" and "equivalent to and separate from time" (Tilley 1994, 9). Varied modes of perception, such as smell, hearing, and touch, were recognised as significant in bridging the gap between individuals and the world they inhabited; thus the phenomenological approach fundamentally rejected the Cartesian distrust of any sensory experience beyond the visual gaze, as has inhibited earlier considerations of landscape. The emphasis was on *immersion*:

Any perception of a thing, a shape or a size as real, any perceptual constancy refers back to the positing of a world and a system of experience in which my body is inescapably linked with phenomena. But the system of experience is not layed before

me as though I were God, it is lived by me from a certain point of view; I am not the spectator, I am involved... (Merleau-Ponty 1962, 303-4)

Merleau-Ponty conceptualised the human body as the mediator between thought and the world, and landscape as a spatialization of being. This perspective is grounded in Martin Heidegger's generation of a "*topological* model" to better understand the relationship "between people and landscape as a matter of 'thereness' of the self-disclosure of Being of and in the world" (Tilley 1994, 13). Heidegger's notion of dwelling, in particular, was taken up by Tim Ingold in cultural geography. Whilst one interpretation of dwelling might imply stasis – a dwelling carries connotations of a fixed home – Ingold mobilizes the term to action: "In [the dwelling] approach, both cultural knowledge and bodily substance seen to undergo continuous generation in the context of an ongoing engagement with the land and with the beings – human and non-human – that dwell therein" (2000, 133). Dwelling is about the practices of existence, and it is through practice that inhabited environments become meaningful for individuals and collectives. Tilley similarly draws attention to the ways that spatial experience is affective and guided by personal memories, but can also transcend the individual:

in a constant process of production and reproduction through the movement and activities of members of a group [...] experienced and created through life-activity, a sacred, symbolic and mythic space replete with social meanings wrapped around buildings, objects and features of the local topography, providing reference points and places of emotional orientation for human attachment and involvement. (Tilley 1994, 16)

Throughout these respective models, space, like memory, is seen to be a production rather than an autonomous zone, "both constituted and constitutive" (ibid., 17).

Crucial to phenomenological cultural geography is its focus on landscape as a participatory platform, a space of engagement; for Wylie landscape is something with which we are "intertwined": "I perceive through an attunement with landscape" (2007, 152). Wylie in particular highlights this perspective as one which "releases the visual gaze from its detention as the accomplice of Cartesian spectatorial epistemology" (ibid). This release, I would argue, reveals something of the potential of the phenomenological approach in the context of the Holocaust as understood by Bauman; that is, as an event resulting from an excess of Cartesian rationalism. Yet it also raises questions about the relationship between the self and a different kind of other – the otherness of nature, which is in a sense collapsed by Wylie's expression of total immersion and attunement. That he does so is unsurprising considering his embrace of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. As Suzanna L. Cataldi and William S. Hanrick argue, "Merleau-Ponty's ontology of flesh has generated a heightened awareness of, and appreciation for, what his later texts say and

imply about Nature and our place within it [...] it is difficult to imagine another philosophy that so completely supports environmental well-being and prepares for a coherent philosophical ecology” (2007, 5). Clearly, then, landscape phenomenology sets itself against the Cartesian categorisation, manipulation and use-value evaluation of nature. Whilst this is an appealing departure, the two approaches inevitably exist in tension, particularly in places where human activity within the landscape has resulted in the visible and far-reaching destruction of ‘natural’ environments. On this basis, I prefer to take forward Ingold’s more measured proposal, that a phenomenological approach renders landscape a space for “attentive involvement” (2000, 207), a phrase which places the subject in an intimate relationship with the world around us without ‘making it’ the same. Furthermore, it is pertinent to note that whilst pure phenomenology is focused on the bodily experience in the world,³⁵ Tilley recognizes a cognitive dimension to phenomenological immersion which prompts discussion, analysis, reflection and theorisation of that bodily experience. In this way, immersion in landscape retains an element of essential reflexivity resonant of that which should be maintained with regard to immersing ourselves in the experience of others.

As phenomenological cultural geography developed, a substantive shift occurred; representational theories such as Cosgrove’s landscape as a ‘way of seeing’ were rejected by many in favour of non-representational perspectives, or in Hayden Lorimer’s phrasing “more-than-representational” theory (2005).

Non-representational theory is [...] characterised by a firm belief in the actuality of representation. It does not approach representation as masks, gazes, reflections, veils, dreams, ideologies, as anything, in short, that is a covering which is laid over the ontic. Non-representational theory takes representation seriously [...] not as a code to be broken or as illusion to be dispelled; rather, representations are apprehended as performative in themselves, as doings. The point here is to redirect attention from the posited meaning towards the material compositions and conduct of representations. (Dewsbury et al. 2002, 438)

The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation. (Lorimer 2005, 84)

³⁵ Thrift, for example, defines the phenomenological as “the lived immediacy of actual experience, before any reflection on it” (2008, 6).

With the advent of more-than-representational theory came increased interest in performance. In part influenced by Deleuze, this turn “recuperate[d] and reinvigorate[d] phenomenological accounts of embodiment, perception and human being-in-the-world” whilst simultaneously “pursuing intellectual trajectories that are in many ways quite opposed to phenomenological forms of understanding” (Wylie 2007, 165). In other words, the dynamism of more-than-representational logic dislodges the fact of being-in-the-world as an always-already, frozen state of being. Nonetheless, I would align my own position with that of Nigel Thrift, who has argued that non-representational theory does not necessarily “jettison” phenomenology (2008, 6), because I do not see immersion in an environment as a fixed or static state as the strictly Heideggerian model presumes.

Also influenced by Deleuzian thinking, and considered by some as antithetical to phenomenology, the relational approach to geography has been increasingly popular since the late 1990s (Wylie 2007, 199). Relational geography presents “a topological picture of the world” more concerned with “networks, connections, flows and mobilities” (ibid.) than with the specificities of particular spaces and how they are experienced. In privileging “connective properties” over the traditional geographical denominators of “distance and position” (ibid., 204), relational topology presents a challenge to conventional ways of thinking about landscape. Whilst it can be argued that in such an approach “a certain topographical richness is being sacrificed for the sake of topological complexity” (ibid., 205), I maintain that there need be no such binary if the processual dynamism of the landscape in question is recognised from the outset. For relational geographers, “rather than relations and connections being forged *in* an already-given space, relations are being viewed as *creative of spaces*” (Wylie 2007, in discussion of Massey 2004, 5); yet these two perspectives are not necessarily oppositional if the spaces themselves are imagined not as already-given but in process. Thus it is worth looking for memory both as it is forged within memorial spaces *and* as it creates new ones; there may be tensions between these spaces, but this can be seen as contributing to, rather than negating, the discourse that both surrounds them and constitutes their dynamism.

Phenomenology and the other of the past

The cultural geographic model of phenomenology as discussed here has fruitful implications for the contemplation of the Holocaust and its victims, if, that is, we consider what a phenomenological approach to the past might be – particularly if we see phenomenology as a kind of experiential inhabitation, be it an inhabitation of landscape or

inhabitation of the other. Clearly such a model implies the breakdown of formerly assumed delimiting borders between victim and witness, just as phenomenological approaches to landscape collapse the divide between the world and the self. Such a possibility has been explored, the most prominent attempts echoing Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in their discussion of the crisis of witnessing (1992). In Laub's words, witnesses who view traumatic testimony become not only "participants" but "co-owners" of the experiences described therein (1992, 57).

Marianne Hirsch's model of 'postmemory' has advanced understanding of memory production beyond the boundaries of personal recollection, specifically in the Holocaust context. Developed to describe "the second generation response to the trauma of the first" (2001, 8), postmemory is distinguished from recollection by *generational distance* and from history by *personal connection*. Hirsch stresses the way memories of events we have never lived through are both intensely powerful and intensely mediated; a form of "imaginative investment and creation" (Hirsch 1997, 22), an "encounter with another, an act of telling and listening, a listening to another's wound, recognizable in its intersubjective relation" (Hirsch 2001, 12). Postmemory's potential for reciprocity – for a meaningful encounter between the self of the present and the other of the past – is appealing. However, this compelling concept has been subject to arguably inappropriate application in subsequent studies of memory, not least because Hirsch herself fails to recognize its limitations. Hirsch originally stated that postmemory "may usefully describe other second-generation memories of cultural or collective traumatic events and experiences" (1997, 22), although her definition of the second generation – "those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated by the stories of the previous generation shaped by traumatic events that can be neither understood nor recreated" (ibid.) – is somewhat loose. In 1999, however, Hirsch further developed postmemory as "a space of remembrance" open to anyone who cared enough to inhabit it (1999, 8), exacerbating the issue of potential over-identification; even within the confines of parent-child relationships, as Weissman has argued, the very idea "that a deep personal connection to the Holocaust is enough to transform its learned history into inherited, lived memory" is "dubious at best" (2004, 17). Equally dubious according to this logic are Alison Landberg's "spaces of transference" – namely film or museum spaces which give the participant "a kind of experiential relationship"; that "might actually install in us 'symptoms' or prosthetic memories through which we didn't actually live" (1997, 82).

Both Hirsch and Landsberg's models of memory, their spaces of remembrance and transference, underestimate the importance of self-reflexivity; they promote an empathy that is fundamentally unaware of the limitations of a bounded self. Dominic LaCapra's notion of "empathic unsettlement" provides a more nuanced approach to secondary witnessing:

Empathy is an affective component of understanding, and it is difficult to control [...] bound up with a transference relation to the past, and [it] is arguably an affective aspect of understanding which both limits objectification and exposes the self to involvement or implication in the past, its actors and its victims [...] desirable empathy involves not full identification but what might be termed empathic unsettlement in the face of traumatic limit events, their perpetrators and their victims. (2001, 102)

True empathic unsettlement avoids the "extreme identification" (LaCapra 2001, 103) implicit in models of post- and prosthetic memory. Developed in light of viewer reactions to Holocaust video testimonies, the phrase empathic unsettlement covers a number of loosely defined modes of response in which an individual is significantly affected by exposure to a traumatised other, yet remains aware of the irreducible gulf inherent to an ethical self/other relation. LaCapra redefines the limits of traumatic transference, suggesting that, whilst secondary trauma cannot be discounted as a potential response in certain cases, "it is blatantly obvious that there is a major difference between the experience of camp inmates or Holocaust survivors and that of the viewer" (LaCapra 2001, 102).³⁶ Thus he remains keen to restrict the use of the term trauma to "limit cases' that pass a certain threshold" (Bennett 2005, 9). Furthermore, LaCapra's work recognizes that "empathy is an affective relation to the other recognized as other, while identification involves acting out the problems of the other" (2004, 41). Empathic unsettlement, then, might characterise an onlooker whose genuine concern for the others of the past leads them to attempt to imagine others' past suffering whilst simultaneously acknowledging the impossibility of completely doing so.

So far in this section, I have considered phenomenological approaches to inhabiting both space (the memorial environment) and the other of the past (through a form of secondary witnessing). There is a distinct resonance between the approaches covered here. In both cases the aim is to immerse the self, be it in landscape or experience; the idea being, of course, that the one provides a platform for the other. In both cases there are limitations to be acknowledged. With regards to space, Wylie proposes perception "through an attunement with landscape" (2007, 152). But as we have seen, this requires a collapse of

³⁶ The viewer in the context of LaCapra's discussion is someone exposed to Holocaust testimony videos, but I would argue that the principle can be applied to those who contemplate the suffering of others in various other mediums, including literature.

distinctions between ‘nature’ and the self, one which is potentially exciting, yet complicated by the legacy of man’s impact on the earth. A similar approach, Ingold’s notion of “attentive involvement” in landscape (2000, 207), allows for a more nuanced recognition of this legacy. In the realm of the secondary witness, whilst Hirsch’s spaces of remembrance may facilitate the kind of imaginative creativity and investment we might aim for, they fail to avoid divesting the other of his or her alterity, thus fall short of a Levinasian ethical premise. In LaCapra’s empathic unsettlement, however, any such “extreme identification” is avoided.

Within the body of literature on visits to landscapes of atrocity, the work of Derek Dalton provides an example of how an attentive approach to the space may result in a resulting sense of empathic unsettlement. Dalton interrogates his own visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau³⁷ with a reflexive scrutiny of his position as a visitor. He begins by appraising of his own motivations:

Since my teenage years I have been entranced by Auschwitz-Birkenau [...] Despite my exposure to innumerable historic, literary and cinematic representations of the Holocaust, I was left with a nagging sense that Auschwitz-Birkenau was still something of an enigma to me; and that all my reading and viewing had really accomplished was to act as a powerful psychic lure (Dalton 2009, 187).

His discussion is explicitly centred on “personal experience” (ibid., 188): “I have come to Auschwitz to dig in the fertile soil of my imagination – my memories of the Holocaust” (2009, 189). He identifies himself with Amy Hungerford’s model of an onlooker “who show an *intense concern* with the subject despite that they are not themselves survivors” (in ibid., my emphasis), and this notion of intense concern seems appropriate as a starting point for the achievement of attentive involvement and empathic unsettlement.

Whilst Dalton’s handling of the subject is necessarily grounded in academic discourse (which is unlikely to be the case for the majority of tourists), his basic premise is one which can be shared by visitors who operate outside the academic context; in other words, it should not be taken for granted that the average tourist is not inspired by a similarly complex but fundamentally ethical series of motivations – that of *intense concern* for past victims often associated with scholars, survivors or mourners. Dalton describes experiencing a feeling of reassurance as he witnesses evidence of many small acts of

³⁷ Unsurprisingly, perhaps, in the context of Holocaust tourism, the majority of accounts are centred around either Auschwitz-Birkenau – as the primary site associated with the destruction of European Jewry, and, as a non-site-specific museum, the USHMM. As such Dalton’s references can be seen to represent the predominant foci of work on tourists and visitors at sites of memory, and this is logical; to examine tourists, one must to an extent follow in their footsteps. Auschwitz-Birkenau was visited by 1.4 million people in 2011 alone (Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial and Museum website 2012) and the USHMM has seen 33.2 million since opening in 1993 (as announced by the USHMM website 2012).

performative commemoration at the site: “these responses are as unique and personal as the thousands of people who visit Auschwitz Birkenau each year” (2009, 211). Crucially, Dalton, is willing to accept that possibility that, whilst there are always exceptions and variations, many tourists who visit Auschwitz-Birkenau are also fundamentally motivated by the same ethical imperative he describes in his own case.

Dalton grounds his account explicitly in Holocaust literature encountered prior to his visit, demonstrating the affective impact of such work on his experience of place. This is central to the way I will discuss commemorative sites. Although the extent to which visitors are acquainted with literary material is an unknown factor, certain texts have been embraced by popular culture and education in many national contexts in recent years. Dalton considers one such text, Kitty Hart’s *Return to Auschwitz: the remarkable story of a girl who survived the Holocaust*. On seeing the expansive grassed area that now constitutes the remains of Birkenau, he experiences an awareness of “the presence of absence”:

it gradually dawned on me that we are placed in the realm of the senses, but our ‘out-of-wartime’ temporality leads to an impoverished experience of the camp complex. We are slaves to a particular sense – vision – and the sites themselves are somewhat impoverished and visually compromised due to the absence of victims. This notion that vision fails us is perhaps best captured in the reminiscence of Kitty Hart [...] upon her first return to Birkenau:

You see grass. But I don’t see any grass. I see mud; just a sea of mud. Outside the ‘meadow’ is green with grass. That’s something I can’t get used to. It was never like that... men collapsed and died in the mud.

[...] at Birkenau, I felt painfully aware of my sense of privilege. I acutely felt the presence of this absence. (Dalton 2009, 202)

Dalton returns to this absence in concluding: “The experience of visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau as a dark tourist must entail an experiential failure. Out-of-wartime temporality cannot capture the multitude of true horrors and loss embedded in the camp complex” (ibid.). And yet:

the very relics and remnants of Auschwitz-Birkenau provide a powerful backdrop – a type of *mise en scène* – that helps animate the imagination. I thought back over the many moments of imaginative reflection that had prevailed during my visit [...] the so-called ‘material evidence of crimes’ [...] are, despite their plurality – able to invoke a powerful affective sense of individual loss if one is prepared to engage in imaginative contemplation. This small paradoxical triumph struck me as something worth celebrating. And as I prepared to finally depart Birkenau, I reflected on the fact that whilst I cannot ‘live their loss’ [...] I can pause to imagine their suffering. (Dalton 2009, 218)

From this perspective, it becomes possible to conceive of the tourist as engaging in a relation with the other of the past founded on a fundamentally ethical premise, which

demonstrates intense concern yet avoids complete identification. In particular, the “out-of-wartime temporality” refuses any such extremity. The metamorphosis of the landscape itself is essential in this realisation of difference. However, the imagination, in this case, is not animated by landscape alone. As seen in Dalton’s case, an on-site consideration of relevant literary material was fundamental to his experience at Birkenau; his visit was mediated by both “the exhibits and sights” he encountered there and “the memory of filmic and literary representations that are evoked by being there” (2009, 118); as discussed earlier, literary texts may also facilitate imaginative investment.

Encountering the Holocaust at Buchenwald, Babi Yar, and Lidice

With these co-ordinates in place, I complete this introduction with a brief explanation of the work done by each chapter of the thesis. Each follows a similar trajectory. I begin, necessarily, with an overview of each landscape as *lieu*, tracing the shaping of their respective topographies by particular regimes and “memorial entrepreneurs”.³⁸ With this fundamental platform in place, I move on to consider various mediations and remediations of each place, with a focus on literary texts. The final sections of the chapters function in slightly different ways according to the specificities of each case study, but all demonstrate diverse forms of engagement and examine the potentiality and limitations of associated memory work in some way.

The first, on the Buchenwald concentration camp memorial, explores the past and present landscapes of the camp itself and the surrounding area, which includes the historic city of Weimar and the picturesque, forested, Ettersburg slopes. Tracing a series of landscape redefinitions, this section harnesses existing scholarship to provide a comprehensive overview of Buchenwald as an evolving *lieu de mémoire*. Close attention is then dedicated to the literary work of Semprun, who experienced Buchenwald as an inmate from 1943-1945. Three of Semprun’s texts, *The Long Voyage [Le Grand Voyage]* (1963), *What a Beautiful Sunday! [Quel beau Dimanche!]* (1980), and *Literature or Life [L’écriture ou la vie]* (1994), discuss his memories of Buchenwald in great detail. These texts are ideally suited to a consideration of process and mediation; he returns to particular moments over and over again, revising and reimagining his past, laying bare the fundamental metamorphic nature of memory. The chapter exposes the potential of Semprun’s literature to animate the landscapes of Buchenwald for those who encounter

³⁸ A phrase coined by Jennifer Jordan, which economically describes the principal advocate for the transformation of a particular space into a memorial (2006, 11).

them. Guided both by Semprun and my own experience of the area as a visitor, the investigation is grounded in its specific cultural history, allowing for an interrogation of the relationship between humanity and the natural world specific to the German context. Although this focus on national heritage might suggest a return to the pre-cosmopolitan understanding of the bordered state, this aspect of the landscape's history is then juxtaposed against the contemporary life of the memorial as an international visitor destination. A Spanish communist who lived most of his life in France, and indeed who usually wrote in French, Semprun demonstrates a profound engagement with Germanic philosophy, language and culture throughout his literary project. His multi-cultural affiliations render his reflections on Buchenwald of particular interest for a consideration of transcultural engagement.

I propose in this chapter a fundamentally affective form of memory-work to be prompted by encounters with literature and landscape, leading me to argue that landscapes of memory can and will continue to play a role in interpreting and responding to atrocious pasts by providing a platform for ethically-driven response. The chapter, then, presents and interrogates a concept of landscape as palimpsestic – multi-layered, multi-dimensional and texturised, following Huyssen's conviction "that literary techniques of reading historically, intertextually, constructively, and deconstructively at the same time can be woven into our understanding of urban spaces as lived spaces that shape collective imaginaries" (2003, 7). Whilst Huyssen focuses on urban space, I apply this model to a varied set of landscapes, with a primary focus on their 'natural' components. In considering the potential of landscape as a realm of shared experience and immersion, I present Buchenwald in conjunction with Semprun's writing as a platform facilitative of empathic unsettlement.

Chapter 2 begins with an exploration of Babi Yar in Kiev, which considers the atrocity that took place at the ravine, and the landscape of the ravine itself as a microcosm of the larger topography of the Holocaust in Ukraine. Commemoration at Babi Yar has been extremely slow to appear and is still emerging only hesitantly due to the marginalisation of the Holocaust in Ukraine, particularly in comparison to a recent official focus on the suffering of the Ukrainian people under Stalin. Both Hitler's and Stalin's campaigns in Ukraine resulted in a similar disruption of landscape and landscape experience; an increased acknowledgement of such similarities, I suggest, might go some way to countering the marginalisation of Holocaust memory in Ukraine. The chapter then moves on to focus on what has become an alternative commemorative medium for Babi Yar itself: the mediation and remediation of the atrocity in literature. I trace a journey

through text; beginning with a testimonial account of Babi Yar by Ukrainian survivor Dina Pronicheva, I follow the integration of this account into Anatoli Kuznetsov's biography of his life in Kiev as a witness to the German invasion (*Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel*, 1970), and its subsequent mobilization in the fiction of the English writer D.M. Thomas (*The White Hotel*, 1981). This literary trajectory, I suggest, was instrumental in creating the international awareness of the atrocity that prompted the creation of a commemorative landscape thousands of miles away on the Colorado plains: the Babi Yar Memorial Park in Denver.

Inaugurated in 1982, the Babi Yar Park represents the efforts of community groups in Denver to draw attention to the continued marginalisation of minority groups in Soviet territories during the communist era. Landscaping at the park aims to highlight certain distinctive geographical features that resonate with the specific environment of the site in Kiev, including a natural ravine around which the park is centred and a remarkably similar grassland ecosystem. The inclusion of a cylinder of soil from the ravine at Babi Yar constitutes yet another co-ordinate in dialogue between the two sites, further contributing to topographical connections which aim to collapse the geographical distance that divides them. The park is currently undergoing a reinvigoration as the result of a major international landscaping competition. This section, which is grounded in my own visit to the Babi Yar Park during ongoing reconstruction at the site, examines the way the new design integrates it into a nationalised narrative concerning the War on Terror. Whilst the integration of a sculpture made from World Trade Centre steel at the park draws a comparison between two very different events, in Ukraine there is a reluctance to recognise any confluence between the experiences of Stalin and Hitler's victims. Finally, the chapter returns to the original site of massacre in Kiev, in looking ahead to Babi Yar's future in 21st century Ukraine.

Chapter 3 explores the commemoration and activism surrounding the attempted annihilation of the Czech village of Lidice. As in the preceding chapters, the investigation begins with the place itself. The chapter initially considers the significance of the Nazis' attempt to remove the village from history and memory by re-landscaping the area and covering it with German soil. The international reaction to this act has had notable results: both places and people around the world were named Lidice in memory of the village, and the village itself was rebuilt as a result of a community fundraising project based in Stoke-on-Trent, England, almost immediately after the end of the war. The new Lidice is both living space and memorial complex, comprising a museum, art gallery, one of the largest commemorative rose gardens in the world, and a large area of open landscape where the

original village stood, and where faint traces of former structures are visible. The first part of the chapter, again grounded in my own visit to the site itself, provides an overview of this complex environment for the first time in an academic context and pays close attention to the particular methods of landscaping that have been employed there.

In examining the various textual representations of Lidice that emerged in the years following its destruction, I draw attention to a tendency to frame it within a narrative of the disrupted pastoral; a nostalgic vision, but one which can be seen to resonate with people across many cultures. The chapter finally moves on to focus in particular on inscriptions of Lidice into local contexts via cosmopolitan memory processes, again demonstrating a variety of transcultural forms of engagement. Finally turning to the mobilization of Lidice in recent years, the chapter examines two particular cases of town twinning, as proposals for the Czech village to be officially linked to Khojaly, Azerbaijan (announced February 2011) and Stoke-on-Trent, UK (planning underway since September 2010) take shape. These three places, Lidice, Stoke-on-Trent, and Khojaly, form a network of memory, the nature of which is explored here with an eye to providing an improved understanding of this case in particular as an example of processes of memory mobilization rendered possible in a global context. Whilst the separate twinning campaigns came about as a result of divergent motivations, and are characterized accordingly, they will both emerge as mobilizations of Lidice's memory. In looking closely at the supranational dynamics of twinning, the chapter evaluates the potential of this emerging network as a model of cosmopolitan relational topology.

* * *

Holocaust landscapes irrevocably provoke within the viewer what Rose and Wylie discuss in general terms as “the tension of regarding at a distance that which enables one to see” (2006, 477). I have suggested here that this tension is an issue for everyone who encounters these commemorative places with an intense concern for the victims of the past, and that the nature of this tension is both progressive and ethically beneficial. Essential to this argument is the collapse of delimiting assumptions about the personal motivations, backgrounds and previous literary and artistic encounters that undoubtedly shape visitor experiences of memorial landscapes. By the same logic, it would be short-sighted to assume that academics who work on these same landscapes are not themselves

participating in a form of dark tourism. In some cases, the resulting academic work takes into account the personal experiences of the writer alongside a consideration of theoretical or conceptual concerns. In turn, this adds to the rich archive of existing work by survivors, travel writers, and even authors of fiction, all of which contribute to the way memorial landscapes are mediated and remediated. Some academic work of this nature risks “engendering a conflation of biography and analysis”, as Lucy Bond (2011, 749) notes with regard to what she calls “testimony-criticism”; “a form of theory that draws upon the author’s own experiences as its principle frame of reference” Developed and critiqued in the particular context of 9/11 literature, Bond notes that an overemphasis on personal experience risks the de-specification of the event’s larger socio-political context. Clearly a similar risk may be extended to the Holocaust context, but some examples of what we might call Holocaust testimony-criticism, notably those which avoid the inclusion of the self within an extended traumatic paradigm,³⁹ are enriched by the integration of an author’s personal response to the landscapes in question. Omer Bartov’s account of the contemporary territory formerly known as Eastern Galicia, for example, a project with “deep biographical roots” (Bartov 2007, ix), is consistently enhanced by his own physical and emotional immersion in the landscapes themselves; MacDonald’s discussion of Nuremburg weaves personal recollections into a larger tapestry of perspectives, adding a unique angle to her negotiation of the area’s past and present; Markle’s *Meditations of a Holocaust Traveller* (1995) for the most part succeeds in balancing critical theory with his own personal reflections.

These authors are most successful, I argue, when maintaining a separation between themselves and the others of the past; they focus reflexively on their encounters as secondary witnesses. Thus the final challenge, perhaps, of work such as my own, must be to situate not only *the* self but also *myself*, in relation to the Holocaust and its landscapes. Therefore, beneath the varied cultural geographic and memory models explored in this thesis, lies my own sense of empathic unsettlement in the face of historical suffering; I can only hope, in the course of these investigations, that both the specificity of this suffering and the unique contexts in which it occurred are thrown into relief, rather than obscured by my own involvement.

³⁹ As in the ‘travelling’ of trauma implied in Caruth’s thesis on unclaimed experience – “In a catastrophic age [...] trauma may provide the very link between cultures: not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves” (1996, 11). The potential of listening through shared departures is undermined by the overextension of the trauma itself.

Chapter One

Buchenwald

*There is no knowing or sensing a place except
by being in that place, and to be in a place is to be
in a position to perceive it*

Edward Casey (1996, 13)

This chapter will examine the Buchenwald Concentration Camp Memorial in Germany with a view to conceptualising its landscape as a space of potential present-past engagement.¹ I focus on the phenomenological potential of Buchenwald as a site-specific memorial space, arguing that landscapes of past suffering may present us with a platform for an ethical model of immersive and dynamic memory work. Throughout I utilize a combination of cultural geographic and ecocritical approaches to place and testimonial literature, in an attempt to destabilize the delimiting claim that the normal relationship between a human subject and the space s/he inhabits was rendered void within the space of the concentration camp. Ulrich Baer (2002, 65) has stated that Holocaust sites “failed to accommodate human experience” for victims in the past; and that in the present they are “radically inhospitable”; “attempts to inhabit them through empathic identification and imaginary projection via transferential bonds, [are] illusory at best” (2002, 83). Geoffrey Hartman’s work on ‘traumatic’ place memory makes a similar claim. Hartman interrogates

¹ Abbreviations: Semprun texts: *LV: The Long Voyage [Le Grand Voyage]* (1963); *WBS: What a Beautiful Sunday! [Quel beau Dimanche!]* (1983); *LL: Literature or Life [L’écriture ou la Vie]* (1997).
Gedankstätte Buchenwald Publications: *BTM: Buchenwald: A Tour of the Memorial Site* (1993); *BGE: Buchenwald Concentration Camp 1937-1945: A Guide to the Permanent Historical Exhibition* (2004); *KLB: K.L. Buchenwald, Post Weimar: The Former Buchenwald Concentration Camp, photographed by Jürgen M. Pietsch in 1998 and 1999* (2006).

the nature of Wordsworthian ‘memory places’ as “points of connection with another time or place, remembered or imagined” (Whitehead 2003, 288) alongside the representation of place in Holocaust testimony. He is struck by dissonance, finding it “difficult to think of the camps as being such memory places” (1996, 648). To Hartman – and his extensive work on the Fortunoff Video Archive of testimonies cannot but give weight to his argument – it seems that the camps were experienced as non-places, partly at least as a result of the disorientation prompted by victim deportation.

I challenge this perception of place via an examination of the testimonial project of former Buchenwald inmate Jorge Semprun, whose approach to memory was discussed briefly in the preface to this thesis. Academic commentary on Buchenwald itself has, to date, considered both the site and relevant literature within discourses of memory and commemorative politics,² but such investigations have so far neglected a detailed consideration of the dialogue that exists *between* literature and landscape. This chapter aims to provide such an exploration, highlighting both Semprun’s engagement with and sense of emplacement within landscape, and the implications of his work as a whole for contemporary visitors as they traverse the landscapes of Buchenwald-Weimar in his wake. Furthermore, I argue that the particular way in which Semprun negotiates the spaces of his interment in literature enables a critique of National Socialist culture which challenges the notion that access to the particular cultural capital ‘embedded’ in Buchenwald’s landscape is organically determined by a ‘blood and soil’ connection. Effectively, Semprun immerses himself in this landscape, in doing so refusing the Nazis’ exclusive claims to it.

Accordingly, this chapter begins with an examination of the present day Buchenwald Memorial as a *lieu de mémoire* caught between two poles of German history: Weimar classicism and Nazi atrocity. I then move on to consider how Semprun’s testimonial project, particularly his narrativization of the Buchenwald landscape for others, articulates and enriches the memorial space as it is now encountered, in a nuanced negotiation of its dichotomous history. Semprun transforms the landscape from static *lieu* to a landscape of evolutionary memory, in presenting his experience as characterized by two forms of immersion: one in the natural environment of the Ettersburg, and one in the area’s cultural past. Whilst at times Semprun arguably presents a ‘traumatic,’ or ‘blocked’ response to time and place,³ I suggest that the spatial experience as represented in his

² On the politics of memory at the Buchenwald memorial, see Sarah Farmer (1995), Siobhan Kattago (1998), and Maoz Azaryahu (2003). Bella Brodzki (2007) provides an all-too-brief glimpse into the important role literary testimony may have in future analyses of the site.

³ On “radical and traumatic displacement” as a result of “loss and exile” in Semprun’s Buchenwald testimonies, see Ursula Tidd (2008); on literary repetition and trauma see Tidd (2005) and Susan Rubin Suleiman (2006).

work indicates a complex and intimate relationship between subject, landscape and history, one which implies a sustained and ultimately recollectable form of engagement; place, it seems, *does* hold his experiences together. Baer's contention that the concentration camps failed to accommodate human experience implies a breakdown in the interned subject's sense of 'being-in-the-world', a gulf between individuals and their surroundings which negates the construction of meaningful spatial relations as suggested by Tilley; that is, a relationship involving discussion, analysis, reflection and theorisation which may be replicated, albeit in a different way, by those who approach the site as a memorial.

Thus the following discussion of Semprun's work aims to reveal a reflexive habitation of space, destabilizing Baer's claim that camp internment *closed down* spatial experience. Whilst Baer argues that the camp subject's dislocation from place occurs partly as a result of the disorientation of deportation – deportation destroys the “symbolic notion of a place that could hold experiences together” (2002, 72) – Semprun's narratives, which cover the full spectrum of his Buchenwald experience – including deportation and arrival (1942), internment (1942-3), and return to the camp as survivor (1990) – suggest a tangible and consistent engagement with place, with regards both 'natural' and 'cultural' co-ordinates. I furthermore demonstrate the ecocritical nature of Semprun's engagement, in particular the principle that “[o]ur identities are constituted in time and place [...] always shaped by both memory and environment” (Bate 2000, 109). Like Romantic poetry Semprun's work is both “mnemonic” and “ecologic” (ibid.), and offers receptive readers “a sense of being-at-home-in-the-world” (ibid.) on the Ettersburg slopes. Landscape, furthermore, is presented as habitable, and potentially able to facilitate the imaginative projection Baer dismisses as illusory. Semprun effectively lays the landscape open for new encounters, mapping out a terrain which is de-territorialized from the regimes of history and memory in which it is implicated.

The chapter thus takes issue with Baer's contention that contemporary attempts to inhabit concentration camp spaces are destined to fail. Whilst there is little doubt that there can be something “confounding and inexplicable” (Baer 2002, 72) about the existence of concentration and death camps, I argue that this does not necessarily engender an empathic failure between past inmate and present-day visitor. For Baer, the experiences recounted in testimony are “*all too much* [the survivor's] own [...] A visit to a former camp undermines our hope that the quest for knowledge is an inherently liberating process” (ibid.). But I argue that testimony, in this case Semprun's literary project, is uniquely able to facilitate a meaningful spatial engagement for readers as they

encounter the 'natural' and 'cultural' realm of Buchenwald-Weimar, transforming the space from a static *lieu de mémoire* to a dynamic landscape of memory. I will propose that visitors are not necessarily aiming, or achieving, a vicarious sense of full identification by attempting to place themselves in the position of the victims of the past. Given the model of the tourist I suggested in the introduction to this thesis, who may be motivated by intense concern and capable of transcending mere consumption in the creation of their own trajectories, these visits are worthy of further scrutiny.

Arguments such as Baer's contribute to a pervasive pre-determination of the failure of memorial spaces to facilitate access to past events. Instead, I will propose that elements of landscape may allow perceptual continuity between original and secondary witnesses whilst acknowledging the impossibility of *total* self-Other identification. "The fact that nothing has been left intact does not mean that nothing has been left" (Rothberg 2000, 81). Perception of landscape in the Holocaust context demands this nuance be taken into account. Baer's argument seems to rule out the potential for onlookers to gain a meaningful sense of understanding from either testimonial literature or site visits, or, more to the point for this enquiry, from a combination of the two. Reading Buchenwald through Semprun's works, then, the second part of the chapter will propose that it is possible to conceive of the camps as significant co-ordinates in contemporary memory work, and furthermore, that an ethically stable sense of empathic unsettlement can arise as a result of visiting them; accordingly, this chapter brings to light a series of explicit and implicit links between site and literature. The result is a textualised model of a commemorative landscape that may facilitate a meaningful relationship between victims of the past and visitors of the future. Whether this constitutes a 'liberating quest for knowledge' as Baer would understand it is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it does suggest that there may be an alternative to the blanket delimitation of Holocaust landscapes as places of past-present engagement.

1.1. Defining and Redefining Buchenwald

Buchenwald lies 8km from the small city of Weimar, perched on the slopes of the Ettersburg and surrounded by Thuringian forestland. This area is home to what is arguably Germany's most prized literary and cultural legacy: Weimar classicism. The city's notable residents have included Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Johann Gottfried Herder, Franz Liszt and Johann Sebastian Bach. Hunting land for the Dukes of Saxony-Weimar from the 16th century, Goethe famously strolled on the Ettersburg slopes with his friends and lovers, and many of his plays were enacted in an amateur theatre in the forest. The homes and tombs of these internationally recognised figures attract tourists to Weimar from all over the world. Many sites, including parks and buildings, from the Classicist and Bauhaus periods, are listed by UNESCO. Amongst these are both Goethe's home at the Frauenplan and his garden house. From as early as 1900 the forests, too, have been popular with tourists (BGE 2004, 27).⁴ Forests such as those found in Thuringia have long been "quintessential symbol[s] of Germanness" (Lekan 2004, 9); they play a central role in the nation's literature and have traditionally been centrally integrated into the everyday life of its people.⁵ Furthermore, they have been key coordinates in the uniquely German concept of *Heimat*; the deeply historical attachment of a people to their native lands. When this area was taken over by the Nazis, the landscape was dramatically altered and imbued with a new layer of symbolic meaning. After liberation, the East German authorities re-landscaped the camp to celebrate the triumph of communist resistance over Nazi fascism; these three phases of the camp's history are now juxtaposed in the present-day landscape of Weimar-Buchenwald.

This section will outline a series of polemic territorializations beginning with the construction of Buchenwald by the Nazis in 1936. Throughout this section I make extensive use of official Gedankstätte Buchenwald Publications, including site guide books, as a way into interrogating its history (abbreviations are employed to reference these texts, for which a key can be found at the beginning of this chapter). In doing so, I approach the analysis with a view to demonstrating the extent of the material made available by the memorial as an institution, which plays a key role in mediating the experience of visitors to the landscape. I bear in mind, when using these sources, that they are inevitably grounded in the agenda of the institution, and maintain a vigilance about the

⁴ Baedeker's guides from the period describe the Thuringian Forest as "full of interest for the pedestrian" (1925, 266), and grant the area an asterisk designating it as of notable interest to the traveller.

⁵ Throughout the 20th Century, the German people made regular pilgrimages on Sundays to see the older trees in their region (Christof Mauch 2004, 2). Forests are also seen by some as monuments to German history, places that told the people "more about the life of [their] forebears than ramparts and walls" (ibid., 23).

way in which, as a result, they may be selectively composed. It shall be suggested here that the series of territorializations described in this section has led to the creation of a *lieu de mémoire* in which memories of traditional German Classicism, Nazism, and Communism continue to jostle against one another for space in the present day landscape of Weimar-Buchenwald as it is encountered by visitors.

Along with Sachsenhausen, north Berlin, and Dachau, Munich, the camp near Weimar was originally planned to “optimally combine the organisational, political and economic interests of the SS in a single complex” (BGE 25) in addition to its functions as a detention facility. Thus a considerable area was required for its construction. With an enormous complex of labour sub-camps and extensive SS accommodation and training facilities, by the end of World War II Buchenwald was the largest concentration camp in existence. Over six thousand SS men and women, and often their families too, were housed in the area directly around the main camp. From an initial allotment of 46 ha of the state forest, 190 ha were eventually deforested. The selection of this site, as a place which would require deforestation of this extensive nature, seems incommensurate with Nazis’ advocacy of forest protection in the early years of the Third Reich. Ecologically speaking, “no German government had ever taken the protection of the German forests more seriously” than the Nazis (Schama 1995, 119); their arboreal policies was based on the exemplary *Dauerwald* (perpetual or eternal forest) philosophy which was designed to improve the long-term health of forest eco-systems (Imort 2006, 5). However, as the demands of warfare clashed with the original ecological principle of forest protection (Lekan 2004, 14) the traditional, reverent relationship between the Germans and their trees, inherent to the *Dauerwald* principle, was gradually subverted.⁶ The deforestation of nationally treasured forestland was but one example of this trend, as the Nazis territorialized German land within a new ideological framework.

Historically, according to ecocritical discourses, deforestation is a both a fall from attunement with nature and a precursor to war and the expansion of empire (Bate 2000, 28). The laws of civilization have constantly been defined “against the forests” (Pogue

⁶ By the end of the war, new trees were often only planted to cover the traces of Nazi crimes. After prisoners escaped from Sobibór in 1943, the Nazis razed it to the ground, buried prisoners’ remains, and planted trees to disguise the remnants. The mass graves were eventually discovered by a research team in 1991 (BBC News 2001). Firs and lupins were planted over mass graves and foundations at Belzec (Robin O’Neil et al. 2007). Attempts to screen the activities of functioning camps are also documented; poplar trees were planted to mask the crematoria at Birkenau early in 1944 (Gilbert 1997, 152). It should be noted too that even in the early days of the Reich forest protection was selective; it did not extend to non-native trees: “the unwanted foreigners and bastards that have as little right to be in the German forest as they have to be in the German *Volks*” (Willi Parchmann, head of the Nazi party forestry unit, 1934, in Imort 2005, 44)

Harrison 1993, 2): “Human beings have by no means exploited the forests only materially; they have also plundered its trees in order to forge their fundamental etymologies, symbols, analogies, structures of thought, emblems of identity, concepts of continuity, and notions of systems” (ibid., 7-8). Deforestation is the “mastery and possession of nature” in practice (Bate 2000, 87 and Pogue Harrison 1993, 107). In plundering the Thuringian forest – even the barracks at Buchenwald were built by inmates using wood from the forest (see figures 1.1 and 1.2) – the Nazis forged a powerful symbol, a space constituted by and constitutive of the structure of National Socialist thought.

There are a number of reasons Buchenwald appeared in the homeland of Germany’s cultural elite. The Land of Thuringia was known as the heart of Germany; it would thus need protection from ‘subversive’ elements (these could be detained in the camp) and invading forces (the SS to be stationed there could attend to this) (BGE 25). The Nazis were also attracted by the potential gains of exploiting nearby land with the forced labour the camp could provide; there were minable loam deposits and turnip fields in the near vicinity. Furthermore Weimar was ideologically prepared for the construction of the camp. The city was home to National Socialist rallies, parties and parades and had a record of loyal Nazi citizenship. A sole protest about the camp was raised about the proposed name ‘K.L. Ettersburg’, highlighting the sentimentality underlying Nazi brutality. The local chapter of the NS Cultural Community objected to a name that would associate the traditional home of Weimar classicism with a forced labour camp (BGE 29)⁸. Thus they named the camp KL [Konzentrationslager] Buchenwald/Weimar. However, the change in name did not sufficiently disguise the formation of a new cultural dichotomy. ‘Buchenwald’ [*beech wood*] was a self-evident reference to the camp’s forest setting.⁹ As former Buchenwald inmate Eugen Kogon has identified, Nazi sentimental-brutal ideology – not dissimilar to that which grounded their appropriation of the German forests – found representation in the “new connection” between Weimar (“formerly the city of the German classical writers who had given German emotion and intellect their highest expression”) and the camp at Buchenwald (“a raw piece of land on which the new German emotion was to flower”) (BTM 29). In a stark embrace of the new connection, the only tree left standing in the main area of the Buchenwald camp after the deforestation of the designated Ettersburg area was a large oak, reputed to have been a tree under which

⁷ See also Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Discourse on the Origins of Inhumanity* (1754), an early precursor linking the inexorable progress of civilisation to deforestation.

⁸ A letter from SS Obergruppenführer Theodor Eicke to Heinrich Himmler notes: “Weimar has raised an objection... in view of the fact that the Ettersburg is associated with the life of the writer Goethe” (KLB 64)

⁹ Ernst Weichart’s memoir *The Forest of the Dead [Der Totenwald]* (1947) recalls how this “lovely” name sparked an immediate mistrust to those familiar with the Nazi’s use of misleading signifiers (1947, 59).

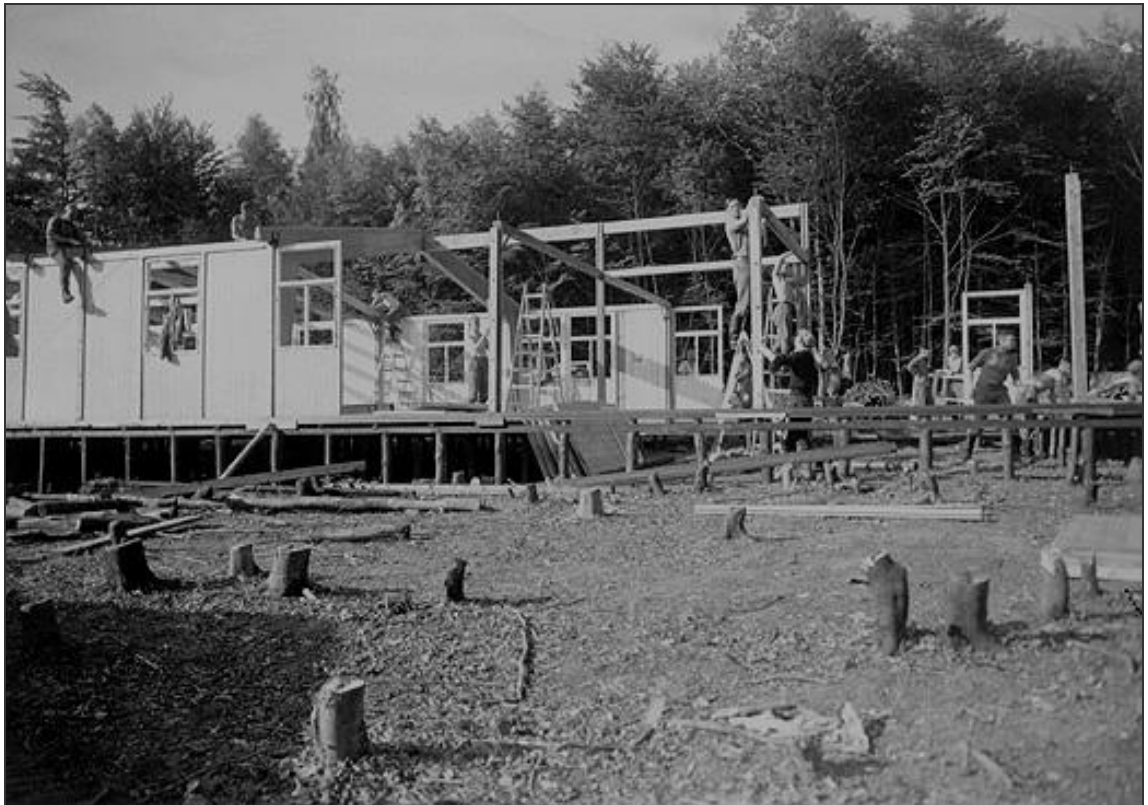


Figure 1.1: Deforestation of the Ettersburg by inmates, 1937 © Gedankstätte Buchenwald.



Figure 1.2: Construction of barracks at Buchenwald, 1937 © Gedankstätte Buchenwald.

Goethe sat to write poetry (Michael Gorra 2004, 16). In 1944, the tree was reduced to a stump when it caught fire during an Allied bombing attack; however the attempt to preserve it continued as the camp authorities filled the centre of the stump with concrete in order to prevent erosion (Kattago 1998, 275) (see figure 1.3). Whilst the camp's proposed name was changed to avoid implicating Goethe's cultural legacy, Young's discussion of Buchenwald suggests that "in some ways" the Nazis built the camp on the Ettersburg "precisely because it already had a mythological past [...] when Himmler cynically designated Goethe's oak as the centre of the camp [...] he hoped to neutralize the memory of Goethe even as he invoked the philosopher's cultural authority" (Young 1994, 73-4). Nonetheless, what Buchenwald survivor Ernst Thape referred to as the 'Weimar-Buchenwald' dichotomy was created:

Weimar meant Wieland and Herder, meant Schiller and Goethe, meant Liszt and Friedrich Nietzsche, and now it also meant Buchenwald Concentration Camp. This contrast between literature and music of world importance and the most fearsome barbarity continued to set its forceful stamp on international public opinion after the traumas of the war, making Buchenwald the negative pole of German culture after Goethe had so long been the positive pole. Weimar became the symbol of Germany's moral dichotomy. (in *WTT* 135)

Even as the camp's liberation was taking place, survivors began transforming the landscape into a memorial space by erecting a monument on the main muster ground.¹⁰ It operated as a prison for Soviet prisoners of war before being turned into an official memorial site by the authorities.¹¹ 7113 prisoners died in the Soviet camp as a result of disease and malnourishment (Buchenwald.de 2011). The landscape was entering into a new phase, embedded with a new layer of rhetoric; it was mobilized to serve as a symbol of Communism's triumph over the Nazi regime.

Scholarly work on Buchenwald to date has provided a full exposition of the political undercurrents that shaped the landscape during the communist period, and has contextualised this fully as part of a dominating trend in East German memorial culture,¹² thus I will not dwell overlong on the subject; nonetheless it is worthy of a brief exposition, as it usefully maps out the series of attempts to territorialize the landscape, something with which Semprun's work is directly concerned. Semprun himself was one of the many communists from diverse national backgrounds interned at Buchenwald, and his views on

¹⁰ Young describes the monument, which was inaugurated ten days after liberation, as a wooden obelisk, a temporary structure which had already begun to rot three years later (1994, 75).

¹¹ A commission was set up for this purpose in 1954, to be led by the East German prime minister Otto Grotewohl (Azaryahu 5).

¹² For in-depth discussion of the shifting political organisations and motivations behind the Buchenwald landscape see the full text mentioned here by Azaryahu (2003), Chapter 2 in Young (1994), Bill Niven's introduction to *The Buchenwald Child: Truth, Fiction, Propaganda* (2007); also, as previously noted, Farmer's (1995) discussion of the reorientation of the site alongside the Sachsenhausen camp memorial.

this period of commemoration shall be considered at a later stage. Young (1994) features the Buchenwald camp memorial, along with those at Dachau and Bergen-Belsen, as a paradigm of the way Holocaust commemoration played out throughout the German Democratic Republic (GDR). As a self-defined anti-Fascist State, GDR commemoration at Buchenwald was firmly rooted in the celebration of the Communist Resistance. Whilst the prisoners themselves initially instigated the “cult” of anti-fascist rhetoric that was to shape the site’s development, “exaggerating the extent, effectiveness, and probity of communist resistance” at the camp (ibid., 2), it was the SED and GDR authorities that took control of its re-landscaping (Niven 2007, 3 and 53). A central component of this was the addition of a bronze statue group designed by Fritz Cremer entitled *Revolt of the Prisoners*, “a spreading victory wedge of dignified, fighting figures unbent by their travails in the camps [...] a monument to triumph and resistance, to triumph *in* resistance” (Young 1994, 78); “a vision of great roads of blood and sacrifice leading to landscaped mountainsides, crowned by victory monuments overlooking the beautiful Ettersburg Valley” (ibid., 77). The resulting collaboration, comprising Cremer and landscape gardener Reinhold Lingner, amongst others, created a “memorial complex” on the Ettersburg slope between 1955 and 1958. As part of this complex, three mass graves on the slopes were encircled in concrete, transformed into ‘ring tombs’, linked by a concrete strip dubbed the ‘Road of Nations’. Cremer’s vast sculpture group overlooks the landscape, still constituting the first monument visitors approaching from Weimar encounter today. Koshar comments on the “spectacle and monumentality” of the memorial: “like national war monuments of the German past, [it] was to be seen from miles around and surrounded by a huge space big enough for ten thousand participants... not primarily a mournful representation of death but a German victory monument” (2000a, 215); Jewish victims were not part of this memorial space, and the complex overall “represents, essentially, a journey from pain to triumph that transcends any victimhood” (Niven 2007, 59). Notably, the memorial was in part located in this position overlooking Weimar because, for much of the planning period, the camp itself was still being used a prison for enemies of the new regime. Thus the memorial landscape was, at this point, effectively divided into two halves (Azaryahu 2003, 5).

After the Soviet Camp was closed, the barracks of the main camp area were marked out for perpetuity. Razed not long after liberation, their foundations were demarcated with different coloured stones and gravel. Other buildings in this area, including the crematorium, were left to stand as evidence of the Nazi regime’s barbarity.

The stump of Goethe's oak continued to sit amongst them; indeed Young (1994, 74) claims that it resonated anew:

Buchenwald was chosen as the centre of the GDR's commemorative activity for some of the same reasons the Nazis had chosen to build a camp there in the first place: this stunningly beautiful region seemed in both cases to exemplify the heart of German culture. As the nearby Ettersburg mountain range and city of Weimar would suggest the majesty of German culture, the charred and withered remains of Goethe's oak would symbolize the depths to which the culture had sunk.

As Niven notes, the way in which Communism's official memory discourse transformed the camp "confirms Halbwachs's argument that the past is being continually molded to fit the exigencies of the present" (2007, 4). Buchenwald had become a *lieu de mémoire*; it represented, not the suffering of those interned there under the Nazis, but the GDR's political appropriation of that suffering.

After the re-unification of Germany in 1989 the landscape of Buchenwald was again territorialized, or "reoriented", as Azaryahu has argued.¹³ It is worth reiterating some of the key points noted in Azaryahu's analysis here, alongside observations made by Farmer, as their studies comprehensively map the changes that took place at Buchenwald at a critical point in its history as a memorial. Following the collapse of the GDR, Buchenwald underwent a "crisis of meaning" as "the narrative of heroic resistance and anti-fascist martyrdom lost both its credibility and authority" (Azaryahu 2003, 6). With the change in central government administration,¹⁴ it became known, "sensationally" (*ibid.*), that the camp had been used for the internment of German prisoners by the Soviet authorities. In the light of this knowledge, the memorial authorities and the local public went through a heated series of discussions, which eventually resulted in the 'recasting' of the commemorative landscape (*ibid.*, 11). Plans were made to commemorate the German victims of Soviet rule alongside those of fascism, although it was made clear that the Nazi era of the camp should remain the dominant narrative. The same commission also recommended that the original Cremer monument should be preserved; it would now signify "a chapter of Buchenwald's history and evidence for its political instrumentalization for propaganda purposes by the GDR regime" (Azaryahu 2003, 10). The landscape, effectively, was now divided into three areas; three historical territories, or what Azaryahu refers to as "cultural geographies of memory" (*ibid.*, 11): the main camp

¹³ Farmer also phrases the shift as a reorientation, but places the date that substantial change began as 1991 when the Thuringian division of the Ministry for Science and Culture established a new commission to oversee the new phase.

¹⁴ As Farmer notes, the East-German management team were replaced with western Germans in 1990 when the GDR was assimilated into the Federal Republic (104).

with its barrack foundations and crematoria to represent the Nazi regime; the Soviet camp exhibition and mass graves commemorating the 1945-1951 period; and the GDR memory complex with Cremer's sculpture group directing attention to the communists' triumphant mobilization of Buchenwald's history from 1951 to 1989.

The myth that Buchenwald had been completely self-liberated was firmly discredited during the World War II 50th anniversary celebrations at Buchenwald in 1995 when the prime minister of Thuringia thanked American Veterans for their part in the events of April 1945 at Buchenwald (Azaryahu 2003, 13). Discussion about how to change the landscape to reflect a new set of victims – a percentage of whom had been Nazi officials – was fraught and convoluted. A policy of what Azaryahu calls “separate and not equal” was the result (ibid., 14). New guidebooks and route maps of the site were published in 1993 (ibid., 10), and in 1997 an exhibition opened in a specially commissioned block, narrating the history of Special Camp No. 2, although as Farmer notes, the objects displayed create an “incomplete, fragmentary, almost cryptic” impression in comparison to the “fully elaborated and institutionalized historical narrative” provided in the Permanent Historical Exhibition on the main camp (ibid., 104). Despite the discrepancies in the way the two histories were presented, there was some sense that the landscape was taking on a new and more democratic face; the way the entrances to the respective exhibits were positioned meant that “[v]isitors could, if they chose, see the exhibits at the Soviet camp or the Nazi camp, without having to see both” (ibid., 107). In this, the most recent phase of curation, the aim was to use different parts of the landscape to reflect the camp's multiple histories in order to “avoid encouraging simplistic parallels between the Nazi and the Soviet camps” (ibid., 108). For Farmer, the result is both profoundly dissonant and creates a new tension within the landscape (ibid.). After much discussion, the mass grave pits containing the bodies of the German victims of the Soviet camp were marked out by brushed steel pillars (see figure 1.4), replacing a collection of wooden crosses that, according to Azaryahu (2003, 8) had been set there by relatives of the deceased. Conveniently, the graves were geographically distanced from the main commemorative area. The oak that seemed such a powerful symbol of the coincidental spatial overlap between Goethe's realm and Buchenwald remains a prominent feature at the memorial site today. Signposted, discussed in the museum guidebooks, and integrated into the most frequented walking tour of the site, the monumentality of the stump continues to endure.



Figure 1.3: The remains of Goethe's Oak



Figure 1.4: Steel pillars over mass grave of victims of Soviet camp

The contrast noted by Thape continues to endure between Buchenwald and Weimar and is central to the tourist experience of this area to date. As Young has argued, monuments are always fixed points of reference amongst others; together they create meaning, orientation and linear narratives for the visitor to a memorial landscape. As a result “any memorial marker in the landscape, no matter how alien its surroundings, is still perceived in the midst of its geography” (1994, 7). Young hints here at the existence of a dialogical relationship between particular objects and elements of memorial landscapes; as a composite memorial landscape, Buchenwald-Weimar functions accordingly. As travel writer Michael Gorra noted upon the occasion of his own visit to the camp “any student of German culture” at Buchenwald must “worry at the question of how one might get from the poet to the prison... of their coincidence in something more than space” (2004, 16).

This dichotomy was notable in the way the local topography was mapped for visitors in 1999, when Weimar became the first former-Eastern bloc city, and the smallest to date, to be awarded the title of Europe's City of Culture. An associated conference¹⁵ aimed to address the issues surrounding the complexities of the city's culture. Weimar was described as important *lieu de mémoire* for German national identity, a cultural and political homeland for numerous important movements in history, including Romanticism, Classicism, the Bauhaus, the Weimar Republic, and National Socialism (S. Roth, 2003). In an assessment of the events organised throughout the year known as Weimar 1999, Roth observed that, whilst many of these histories were downplayed, Classicism and National Socialism emerged as clear priorities in the schedule. An opening speech by then President of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) Roman Herzog glossed over the re-unification of Germany and East/West relations, stressing a model of German culture defined by a “contrast between Enlightenment and National Socialist terror” (S. Roth 2003, 95).¹⁶ Of the 370 events organised for Weimar 1999, Silke Roth argues that whilst those celebrating Weimar Classicism, and in particular Goethe, were most predominant,¹⁷ Buchenwald and National Socialism were also highly visible. Indeed there was an emphasis, in some events, on the connection between the two; an art exhibition, *Marked Site*, even featured anachronistic drawings of Goethe at Buchenwald. Although only 12 of the 370 events

¹⁵ *Why Weimar? Questioning the Legacy of Weimar from Goethe to 1999* (McGill University)

¹⁶ Roth also highlights that one of the reasons for the choice of Weimar as 1999 Capital of Culture was its former identity as an Eastern Bloc city; selecting Weimar was an attempt to celebrate the success of the process of German re-unification. Despite this, references to the former GDR and to re-unification were downplayed. Although eleven related events took place – only one less than those on the subject of Buchenwald – they were all held towards the end of the programme, in winter, when tourist numbers had dropped dramatically. They were given only marginal attention by the media.

¹⁷ Perhaps unsurprisingly, as 1999 was Goethe's 250th birthday. Many events were designed to modernize Classicism, such a contemporary theatrical interpretations of Goethe's *Faust*.

made direct references to Buchenwald, Roth maintains that these were prioritised in the overall schedule; they were opened by celebrities and politicians, and were given particularly prominent media coverage. The accompanying speeches were characterised by the advocacy of a 'never again' philosophy with regards the Holocaust, and a small protest was held against contemporary right-wing activities in Weimar (Roth 2003, 99).

One of the events in the programme was a walking route around the town, mapped by curators. Entitled *Walking through Time in Weimar, A Criss-cross Guide to Cultural History: Weaving between Goethe's House and Buchenwald* (1999), it encompassed twenty-three 'stations in time'; visitors would walk from place to place and consider the rich histories behind these points on the map. Gerd Schuchardt (Thuringian Minister of Science, Research and Culture) prefaced the exhibition catalogue with a statement which suggests the potential of Weimar-Buchenwald to become more than a static site when approached in such a way:

Some towns convey the impression of being particularly alive with their own history. Weimar is surely one of them. [...] It depends [...] on how history seems to live on in the people of a town. For many visitors and also many residents of Weimar, probing into this history, encountering the personalities and the spirit of other ages, tracing the oft-sung Weimar myth, will be an exciting enterprise. The time traveller is carried into different layers of the past, experiencing the complexity of this history. It is today's town which provides the stage, with all its stone vestiges of yesterday.

The dimension of the weft and warp between Goethe's house and Buchenwald shows whoever sets out in Weimar what it means to embark on time travel in a German town. (*WTT* 1999, 6)

The stations on the tour included all the likely cultural highlights of the city, such as the houses that had belonged to its cultural heroes, the squares posthumously named after them, and the graveyard where many of them were buried. Although it did not include the site of Buchenwald itself (the camp lies outside the city lines), the Nazi past was represented in an exhibition at the city train station (the closest point in the city to the camp, and once linked to it by rail). The former Ducal stables on Kegelplatz, used as Gestapo headquarters from 1937-1945, was also included to represent the 'darker' side of Weimar's history. Classicism and Nazism again emerged alongside one another in this curatorial mapping of the city. The dual territorialization of the landscape is laid bare.

Somehow, then, despite Weimar's many legacies, Buchenwald and Goethe took precedence in the cultural landscape of Weimar 1999. Tourists were confronted with the dialectical opposites of creativity and destruction, sentimentality and brutalism that seem embedded in the fiercely territorialized landscape of today's Weimar-Buchenwald. And

yet the problem remains, despite Schuchardt's optimistic description of the area as a platform for travelling in time; how does one get from the poet of Enlightenment humanism to the prison in the forest? The dichotomy identified by Thape and Kogon, and the polarities of Goethean humanism and Hitlerian brutality structures visitors' experience in the present day. This dichotomy was a central concern for Semprun, a phenomenon that both captivated him as an inmate and shaped his literary representations of his time in Buchenwald; I will go on to argue that his writing places Buchenwald's polarities in dialogue, staking his own claims on the landscape and, in his own engagement with it, opening it up as space of possibility for new phenomenological encounters.

I.II. Semprun's Buchenwald

Semprun as narrator

Semprun was arrested by the Gestapo and deported to the camp on the hill in 1943, as a result of his association with the Communist resistance.¹⁸ Originally from Spain, in the years before his arrest Semprun had been studying philosophy in Paris at the Lycée Henry IV and the Sorbonne, where, amongst others, he was taught by Halbwachs, with whom he was later interned at Buchenwald. Knowledge of German language, literature, culture and philosophy continually shape his representation of his experiences in the camp. His testimonial project combines philosophical enquiry and autobiography into three narrative journeys. Each takes a different perspective on his concentration camp internment: *The Long Voyage* describes the experience of deportation to Buchenwald; *What a Beautiful Sunday!* combines detailed accounts of the camp itself juxtaposed with later memories from his time in the French Communist party; and *Literature or Life* deals primarily with his memories of liberation and his eventual return to Buchenwald as a visiting survivor in the early 1990s. Each text deals as much with Semprun's struggle to relate his memory of his camp experience as with the content of those memories.

Semprun's multi-lingual abilities almost certainly helped him maintain an administrative role at Buchenwald which allowed access to several areas of the camp he might otherwise have struggled to enter; amongst them the infirmary where Halbwachs lay "rotting" (LL 17) and eventually died. As Susan Suleiman points out, it was a strange, "one is almost tempted to say happy, coincidence, for a writer concerned with testimony and memory to have been present at the deathbed of Maurice Halbwachs, the theorist of collective memory" (2006, 154). Indeed, his literary project is guided by his reflections on the nature of both personal and collective memory, and, as will be seen, with the related issue of 'implacement'. His involvement with Buchenwald's underground Communist Resistance group also allowed him a little more privilege than, for example, the majority of Jewish prisoners, whose living conditions were the worst in the camp. Furthermore, his writing – that of a Spaniard, composed in French and frequently utilizing German, and now widely available in English translation – is testament to his transnationally constructed identity. In combination with this, in demonstrating ecocritical sensibilities in his approach to documenting Buchenwald – an approach which dislocates the notion of

¹⁸ After the war, Semprun worked for many years for the French Communist Party until he was eventually expelled for divergent beliefs.

territorialized, organic identity – I hope to demonstrate that Semprun’s work both constitutes and encourages a transculturally grounded response to the Holocaust.

Semprun was fully aware of the singularity of his position in the camp as a Spanish communist with an academic background. A passage written as an imaginary attempt at describing himself through the eyes of a fellow prisoner reveals much about the way Semprun saw himself; as possessing “the keys to a kind of knowledge – words, formulas, a way of talking that is organized according to a coherence [...] that allows him to play with ideas” (*WBS* 54). He refers more than once to his class background, which seems to alienate him even from other members of Buchenwald’s underground communist resistance; “I might at most be a pal, *ein Kumpel*, but I would never be a prole, *ein Prolet*” (29). Such details, which stress the particularised nature of Semprun’s experience of Buchenwald, indicate the individuality of his narrative voice. Indeed, he is far from the static conception of the Holocaust ‘survivor’ whose ‘trauma’ interferes with meaningful spatial recollection. As Henri-Lévy’s obituary, cited in the preface to this thesis, signposts so explicitly, his writing embraces memory’s dynamism. The constant repetition and re-negotiation of his Buchenwald memories throughout his literary oeuvre provides what Bella Brodzki has described as “the strongest argument for conceptualising ‘survival’ not as a unique and completed event, but rather as ‘survivorship’ – an ongoing, inconclusive, shifting experience whose finality comes only with death” (2007, 172). Revisions in Semprun’s narratives are forms of translation; no account is ever final, authoritative or finished; instead, like memorial spaces, memory is constantly subject to metamorphic processes. As a result, many layers of history and text come together in Semprun’s work; or rather, Semprun collapses history to bring pertinent characters and texts together in the landscape of the Ettersburg in 1944. This presentation of Buchenwald resonates with Huyssen’s model of memory spaces as palimpsests as discussed in the introduction, which encourage our imaginations “to put different things in one place: memories of what there was before, imagined alternatives to what there is. The strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses, and heterotopias” (Huyssen 2003, 7). In Semprun’s case, this literary construction of space as palimpsest is itself embedded in other literary works.¹⁹

Both the politically driven re-landscaping of Buchenwald as a memorial and Semprun’s frequent re-drafting of his experiences throughout his narratives result, according to Brodzki, in overarching losses of meaning. Whilst loss underpins Semprun’s

¹⁹ Huyssen also reminds us that “the trope of the palimpsest is inherently literary and tied to writing” (2003, 7).

work – the initial loss of his Spanish homeland, and later of his political and social beliefs (his eventual rejection of communism) – I interpret his writing as connotive of the evolution, rather than the evacuation, of meaning. In this chapter I will be focusing in particular on Semprun’s re-consideration of German literary culture and related signification of nature and landscape, and considering how the Holocaust may have disrupted frequently perceived meanings; concepts are mediated and remediated but not rendered void. Furthermore, Semprun’s work is uniquely suited to an interrogation of past-present engagement because, against the grain of much scholarship on Holocaust representation, he believed in writing as something that could facilitate understanding. Another survivor Semprun encounters proposes to him that “the essential truth of the [camp] experience cannot be imparted... or, should I say, it can be imparted only through literary writing [...] through the artifice of a work of art of course!” (LL 125). This notion seems to captivate Semprun, and is borne out in his Buchenwald texts. He echoes these words in a description of his struggle to find a narrative voice, to overcome the “obstacles” innate to literary expression. Wishing to “avoid a recital of suffering and horror”, he searched for “a narrative 'I' that [drew on his] experience but goes beyond it, capable of opening the narrative up to fiction, to imagination... Fiction that would be as illuminating as the truth, of course” (165). His determination to overcome such obstacles stems from his resistance to the concept of representational failure in the wake of extreme experience, a refusal that his experience was “indescribable”; that “the ‘ineffable’ you hear so much about is only an alibi” (13-14). It is this perspective on how the past may be represented that I take forward here as I consider the encounters that potentially facilitate access to that past.

A Good Beginning

When embarking on an account of his internment at Buchenwald, Semprun faced one obstacle in particular: he needed to decide where to start. This was not only a question of deciding what the beginning *was* – something which, at any rate, is subject to the fluidity of memory – but also of what would constitute a *good beginning*. He debates the point in some depth in *Literature or Life*, primarily via accounts of his conversations with an American liberating soldier, Lt. Rosenfeld. Whilst acknowledging that “[t]here are all sorts of beginnings,” he decides that “[o]ne ought to begin with the essential part of [the] experience [...] to go beyond the clear facts of this horror to get at the root of radical Evil” (LL 87). It is with the essence of experience, he insists, not its horrific semblance, that an

account must begin. "Goethe wouldn't be a bad beginning," he muses a little later (94). In invoking the name of this master of German culture, Semprun sets up an intriguing proposition; Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the Classic humanist, as root of radical Evil and the essence of a an experience of internment endured over a hundred years after his death.

The backdrop to this conversation is a picturesque riverside scene, a cottage on the banks of the river Ilm in Weimar: Goethe's retreat. Buchenwald is a mere 8km away. But beyond this apparent coincidence of geographical co-ordinates, what has Goethe to do with the Holocaust? Or, as Gorra puts it, was this coincidence "in something more than space"? (2004, 16). Certainly, Hitler's writing and speeches frequently implicated Goethe in National Socialist ideology; *Faust*, in particular, was repeatedly invoked as a precedent for Nazi racial politics.²⁰ But Goethe's oft-cited rejection of the emancipation of the Jewish people in his own time has been described as a symptom of his adherence to a "class-oriented, patriarchal conception of society": a rejection of emancipation in general (Berghahn 2001, 6), rather than nascent anti-Semitism.²¹ To suggest that Goethe's racial politics render the author "a good beginning" to an account of Buchenwald, therefore, would be at best an over-simplification. Rather, we must look to the particular nature of his humanism. Humanism's "positive affirmation that human beings can find within themselves the resources to live a good life" (Norman 2004, 18) initially seems to have no place in the dehumanising zone of the concentration camp. Yet as R.J. Norman has also suggested, humanism raises questions, one of which is central to this context: "Does a belief in the idea of 'man' function to exclude groups of people who do not match this favoured model of what it is to be human?" (ibid., 8). At issue for Semprun, I suggest, is whether Goethean humanism was guilty of this exclusion; in presenting what is arguably an ecocritical inhabitation of space, he provides an alternative perspective on the world that corrects this exclusion.

²⁰ "The 'spirit of Weimar' was a lofty but useful device; it could legitimize anything" (Lepenes 2006, 158), and Thomas Mann was "appalled at the mixture of Goethe worship and Hitlerism" he encountered on his journey to Weimar in 1932 to give a speech for the hundredth anniversary of Goethe's death (ibid). Throughout Hitler's *Mein Kampf* ([1925] 2004), Goethe's name, alongside those of his contemporaries, was constantly invoked to emphasise the superiority of German culture. Hitler's participation at ceremonial occasions such as the opening of the first Reichstag of the Third Reich, at which the memories of Goethe, Friedrich Schiller and Kant were openly celebrated, aligned the new Fuhrer with the "noble and lofty heritage" of German classicism (Glaser 1978, 41).

²¹ Klaus L. Berghahn, for example, noting Hitler's comment in *Mein Kampf* that even Goethe had "been disgusted by the thought that, in the future, marriages of Christians and Jews should no longer be forbidden by law," argues that Goethe was in fact opposed to mixed marriages "because they offend the religious beliefs of both parties and lead to religious conflicts between spouses" (2001, 7), a perspective from which prejudice against either group involved was largely irrelevant.

Across Semprun's concentration camp memoir-novels, the Ettersburg again becomes Goethe's stage; past and present collapse in this landscape, in a negotiation of German culture which oscillates between playful affection and mocking condemnation. Whilst Wolf Lepenies (2006, 159) argues that Goethe "became a beacon of hope for many inmates of the Nazi camps, even if they were not German" (ibid., 159), and cites Semprun's imaginary conversations with Goethe on the Ettersburg as an example of this, a close examination of these episodes reveals Semprun's Goethe as representative of something far more complex and less reassuring. Unlike Lepenies' other example – Dutch communist Nico Rost's memoir/diary *Goethe in Dachau*, in which the experience of reading the German classics is uplifting and sustaining for the author – Semprun uses Goethe to foreground a bitter critique of Nazi ideology's sentimental-brutalism, its contradictions and complexities.

Goethe might also be deemed a good beginning for an analysis of Semprun's work, for the two writers share a pre-occupation with ways of seeing and experiencing landscape and, in particular, its 'natural' elements. On the one hand Goethe advocated the human encounter with nature as an enriching experience, and the natural world as a realm to be approached with reverence (Seamon 1978, 239). He promoted immersion in nature, yet, as will be seen, his approach was grounded in a scientific perspective which demanded nature be studied, categorised and objectified. In this respect, his thinking can be seen to have informed and coalesced with the evolution of *Heimat* ideology in German culture; in books, "Heimat nature was a mixture of geology, climate, flora and fauna, and geography" yet "for all its [...] regulation, local and national nature remained for Heimatlers a territory replete with beauty and memories" (Confino 1997b, 114). *Heimat* was later appropriated by National Socialist writers to shore up the notion of a national identity rooted in the territory of the nation state, and was instrumental in legitimizing the Nazis' construction of an 'organic' German identity. Like Goethe's name, "Heimat became simply one term among many that revolved around the central themes of race, blood and German identity"; "stripped of its provincial particularities" (Applegate 1990, 18), the local dimension of *Heimat* was submerged by the nationalising narratives of Nazi ideology. Goethe's reverence for nature may seem to fit uneasily with his particular cosmopolitanism, which was underpinned by a "totalizing, transcendental view of the world"; "As an object to be surveyed, the landscape is an orderly and encompassable panorama able to be observed, structured and known as a totality [...] [Goethe's] synthesizing vision allows a mastery of objects in the world" (Presner 2007, 76). Yet this uneasy marriage of inhabitation and reverence, taxonomy and mastery both echoes the

logic of German *Heimat* sensibilities and anticipates the contradictory sentimental-brutal dualism of National Socialism. Semprun's own writing on the subject of landscape can be usefully juxtaposed with that of Goethe, contributing to a bitter critique of Goethean humanism that exposed its inadequacy alongside a condemnation of the Nazi brutality's sentimentalism.

In the post-war period, just as *Heimat* was re-born in post-war Germany, with a restored focus on the relationship between the local and the national (Applegate 1990, 18), classic German literature was again appropriated, this time to repair a country destroyed by Nazi brutality:

Goethe was revived to represent the 'other,' humanistic and spiritual Germany, which became all the more vital with the destruction of the political Germany. Friedrich Meinecke [1946] suggested that Germany identity be renewed by the spirit of German classicism and that the moral rebirth of the nation be promoted by hours set aside each Sunday to celebrate Goethe. (Kaes 1992, 13)

Nonetheless, as Richard Alewyn warned, "It will not do [...] to pride oneself on Goethe and deny Hitler. There is only Goethe *and* Hitler, humanity *and* bestiality" (in *WTT* 137). Professor Alewyn, an exiled Jewish Germanist who was "forcibly retired" from Heidelberg in 1933 (Wilson 2001, 156), was perhaps ideally situated to press this point.²² The uncomfortable duality he identifies, I will suggest, and its relationship to the Holocaust, is interrogated in Semprun's testimonial narratives.

I now move on to consider specific elements of Semprun's texts which contribute to an improved understanding of his experience of place as historically and culturally mediated. I begin this investigation with *The Long Voyage* (1963). Scrutiny of this text, which echoes the genre of travel writing, affords the opportunity to evaluate whether, as Baer suggests, the disorientating experience of deportation evacuated internees' spatial experience and rendered the camps 'non-places' on arrival. I will suggest, to the contrary, that the particular way Semprun engages with landscape in this initial text can be seen to continue throughout his internment, facilitating the negotiation described above.

²² Although, as Wilson – who also cites Alewyn on this point, albeit a slightly divergent translation which substitutes "humaneness" for "humanity" – argues, to set these two figures up as polar opposites, with Goethe standing in for "humaneness" and Hitler for "bestiality" is to overlook the former's "disdain for human and civil rights" and his "regressive attitude to Jewish emancipation" (2001, 156). The significance of this elision will be also be considered here as the argument progresses.

Deportation: The Journey to Buchenwald

The Long Voyage is a combination of autobiography and fiction in which the author works through the experience of his five day deportation in the goods wagon of a train. The main narrative voice is that of 'Gerard', a young Spanish resistance fighter. Throughout, he remains largely anonymous, however by the end readers understand 'Gerard' to be the character's name to his Resistance comrades; he is addressed as 'Manuel' by other Spanish prisoners. This "doubly displaced" narrator (Jones 2007, 36) switches between different voices – Gerard, Manuel, and an occasional 'I'/'je' – and times – from deportation to arrival at the camp to post-camp experiences. He revisits events time and again, prompting critical interpretations of his Buchenwald texts as driven by traumatised temporal disruption,²³ and supporting the notion that Semprun's works function effectively as formal conceptualisations of his own struggle towards representation. However, of more relevance to this enquiry is the critical acknowledgement that *LV* is undoubtedly also a form of travel writing, albeit distinct from the usual form in that it relates the tale of a forced, as opposed to elected, journey (Silk 1992, 54). Semprun's use of travel to frame Buchenwald is both literal and metaphorical. Particularly notable is the parallel structure of travel and memory revealed in *The Long Voyage*. Jones also argues that Semprun exposes "the importance of travel and its metaphors to memory discourses concerning the Holocaust" (2007, 35-6). According to this argument, in the work of Semprun, "metaphors of travel play a central role [as he uses] the familiarity of the journey in order to engage with the uninitiated reader's everyday experience of travel as a frame of reference for understanding the experience of deportation and internment" (2005, 36). Jones' discussion of *The Long Voyage*, whilst acknowledging that deportation to the camps resulted in a "rupture of experience" (ibid.), suggests that viewers are not necessarily completely alienated from understanding this rupture; indeed, she implies that a visitor's own travels and journeys may provide them with a helpful experiential framework. This is significant in the context of Holocaust tourism, for the majority of visitors experience the camps as part of a journey; we can take from Jones' work that this may enhance rather than limit tourists' sense of engagement.

Silk identifies the novel's problematisation of the notion of return in the context of the Holocaust-as-travel; Gerard's longing to travel "back in the opposite direction" (1992, 60) is confounded by the way his experiences at the camp are 'burned' into his memory, making a return journey – the elimination of these memories in their undoing –

²³ See Tidd (2005, 2008) and Sulieman (2004).

impossible. In opening a discussion of the way in which *The Long Voyage* brings the themes of the Holocaust and travel together, she introduces a series of points, particularly about spatial experience, which can be taken further, both in the context of *The Long Voyage* and in Semprun's other Buchenwald texts. *LV* emerges from her analysis as a subversion of traditional travel writing; contra the Enlightenment understanding of the journey as broadening the mind, Gerard's narrative leads only inwards: "'travel' [...] narrows Gerard's world to such a degree that [...] only the space of interiority can be explored" (1992, 3). Indeed, he describes his approach as follows: "Put this voyage to good use by sorting things out. Draw up a balance sheet on the things in life that are really worth their weight and those that are not" (*LV* 29). This inventory, which he comes back to again and again throughout the journey, allows Semprun to make discoveries about himself, rather than the world around him. Silk's contrast between *LV* and the travel narratives of the Enlightenment is worthy of further scrutiny; indeed, this is the first point in the Buchenwald texts that underscores the significance of Semprun's engagement with issues of landscape, experience and Goethe's legacy in German culture. Goethe's *Italienische Reise* (1816-17) gave him "the status of German traveller par excellence" (Hachmeister 2002, 1). Although travel writing is a hugely versatile literary genre (Hooper and Youngs 2004, 3), and despite the fact that Semprun and Goethe write at different times and in different contexts, both authors seem subject to "the travel writer's desire to mediate between things foreign and things familiar, to help us understand that world which is other to us" (Blanton 2002, 2). The crucial difference between them, for the purposes of this chapter, is their assumed subject position in relation to worlds of otherness. Goethe's worldview in *Italienische Reise* is:

totalizing, transcendental [...] the landscape is an orderly and encompassable panorama able to be observed, structured and known as a totality. Even when the landscape is moving [...] his embodied subject position is never compromised because his observations are always systematically oriented in a mappable space and emplotted [...] in cyclical time [...] His observations [...] are often made from either the highest perspective he can find [...] or from the slow and methodical accumulation of details on the ground. In both cases, his synthesizing vision allows a mastery of objects in the world [...] The geographic totality is organized by the visual clarity of the cardinal directions, mapped according to geography, and oriented according to his body in the centre of the space. (Presner 2007, 76-77)²⁴

Semprun, as Silk's argument implies, subverts this paradigm of Enlightenment objectivity, in his retreat to an interior world. His refusal, or perhaps his inability, to plot events in

²⁴ See also Berghahn (1992, 2). It is worth noting that in this regard, Goethe's travel writing is radically different from his approach to natural philosophy, which "rejects by its very definition the hierarchy (ascribed to Plato and Aristotle) of soul over body, Cartesian dualism, and the Kantian emphasis on the subject, because such views deny the interrelatedness and the constant dynamic motion of the phenomena" (Tantillo 2002, 47).

cyclical time, highlights the compromise of his subject position. This does not mean, however, that landscapes of the exterior world are of no interest or significance to him; indeed, I will demonstrate, they ground his interior explorations.

As Silk also notes, “awareness of spatial existence plays an important role in the narration” of the text, even if Semprun “comes to equate the term ‘outside’ with ‘life before’” and the journey itself as “being inside” (1992, 54). My own analysis will demonstrate a continued awareness of spatial existence throughout Semprun’s internment, an awareness which substantially foregrounds and shapes his time in Buchenwald. Whilst some of his landscape descriptions appear to continue the pattern identified by Silk – outside as ‘before’, or somehow other from his internal world – others suggest an immersive involvement with landscape as an inhabitable realm. In all cases space is discursive and constantly mediated. There is a final point to be drawn from Silk’s analysis which merits further exploration both in and beyond *The Long Voyage*; Semprun’s reliance on “a troping of space to define the position from which he writes many years after his experience” (1992, 63). This troping can be extended to include diverse dimensions of phenomenological experience, including the impact of seasonal changes, weather conditions and encounters with animal life; the significance of this will be scrutinised in discussions of *Literature or Life* and *What a Beautiful Sunday!* Close scrutiny of these texts alongside *The Long Voyage* indicates a sense of experiential continuity between deportation and internment, evidenced in Semprun’s recurring habit of relating his emotions to surrounding landscapes; further evidence of his acute awareness of spatial existence. As part of his recollection of the journey to the camp, Semprun describes his reaction to the view of the Moselle valley from the train:

I close my eyes, savoring this darkness which unfolds within me, savoring this certainty of the Moselle valley, outside there beneath the snow. This dazzling certainty of grey tints, the tall pines, the prim villages, the calm smoke in the winter sky. I force myself to keep my eyes closed as long as possible. The train is moving slowly, to the monotonous sound of the axle. Suddenly it whistles. It must have rent the winter landscape, as it rent my heart. I open my eyes quickly, to take the countryside by surprise, to catch it unawares. There it is. It’s simply there. It has nothing else to do. I could die right now, standing here in the boxcar crammed with future corpses, and it would still be there [...] beneath my lifeless gaze, sumptuously beautiful, like a Breughel winter scene. We could all die [...] it would still be there, beneath our lifeless gazes. I close my eyes, I open my eyes. My life is nothing more than this blinking of my eyes which reveals the Moselle valley to me [...] The valley unfolds [...] The Moselle comes in to me through my eyes, inundates my gaze, gorges my soul, which is like a sponge, with slow waters. I am nothing but this Moselle which invades me through the eyes. I have to concentrate on this savage pleasure (*LV* 11-13).

I don’t want to lose sight of this fundamental certainty. I open my eyes. Here’s the valley, fashioned by the work of centuries... (15)

This passage suggests another element of Semprun's approach to landscape which reappears in later works: a consistent awareness of his geographical location, exhibited in his tendency to rarely mention a place without also thinking about its past and cultivation. The experience of landscape for Semprun is inherently embedded in history and continuity. His sense of the Moselle Valley as a 'fundamental certainty' suggests that in times of disruption and dislocation – at this stage Semprun can only guess at his destination – landscape equals continuity. However, the harmony of the Moselle, which is one created through centuries of wine-growing – man and nature in a productive relation – is implicitly disrupted later in the journey when the train stops at Trier – the birthplace of Marx. "Was I blind, my God, deaf, dumb and blind, an oaf, an utter idiot, not to have realized sooner where it was I had heard of the Moselle valley? [...] The Moselle winegrowers, the Moselle woodcutters, the law about stealing wood in the Moselle. It was in the "Mega," of course. It's a childhood friend, dammit, this damned Moselle is a childhood friend of mine" (*LV* 36). The "Mega," a common name for the collected works of Marx and Engels, contains Marx's essays of 1842 in defence of Moselle peasants found guilty of stealing wood from recently privatised land. In arriving at Trier, this recalled knowledge forces a re-evaluation of the apparently timeless harmony between man and nature the landscape had seemed to represent. The always-already disrupted nature of pastoral nostalgia permeates the narrative. The following day Semprun's character is "sunk into a sort of dull somnolence" and the scenery outside the train no longer interests him: "It's simply that yesterday it was beautiful, and today the scenery's not beautiful" (*LV* 122). As readers we cannot say for certain whether the aesthetic of the landscape itself has changed, and no longer appeals, or if the disruption caused by the recollection of Marx's connection to the Moselle – the recognition of the pastoral as an unstable fable of harmony – undermines his pleasure in it.

There are also hints in these passages of an experience of the sublime, if that experience can indeed be considered a 'rape' of the onlooker as he positions himself in relation to the external world (Shaw 2006, 10); Semprun describes being gorged, inundated and invaded. His description resonates with Goethe's Young Werther's description of "Nature" as "a monster, forever devouring regurgitating, chewing and gorging" ([1774] 1989, 66), and his response to a valley landscape that "will be the end" of him: "The glory of these visions, their power and magnificence, will be my undoing" (*ibid.*, 27). Yet the sublime experience presented in Semprun's text diverges from those found in Goethe's literature; for him, as for his Young Werther, "the sublime is mysterious because unknown, dangerous because untamed, and attractive because knowledge of it promises

dominion over nature itself" (Gay 1992, 96). Semprun's sublime experience is emptied of the potential to dominate nature, because the possibility of his death in the box car grants the landscape a longevity and continuity he cannot promise himself. These passages introduce an approach to landscape which recurs later on in his testimonial project. As a result, his work overall suggests something of an experiential continuity throughout his deportation and internment, with both phases mediated by the same – principally environmental – co-ordinates.

If *The Long Voyage* works to make sense of Semprun's deportation, *Literature or Life* and *What a Beautiful Sunday!* unravel the substance of his experiences on arrival. In order to better determine the nature of Semprun's relationship with the Buchenwald landscape, I will consider his vivid memories of the elements including weather conditions and natural forms on the Ettersburg, and his knowledge of and engagement with intellectual and cultural history associated with the landscape. I will examine these points with a view to arguing that Semprun's experience, echoing Tilley's description of phenomenological spatial habitation, was individually determined, guided by personal memories, and took place in landscapes loaded with affective significance. In this way, his landscape memories appear to be deeply interwoven with his experiences, rather than radically de-contextualised by deportation in line with Baer's contention. However, this is not to suggest that the extreme context of Semprun's experiences does not temper his spatial engagement, or his later memories of arrival. He retains a reflexive realisation of the communicative limitations of these memories. One page of *LV*, enclosed in brackets, provides readers with a concise account of arrival at Buchenwald, drawn from "the most secret, best protected recesses of memory" (*LV* 214). It is made up of "beech trees and tall pines [...] dogs barking and the blinding brightness of all the lamps and searchlights, their icy light inundating the snow-covered landscape" (*ibid.*); a "Wagnerian" spectacle that "explodes" in Semprun's mind in later years, "in unexpected ways and at the most ordinary moments":

suddenly, like a scalpel slicing cleanly into the soft tender flesh, this memory explodes [...] And if someone seeing you standing there petrified, asks: "What are you thinking about?" you have to answer "Nothing," of course. It's first of all a memory difficult to communicate, and, besides, you have to work it out by yourself. (*LV* 214-215)

This description adds weight to the conclusion of Jones' argument on the subject of the Holocaust-as-travel:

It could be argued that the journey as a metaphor for life is evoked solely in order to be negated. The normality associated with travel only serves to underline the irreducible gulf

constructed by the authors between the reality they experienced at the camp and the knowledge of their addressees and readers who did not enter this world. (2005, 51)

This sense of difference, of an irreducible gulf, does not necessarily foreclose a reader's empathic endeavour; as already determined, empathic unsettlement as conceived by LaCapra depends on a reflexive acknowledgement of the impossibility – and undesirability – of total identification. Silk, whilst concentrating in part on the ways in which Semprun's journey is a perversion of the usual activity of travel, argues that all voyages, even deportation, constitute “an accumulation of moments, a density of various situations that relate to each other metonymically” (1992, 3); fundamentally, this is true of any journey, regardless of the situation in which it is undertaken.

Internment: Semprun on the Ettersburg

In the preceding section, I suggested the following as significant elements in Semprun's mention of landscape during his journey to Buchenwald: a suggestion of an emotional reaction to landscape akin to a sublime experience; an awareness of his geographical position and the cultural and historical heritage of associated topographies; and a presentation of landscape and nature tropes as spaces of inhabitable memory. In this section I will outline the ways in which these elements can continue to be traced throughout narrative representations of his life at Buchenwald. Each element contributes to Semprun's negotiation with Goethe's legacy in particular and Germanic cultural and literary approaches to landscape and nature in general. I will argue, furthermore, that whilst exploring the same “cultural geographical histories” that now structure Buchenwald as *lieu de mémoire* (as described above), this negotiation de-territorializes these histories and draws attention to alternative ways in which the space, and the Holocaust itself, may be encountered in and as landscape.

Semprun draws attention to the views over the Ettersburg that can be seen from the Buchenwald site, such as the scenes visible from the Little Camp where he recalls walking on many Sunday afternoons, at sunset (*WBS* 237). He is prompted to imagine Goethe's perspective; “Even Goethe could not have had such a fine view, for the trees that were cut down to build the camp must have blocked the view in his day” (34). He also imagines that the guards in their watch towers would sit looking over this landscape (*ibid.*). The question of how others would perceive the views he looks upon, as though searching for a possible alignment of perspective, recurs frequently in his thoughts. This

search is thrown into relief at the opening of *What a Beautiful Sunday!*, as he describes an intense longing for a shared experience of the natural world which will, even temporarily, disrupt the fixed subject-object dichotomy of his position within the camp surveyed by these guards.

Referring to himself in the third person, he recalls standing in front of a tree in Buchenwald in the December snow:

He remembered no other tree. There was no trace of nostalgia in his curiosity, for once no childhood memory rising up in a stirring of the blood. He was not trying to recover something inaccessible, some impression from an earlier time. No long-lost happiness nourished this present bliss. Just the beauty of a tree, whose name, even if it was in fact what it seemed to be, had no importance. A beech, probably [...]

Carried away by sheer joy. A tree, just that, in its immediate splendor, in the transparent stillness of the present. (WBS 2)

The splendour of the scene may again invoke Goethe's Young Werther. His narrative is also suggestive of what Bate describes, via Gaston Bachelard's discussion of *The Poetics of Space* ([1958] 1969), as a true inhabitation of the world; "a willingness to look at and listen to the world [...] a letting go of the self which brings the discovery of a deeper self" (Bate 2000, 155). For Bachelard, being at one with the world occurred in phenomenological moments in which "the duality of subject and object is iridescent, shimmering, unceasingly active in its inversions" (Bachelard 1969, xv); "Through the poetic image, oneness with the world can be experienced directly rather than yearned for elegiacally in nostalgia for the *temps perdu* of childhood or the imagined good life of primitivism" (Bate 2000, 154). The tree, for Semprun, functions in this encounter as a poetic image; it offers him an encounter with the natural world which, he insists, is not characterised by nostalgia but sheer 'immediate splendor [sic]'.

Later on we learn Semprun was at the time on his way back to the main camp after accompanying another inmate from the Buchenwald administration on an errand. To stop and stand in front of a tree outside the main entrance was dangerous. But Semprun is clearly captivated by this beech, by the "crude dialectic" of the bud that would soon negate winter. As he stands entranced by the beech, an SS warrant officer approaches him and seems to pause before challenging him.

For a split second he had caught himself imagining that the warrant officer would see the tree as he had. The warrant officer's gaze had weakened, invaded perhaps by so much beauty. (WBS 3)

There they were, side by side; they could have talked together about the miracle of beauty [...] The warrant officer took a few steps back, as *he* had done a little while ago. The warrant officer looked at the beech, the landscape, with eyes that had turned blue. Everything seemed so innocent; there was a vague possibility that it was anyway. (4)

The encounter Semprun wishes the SS officer to share with him, an ‘invasion of beauty’, is reminiscent of Ernst van Alphen’s conceptualisation of the ‘outward facing’ sublime, in which subject orientation becomes directed outwards. In desiring the officer to share this moment of subjection to sublime experience, he looks for an ethical-emotional response that would disrupt their subject-object opposition; as ecocritical theorist Mick Smith has speculated, “talk of being ‘moved’ by nature” may potentially operate beyond metaphorical limitations. For Smith the emotional response to nature is a mode of attachment and involvement, an “intimate participatory [practice] that draws us closer to others [...] giving us a feeling for and an understanding of our relational emplacement within [the] world” (Smith 2005, 219). Goethe was an early advocate of such encounters, although his empirical approach to the study of nature (Seamon 1978, 239), in line with his attitude to weather, differentiates him from the more phenomenological inhabitation in nature as embraced in Bachelard’s *poetics*. According to Seamon, Goethe’s views exposed “the human encounter with nature” and revealed:

a belief in the importance of that encounter. As he believed that all things in nature reflected a universal whole imbued with spiritual intention and order, so too did he believe the universal whole might be demonstrated experientially through immersion in the events of nature. (Seamon 1978, 239)

“The intent” of his method, regardless of its empiricism, “was to arrive at not only a deeper understanding but also a more reverent appreciation of nature” (ibid.). Goethe’s natural world is a place of control, balance and harmony; nature becomes a place to find unity: “The whole and the parts, like macrocosm and microcosm, each reflect each other” (Seamon 1978, 240). Goethe’s approach differed slightly from that of other Romantic poets; whereas Wordsworth emphasised the unique, intense and inherently individual nature of human encounters with the natural world, Goethe argued for something that was more “reproducible for others”; the specific importance of such encounters was the idea that an understanding of the external world would improve understanding of the internal: “Each phenomenon in nature, rightly observed, wakens in us a new organ of inner understanding” (Lehr 1985, 85 in Seamon 1978). According to Seamon, whereas modern science sees nature mechanistically, only from the perspective of human use, “without intentional design”, Goethe “teaches an alternate mode of interaction between person and environment that entails reciprocity, wonderment and gratitude” (1978, 247). This can be

seen in the larger context of Goethe's approach to the relationship between nature and mankind, which embraced completely the idea that "mankind is part of nature, nature as modified by reason, consciousness and conscience – but nevertheless nature" (Wilkinson and Willoughby 1962, 11). This was central to his conception of the organic link between native land and human identity. Understanding of nature – of what thrives on that land – should thus also improve man's understanding of himself, particularly as a being of "dignity, respect and purposefulness" (Seamon 1978, 247). As has also been established, central to Goethean thought was the idea that such encounters were ultimately reproducible; that they could be shared. As Semprun, who is simply trying to have his humanity acknowledged, reveals, Goethe's notion of the 'dignity, respect and purposefulness' of man-in-nature fails in the concentration camps, realms in which one set of people attempted to systematically eliminate these three qualities from another. The officer cannot share in the momentary sublime, cannot be moved by nature: "Suddenly it was all over" (WBS 4). The illusion of a shared or reproducible encounter is shattered; as the officer points his revolver at Semprun's chest he denies him his humanity, for, as he concludes: "Between SS Warrant Officer Kurt Krauss and No. 44904 there is all the distance created by the right to kill" (5). The possibility of a shared encounter with the natural world is impossible within the concentration camp hierarchy.

The story of the beech demonstrates an example of Semprun's experience of Buchenwald's landscape as sublime; it also again underlines his acute awareness of the history and culture associated with the geographical location of his internment. He revisits his encounter with the beech tree several times throughout *What a Beautiful Sunday!*, and we finally hear what happened next over 100 pages later. The Warrant Officer takes Semprun back to the camp gates ("They were going to rough me up, no doubt about it" WBS 128). A Hauptsturmführer arrives on the scene and questions him about why he was found standing staring at the tree.

'Because of the tree, Hauptsturmführer!' I say.

I know that's a good point for me, too, that I should get his rank in the SS hierarchy exactly right. The SS don't like to get tied up in complications about their rank.

'The tree?' he says.

'There was a tree, by itself, a beech, a very fine tree. As soon as I saw it, I thought it might be Goethe's tree, so I went up to it.'

He looks very interested.

‘Goethe!’ he exclaims. ‘So you know the works of Goethe?’ A distinct change of tone. *Kultur* has its uses.

I nod modestly. (WBS 129)

‘I thought it was Goethe’s tree, Hauptsturmführer,’ I tell him. ‘I couldn’t resist the temptation of taking a closer look.’

Schwartz nods understandingly.

‘You’re quite wrong,’ he says. Goethe’s tree, the one on which he carved his initials, is inside the camp, on the esplanade between the kitchens and the clothing stores! And anyway, it’s not a beech, but an oak!’

I know this already of course, but I must put on a display of great interest, as if delighted at acquiring a new piece of information.

‘Oh, that’s the one!’

‘Yes,’ says Schwartz, we spared it when the hill was cleared of trees, in memory of Goethe!’

And he embarks on a long speech about the respect shown by the National Socialists for good German cultural tradition. I am still looking him in the eye, still standing to attention, as is the custom, but I am no longer listening. I am thinking that Goethe and Eckermann would be very pleased if they heard him. (WBS 132-3)

Indeed, Semprun’s Goethe displays the same a naive sentimentality as Young Werther who, when learning his favourite walnut trees have been cut down for wood, laments that “there are people devoid of appreciation or feeling for that which has real value on earth” (1989, 93).

‘Did you know [...] that tree in whose shade we were so fond of resting is still inside the camp? That, again, is a typically German gesture, and one that I appreciate! Despite the terrible demands of the war, that tree – which the officers and soldiers of this garrison continue to call “Goethe’s tree,” which, no doubt, will not fail to raise the spirits of the wretches imprisoned here for various reasons – that tree has not been cut down [...] Yes, I appreciate that gesture of respect toward the memory of our history. Even in 1937, when the construction of this re-education camp was begun, I was profoundly touched by the representations made by the National Socialist Cultural Association of Weimar, demanding that the camp should not bear the name K.L. Ettersburg, due to the imperishable links between that place and my life and work. I can tell you, Eckermann, I was profoundly touched by those representations and by the decision finally made – in the highest places, I understand from a reliable source – to call the camp K.L. Buchenwald!’ (WBS 206-7)

It is in this section of the text that Semprun comes closest to offering an explicit critique of Goethe’s particular humanism. His irreverent portrayal shows the imaginary Goethe’s reaction to the Nazi regime as one of “understanding neutrality”; Eckermann depicts a Hitler “radiating [...] all the wisdom that the Goethean synthesis of the classical spirit and

Faustian demonism can produce" (WBS 204). Semprun's Goethe is alarmed that Thomas Mann, "a writer so close to Goethean thought", had famously denounced National Socialist ideology, and unsettled that Heidegger, a thinker "so removed from Goethean humanism", was infamously a member of the Nazi party (205). The inadequacy of the imaginary Goethe's statement that "the intellectual cannot be uninterested in politics" (ibid.) serves to highlight the failure of the real Goethe to make any meaningful contribution to a discussion of Jewish emancipation or the larger politics of his time. The imaginary Goethe's reaction to Buchenwald, particularly to the Nazis' "typically German" reaction to preserving the tree furthermore reflects Semprun's comprehension of the way in which traditional German values were undermined and distorted by National Socialism's sentimental-brutalism.²⁵ On walking past the zoological garden, the basic structure of which still exists today, Semprun's Goethe remarks approvingly on the excellent condition in which the animals are being kept: "At a difficult time like ours, this respect for animal life, for the requirements of nature, seems to me to be specifically German [...] as far as we are concerned, this characteristic [...] seems to me [...] inherent in a view of the world in which harmony between man and nature plays a determining role" (WBS 202-3). His naive approval of the legend '*Jedem das Seine*' [to each his due], emblazoned above the camp gates, completes Semprun's condemnatory depiction of the great German humanist:

I find it most significant and most encouraging that such an inscription should decorate the gates of a place where freedom has been withdrawn, a place of re-education through forced labour. [...] Is it not an excellent motto for a society organised to defend the freedom of all, of the whole society, to the detriment, if necessary, of an excessive, harmful individual freedom?" (207)

Furthermore, he boasts:

whoever the author of that inscription [...] may be, I cannot help thinking that I had something to do with it, that the breath of my inspiration is to be found in it. To each his due, indeed, to each the place that is due to him, through birth or talent, in the hierarchy of individual freedom and constraints that make up the liberty of us all. (208)

This is the Semprun's indictment: Goethean humanism is guilty of exclusion, for it advocates a paradoxical hierarchy designed to grant "freedom for all" which can only function by constraining the liberty of particular individuals.

Literature or Life in particular reveals the way in which elements of the natural environment, including weather conditions and plant and animal life, became important

²⁵ At one stage, for example, Semprun notes the German Army's "revealing military tradition" of using poetic name codes such as *Meerschäum* (Sea Foam) and *Frühlingswind* (Spring Wind) for mass deportations of French prisoners in 1944 (LL 40).

grounding tropes for Semprun's later recollections. His descriptions suggest an application of symbolic meaning to natural elements that fits with Tilley's description of a phenomenological spatial relationship; such elements became "reference points and places of emotional orientation for human attachment and involvement" (1994, 17). Semprun's references to birds throughout *LL*, for example, indicate sustained attention to, and a sensual awareness of, environmental factors. The text opens with Semprun's account of his encounter with three Allied soldiers in the forest on the Ettersburg immediately after the liberation of Buchenwald. The soldiers stare fearfully at Semprun. He asks one of them:

"What's the matter? [...] You're surprised to find the woods so quiet?"

He looks round at the trees encircling us. The other men do the same. Listening. No, it's not the silence. They hadn't noticed, hadn't heard the silence. I'm what's scaring them, obviously, and nothing else.

"No birds left," I continue, pursuing my idea. "They say the smoke from the crematory drove them away. Never any birds in the forest..."

They listen closely, straining to understand.

"The smell of burned flesh, that's what did it!"

They wince, glance at one another. In almost palpable distress. A sort of gasp, a heave of revulsion. (*LL* 5)

This tableau has been discussed in existing scholarship on Semprun, for it deals with the fear experienced by survivors that their testimony would "drive away" any potential audience.²⁶ As Naomi Mendel (2006, 108) notes, there is a Levinasian implication "in the Allied officers' inability to 'face' the survivor." Yet there is another undercurrent here which deserves attention. The disappearance of birds is an enduring herald of apocalypse in environmental literature. In the opening chapter of Rachel Carson's founding ecocritical text *Silent Spring* (1962), the "grim spectre" of human perpetrated environmental disaster is heralded by "a spring without voices" – the end of the dawn chorus (1962, 22). In Semprun's account, pastoral disruption finds a new home in the concentration camp, as the crematorium pollutes the earth anew. His repeated allusions to the month of April, when the camp was liberated, to the "deep draught" of spring (*LL* 28), serve to reinforce the seasonal temporality of this ecocritical parallel. Furthermore, although Semprun's account attributes the bird's disappearance from the Ettersburg to the smoke produced from the cremation of human bodies, it is interesting to consider Semprun's example in

²⁶ See Langer (1993, 61) and Mandel's discussion of this in relation to Semprun's encounter with the Allied soldiers (2006, 108-109).

light of Carson's argument that the industry responsible for an explosion in the invention of man-made pesticides was a "child of the Second World War" (1962, 32); chemicals designed for warfare were initially commonly tested on insects, and such experiments resulted in the production of many new varieties of synthetic pesticide. Pre-war insecticides, Carson explains, were derived from natural products, and were considerably less biologically potent than their synthetic descendants. With what Carson has labelled "a certain ironic significance" (1962, 42), the insecticidal properties of many chemical agents were discovered by Gerhard Schrader, a German chemist, in the 1930s:

Almost immediately the German government realised the significance of these same chemicals as new and devastating weapons in man's war against his own kind, and the work on them was declared secret. Some became the deadly nerve gases. Others, of closely allied structure, became insecticides. (ibid.)

Pollution comes in different forms, but these forms may bear intimate relation to one another. Semprun's thoughts periodically return to birds: in the above passage on their absence; not long after when he visits Weimar after liberation, and comments on their palpable presence (*LL* 93-94), and many years later when he returns as an honoured guest and they, too, have come back to Buchenwald (296, 304). The birds, in their absence and presence, become one of Semprun's environmental memory tropes, and offer him a way of speaking about what may otherwise be unspeakable.

Many of Semprun's recollections are introduced with seasonal signposts: "this splendid April morning" (*LL* 15); "that autumn day" (55); "this first experience of torture. Out in the garden with its sloping lawn, the trees still bore leaves of yellow and russet gold" (54); "every afternoon that spring" (17) – the spring that Halbwachs died. This introduces a sense of temporal stability to a text which, like *LV* and *WBS*, otherwise refuses to be pinned down to a linear narrative; "It's crazy how memory goes back and forth" (*WBS* 125). Seasonal changes also took on new associations for Semprun after Buchenwald. The aforementioned "deep draught" of the liberation spring; the end of winter 1945 always stays with him (*LL* 28). Years later, the advent of spring shatters Semprun's "hard-won peace of mind": "The anguish of former days returned to haunt me, especially in April. Various circumstances make it difficult to escape this month unscathed; the deeply affecting renewal of nature, the anniversary of the liberation of Buchenwald" (*LL* 226). Embedded in this seasonal awareness are perhaps the most pervasive of Semprun's environmental memory tropes; those of weather conditions, most particularly wind and snow. Weather, "a prime means of linking spatiality and temporality" (Bate

2000, 109), is, for Semprun, impossible to disassociate from place memory. These elements frequently accompany the crematorium smoke in Semprun's accounts.

The Ettersburg winds and snows are, for Semprun, unique to Buchenwald, and are presented in his work as elements of continuity throughout internment, liberation and later life. Frequent references to these elements, both on his return to the camp as a visitor and in intervening years, cast them as vehicles of return, willed or unwilled; wind and snow take him back to the past.

There is only the sound of the wind blowing, as always, on this slope of the Ettersburg. In spring or winter, mild breeze or icy blast, there is always the wind on the Ettersburg. (LL 37)

All at once I was twenty years old and I was striding swiftly through the swirling snow, right here, but long years ago. (LL 307)

For Semprun, the wind and snow of the Ettersburg are eternal. He recalls a sudden memory 'snowstorm' on the Place de la Nation, Mayday: "I was swept away by a staggering memory of snow on the Ettersburg. A perfectly calm giddiness, heartbreakingly lucid. I felt myself floating in the future of this memory. There would always be this memory, this loneliness: this snow in all the sunshine, this smoke in every springtime" (LL 139). The continuity provided by weather is also projected, by Semprun, back into the Ettersburg's past; the wind is a "wind for all seasons on Goethe's hillside" (LL 37). The landscape around him was "the snowy forest where Goethe and Eckermann were fond of walking" (WBS 126). The seasons on the Ettersburg, too, are eternal frameworks which accommodate his experience alongside that of his imaginary Goethe:

Spring returned; it was April.

Goethe would have ordered his barouche. He'd have taken Eckermann for a ride around the Ettersburg, among the tall beech groves. Goethe would have commented on the beauties of the landscape, the tiny events in the life of the birds [...] it would be spring, in the fine forests of Thuringia! (WBS 82)

All that separates Semprun's Buchenwald from Goethe's in these passages is the crematorium smoke that sends the birds away. Distinctions collapse completely when Semprun projects an imaginary Goethe into the Buchenwald landscape: "Goethe, immortal and Olympian – Goethean, in other words – was still walking on the Ettersburg with that distinguished fool Eckermann" (WBS 92). From a man who "would have commented on the beauties of the landscape" (my emphasis), Goethe seems to materialise; he "still" walks on the Ettersburg. For Semprun, coincidences of shared geographical co-ordinates across history were "not without meaning" (WBS 92), although he berates himself for "wasting

[...] time arguing with Goethe, catching [...] bourgeois humanism in the trap of its own historical hypocrisies” (93). Yet he continues to imagine; an army truck becomes Goethe’s sleigh, arriving “suddenly on a cascade” of the Ettersburg snow (ibid.). Indeed, Semprun “can imagine anything on a December Sunday in that historic landscape”, from the Grand Duke Charles Augustus entertaining Napoleon to Goethe and Eckermann appearing “at the end of the avenue flanked by eagles” at the Buchenwald’s main entrance (122). The Ettersburg is a porous space, and Semprun’s Goethe negotiates the same landscape, the same weather, as Semprun himself. Indeed, Eckermann’s published accounts of his conversations with Goethe demonstrate that the two friends were continuously concerned with weather,²⁷ echoing Semprun’s narratives. Goethe had himself been responsible for setting up the first government run weather observations network in 1776 in Sachsen-Weimar (Lamb 1977, 26) and became known late in his lifetime as a keen meteorologist (Magnus and Schmid [1906] 2004, 30). Yet Goethe’s approach to weather could not be more different from that of Semprun. Early evidence of Goethe’s interest in weather can be found in the published correspondence from his *Italian Journey*, and both this and his later work on the subject bear the Cartesian hallmarks noted by Presner in relation to Goethe’s travel writing: in his detailed observations, he sought to “bring order to the infinite variety of weather phenomena” (ibid). Eckermann’s record further substantiates this approach, for example on the subject of wind: “The thing is very simple [...] High barometer, dry weather, east wind; low barometer, wet weather, and west wind” (Goethe, [1827] 2005, 192). He was interested in atmospheric process from the perspective of the scientist, as something to be measured with barometer and thermometer, with a view to predicting an accurate weather forecast (Rickels 2011, 95). Weather for Goethe means looking forward; for Semprun, it seems, it is always about looking back. Where Goethe is interested in clouds, forms which can be observed and documented from a distance, Semprun is concerned with the wind that blows against him and the snow that falls around him. This is the nature of his phenomenological engagement.

The representation of this engagement is central to the way in which his work dislocates determinative territorializations of the Ettersburg, one which perhaps begins as he retells the story of his encounter with Karl Krauss. He implies in this account that landscape can become a democratic platform for empathic engagement, a space in which people may come together in a response to nature; a dialogue foreclosed in Nazism’s appropriation of *Heimat* as exclusive to Germanic traditional life. Despite the failure of his attempt in this instance, the ethical intention behind it is not defeated. Indeed, his

²⁷ See for example Goethe, Eckermann & Soret, pages 52, 86, 106, 385, and 387.

interrogation of the idea of Goethe, and of how that idea was mobilized by National Socialism, continues with his later visit to Goethe's house. In the passages describing this visit, we see once again a spatial and temporal collapse which itself prefaces his later return to the camp. In encountering the Ettersburg in this way, he unmoors the Nazis' territorialization of the land. As a result he undermines their contention that one racial group alone can be exclusively connected to one particular *Heimat*.

And so, Semprun tells Rosenfeld, Goethe wouldn't be a bad beginning. The deep draught of spring has arrived on the Ettersburg, and Buchenwald is liberated. Rosenfeld proposes the trip to Weimar, to the banks of the Ilm, as a present for Semprun to celebrate his name day (it was April 23rd, St. George's day). Together they stand on a stretch of grass outside Goethe's garden house. Semprun had been amazed at how close the city was to the camp. They cannot explore the garden house because it is locked up, but they move on to Goethe's town house where an "old Nazi", the "zealous guardian of Goethe's museum-home" is reluctant for them to enter "this shrine of Germanic culture"; he describes in a tones of pointed admiration, "Hitler's last visit, when he stayed at the Elephant hotel in Weimar" (LL 103-4). As Semprun talks to Rosenfeld in Weimar, he enjoys a process of uncovering such connections, which seem to him to be "quirk[s] of fate"; together they form co-ordinates in a complex yet coherent picture of Weimar-Buchenwald's duality. The next part of this chapter will examine how these 'quirks of fate' are still palpable co-ordinates for visitors today, rendering this duality clear in the landscapes they encounter.

Throughout this section, it has become clear that Semprun experienced Buchenwald as a phenomenological space significantly textualised and embedded in Germany's cultural and literary legacy. In years to come, tourists to Weimar, knowingly or unknowingly, follow Semprun on this journey between Buchenwald and Goethe's home, to be confronted anew with the fearsome results of bourgeois humanism's hypocrisy. A few days after his visit to Goethe's house with Rosenfeld, Semprun leaves Buchenwald and Weimar behind him, travels to Paris, and returns to his work as an undercover agent for the Communist Party, not to return for nearly fifty years.

I.III. Arrivals: Memory in Place

Semprun as visitor

In 1960, whilst attending a series of meetings in East Berlin, Semprun told an official from the German Central Committee that he had been interned in Buchenwald. “He was as excited as an Englishman who has just been told, in the middle of some ordinary conversation [...] that one has been to Oxford. Buchenwald! Why didn’t I say so earlier?” The official wants to arrange a return journey to Buchenwald, so Semprun can see the memorials there. “Oh, no; shit! I had spent fifteen years trying not to be a survivor [...] the trips organised for the deportees and their families to the sites of the former camps, had always filled me with horror” (*WBS* 22). His lack of desire to return was part of his impossible attempt to leave his past behind him. Yet initially, and *contra* to the argument I am making here about Buchenwald’s potential as a memorial landscape, he also firmly rejected the idea that Buchenwald should one day be a legitimate destination for anyone else; indeed, passages from his texts suggest that the site itself has no place in the contemporary world. His own return, however, as will be seen, causes him to partially revise this opinion. After liberation but before the inmates had left, he recalls the Buchenwald librarian predicting that the camp would soon be used to re-educate the Nazis.²⁸ He asks Semprun:

“What do you want to do with Buchenwald? Turn it into a place of pilgrimage, of meditation? A vacation resort?”

“Absolutely not!” [Semprun replies] “I’d like the camp to be abandoned to the erosion of time, to nature...I’d like it to be engulfed by the forest.” (*LL* 63)

The idea had first appeared in *The Long Voyage*:

I would like to see that: the grass and the bushes, the roots and brambles encroaching as the seasons go by, beneath the persistent Ettersburg rains... obstinately encroaching, with that excessive obstinacy of natural things, among the cracks in the disjoined wood and the powdery crumbling of the cement that would split and yield to the thrust of the beech forest, unceasingly encroaching on this human countryside on the flank of the hill, this camp constructed by men, the grass and the roots repossessing the place where the camp had stood. (*LV* 189)

²⁸ Buchenwald was indeed taken over by the Soviet military administration. As ‘Special Camp No. 2’, the newly oriented prison was used to intern a varied community of Nazi perpetrators, Wehrmacht and SS officials, Hitler youth leaders and “a large number of persons committed to the camp on the basis of denunciations, confusions of identity and arbitrary arrests” (Buchenwald.de).

Whilst Semprun rejects the notion that Buchenwald could become a memory site of the future, his desire for nature to overcome the camp resonates with certain contemporary curatorial strategies at former camps, for example at Birkenau, where plants and trees are carefully controlled in order that “lush vegetation” may lend “peace to what was once a malevolent landscape” (Rymaszewski 2004, 24) without interfering with ongoing efforts to preserve authentic structures. Unlike the land managers at Birkenau, however, Semprun is not advocating the maintenance of a balance between ruins and nature that may soothe the spirits of a visitor. He desires the decay of the camp, not its preservation: the return of the trees, the reversal of the Nazi’s deforestation of the Ettersburg.

I will argue in this section that Semprun’s work provides an exemplary frame of reference for contemporary explorations of the Buchenwald landscape. Neither his own long-held resolution to avoid return nor his desire for the site to be abandoned to nature initially seem to recommend him as an intermediary between past and present. Indeed, if anything, his remarks in these passages seem to endorse Baer’s contention that little of value can be gained from a Buchenwald ‘pilgrimage’. Yet there are several factors, as this section will demonstrate, which render his work an invaluable source for those in search of memory ‘in place’. As earlier foregrounded, Semprun’s texts offer a multi-sensory and multidimensional spatial engagement with the landscapes of Weimar-Buchenwald. In immersing himself in the area’s cultural history and natural environment, Semprun encounters the space on his own terms, unintentionally presenting the contemporary explorer with an exemplary methodology which supports both reflexive critical distance and phenomenological inhabitation. Accordingly, I begin this section with a discussion of Semprun’s response to the forty years of commemorative landscaping that shaped Buchenwald between 1950 and 1990; a response characterised by the same merciless condemnation that shaped his representations of Goethe’s futile humanism. I then proceed to elucidate ways in which the trajectory of contemporary visitors can be seen to echo Semprun’s own path between Buchenwald and Weimar, exposing them to the same confrontation with Germany’s dichotomous history that so troubled the author throughout his interment.

The official who offers to organise a trip for Semprun failed to persuade him:

He described for me all the work that had been done to the camp. A memorial: the German Democratic Republic had built a memorial there of great artistic value. I nodded, but I had seen the photographs of it, I knew: it was disgusting. I didn’t tell him what I thought, of course. Shyly, I just told him my old dream: that the camp should be left to the slow work of nature, to the forest, to the roots, to the rain, to the irreversible erosion of the seasons. One day, people would rediscover the buildings of the old camp overgrown by the irresistible

profusion of trees. [...] But no, a memorial, something educational, political, that's what they had built. In any case, it was Bertolt Brecht's idea. It was he who suggested that they build this majestic memorial, opposite the old concentration camp, on the slope leading to Weimar. He had even wanted the figures to be larger than life, carved in stone and placed on a pediment devoid of ornament, taking in with their gaze some majestic amphitheatre. In this amphitheatre a festival would be organised each year in memory of the deportees. Oratorios, works for massed choirs would be performed there. There would be public readings and political appeals [...] I was well aware that Brecht had often displayed bad taste, but to such an extent, it was unbelievable! (*WBS* 22)

The 'disgusting' memorial in this passage is that of Fritz Cremer, as described earlier in this chapter. Brecht had indeed been involved in the designs in the early stages of the competition (Niven 2007, 57-60). Semprun's objection to the memorial is both aesthetic and polemic; indeed, his critique resonates with those made in later years by scholars on the subject. As a member of the communist resistance himself, Semprun knew of the disparity between the celebratory rhetoric that defined both the memorial and the first museum at the site and the reality of Buchenwald; his texts, which include many references to events at the site in April 1945, describe his own role as member of this underground group in administering and facilitating the complex task of liberation; however, he does so alongside the American soldiers, whom he credits with restoring "essential services [...] in order to feed, clothe, care for, and reorganize" Buchenwald's "several tens of thousands of survivors" (*LL* 29). His affiliation with the Communist Resistance did not blind him to this reality; given his comprehensive knowledge of the daily life of many groups in the camp both under the Nazi regime and throughout its liberation, it is unsurprising that the one-dimensional slant of GDR commemorative architecture has failed to appeal to him. The many varied narratives involved in the camp's history were obscured by the GDR's determined focus on victorious resistance. As Semprun himself remarks (*WBS* 40): "The masses may make history, but they certainly don't write it. It is the dominant minorities – which on the left are called 'vanguards' and on the right, even in the centre, 'natural elites' – that write history. And re-write it, if need be, if the need is felt, and, from their dominant point of view need is often felt."

In 1992, the re-orientation of Buchenwald was well underway. Semprun had successfully written and published several critically acclaimed testimonial texts, and in so doing had begun the task of locating himself in relation to his past. This is when he decides to return. Indeed, the return becomes essential to the completion of his testimony: "The only way, in fact, to force me to finish the story I had repressed so long was to lure me back to Buchenwald" (*LL* 280). His visit takes place in March, at the request of a German journalist: "He was going to do a program on Weimar, a centre of culture with a

concentration camp [...] He wanted me to be one of the principal participants in this exploration of the past. In the concentration camp department, of course" (LL 279).

Semprun remarks on the contrast between the two areas of the camp, one where the GDR had commissioned the vast memorial complex and the other the void where Special Camp no.2 had stood:

On one side, on one of the slopes of the hill, a monstrous and pompous marble monument was supposed to remind people of the misleading (since it was purely symbolic) connection of the Communist regime to the Anti-Fascist struggles of Europe's past. On the other side, a new forest had grown over the boneyards of Communism, to erase their traces in the humble and tenacious memory of the countryside, if not in that of men. (LL 306)

At this stage no decisive plans had been formed as to how to include a commemoration of German victims of the Soviet regime. The only commemorative markers for the prisoners of the Soviet regime in 1992 were "a moving assembly of mismatched crosses":

It seems only proper to me that reunified, democratic Germany [...] the new Germany, born of the double tragedy of the twentieth century, anchored in Europe and a possible stabilizing force for its future, should make the Weimar Buchenwald site a place of remembrance, an international centre of democratic reason.

Germany's special place in the history of this century is obvious: it is the only European country that has had to experience, suffer, and acknowledge responsibility for the devastating effects of both totalitarian movements of the twentieth century: Nazism and Bolshevism. [...] My point is that the same political experiences have made the history of Germany a tragic history can also allow Germany to take its place in the forefront of a democratic and universalist expansion of the idea of Europe.

And the site of Weimar-Buchenwald could become the symbol of this idea, a place of remembrance and promise. (LL 306-7)

Thus, despite his reluctance for the camp to become a place of pilgrimage, Semprun becomes aware of its potential as a powerful symbol; that Buchenwald might have a part to play in realising what Brodzki describes as his "longing for freedom, justice, and international solidarity, and his multi-faceted, persistent, and principled attempts to ground a body of political convictions in real possibility" (2007, 147). His hopeful recognition of Buchenwald's promise is echoed in his response to the return of birdsong: "I heard the myriad murmur of the birds. They had returned to the Ettersburg, after all. The rustle of birdsong surrounded me like the voice of the ocean. Life had returned to the slopes of the Ettersburg" (LL 296).

Semprun's recognition of Buchenwald's potential does not alter his perspective on the commemorative aesthetics, however, and it is perhaps unsurprising that the apparently spontaneous collection of 'miss-matched' crosses at the site of the Soviet Special camp strike him as a 'moving' sight. He also acknowledges the affective impact of the open space where the barracks had once stood (these were levelled as part of the memorial design, and their foundations marked in gravel): "the effect was incredibly powerful. The empty space thus created, surrounded by barbed wire, dominated by the crematory chimney, swept by the wind of the Ettersburg, was a place of overwhelming remembrance" (*LL* 295) (see figures 1.5 and 1.6 for present day images of this area, which has not been significantly altered since Semprun's visit). He recognises this wind: "The same wind, the same everlasting wind, was blowing across the eternity of the Ettersburg" (291). Indeed, Semprun's environmental memory tropes – the Ettersburg winds, snow and sunshine of his internment – structure his experience of return, just as they structured his memories of Buchenwald through the intervening years.

Arriving in Weimar, he stays at the same hotel he knew had been favoured by Hitler, the Elephant, where, he recounts, the Ettersburg snow "falls on" his sleep: "It blanketed the young forest that had sprung up where the Little Camp had been. Where the thousands of nameless corpses that had not gone up in smoke [...] lay rotting in the Thuringia earth" (*LL* 306). He becomes troubled by a vague but persistent sense of déjà vu: "I'd come here in an earlier life, one day in April 1945, with Lieutenant Rosenfeld. I'd forgotten that escapade in Weimar with Rosenfeld. I'd forgotten it so completely that in the first version of this book I hadn't said one word about it [...] I'd have to reinvent Rosenfeld, in a way: make him rise again from the confused obscurity of my clouded, tattered memory" (*LL* 284). Place can release memories in the presence of one who remembers, memories "which belong as much to the place" as to the "brain or body" (E. Casey 1996, 25). Semprun recognizes his capacity to reinvent memory in place; the landscape of Weimar seems to release memories in his presence. This is of central significance to my own advocacy of Semprun's work as an exemplary guide to Buchenwald. Only he could see the reinvented memories place released for him; indeed, since his death in 2011, his seemingly ceaseless past-present remediation is finally at an end. Yet his literary legacy continues to provide a mediatory function; whilst his own endeavour was one of reinvention, in his wake we can, and should, invent anew.

Indeed, Semprun himself seems to advocate literature as a useful tool for the negotiation of space; he makes a careful selection of texts to take with him upon his return to Weimar and Buchenwald. Implicit in his choices is the notion that, beyond framing our



Figure 1.5: Former muster ground



Figure 1.6: Gravelled barrack foundations, former muster ground

experience of concentration camp spaces (as proposed by Jones, see the introduction), particular texts may help us negotiate the relationship between these spaces and their cultural legacies. Semprun's selection included a Thomas Mann novel, *Charlotte à Weimar*, the first book he had bought after liberation: "Partly because of Thomas Mann. Mostly because of Weimar. I knew that the Charlotte in question was Goethe's Charlotte [...] from *Werther*, and Goethe had been a part of my life in Buchenwald. Because of his walks on the Ettersburg with Eckermann..." (LL 285). The same Charlotte, he remarks, also stayed at the Hotel Elephant when in Weimar, a fact unknown to him when he first bought the novel.

So when I'd [...] learned we would be staying at the Elephant, I'd immediately gone looking in my library for the volume of Thomas Mann. Which I'd found, perhaps not exactly where it ought to have been, if my library was arranged in a more logical fashion, but found nonetheless. Among certain other books that had nothing to do with Thomas Mann [...] but which had some connection to Buchenwald, as though an obscure premonition had led me to include the novel within a context that would become clear many years later. (LL 285-6)

Another book choice was a set of correspondence between Heidegger and humanistic German philosopher Karl Jaspers dating between 1920 and 1963. For Semprun, "in the background" of this text:

figured four decades of tragic and decisive German history [...] I'd felt it appropriate to reread these letters in the lucid emotion of my return to Buchenwald. A return to the only place in the world where both totalitarianisms of the twentieth century, Nazism and Bolshevism, have together left their mark. (LL 288)

The third book was one of Paul Celan's poetry, including versions of 'Todtnauberg' – the poem in which Celan comes close to confronting Heidegger with the philosopher's silence on the question of the Nazi destruction of European Jewry ("The Heideggerian unsaid par excellence: the unsaid of German guilt" (LL 290)). These figures are Semprun's way of bringing together the cultural and literary connections that constitute Weimar-Buchenwald, echoing the palimpsestic model implied by the appearance of the imaginary Goethe on the Ettersburg slopes in 1945. He creates a textualised topography which, in the final section of this chapter, is considered as a space of encounter in the present day.

The Visitor after Semprun

I have suggested that Semprun, *contra* Baer, can be seen to have had a meaningful sense of engagement with the landscape of his internment, and have now discussed in some depth how this is apparent from both his emotional reactions to the landscape and nature, and

his awareness of the cultural history of the spaces around him. The guiding principles his work offers to visitors can be considered according to the same co-ordinates I employed to discuss his own intervention in the above sections on his deportation, internment and return: an ecological immersion in nature that steers us away from simply focusing on monuments which can refer only to their own histories; an embrace of the potential for shared experiences in landscape. Throughout he urges us to recognize the various ideologies that have contributed to the creation of Buchenwald as *lieu de mémoire*. Buchenwald has been presented as a textualised space in which Semprun's work can now be included. Given the way in which, as demonstrated above, he suggests literature to be a useful tool for the negotiation of space, to take his own texts as guides seems a fitting approach. Indeed, his work has already begun to structure contemporary experiences of the Weimar-Buchenwald area. In 2010, journalist Christopher Cook narrated his walk from the city to the camp for a BBC Radio 3 programme, incorporating the testimonies of survivors, including that of Semprun, alongside Goethe's poetry.

I have implied in my discussion of Semprun that his work guides us away from official commemorative monuments – or at least urges us to be vigilant to their self-referential nature – and towards the 'natural' elements of the landscape: the forest, the weather, the birds, the views over the Ettersburg valley. He is interested, likewise, not in the preserved concrete remnants of the camp but in the "slow work" of a nature that would obliterate them. Whilst the route maps offered to visitors at Buchenwald are effective in casting "individual experiences in the mould of shared historical themes" and translating "the spatiality of historic sites into an itinerary based on geographical contiguity rather than historical chronology" (Azaryahu 2003, 2), Semprun, as 'victim' who has encountered the landscape on his own terms, compels visitors to do the same, perhaps eschewing the particular path offered by official discourse.

So central to the official route around the site, the protection of the Oak stump seems, in Semprun's work, to be little more than a symbol of "arboreal rootedness"; I recall Campbell's mobilization of Deleuze and Guattari, whereby "the tree typifies [a] limited, rooted model, 'hierarchical' and working along 'pre-established paths'" (2008, 7). Whilst its meaning as a commemorative monument remains open to speculation, the Oak can no longer effectively function simply as a monument to the Goethean era of German cultural history; it cannot but be undermined, even retrospectively, by National Socialism's lack of

'Goethean humanism' – a humanism of exclusion.²⁹ Semprun guides us, rather, towards a rhizomatic approach: to become "silent discoverers of [our] own paths" (de Certeau 1988, xiii); perhaps to encounter the trees at the site which have not been the focus of commemorative strategy, like the anonymous beech amongst a forest of beeches, in all its "immediate splendour". Yet there is another, more fundamental guiding premise in Semprun's work that goes beyond urging attention to the paths less travelled; I would argue, in fact, that it is not particular points in the landscape – or which route we walk to encounter them – that matter so much as the mode of encounter we may have in and with that landscape. Semprun's geography is phenomenological rather than empiric. As James Ingo Freed has suggested on the subject of narrativizing museum visitor experience, it is important to let "memory be sufficiently ambiguous and open-ended so that others can inhabit the space, can imbue forms with their own memory" (1989, 64); this, I would argue, is what Semprun's de-territorialization of the Ettersburg achieves. For all his scepticism about Goethe's humanism, his description of immersion in nature resonates with the Goethean vision of man-nature relations as described by David Seamon: the emphasis on reflexivity, harmony and mutuality between components, and of the reproducible nature of the encounters involved. The task of improving man's understanding of himself as a being of "dignity, respect and purposefulness", open to modes of interaction entailing "reciprocity, wonderment and gratitude", becomes urgent and fundamental to our participation as witnesses.

Semprun reveals to readers his desire for a shared encounter with nature; despite his periodically reiterated doubts that anyone could understand his experiences, he sees the value in attempting to communicate them. This much is clear in his own ultimately frustrated desire for the SS Warrant Officer to be 'invaded' by the beauty of the beech. This passage draws attention to the value of phenomenological immersion, in urging a sublime encounter with nature as a fundamentally ethical response to the 'limit' event of the Holocaust. It should, of course, be clarified at this point that these two instances of sublime engagement – that of Semprun and that of the visitor in his wake – take their own

29 Although it is often assumed that the tree was originally left intact in respect for the memory of this legendary literary figure, as Semprun's Goethe suggests, (also see, for example, Farmer 1995, 100) the Buchenwald Tour Guide suggests that "this was due to the fact that the SS had the tendency to see a symbol in the oak rather than any sentimental reminiscences of Goethe" (*BMT* 33). According to Thomas Lekan, throughout the history of German environmental preservation, historic oaks were among the natural features that became "designated as natural monuments", in line with priorities that "placed the cultural landscapes of home, not the sublime places of the distant wilderness, at the centre of environmental perception and care" (2004, 15). Indeed, the oak left standing at Buchenwald had been marked on maps of the Ettersburg as the 'Thick Oak' (*BMT* 33), suggesting an existing status as a significant landmark. One contemporary Buchenwald guide books suggests that the tree was significant for the camp prisoners, representing "unspoilt nature" and "the positive world" outside the camp (*BGE* 33). Gorra speculates that this "bit of greenery" could, in fact, have sustained or mocked the prisoners, depending on their perspectives (2004, 16).

respective forms according to the knowledge and experience that mediates the experience. Whilst postmodern re-appraisal of the sublime, particularly in the work of Jean-François Lyotard ([1983] 1988), has posited that the Holocaust itself was an instance of history as sublime and thus beyond either representation or comprehension,³⁰ I am wary of following such logic; it liberates us from facing the fact that history's atrocities were perpetrated and justified by human beings, legitimising a mystification of an event "we dare not understand, because we fear that it may be all too understandable, all too continuous with what we are –human, all too human" (Rose 1996, 43).³¹ I envision instead the possibility for an alternative form of sublime experience, formulated on individual representations and similarly individual responses; subscribing not to the categorisation of the Holocaust as a historical instance of the sublime, but to the sublime's potential as a subjective experience based on universal and transhistorical stimuli. It is in finding common ground that we might break down destructive distance such as that which existed between the SS Warrant Officer and 'No. 44904' in 1944.

As I have also suggested above, Semprun's precise selection of the literary material he would take with him on his return to Buchenwald implies the value of framing experience textually. In order to better elucidate the ecocritical sensibilities inherent to the experience of landscape I see to be advocated in his work, a particular reading of Celan's 'Todtnauberg' – a text Semprun himself chose to structure his own experience of return – is worthy of scrutiny. Bate's interpretation of the poem is based on the fundamental premise that, whereas "Heidegger gains his sense of identity from his forest dwelling-place", "Celan, the archetypal wandering Jew, finds no home" (2000, 271). He presents a microcosm of Holocaust territory via these two figures, in which the Nazis' claims on the soil refuses the claims of others. Indeed, the poem is generally assumed to be based on a visit made by Celan to Heidegger's cabin in the Black Forest in 1967; the poet's attempt, as "an outsider", to "disrupt the *Heimat* of the philosopher" (Rapaport 1997, 126). Bate focuses on a fragment of the poem concerning orchids ["woodland sward, unlevelled,

³⁰Karyn Ball has described Lyotard's elevation of the Holocaust's "moral impact above experience" to "an 'absolute otherness' that transcends imagination" (Ball 2008, 123). Given Lyotard's casting of the Holocaust as a postmodern sublime trope, as Ball points out, it becomes difficult to defend his work from the accusation that he posits 'Auschwitz' as "*a priori* incomprehensible", and that in casting 'Auschwitz' itself as a metonym he encourages us to elide the specificity of the historical/political context in which the Holocaust occurred (Ball 2008, 140).

³¹ Indeed the postmodern sublime arguably constitutes what Rose calls 'Holocaust piety', casting the Holocaust as both ineffable and beyond representation and resulting in a conflation of "the search for a decent response to those brutally destroyed [...] with the quite different response called for in the face of the 'inhuman' capacity for such destruction" (1996, 43). Gross and Hoffman's work on the reception of Holocaust testimonial literature, as discussed in the introduction, describe the logical outcome of this over-extension: "since most victims of the Holocaust did not understand what was happening to them or why, contemporary students of the Holocaust should not try to understand either" (Gross and Hoffman 2004, 40).

/ orchid and orchid, single, / course stuff, later, clear in passing”] growing outside Heidegger’s cabin.

Heidegger made an appalling error of judgement when in the 1950s he compared the mechanization of the modern agriculture [...] to the mechanization of mass extermination in the Nazi death camps. [This] served only to give the impression of a Heidegger who still refused to grasp the unique evils of the Holocaust. But when Celan, a Jew and a child of the camps, writes of orchids he invites us to reflect on the sacredness of many diverse forms of life. He permits the comparison which says: without Jews the human race would have been diminished, without orchids the earth would be diminished. (Bate 2000, 272)

Celan found no earth with which he could dwell. Just over two years after the poem was published, he threw himself to his own death by water. But the orchids which he saw [...] which he memorialized in the poem [and] which we imaginatively reanimate when we read the poem, effected for him and may effect for us an unconcealment. [...] Celan’s kind of poetry opens itself to many readings. It does not admit solution or fixed interpretation. What matters is not the conclusion which we draw about the orchid, but that we are made to attend to the orchid. The poem makes us ask the question concerning the orchid, the question concerning the earth. And that in itself is enough of a beginning. (ibid., 272-3)

Semprun’s work, like that of Celan, opens itself to many readings. Just as digging into memory does not exhaust it, his mnemonic representations do not pin meanings down. As he listens for bird song and immerses himself in an encounter with the beech, he draws attention to the unique and eternal wind, snow, and sunshine of the Ettersburg slopes. These environmental tropes that structure his experience and memory are still part of the Buchenwald landscape today. They are there for us to encounter, just as they were for Goethe, the SS guards, and Semprun himself. What matters in this case, I would suggest, is not the conclusions we may draw about these particular tropes and forms, but to attend to them; to look at and listen to the world.

I referred earlier in this chapter to Smith’s contention that an immersion in nature is an “intimate participatory [practice] that draw us closer to others [...] giving us a feeling for and an understanding of our relational emplacement within [the] world” (Smith 2005, 219). It is with this focus on relational emplacement in mind that I suggest a parallel between such immersion and LaCapra’s discussion about the role of “empathy in understanding, and its complex relation to objectification and dialogic exchange” (2001, 102). LaCapra’s work, as discussed in the introduction, situates this relation specifically in terms of contemplating the past: “Empathy is bound up with a transference relation to the past, and is arguably an affective aspect of understanding which both limits objectification and exposes the self to involvement or implication in the past, its actors and its victims”. It is on this foundation that he concludes desirable empathy to involve

“not full identification but what might be termed empathic unsettlement in the face of traumatic events, their perpetrators and their victims” (2001, 102). As such, I would argue that relational emplacement is fundamental to achieving this balance between full identification and totalizing objectification.

This point draws attention back to the premise with which I began this chapter: that Baer’s notion that a survivor’s experience is necessarily “*all too much*” their own, and that any attempts to inhabit their world – that of the camps – “through empathic identification and imaginary projection via transferential bonds, [is] illusory at best” requires revision. Semprun’s testimony, I have suggested here, does not render his experience “too much” his own; as he himself questions:

Has one really experienced something that one is unable to describe, something whose minimum truth one is unable to construct in a meaningful way – and so make communicable? Doesn’t living, in the full sense of the term, mean transferring one’s personal experience into consciousness – that is to say, into memorized experience that is capable at the same time of integration into the future? [...] The history – the stories, the narratives, the memories, the eyewitness accounts in which it survives – lives on. The text, the very texture, the tissue of life. (*WBS* 39)

In concluding this chapter, I propose that the landscape of the Buchenwald memorial is transformed for readers of Semprun’s testimonial literature, just as the meaning of the space was originally mediated and textualised, for Semprun himself, by a German literary legacy. Through a phenomenological appreciation of space, which, as I have argued, can be related to a sense of subjection to the sublime, the contemporary subject can begin to approach the task of confronting the difficulties of attaining a shared experience so inherent to empathic unsettlement. And in this model, it is the *attempt* to encounter the past, rather than the achievement of a vicarious sense of illusory identification with its victims that renders the subject an ethical participator in the essential work of memory demanded by the atrocities of the past.

Throughout this extensive chapter, I have attempted to cover much ground. By its very nature, the attempt to contemplate the intimate mechanics of how ‘memory’ comes about is, and should be, complex and involved. In a very straightforward sense, I have tried to comprehend the way a site appeared to one person, and consider whether another person visiting it might see it, to a limited extent, in the same way. There is no doubt that reading what other people have witnessed and felt in relation to a place can change the way that place is encountered by the next person; that is the fundamental facet of travel literature. I have already expressed an intrinsic disbelief in the idea that any one person

may completely identify with the suffering of another, or indeed with any experience another person may have. However, the experience of place can nonetheless come to constitute shared ground; because, although landscape is constantly undergoing a metamorphic process, features within it remain stable enough to provide points of comparison across multiple generations. As I have discussed here, the slopes of the Ettersburg have been the backdrop to a multitude of experiences, both real and imagined. From the Dukes of Saxony to the contemporary tourist, the Thuringian forests outside Weimar have continued to attract visitors for hundreds of years. The landscape itself does not ‘tell’ anything – none of this history is self-evident. It is our knowledge of history that changes our perception of place, and I firmly believe that it can be the testimonial narrative that animates landscapes of atrocity for the eye of the reader. In the case of Semprun, we are presented with Buchenwald as palimpsest; an example of how “literary techniques of reading historically, intertextually, constructively and deconstructively at the same time can be woven into our understanding of [memorials] as lived spaces that shape collective imaginaries” (Huysen 2003, 7). Whilst Buchenwald and Weimar, like Semprun’s Goethe, may have come to exist in one sense as *lieu de mémoire*, this chapter has also demonstrated how much the memorial landscape of the camp and its meanings are constantly involved in evolutionary processes shaped by a variety of literature and the participatory involvement of visitors.

* * *

I first visited Buchenwald in April 2008. My visit was not planned to coincide with the anniversary of the camp’s liberation so central in Semprun’s work, it was merely a convenient time for me to be in Germany with a few days to spare. It was early in April, the wind was biting, and the snow was still clinging to the Ettersburg slopes. But spring was in the wings: crocuses and violets were poking their noses through the snow-covered leaf mulch and in many places the snow itself was little more than slushy mud. It would be sentimental to trace out every part of that site that resonated with Semprun’s narratives. It would also be out of place, because despite the emphasis throughout this chapter on both Semprun’s work and the cultural history of Weimar and the Ettersburg landscape, the point of this argument is that everyone takes something with them when they experience a site – that it is, and can be, different for everyone, and that is the beauty and capacity of

spatial experience. However, I will mention one place where I stopped for a while and thought about Semprun and his stories of Buchenwald.

There is an avenue of trees that leads up to the main gate of the camp. Today, this avenue is not the first stop on a tour of the camp, as it is now preceded by the museum shop, canteen, information centre and various other necessary tourist amenities. I walked along this avenue and two of Semprun's stories came into my mind. The first was the story of the beech that he pretended he thought was Goethe's tree in order to avoid a beating from the SS, which I have already discussed in some detail. The other is infinitely less peaceful, one of the few passages in Semprun's work about Buchenwald in which he re-tells in minute detail the 'suffering and horror' he had always been so reluctant to avoid in his representations. The story involves the arrival of a group of children from a Polish camp in the last winter of the war. He seems compelled to tell the story for the sake of the children, although it had "lain buried" in his memory "like some mortal treasure" until he wrote *The Long Voyage* (LV 162). He stands on the road leading to the camp:

it was by this road which we had arrived [...] and when I leave I shall leave by this road. It was here that I witnessed the arrival of the slow, staggering column of Polish Jews, in the middle of that winter which has just ended [...]

That was the day I saw the Jewish children die.

[...]

For days, for weeks on end, in our camp not far from Weimar, in the beech forest above Weimar, we had seen these convoys of evacuated prisoners arriving. The trees were covered with snow, the road was covered with snow, and in the quarantine camp you sank down into the snow up to your knees. [...] One day, in one of the cars where there were some survivors, when they separated the pile of frozen bodies, which were often stuck together by their rigid, frozen clothing, they discovered a group of Jewish children. Suddenly, in the snow on the station platform, amid the snow-covered trees, there was a group of Jewish children, about fifteen in all, gazing about with an air of amazement, looking at the corpses piled up as the trees of trunks already stripped of their bark are piled along the side of the roads, waiting to be taken somewhere else, looking at the trees and the snow on the trees, looking like children do.

[...]

the S.S. loosed their dogs and began to hit the children with their clubs, to make them run, so that the hunt along the avenue could get underway [...] And the children were running [...] their legs were moving awkwardly, slowly and jerkily, as in the old silent films, as in nightmares when you run with all your might and can't move a step and the thing pursuing you is going to overtake you, and does overtake you and you awake in a cold sweat, and that thing, that pack of dogs and S.S., running behind the Jewish children, soon engulfed the weakest among them, the ones who were only eight years old, perhaps the ones who no longer had the strength to move, who were knocked down, trampled on,

clubbed to the ground, who lay there on the avenue, their skinny disjointed bodies marking the progress of that hunt, of that pack swarming over them. And soon there were only two left, one big one small, both having lost their caps in their mad race, and their eyes were shining like splinters of glass in their grey faces, and the little one began to fall behind, the S.S. were howling behind them and then the dogs began to howl too, the smell of blood was driving them mad, and then the bigger of the two children slowed his pace to take the hand of the smaller, who was already stumbling, and together they covered a few more yards, the older one's right hand clasping the smaller younger one's left hand, running straight ahead till the blows of the clubs felled them and, together they dropped, their faces to the ground, their hands clasped for all eternity. The S.S. collected their dogs, who were growling, and walked back in the opposite direction, firing a bullet point blank into the head of each child who had fallen on the broad avenue, beneath the empty gaze of the Hitlerian eagle.s (LV 163-166)

I remembered this part of *The Long Voyage* when I visited Buchenwald and walked down that road whilst keeping one eye out for Semprun's beech. It has remained, for me, a piece of testimony that never loses its emotional affectivity through repeated reading. Just as Semprun struggled with the memory of the way the children died on the road, I struggled with the attempt to comprehend his memories. For, as Semprun admitted, to "tell about all that death" would take "several lifetimes". There is no way in which one person can empathise to the extent that they entirely identify with the suffering of another; but on that day, I was, perhaps standing in the best possible place to try, just as Semprun's writing constitutes his own necessarily never-ending attempts to tell. And as far as this argument is concerned, the ethical significance lies not in the result, but in the fundamental nature of the attempt.

Chapter Two

Babi Yar

*Stop! – for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be; –
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!*

George Byron (1841, III)

This chapter examines two landscapes 6000 miles apart, both of which serve as memorials to a Holocaust massacre committed at Babi Yar [tr. *Grandmother's Ravine*] in Kiev, Ukraine: the ravine and the Babi Yar Park in Denver, Colorado. Each of these transcontinental co-ordinates in contemporary Ukrainian Holocaust memory is the result of a dialogue between distinctive cultural groups. Accordingly, these places direct attention to the various transcultural affinities and tensions that have alternately driven or hindered their development as commemorative landscapes. Levy and Sznajder's thesis on Holocaust memory in the global age urges us to "uncover memoryscapes that correspond to emerging modes of identification" (2006, 2); this chapter takes up this challenge, and in doing so attempts an evaluation of ethical and political implications of the identificatory modes these particular memoryscapes reveal – and also those they refuse.

Literary texts play a key role in my analysis of each site. Testimony from those who lived in Ukraine up to and during the Holocaust suggests that the landscape underwent a

radical change during this period, rendering soil and topographical elements potentially powerfully affective as commemorative tropes in Ukrainian memory consciousness. I go on to suggest that such testimony, and its remediation in fiction, played a central role in communicating the events at Babi Yar to an international audience, ultimately leading to the creation of the corresponding memorial park in the United States. The park notably makes use of some of the same topographical tropes that emerge from the literature discussed, and in doing so, I will argue, presents a very different view of the natural world to that found in testimonial material, as its designers re-inscribe a reliance on nature as a regenerative and restorative medium.

From September 1941-1943, Babi Yar was used by Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* squads as a place of slaughter and mass burial. In excess of one hundred thousand people, including Jews, Roma and Soviet prisoners of war were killed here, their bodies burnt and their ashes buried in the ravine. 33,771 of these people were shot during an initial massacre over two days (29-30th September) in 1941, constituting the largest isolated killing operation of World War II. Whilst Chapter 1 was primarily concerned with memory in place, this chapter will consider ways in which memory travels – away from place, perhaps, but according to the specific geographical features determined *by* that place.

As in East Germany, political regimes in Ukraine have had a significant impact on the representation of the Holocaust in public space. In both countries, the collapse of European Communism in 1991 has had a decisive and clearly visible impact. Like Buchenwald, Babi Yar lies on the outskirts of a city, on the periphery of everyday activity. However, whilst Buchenwald became a place of commemoration immediately after the camp's liberation in 1945, Babi Yar remained an unmarked chasm in the earth for many years. Due to the political marginalization of the Holocaust in Ukraine, no official commemorative monuments appeared at the site until 1976. Whilst Buchenwald has been used to exemplify the multi-faceted ways in which a landscape can be seen to remember, in comparison Babi Yar has for decades been an example of what appears to be its amnesia. Between the end of the war and the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was little recognition that the events of the Holocaust had even touched Ukrainian territory. Even after 1991, when the political situation became more conducive to an exploration of the Ukrainian Holocaust, its memory has been significantly marginalised; the focus of official commemorative activity has instead been the Great Famine, or Holodomor, which took

place in 1932-3.¹ Millions of Ukrainians died of starvation and related diseases during this period. Whilst historians argue over exact figures as well as exact causes (the official status of the Holodomor as a genocide is still debated), there is little doubt that the Soviet government under Stalin were partially culpable for the extent of the famine, and none that they later denied it had ever happened (Ellman 2007, 663-693).

The first part of the chapter will explore Babi Yar itself within the Kiev landscape, revealing the impact of the faltering history of Ukrainian Holocaust commemorative activity on the site of the massacre. This activity is only now beginning to occur at Babi Yar on a scale comparable to Holocaust sites in other European countries. Rather than positing the Holocaust as a unique event in Ukrainian history, I then deliberately discuss the years 1941-5 within a broader context, with a particular emphasis on the intimate relationship between the nation's people and their land. The analysis focuses in particular on the years immediately preceding the Holocaust, during which this relationship was significantly disrupted by the Holodomor. In a scrutiny of testimony from Ukrainian sources I demonstrate a pronounced experiential parallel between the Holodomor and the Holocaust. This analysis leads me to suggest that it may be possible to productively dilute the competitiveness which has come to characterise the relationship between the Holocaust and the Holodomor in Ukrainian memory discourses today by considering the various individual memories involved according to a multidirectional logic; that is, by acknowledging the "ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing" to which such memories are subject (Rothberg 2009, 3).

Moving on to consider how the memory of Babi Yar travelled to Denver, the mobilization of testimony in fiction is shown to have "mediated" and "remediated" (see Erll and Rigney, 2009) the story of Babi Yar at a transcultural level which can be understood to give readers an increased sense of engagement with the events that took place at Babi Yar in 1942. Thus literature in this chapter will be cast as a form of memorial displacement which is more often productive than destructive. Through this mediation, I argue, the site of the Babi Yar massacre has come to capture imaginations across many nations and cultures. As with Buchenwald's literary legacy, the representations will be shown to shape memorial discourses; but instead of facilitating a form of site-specific commemorative engagement as explored in the case of Buchenwald via the work of Semprun, the literature surrounding Babi Yar takes the reader on a journey that leads

¹ The word *Holodomor* is based on the Ukrainian words *holod* (starvation) and *moryty* (to kill or induce suffering) (K. Bradley Penuel, Matthew Statler, J. Geoffrey Golson 2011, 304). Thus the etymological similarity of the terms *Holodomor* and Holocaust is superficial.

away from the original space to arrive in Denver. The analysis of the Babi Yar Park discusses the geographical displacement and de-territorialization of memory which informed its inauguration. Originally landscaped in the 1970s and 1980s, the site of the park bears a topographical similarity to Babi Yar itself, and integrates elements which notably reinforce the tropes identified in related literature in the preceding section, relying heavily on the signification of soil and topography as vessels of memory. The park in Denver fell into relative disuse in the decade after its inauguration (Young 1994, 296). It is now being re-developed and re-orientated. The design proposed for this new landscape retains many existing elements but, as I will argue, also notably engages with contemporary discourses around commemorative politics, focusing particularly on visitor engagement and the contextualization of the original massacre within an international history of genocide. Rhetoric around the re-development is particularly rooted in forging links between the Holocaust and the war on terror, and thus prompts an interrogation of certain ethical issues and implications raised by comparative, transcultural models of remembering and commemoration.

As the new project in Denver gets underway, the status of the original site in Kiev remains controversial. In concluding the chapter, I return to this landscape. As previously noted, the Holodomor has somewhat dominated Ukrainian memory discourses and commemorative activity since 1991, whilst the Holocaust has been comparatively marginalised. In 2010 tentative council plans to build a hotel on the Babi Yar site to accommodate soccer fans for the 2012 European Championships were leaked to the press, prompting national and international outrage, particularly from Jewish groups (Beaumont, 2009). The plans were withdrawn. In April 2011, the council announced a competition for the design of a memorial complex for the Babi Yar site. Although little has been heard since of this competition, the reinvigoration of interest in the site that occurred in Kiev, and throughout Jewish organisations worldwide, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the massacre has resulted in a new announcement: that two Holocaust museums are to be built in Kiev, one at the Babi Yar site (Shefler 2011). These plans, and their implications for the memorial discourse surrounding Babi Yar and the Ukrainian Holocaust, will be considered in this final section. I return to the suggestion that an increased recognition of the Holocaust within this agenda may not necessarily result in a decreased acknowledgement of Holodomor as central to Ukrainian memory; rather, in focusing on certain commonalities of Holocaust and Holodomor experiences, it may be possible to resist the somewhat competitive logic that has characterised recent national memorial discourse, and replace it with something more productive and democratic. Arguably, such

a multidirectional approach may be more appropriately employed here than in the Babi Yar park in Denver, where the attempt to integrate the Ukrainian Holocaust within the context of the War on Terror raises troubling questions about the conflation of comparatively unrelated historical events. In both cases, I will be asking if it is possible for a form of genuinely “differentiated solidarity” to emerge from dialogical commemorative endeavours; that is, whether they enable us “to distinguish different histories of violence while still understanding them as implicated in each other and as making moral demands for recognition that deserve consideration” (Rothberg, in Moses and Rothberg, forthcoming).²

² Originally employed by Iris Young to describe a democratic form of local governance (2000, 155-178), Rothberg appropriates the term differentiated solidarity here to articulate a potentially desirable element of transcultural memory discourse.

II.I. Marginalised Memory

Babi Yar, Kiev: microcosm of the Holocaust in Ukraine

Babi Yar lies on the outskirts of Kiev within a large public park. The exact position of the original ravine is no longer discernible; several ravines shape the landscape, which constitutes at least a square kilometre of woodland, lawns and paths. There are two distinct sections: one contains nearly all the officially inaugurated Babi Yar memorials including a central monument to slain Soviet citizens, a vast bronze sculpture group of oversized figures looming over this half of the park (see figures 2.1 and 2.2). Eight other memorials to various groups and individuals have since been added here³ (see figure 2.3). One might easily assume the broad, sweeping ravine at the centre of this space to be the original site of the Babi Yar massacre. The landscape aesthetic in this area is more formal and manicured in appearance (see Figure 2.4) than in the other half, which is partially quite densely wooded, and to casual observation looks much as any other large city park (see Figure 2.5). A simple stone Menorah is one of the few memorials to be found in this second half of the park (see Figures 2.6), and this is rumoured to be much closer to the original ravine than the Soviet sculpture group (although there is no way one could know this without researching the subject in advance), and indeed there is an overgrown ravine just south of the Menorah (see Figure 2.7), which can be reached from the other half of the park by walking along a path named 'the road of grief'. As one landscape, the park is a somewhat incoherent space. Each memorial bears little stylistic resemblance to those around it, and certainly until the 70th anniversary, there has been scant evidence of any attempt to provide an overall view of the landscape's history or of how, or exactly where, so many people of diverse cultural groups came to lose their lives here.⁴

The incoherence of Babi Yar's landscape can be related in part to its slow and fractious development as a memoryscape, which corresponds to the larger context of Ukrainian Holocaust memory. As noted in the overview of this chapter, of the approximate 4 million Ukrainians and Jews killed during the Holocaust in Ukraine, up to a hundred and fifty thousand were killed and buried in the vast mass grave at Babi Yar. As in other

³ Others in this area include monuments to Soviet citizens, prisoners of war, and officers of the Soviet Army executed by German Fascists at Babi Yar, to a 'Hero of Ukraine', the Kyiv underground worker and revolutionary T. Markus, and a separate monument to executed children; and various monument crosses, for priests executed (shot) for praying for the protection of the Motherland from Fascists, and monuments to members of OUN (the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists) and the Ukrainian poet O. Teliha.

⁴ Signage has recently been added on the Northern edge of the park to show visitors where each official memorial is (in Ukrainian only). Some temporary banners were also positioned at intervals over the roads around the park in September 2011, announcing the 70th year since the massacre.



Figure 2.1: Soviet-era sculpture group within the surrounding landscape



Figure 2.2: Soviet-era sculpture detail



Figure 2.3: Cross to commemorate Ukrainian Nationalists shot at Babi Yar, inaugurated 1992



Figure 2.4: landscaping near the Soviet sculpture

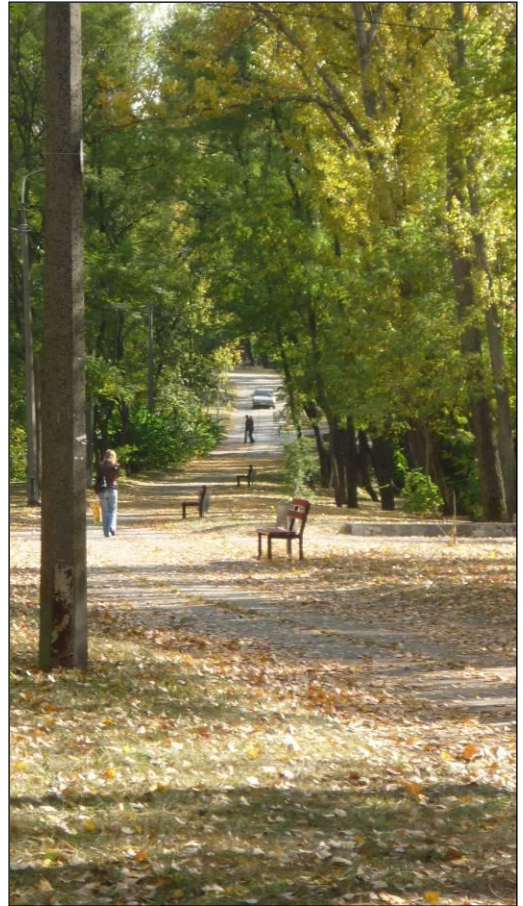


Figure 2.5: Wooded area with paths, leading to the Menorah



Figure 2.6: The Menorah within the surrounding landscape

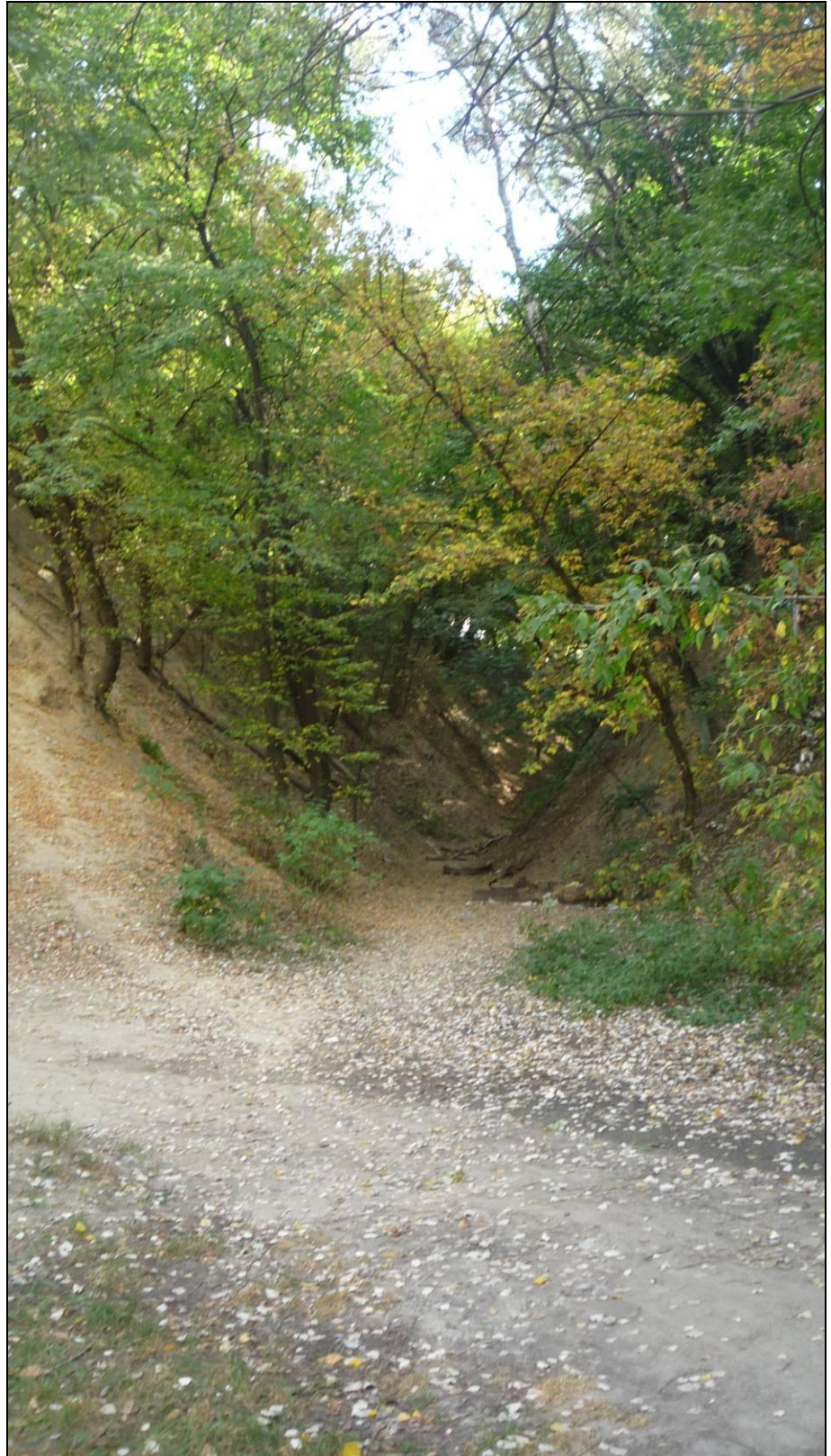


Figure 2.7: Ravine to the south of the Menorah

locations throughout the country, victims were shot and their bodies thrown in a freshly dug pit. Many elements that characterise the landscape of the Ukraine Holocaust can be observed at Babi Yar; it is in some respects a microcosm of the larger topography of the country as a whole. In Patrick Desbois' account,⁵ the full impact of this campaign begins to emerge. "The landscape of Ukraine, village after village, east to west, was transforming itself under my eyes into an ocean of exterminations [...] The horrors of the Holocaust were not necessarily the same from one place to another, but they did unfortunately cover the whole country without exception" (2008, 147). His narrative is not one of isolated atrocities but of an apparently endless landscape of burnt bodies, offering a powerful image of nation space as cemetery: "I imagine that if we could open all the mass graves we would have to take aerial photos of the whole of Ukraine. A mass cemetery of anonymous pits into which men, women, and children were thrown. Not a camp but a country of graves" (2008, 178).⁶

As elsewhere in Ukraine, commemoration of the Holocaust at Babi Yar preceding the fall of communism in 1991 was notable mainly in its absence, reflecting the pervasive silence about the Holocaust in Ukrainian territory under the Soviet government. Indeed, the concept of the 'Holocaust in Ukraine' has existed only on the margins of academic perception for many years, and in some respects this trend persists.⁷ The complex and troubling history of Ukrainian anti-Semitism and complicity in Nazi atrocities, which for many years has been elided in national discourses, may be in part responsible for the long delays between the events of the Holocaust in Ukraine and their commemoration in public space.⁸ Brandon and Lower also note that for a long time, and for understandable reasons,

⁵ The French Catholic priest Patrick Desbois has contributed significantly to an improved understanding of this period, and in the section to come I integrate several of the many testimonies he collected from survivors, as well as certain observations these have allowed him to make about Ukrainian experience of the Holocaust.

⁶ Desbois' team excavated only one of the graves in full, in order to pre-empt accusations from Holocaust deniers.

⁷ Brandon and Lower provide a historical explanation for this: Ukrainian territory was divided in 1941 and new zones were created, all of which were associated with other nation states: the Transnistrian zone with Romania, Transcarpathia with Hungary and Galicia with Poland – these distinctions are reflected in the way the official history of the Holocaust has been written (Brandon and Lower 2008, 2). Thus events which took place on Ukraine soil have in many instances been subsumed into alternative narratives, and considerable linguistic challenges often faced researchers attempting to provide a cohesive overview (ibid., 6). Furthermore a paucity of sources existed from which scholars could glean information about events in Ukraine compared to other territories, particularly until the aforementioned Soviet Union regional archives were made available in 1991 (Brandon and Lower 2008, 6; Shapiro 2008, viii). The full scale of the *Einsatzgruppen* shooting operations that characterised the Ukrainian Holocaust only began to emerge after these archives were opened.

⁸ Martin Dean, for example, records the significant role played by Ukrainian police in the implementation of the Holocaust (2003, 101-102). Ukrainian pogroms against Jews were frequent in 1941, in some cases even before German soldiers arrived in the area, motivated by a desire to acquire Jewish property and wealth (Dean 2003, 20). From September when the initial Babi Yar massacre took place, "numerous surviving Jews were reported and handed over to the Security Police by local inhabitants, the Wehrmacht, the civil administration and especially the local police posts in and around Kiev" (ibid., 61). Elie Wiesel (2011) has attributed both official and non-official silence on the subject of Jewish suffering after Babi Yar to Soviet denial and discomfort over the original lack of intervention by the citizens of Kiev during the massacre itself.

interest in the Holocaust was characterised by what they dub ‘Auschwitz Syndrome’ – “many historians, philosophers, and political scientists as well as the general public focused on the killing centres and methods used to deport Jews” to the death camps; “country and regional studies had to wait” (2008, 6). Ukraine was very much in the latter category.⁹ Paul Shapiro, director of the Centre for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the USHMM has stated that the spaces of killing in Ukraine, unlike the concentration and death camps elsewhere “offer up none of the architectural design elements that shape the iconic imagery of Holocaust memorial sites worldwide” (2008, viii). This is not to say, however, that the Ukrainian Holocaust did not result in a landscape replete with perceived symbolic significance; Ukrainian soil, rather than Ukrainian architecture, provides an alternative Holocaust memoryscape to many of those in other European countries. In both rural and urban areas of Ukraine, the traces of the mass killings that took place here between 1941 and 1943 are faint, but the evidence lies very close to the surface.

Russian writer Victor Nekrasov reveals how low a priority Babi Yar’s commemoration was in Kiev immediately after war when, apart from “some suspicious characters who crawled along the ravine’s bottom in search of either diamonds or golden dental crowns”, people “faced tasks more important than Babi Yar”; it became “simply a rubbish heap. A small lopsided post with the laconic inscription ‘It is forbidden to pile rubbish here, fine – 300 roubles’ did not in the least prevent local residents from getting rid of no longer useful old beds, tin cans, and other rubbish” (in Tumarkin 2010, 7). Nekrasov was among the first to attempt to raise public awareness of Babi Yar’s neglect and wrote against plans to build a sports stadium at the site in 1959 (Tumarkin 2010, 7). The stadium was never built, but the local authorities embarked on a comprehensive project to wipe “the good-for-nothing ravine” from “the surface of the earth” by constructing a dam to flood it. The dam, which later collapsed, released “a great billow of liquid mud around ten metres high [...] from the mouth of Babi Yar. [...] There were thousands of victims [...] those who lived at ground level were killed instantly” (Tumarkin 2010, 8).

⁹ There were concentration camps in Ukraine territory, but they have not captured the popular imagination of the public or extensive interest by researchers. Janowska, a concentration camp in L’viv (Lwow/Lemberg/Lvov), has been described as “a death camp by any reasonable understanding of the phrase”, although there were no gas chambers built there (Winstone 2010, 382). Regular selections took place at Janowska, and many deportees were shot in a ravine to the north of the camp. Between 100,000 and 200,000 prisoners, many Jewish, were killed at the camp over the course of two years (1941-3). The camp is still a prison today, which may go some way to explaining why there is no official commemoration at Janowska, although a privately funded memorial stands at the northern ravine where shootings took place (Winstone 2010, 383). Various attempts have been made to research other Ukraine concentration camps, but for the most part there is either very little left to see or the sites are still being used as prisons or military bases; see for example Desbois account of Rawa-Ruska (2008, 27-37).

As Tumarkin further remarks, the “idea of the curse or the revenge of Babi Yar became understandably widespread” in Kiev after the flood (2010, 9). A similar description appears in the testimonial accounts of Anatoli Kuznetsov, a resident in Kiev from his birth in 1929 until his defection from the Soviet Union in 1969. I will discuss Kuznetsov’s role in mediating memories of the Holocaust in Ukraine and Babi Yar in particular in the second half of this chapter. On the subject of the mudslide, he notes that “[t]he phrase ‘Babi Yar takes its revenge’ was much on people’s lips” (474). This sense of place as cursed, as will be discussed, can be seen as a reflection of local responses to other mass graves across the rest of Ukraine. Also in 1961, the Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko wrote the poem ‘Babi Yar’, with its frequently quoted opening line: “Over Babi Yar there are no monuments”. Both a memorial in itself and an explicit condemnation of the Soviet authorities, Yevtushenko’s poem was to play an important role in creating international awareness of both Babi Yar itself and continuing anti-Semitism in Ukraine in this period. I return to the question of how Babi Yar’s memory came to travel through literary texts in the second half of this chapter.

In 1967, five years after the dam collapsed – and twenty-five years after the massacre – thousands of people attended an event, which appears to have occurred spontaneously at the site (Kuznetsov 1972, 475) in the first significant attempt by a large group to mark the events that took place at Babi Yar in 1941. Local authorities installed the first ever official marker at the site two weeks later: a granite rock which read ‘A monument will be erected at this site’. Kuznetsov suggests that this was put in place simply to show any foreign visitors who might have heard about the spontaneous meeting and who would expect Babi Yar to be marked in some way: “if [they] insist, they can be taken along and shown the stone plaque, which will have some flowers lain around it in advance. Once the visitors have departed the flowers are removed” (1972, 475). Upon visiting Kiev in 1973, Elie Wiesel described the complete lack of commemoration at the actual site as rendering Kiev itself a “city of horror” where the streets were permeated with a paradoxical sense of “nothing and everything” (2011, 28). In 1977 – ten years after the appearance of the granite marker – an official monument was finally erected, eliding the issue of ‘Jewish’ persecution by simply “invoking the theme of slain Soviet citizens” (Tumarkin 2010, 9). Just as was the case in East Germany, the overall narrative – both at Babi Yar and across Ukraine – was one of a violent, tragic but ultimately triumphant struggle against fascism, focusing particularly on heroic communist figures. As at Buchenwald, Jewish victims were missing from the discourse and the landscape. Even when the stone Menorah finally appeared at Babi Yar in 1991, historian Stefan Rohdewald

argues that it served only to “[symbolise] the marginality of Jewish remembrance of the Shoah in Ukrainian society, rather than its incorporation into the national framework” (2008, 176). This observation is borne out by the striking difference between the simplicity of the Menorah and the aforementioned ostentatious memorial to Soviet citizens. Rohdewald suggests that such marginalisation also characterises recent efforts to include Jewish victims of the Holocaust in Ukraine’s commemorative landscape as a whole, despite an evolution in research on the subject since 1991 and the mandatory inclusion of the Holocaust in school programmes laid down by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education in 2001.

[L]inking the murder of Ukraine’s Jews with Ukrainian national history remains a taboo in most public debates [...] Ukrainian history textbooks [confirm] this: the tragedy is linked to German anti-Semitism and extermination camps in Poland, and is “silent” about the death of Jews in the territory of today’s Ukraine. Hence, a strategy to externalise the Holocaust can be observed. (Rohdewald 2008, 17)

In 2008, director of the Ukrainian Centre for Holocaust Studies Anatoly Podol's'kyi condemned the Ukrainian government for their lack of interest in “promoting a discussion of Jewish life and the Holocaust in Ukraine”, practically resulting in a failure to maintain the few memorials that have appeared or to provide any support – “moral, institutional, or financial” – for the few independent institutions now working to keep Ukraine Holocaust memory alive (Podol's'kyi 2008, 5). Reviewing the presence of the Holocaust in Ukrainian school and education programmes, Podol's'kyi echoes Rohdewald in perceiving a peripheral focus at best due to “the subordination of academia to political interests” (2008, 4).

Thus whilst the fall of communism in 1991 facilitated the commemoration of Jewish suffering in Ukraine, the memorial landscape’s development was yet impacted by factors aside from direct prohibition. As noted, the memorial topography at Babi Yar now includes monuments to a number of victimised groups, but the sports proposal of 2009 – echoing that of 50 years before (Tumarkin 2010, 8) – suggests a continued suppression of Holocaust memory in Ukraine.¹⁰ In 2009 a city council proposal to build a hotel on the site as part of a larger plan for the construction of 28 new hotels to accommodate thousands of visitors expected to visit Kiev for the 2012 European Football Championships was leaked to the press by an opposed council member. It sparked immediate international controversy, unsurprisingly most heated among Jewish groups (BBC News 2009), but was

¹⁰ Whilst further investigation, certainly into sources beyond those made available in the media, would be required to determine reliable details about the 2009 hotel proposal, it is at least suggestive in light of Rohdewald’s argument about continuing Ukrainian externalisation and marginalisation of the Holocaust.

publicly vetoed by the mayor of Kiev on the 68th anniversary of the massacre (in Chernovetsky 2009). Podol's'kyi, furthermore, notes a recently emerging competitive framework of Ukrainian memory, generated by a refusal “to perceive [...] national history” as one of “various cultures”:

The ‘other’ tends to be excluded and viewed as something alien. Apparently it is more comfortable to talk about ‘us’ and ‘others’, for example about ‘our Great Famine’ and about ‘the others’ Holocaust’. A certain narrative is taking shape, in which the Holocaust does not appear [...] in recent times, the Great Famine in Ukraine is increasingly being called ‘the Ukrainian Holocaust.’ (2008, 4)

Rohdewald, too, argues that the Holocaust is frequently used as “a rhetorical framework” for the Holodomor (2008, 178), and Andreas Kappeler suggests that the Great Famine became “the most important new element of Ukrainian collective memory” in post-Soviet historiography (2009, 58-59). A necessarily brief survey of memorial activity instigated by official Ukrainian institutions in the recent past is suggestive of a similar tendency. The Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINM), in its first incarnation from 2005-2010, has been key in bringing the Holodomor to public attention and was instrumental in facilitating the legal recognition that it constituted a genocide against the Ukrainian people.¹¹ There can be little doubt that in recapturing the memory of the Great Famine, the UINM amongst others has performed long overdue work of much value. 2008 was recognized by the Ukrainian government as ‘Holodomor Victims Remembrance Year’ and at this date plans for a substantial memorial to commemorate the tragedy were announced. The UINM administrated the competition for designs for the new space and oversaw the project to completion. The result is a monumental “Candle of Memory” perched on a steep slope overlooking the Dnieper river (see figure 2.8), in a central and much visited area of the city alongside UNESCO world heritage site the Peshersk Lavra. The Candle itself, an impressive glass, concrete and metal structure, towers over the entrance to a comprehensive memorial museum, and is surrounded by a complex of walls, plaques, walkways and statues. The aims of the memorial, inherent in the designs of the monuments, museum, and UINM publications sold in the small museum shop, are twofold: the provision of an appropriate space in which people may remember and pay tribute to the suffering of Holodomor victims; and the integration of the famine years as a central coordinate in the creation of contemporary Ukrainian national identity. The former commemorative agenda is visible in several elements within the museum in particular: a

¹¹ The Holodomor was officially categorised as genocide against the Ukrainian people according to the national parliament [*Verkovna Rada*] in 2006. Current President Victor Yanukovich has controversially argued that “[t]he Holodomor was in Ukraine, Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan. It was the result of Stalin’s totalitarian regime. But it would be wrong and unfair to recognize the Holodomor as an act of genocide against one nation,” (Kyiv Post, 2010) – the implications of this statement will be considered at a later stage in this argument.

series of memorial books containing the names of victims from each region affected surrounds a pillar of corn kernels, into which visitors may place lighted candles (see figure 2.9). The associated museum publications also give a voice to the victims by reproducing their testimonies, which are featured in a film projected on the museum's inner walls at timed intervals.

The centrality of the Holodomor to the construction of a new Ukrainian identity is manifest in the decisive casting of Stalin as a perpetrator of genocide, thus providing what the guidebook suggests to be a convincing argument for the elimination of "communism from the lives of all the world's peoples once and for all" (Yukhnovskiy, then acting head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory 2008, 3); an emotive argument in the context of the Holodomor, but one which fails to differentiate between different phases and forms of communism. Ukraine's independence is partly defined, for the Institute at least, by this anti-communism. The museum catalogue also states that the principles that "every nation forms a natural union with its native land" and "Ukraine's land has consistently and indivertibly given birth to Ukrainians" are central to the exhibit. This is borne out by the many reminders of the traditional Ukrainian relationship with soil and wheat in and around the museum; in the design of the outer complex (which features golden wheat behind black metal cages – see figure 2.10), film footage of Ukrainian farmers working the land in the aforementioned projection (see Figure 2.11), and in an installation of related farm equipment, also within the museum. This overriding aesthetic implies that this traditionally productive union between man and soil, and its violent subversion under Stalin, remain central to contemporary Ukrainian national identity.

The "Candle of Memory" and the other work done by the UINM warrant a more lengthy analysis than I can provide in this context,¹² but the above summary at least gives some weight to the argument that the centrality of the Holodomor to discourses of Ukrainian national memory is manifest in the landscape of the country's capital city. Such cannot be said of the Holocaust; as the proposal for the "Candle of Memory" was being put into action, the Kiev city council was discussing the practicalities of building a hotel at Babi Yar. In recapturing vital memories of the Holodomor, those of the Holocaust have remained peripheral. According to Kappeler, the very notion of a Ukrainian 'national history' raises questions: "What should be regarded as Ukrainian history? Is it represented only by the national Ukrainian narrative, focused on the Ukrainian people and their

¹² The museum further deserves attention as constituting a marked development in Kiev's gradual move towards the provision of Westernized visitor spaces. It has left many of the 'Soviet' museum features behind. Multilingual staff and the availability of museum publications in several European languages are particularly notable in this regard.



Figure 2.8: Memory Candle within the larger landscape



Figure 2.9: Corn kernels and candles in the centre of the museum

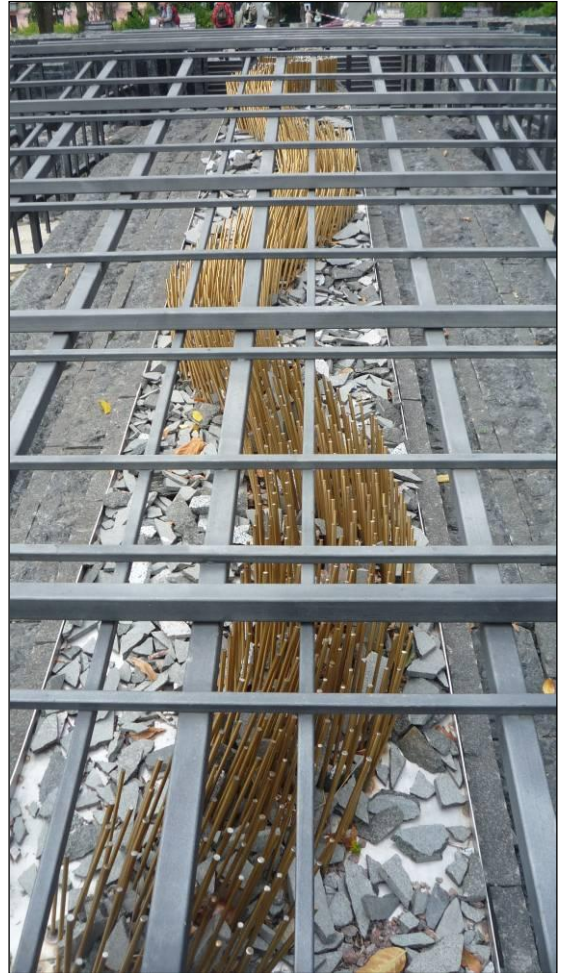


Figure 2.10: 'Wheat stems' under bars, Memory Candle memorial complex



Figure 2.11: Projected image within the museum, with farming equipment silhouetted in the foreground

attempts to create a Ukrainian national state? Or does it embrace the territory of Ukraine, with its multiethnic population, from antiquity to the present time?" (2009, 56). Ukrainian historians, he goes on to suggest, have to date adopted a national paradigm; from the brief survey above, it may be suggested that memorial activity has proceeded along much the same lines.

Yet I would suggest that the Holocaust and the Holodomor share more ground than current memory discourse and landscapes suggest, and that any competitiveness that exists could be productively neutralised by an official recognition of this ground. Hence I go on, now, to consider the possibility that embracing Ukrainian territory, and the experience of the multi-ethnic population on that territory, may be productive for the future of Ukrainian memory; that, rather than promoting a superorganic version of Ukrainian identity, attending to the experience of landscape across a broader period might encourage a more inclusive perception of Ukrainian history as one as one of "various cultures." In order to draw connections between these two events, whilst retaining their individual specificity, I consider testimonial accounts written by both Holocaust and Holodomor victims and witnesses alongside a discussion of the various political and geographical factors that determined and contextualised their experiences across Ukraine from 1930-1945. This analysis leads me back to representations of Babi Yar itself in testimony, where the journey undertaken by the second half of the chapter will begin.

Multidirectional experience? The Holocaust and the Holodomor

In exploring the experiences of Ukraine's population in relation to Ukrainian landscape, is first necessary to note that I do not mean to replicate the logic of 'blood and soil' and thus construct a mythological, superorganic vision of Ukrainian identity; I am wary of assuming "naturalized affiliations between subject and object" (Campbell 2008, 3). I recall too Buell's argument that "National borders by no means regularly correspond with 'natural' borders" (Buell 2005, 81-2). Yet Ukraine is an example of a nation whose borders are almost completely determined by natural elements and topographical forms. The term *ukraïna*, by which the land which now constitutes modern Ukraine was originally known, means 'undefined borderland'. The name Ukraine did not come into popular usage until the early 19th century (Magocsi 2010, 189-90). This land and the people who lived there have been historically defined according to their relationship with, and between, neighbouring states, rather than to any fixed conception of nationhood; indeed Ukraine did not become a nation in itself until the early 20th century. The connection between

inhabitants and territory thus did not evolve strictly according to a national narrative. It was determined far more by the fertility of the rich black chernozem soil, which is ideal for growing wheat (Subtelny 1991, 3, Cooper 2006, 24-5). Thus the land of the Ukrainian steppe has for centuries been regarded as amongst the richest in the Europe, and as the continent's "breadbasket" Ukraine has been "valued for its natural resources more than its diverse population" (Lower 2005, 2). Unlike their Russian neighbours to the North, who had to farm collectively to be effective, the fertility of Ukraine allowed inhabitants to farm independently, a natural circumstance that came to affect the "mentalit[y], cultur[e], and socio-economic organization" of the Ukraine and its people (Subtelny 1991, 5).

Ukraine's borderland position and fertile soil have led to repeated colonizations; effectively, that is, attempts to territorialize the land. Thus as much as geography has played a part in defining Ukrainian identity, it has led to frequent, violent attempts to destroy the fundamental basis on which this identity exists. According to Lower, the perception that the "space and its people could be exploited and radically transformed was most extreme in the 1930s and 1940s when Soviet and then Nazi empire-builders unleashed their utopian schemes in Ukraine" (2005, 2). There is, then, a fundamental parallel between the context in which the Holocaust and the Holodomor occurred, which recent historical scholarship has begun to explore; perhaps the most prominent example being Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe between Stalin and Hitler* (2010). Snyder follows up Hannah Arendt's argument in *Origins of Totalitarianism* that "the Nazi and Stalinist systems must be compared, not so much to understand one or the other but to understand our times and ourselves" (Snyder 2010, 380). Yet the reluctance to embrace the notion of a double Ukrainian genocide – and subsequently, perhaps, to consider any possible confluence between victim and witness experience – is evident in responses to Snyder's text.¹³ Furthermore "identification of the Holocaust with the Holodomor has [...] been rejected by most non-Ukrainian historians" because it presents an unwanted challenge to "the singular and exclusive place of the Holocaust and Auschwitz in the collective memory not only of Jews but also of most other Western Europeans and Americans" (Kappeler 2009, 59). Wiesel, in reporting on Soviet Jewry in *The Jews of Silence* ([2011]1966), argued that "[a]n abyss of blood separates Moscow from Berlin. The distance between them is not only one of geography and ideology; it is the distance between life and death" (2011, 5). Examining the impact of these two totalitarian regimes within one geographic location at least removes one obstacle from this equation. There is

¹³ See, for example, related discussion of 'double genocide' in academia and in the media: Efraim Zuroff (2010); Jonathan Freedland (2010) and Bartov's review of *Bloodlands* (2011, 424-428).

no doubt that that the two regimes had different policies about the Jewish population, but whilst this was the central concern of Wiesel's report it is less so to my own; I pursue instead a focus on the experience of landscape, one which was shared by people across cultures under both Stalin and Hitler.

Concerns about the conflation of different histories are entirely legitimate. But in some instances they can be contextualised within a broader rejection of recent attempts to open up the field of history to transcultural analysis, a rejection commensurate with the "phallic logic" of much debate on empire, colony and genocide since September 11th 2001 (Moses 2010, 6). In asking whether historiography needs to "be a zero-sum game" (2010, 7), Moses also alerts us to the fact that possible alternatives exist as far as the interpretation of the past is concerned, and the most nuanced of comparative work supports this contention. As Rothberg and Stef Craps suggest, some of the most influential work on the Holocaust has drawn attention to the fact that by refusing to consider interconnected histories together "(except in a competitive manner) we deprive ourselves of an opportunity to gain greater insight into each of these different strands of history and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the dark underside of modernity" (Craps and Rothberg 2011, 518). Accordingly, I pursue here the possibility of a multidirectional contiguity between two events which, I argue, are inevitably drawn together by the Ukrainian experience of territory as a factor that both structures history and mediates memory.

The historical specificity of each event must be first addressed. The Holodomor was a consequence of Stalin's Five Year Plan, which, from 1928, enforced a programme of collectivized farming on the Ukrainian people.¹⁴ Under collectivization, which was well under way by 1930, the Ukrainian people were no longer able to live off their own soil. In fact they were alienated from it; although they were in charge of food production, they did not own the results of their labour. Harvests were poor for a number of reasons, but many of these were related to the disruption caused by the major shift to collectivized methods. Much of what had been grown was shipped to other parts of the Soviet Union and elsewhere; in many cases nothing at all was left to feed the Ukrainian people. Furthermore, Stalin's plan involved the destruction of the 'kulak' class. The removal of these wealthier independent farmers, many of whom were either executed or deported,¹⁵ was an evacuation of space with lethal consequences: some of Ukraine's most reliable

¹⁴ See Snyder (2010, 28) for the organising principles of the shift to collectivization; the Ukrainian leadership, local party officials and state police enforced orders originating from Moscow. Peasants were violently "coerced [...] into signing away their claims to land and joining the collective farm".

¹⁵ Snyder reports that 113,637 people were deported as kulaks in early 1930, and 30,000 were executed (2010, 26).

producers were unable to work their land. The liquidization of the kulaks was ideologically commensurate with Stalin's vision for a communist society, but it was also a pragmatic move; he anticipated that collectivization would lead to a struggle between the peasant class and the Soviet police whose job was to enforce it. In depriving the peasants of their leaders, this clash would be minimized (Snyder 2010, 25). The idea that the annihilation of the kulak class would liberate the poorer peasant classes was undermined by the mass starvation of the Holodomor that followed.

According to Snyder's account, Hitler mobilized the Holodomor as an example of the failure of Marxism in practice (2010, 61). In turn, in 1934 Stalin used anti-fascist rhetoric to marshal the European Left (ibid., 66). Yet despite the binary opposition they were constructing, Hitler duplicated several of Stalin's tactics within Germany itself; just as Stalin had forcibly removed the kulaks and taken their grain, Hitler organised boycotts of Jewish businesses: "like collectivisation, the boycotts indicated which sector of society would lose the most in coming social and economic transformations" (ibid., 62). Forced deportation was considered a "territorial solution" to Germany's Jewish 'problem' in the years leading up to the Second World War (ibid., 112). Hitler and Stalin's policies thus share some methodological ground. Furthermore, in a display of pragmatism over ideology, Hitler and Stalin were to join forces to invade and conquer Poland in 1939.¹⁶ However, the alliance was short-lived and the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941 (Snyder 2010, 160-161). As a result the Jewish population suffered most; under Stalin, a high percentage of the dead were non-Jewish Ukrainians.¹⁷ Nonetheless, as will become clear, the landscapes and experiences of the Holodomor substantially foreshadow those of the Ukrainian Holocaust that would follow.

The Nazi colonization of Ukraine was fundamentally a fight for soil and space, what Hitler called the "drive to the East"; "the shift to the soil policy of the future" (in Lower 2005, 3); the campaign to reclaim Germany's "garden of Eden" (in Lower 2005, 101). Hitler aimed to settle the Ukraine with German peasants: "Sacred German soil, in the Nazi view, had no specific boundaries; the Ukraine would effectively become part of Germany" (Kiernan 2007, 432). The campaign was "naturalised" by colonial rhetoric, which depicted Germany's role in Ukraine as a form of "manifest destiny" (Snyder 2010, 15). In 1942, children in Hitler's Germany played a board game in which armed forces competed for the

¹⁶ The opposition so recently harnessed between communism and fascism could be justified the fact that, as Stalin put it, "he and Hitler had a 'common desire to get rid of the old equilibrium' (Snyder 115 cites Stalin).

¹⁷ Snyder (53) estimates a total number of deaths in Soviet Ukraine during the famine years at 3.3 million, of which approximately 3 million were Ukrainian. The remaining 300,000 were "Russians, Poles, Germans, Jews, and others". A further 3 million Ukrainians died in other areas of the Soviet Union during the same period.

'fertile black earth' of Ukraine (Lower 2005, 187). In order to claim it in reality, Hitler needed to remove as many non-Germans as possible, resulting in a rapid and widespread ethnic 'cleansing' programme. Whilst killing in Ukraine under Hitler was, in the course of time, to occur primarily as organised mass shooting operations, the first strategy planned for the country was the deliberate starvation of the unwanted Soviet population: the Hunger Plan.

Ukrainian food was again a central motivating force for this destruction of life. "The Soviet Union was the only realistic source of calories for Germany and its West European empire [...] Like Stalin, Hitler tended to see Ukraine itself as a geopolitical asset, and its people as instruments who tilled the soil, tools that could be exchanged with others or discarded [...] Food from Ukraine was as important to the Nazi vision of an Eastern empire as it was to Stalin's defence of the integrity of the Soviet Union" (Snyder 2010, 161). Hitler's approach to territorializing the land was pursued via policies of "starvation and colonization" (ibid., 163). That shooting rather than starvation came to primarily characterise the Ukrainian Holocaust may have been because it soon became clear that the Hunger Plan was impossible to implement in full.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the German invaders did seize much of the food they came across, and famine again cast a shadow over many parts of Ukraine.¹⁹

Beyond these methodological similarities, both the Holodomor and the Holocaust effected the Ukraine and its people on two interconnected levels: topographical and experiential. The alienation of the Ukrainian peasants from soil in life, a direct consequence of the Five Year Plan, very soon led, in many cases, to their internment within it in death; at the height of the famine, Ukrainian villagers were dying at the rate of 25,000 per day, equivalent to 17 people a minute (League of Canadian Ukrainians website). Historian Robert Conquest introduces an initial parallel to the Holocaust by comparing the landscape of Ukraine in the early 1930s to "one vast Belsen. A quarter of the rural population, men, women and children, lay dead or dying. At the same time (as at Belsen) well-fed squads of police or party officials supervised the victims" (1986, 3). Conquest's description resonates with Desbois' image of Ukrainian nation space as cemetery; throughout the Holocaust and the Holodomor the landscape and soil of Ukraine was steeped in recent death.

¹⁸ See Snyder (2010, 167-9) for an explanation of the problems faced by the German invaders in implementing this policy, primarily that they lacked the 'logistical and social resources' Stalin had been able to deploy ten years before.

¹⁹ As well as reducing the Soviet population as a whole, Hitler was determined to clear his new territory of "agitators, partisans, saboteurs, and Jews" (Snyder 2010, 182). As had been the case throughout Germany's invasion of Poland, the task of eliminating these groups was given to the *Einsatzgruppen*.

In recalling the difficulty of burying victims of the famine, Holodomor survivor Maria Katchmar (2008) describes scenes reminiscent of those many are more used to in connection with the Holocaust; bodies were thrown “like mud”, into a pit “big enough for [an] entire village”. Snyder (2010, 52) similarly notes the problems faced by those left alive with regards burying the dead; “healthier peasants [...] barely had the strength or inclination to dig graves very deeply, so that hands and feet could be seen above the earth [...] Crews would take the weak along with the dead and bury them alive [...] In a few cases such victims managed to dig their way out of the shallow mass graves.” A parallel to the Holocaust again emerges; in nearly every account of mass murder and burial recorded by Desbois, at least one witness recalled how the ground would continue to move for days after the Nazis had left the area: “shot Jews were very often only wounded, not dead. Everywhere, from east to west, north to south, the witnesses always ended their testimonies by muttering: “The pit moved for three days.”” (Desbois 2008, 96-7). In both cases, the genocide’s impact on topography directly affected those who lived on the land and witnessed these events. Kuznetsov too returns periodically to the transformation of the Ukrainian landscape as a corruption of the soil. In an initial passage on Babi Yar, to which I will return in more detail later, the ground is described as made up of ashes and small pieces of bone; he also tells of a trench in a village field outside the city, a “local Babi Yar”: “partly filled in and partly washed away by the spring rains [...] In one place there was something sticking up out of the ground. It was a blackened, moist human foot in the remains of a boot” (2008, 269-270).

According to Catherine Wanner, the impact of the famine was thus the dual destruction of millions of lives and of “the essence of a peasant-based, rural Ukrainian culture” (1998, 41); “irreversibly sapped of life”, its “soul [was] destroyed” (ibid., 43). Whilst the relationship between people and land is couched in somewhat sentimental terms by Wanner, there is little doubt that the experience of many of those who lived on Ukrainian soil was radically altered. As noted in the introduction, the pastoral is always an elegiac form of consciousness; and the harmony mourned by pastoral logic is often naively formulated, constitutive of a longing for a past which never really existed. In Ukraine post-Holodomor, however, there is some legitimate cause for mourning. The lives of the Ukrainian peasantry may not have been defined by a truly harmonious relationship between man and nature, but what relationship there had been was subverted throughout the famine years.

That this subversion was to continue throughout the Holocaust is evidenced in Kuznetsov’s account. Early in the Nazi occupation, when Nazi activity was centred in Kiev

itself and the outlying countryside remained relatively intact, Kuznetsov walked through the forest of Pushcha-Voditsa. He could still find peace there, but events in nearby Kiev loomed in his consciousness.

A BEAUTIFUL, SPACIOUS, BLESSED LAND

There was the world itself. So vast and with so much life always surging up. The tall old pine trees of the dense Pushcha-Voditsa forest towered into the sky, rustling quietly and swaying to and fro against the heavens, full of peace and wisdom.

I lay face up in the straw [...] thinking, I suppose, about everything at once [...] Babi Yar, Darnitsa, orders, starvation, Aryans, Volksdeutsche, book-burnings; yet close at hand the fir trees were swaying gently in the breeze as they had done a million years ago, and the earth, vast and blessed, was spread out beneath the sky, neither Aryan, nor Jewish, nor gypsy, but just the earth intended for the benefit of people. [...] How many thousands of years has the human race been living on the earth, and people still don't know how to share things out. (Kuznetsov 1972, 187)

In this passage, Kuznetsov characterises the earth as “intended for the benefit of people”, an anthropocentric suggestion but one which, it becomes clear, is firmly rooted in the idea of a productive, rather than destructive union between man and nature, based on sharing rather than fighting for resources. Leo Marx has discussed two categories of pastoral, “sentimental” and “complex” (1964, 25); “[h]is sentimental pastoral is precisely the escapist, simplistic kind attacked by the pejorative use of the term” (in Gifford 1999, 10). Kuznetsov adopts the position of a sentimental commentator only to introduce a pejorative conclusion; man should be able to exist in a harmonious, innocent relation with the natural world as it was ‘a million years ago’ but has failed to do so in his obsession with eugenic superiority. His own sense of the pleasure to be found in working with soil is evident in his description of digging trenches, one the many jobs he undertook in wartime Kiev: “Earth has a very pleasant smell. I always enjoyed digging it. [...] Especially in the spring, when you walk across earth that has been resting, or start to turn it over with a rake or a plough or a spade: it can make you quite dizzy, the pleasure of that smell...” (Kuznetsov 1972, 398). Passages such as this are suggestive of Kuznetsov’s sense of what work characterised by a harmonious man/nature relation could be, a harmony missing from the destruction of the forest at Pushcha-Voditska:

It was a beautiful, well-kept pine forest, in which every single tree used to be cared for [...] The Germans had starting cutting the forest down. Not the Germans themselves, but workers who were paid a pound of bread a week for doing it [...] the saws rang out, the tractors chugged away, and the tops of the fir trees trembled and shed their snow and then came sailing down, to hit the ground with a crash like an explosion. (1972, 232-233)

The next time he walks through the forest – unfortunately for the purposes of dating his experiences accurately, Kuznetsov’s narrative appears to follow the whims of his memory

rather than a definite chronology – large areas of it have been cleared. He describes the scene in a chapter clearly titled to resonate with the earlier section about Pushcha-Voditska.

NO BLESSED LAND

Once again I travelled across that beautiful spacious blessed land. But now it looked rather different. [...] I had none of the feeling of joy and peace I experienced once before. They were still cutting down the pine trees; there were now clearings in the forest, and big lorries and trailers were carrying long, straight tree trunks. [...]

The forest along the banks of the Irpen was also being felled and stacks of logs were piled up along the roadside ready to be carted off [...] prisoners were building a bridge across the Irpen. Covered in mud, some of them with their feet wrapped in rags, others simply barefoot, were digging the still-frozen ground and handling the planks of wood, standing up to their chests in water. On both banks there were guards with machine-guns sitting in towers and patrols with dogs standing ready. (1972, 266-7)

Rather than working the land in productive harmony, the forest is destroyed by the forced labour of prisoners of war. Kuznetsov concludes: “Everything in the world was terribly mixed up” (1972, 267).

Desbois’ account reveals further evidence of the subversion of the Ukrainian landscape experience and topography, and the consequences of this for Ukrainian memories of the Holocaust today. The Nazi’s use of Ukrainian landscape and farming equipment as tools in genocidal processes took “the beauty from everything. The most luscious green landscapes became extermination fields [...] The perpetrators of genocide used everything – cliffs, grain silos, beaches, irrigation wells, ditches” (Desbois 2008, 98); local people were ordered to collect hemp and sunflowers to help burn corpses (66-7). Aspects of the landscape in Ukraine were central to the planning and co-ordination of Nazi atrocities. Topography determined where and how local people were executed and buried. German soldiers checked each village and town in advance, ascertaining soil type, and searching for existing ditches, forests and any other topographical elements which might prove useful (106). Repeatedly Desbois encounters a peaceful rural, “bucolic” (165) scene only to reveal the atrocity just under the surface of the earth. Although these atrocities are almost never openly acknowledged or commemorated by local people, Desbois’ interviews constantly provide evidence of deliberate avoidance, deep-rooted unease, and, in some cases, superstition about these landscapes. A road outside the Rawa-Ruska camp, for example, had been constructed after the war with sand from the nearby Jewish cemetery. A local man reports: “You know, there are lots of accidents on this road, and people say that the road should not have been built with the bones of the dead” (‘Maxim’ in Desbois 2008, 33).

In many cases, Desbois found that local people who had witnessed the original massacres would never return to these sites again, despite having lived their whole lives in close proximity to them. “Did you never come back?”[...] “No, for me, this is hell” (Desbois, interview with ‘Adolf’, 2008, 114). Whilst, understandably, such witnesses seemed to feel the sites of atrocity were cursed, in some villages the burial grounds are simply too central to be avoided and were necessarily re-integrated into everyday life. One man leads Desbois and his team to a group of village houses with gardens.

He said: ‘This is where they were killed [...]’ The owners of several neighbouring houses came running out [...] One of them interrupted the witness: “My vegetable allotment patch. That’s my vegetable patch! Leave our gardens alone.” Without realizing it, with their protestations they were only confirming what everyone else in the area knew: the bodies of shot Jews resting under the tomato plants. (Desbois 2008, 64-5)

Thus the destruction of the relationship between Ukrainian people and Ukrainian land, which began in the Holodomor, can be seen to have continued throughout the Holocaust, with a lasting impact on the memories of witnesses. A resonance can be seen in Soviet writer Vasily Grossman’s novel *Life and Fate* ([1950] 2006): “Once [...] I thought that good was to be found [...] in the silent kingdom of the trees. Far from it. I saw the treacherous way [the forest] battled against the grass and bushes for each inch of soil [...] a constant struggle of everything against everything. Only the blind can conceive of the kingdom of trees as a world of good” (2006, 391). In Grossman’s work it is not a mourned, if imaginary, harmony between man and nature that has been destroyed, but any sense of good, in any form of life. This statement is made by Ikonnikov, a character introduced early in the novel by a sceptical narrator as a “dirty, ragged old man” whose “absurd theory” that “morality [...] ‘transcended class’” (13) developed in response to witnessing the cannibalism that resulted from “all-out collectivization” followed in later years by “the torments undergone by the prisoner-of-war and the execution of Jews” during the Nazi campaign in Belorussia (ibid.). The painstakingly realistic *Life and Fate* includes many details gathered in Grossman’s notebooks from his time as a journalist in World War II, and Ikonnikov’s loss of faith in goodness has been called a direct expression of Grossman’s own beliefs (Chandler 2006, xxi).

The cannibalism Grossman refers to indeed became a fact of daily life during the Holodomor, as the state police recorded in 1933: “families kill their weakest members, usually children, and use the meat for eating” (cited by Snyder, 2010, 50);²⁰ “[s]urvival was a moral as well as a physical struggle” (ibid.). That the Nazi Hunger Plan resulted in similar

²⁰ Snyder reports the recorded number of people sentenced for cannibalism between 1932-33 at “at least 2,505 [...] although the actual number of cases was almost certainly greater” (2010, 51).

experience during the Holocaust is evident in Kuznetsov's testimony. To return to his description of a land which is no longer "blessed":

At Dymer the lorry driver collected fifty roubles from each of us and drove on. I turned off into the field.

It had not been dug since the previous year, and there were little rows of humps made by the potatoes which had been left in the ground and had gone bad. The corn had been beaten down and was also rotten. Yet there had been such a famine in the city at the time. (1972, 266-7)

The fruits of previous labour – last year's potatoes and corn – are left to rot whilst people in nearby Kiev starve; the famine to which Kuznetsov refers was that engineered by the Nazis in their bid to de-urbanize Ukraine. The young Kuznetsov finds work assisting a sausage-maker, Degtyaryov. The sausages are made not from pigs, which are unheard of in wartime Kiev, but from horses which are too old to be useful for other purposes. Also at this time, a man in Kiev is hanged for making sausages out of human flesh. "He would go around the market, pick on some likely man or woman, and offer to sell him or her some cheap salt which he would say he had in his home. He would take them home, let them through the door first, crack them over the head with an axe – and turn them into sausages" (1972, 347). On one occasion, Degtyaryov relates to Kuznetsov the story of the 'graveyard gang' – a group led by a graveyard keeper. They opened new graves after funerals and fed the bodies to pigs to fatten them up for: "Even if a corpse today is pretty skinny, it's meat just the same, and what's the sense of letting good stuff go to waste with such hunger about?" (1972, 348).

For Kuznetsov, burdened by empathic imagination, even the slaughter of the horses is difficult to assimilate (1972, 348). Degtyaryov asks Kuznetsov if it still hurts him to kill them:

"Yes, it hurts."

"Silly little fool, why bother about them? As you see, that's the way life is – not only horses; even human beings go for sausages..." (1972, 348)

Kuznetsov presents a picture of wartime Kiev under the Nazis as a realm in which human life is reduced to units. Explicit in his reference to the production of sausages, units of flesh are evaluated in terms of use value. This paradigm can also be traced throughout the city in the everyday actions to which its inhabitants are reduced by artificially generated famine. The narrative is suggestive of Giorgio Agamben's description of the reduction of citizens to bare life within states of exception (1995). The citizens of Ukraine, beyond the Jewish community, fall into the category of bare life, a "life unworthy of being lived", the

originary counterpart to the German life which deserves to live simply for the fact of birth into that favoured nation state.

Following this logic, based on the experiential parallels noted throughout this section, I would argue that the spaces of the Holocaust and the Holodomor in Ukraine were those in which life was rendered bare despite differences of racial or ethnic denomination. As Snyder notes one of the first authors, alongside Arendt, to break the “taboo of the century” by “placing the crimes of the Nazi and Soviet regimes on the same pages, in the same scenes” was Grossman, in both the aforementioned *Life and Fate* and *Everything Flows* ([1964] 1970). Grossman juxtaposes the cannibalism under Stalin with the shooting of Jews under Hitler “in the same breath”, and draws attention to the physical similarity between children in concentration camps and those starving in Ukraine during the Holodomor: “They looked just the same [...] Every single little bone moving under the skin, and the joints between them” (in Snyder 2010, 386). For Grossman, “[h]uman groupings have one main purpose: to assert everyone’s right to be different, to be special, to think, feel or live in his or her own way [...] The only true or lasting meaning of a struggle for life lies in the individual, in his modest peculiarities and in the right to his peculiarities” (2006, 214). Indeed on the first page of the novel he states, echoing Celan’s demand we attend to the orchid, “[e]verything that lives is unique. It is unimaginable that two people, or two briar roses, should be identical... if you attempt to erase the peculiarities and individuality of life by violence, then life itself must suffocate” (2006, 3). Snyder’s conclusion states accordingly, following Arendt and Grossman, that a legitimate comparison between the two regimes must “begin with life rather than death. Death is not a solution, but only a subject” (2010, 387). My own comparison can be seen as legitimate in this sense. Whilst recognizing the intrinsic uniqueness of each life, I have tried to find alternative ways to group those who suffered which are based not on “a race, a God, a party or a state” but on the experience that results from the “fateful error” that such groupings are the very purpose of life” (Grossman 2006, 214). I have concluded that one result of this error, in both Stalin and Hitler’s campaigns in Ukraine, was the reduction of life to bare life within the Ukrainian landscape. In the conclusion to this chapter, I return to this argument to consider the potential of recognizing this confluence of the experience of victims and witnesses in both events within the contemporary memorial discourse in Ukraine.

In concluding this section, it must be noted that this trajectory across Ukraine ultimately leads to Babi Yar itself, as a microcosm of the reduction of humanity to bare life. The corpses of the victims of the SS mass murders were mutilated and violated for

entertainment, searched for valuables, and eventually become mere detritus to be disposed of as efficiently as possible; Kuznetsov mentions a “mysterious installation” on a stretch of land adjacent to the camp, which is later revealed as the beginning of an “experimental soap factory for the production of soap from human corpses” (1972, 304). In the next section of this chapter, I too turn to Babi Yar as a place that came to travel across the world, in part via literatures such as those discussed here, to the Babi Yar Memorial Park in Denver.

II.II. Babi Yar's Literary Journey

Experience from testimony to fiction

This section covers a series of textual representations that I will argue have facilitated an awareness of Babi Yar beyond Ukrainian territory. Babi Yar is perhaps the only event of the Ukrainian Holocaust that has been integrated into international discourse on – and commemoration of – the Holocaust overall (certainly until Desbois' work drew attention to the scale of the shootings elsewhere on Ukraine territory). Clearly, the scale of the massacre in itself, particularly the initial shooting operation on 29-30th September 1941, was in part responsible for this international recognition. But I will argue that the literary remediation of the events at Babi Yar has also had a crucial role in creating this recognition. As noted briefly in the preceding section, Yevtushenko's poem Babi Yar was instrumental in this respect. The journey to be discussed here, however, primarily takes place across three 'texts', beginning with an oral testimony collected by Kuznetsov as he documented life in Kiev under Nazi occupation: that of Dina Pronicheva, a Kiev puppeteer who had escaped from Babi Yar during the first massacre there in September 1941. Kuznetsov's account was published in the West in 1970 and the sections into which Pronicheva's testimony was integrated were instrumental in taking the experience of suffering at Babi Yar beyond Ukrainian territory. These sections were then transposed into D.M. Thomas' fiction, *The White Hotel*, further and more broadly placing Babi Yar within international public consciousness.

Erl and Rigney call attention to:

the central paradox of remediation. On the one hand the recycling of existing media is a way of strengthening the new media's claim to immediacy, or offering an "experience of the real". On the other hand, remediation is an act of hypermediacy that, by multiplying media, potentially reminds the viewer of the presence of a medium (2009, 3-4, in summary of Bolter and Grusin).

Their application of these phenomena to the dynamics of cultural memory prompts an increased awareness both of the complex possibilities and restrictions inherent in the remediation of narratives of the past. Whilst in the chapter I discuss memory in both literary and spatial terms as being in some sense displaced, this move is seen as a potentially productive, performative journey rather than something which *necessarily* elides or erases original forms and narratives. Crucially, as I will furthermore suggest, the specificity of certain elements of the experience had by victims at Babi Yar and across the

Ukraine has been preserved throughout this literary remediation, resulting in the communication of an “experience of the real” with a tangible immediacy. As a result, the way Babi Yar is ‘remembered’ in cultural memories away from Ukraine resonates with the experiences of those who lived through the Ukrainian Holocaust; at least to the extent that Ukrainian soil plays a key role. The phenomenological experience of Babi Yar presented in the texts discussed in this section – one of being buried alive within a landscape of dead and dying human flesh – presents readers with images of extreme suffering within a topography transformed by atrocity. This, as I will discuss later in this section, eventually resulted in that soil itself travelling across the world, to be persevered as a medium that seems to contain the memory of the atrocities committed at Babi Yar. At the same time, the transparent self-conscious intertextuality employed by the authors whose work carries these memories results in a reader’s awareness of the hypermediated nature of this memory. This, I would suggest, is not necessarily an obstacle to the creation of empathic memory, rather an effective way of preserving the other’s experience in a way we can encounter meaningfully whilst resisting a complete inhabitation of that experience. Thus, whilst Soviet authorities deliberately excluded Babi Yar from national discourses of cultural memory and communal remembrance, and Ukrainian authorities have continued to marginalise the Holocaust overall, the events that occurred there are taken up in textual displacements which carry its memory by facilitating an imaginative engagement beyond Ukraine.

Pronicheva was a Soviet citizen with Jewish parents. When the Nazis launched an operation to empty Kiev of Jews, they issued instructions to the city’s population, demanding that all Jewish citizens were to appear at a particular intersection of roads in the north of the city. Pronicheva and her family were amongst those that took their places in the long queue that formed in the streets around the Jewish and Orthodox cemeteries on September 29th, 1941. Her parents and sister were killed over the course of the massacre that followed, but Dina was one of the very few to survive, and “the only person known to have fallen into the ravine unwounded and feigned death” as a means of that survival (Berkhoff 2008, 294). Multiple written records of her testimony, which is detailed and unsurprisingly graphic and harrowing, have emerged over the years (see Berkhoff 2008, 295). It was first published in the Ukrainian press in 1946, and was given by Pronicheva herself shortly afterwards at a Soviet military tribunal (*ibid.*, 295-6). In Kuznetsov’s text her experience in the ravine is described as follows:

When she struck the bottom she felt neither the blow nor any pain, but she was immediately spattered by warm blood, and blood was streaming down her face, just as if she had fallen into a bath full of blood.

All around her she could hear strange submerged sounds, groaning, choking and sobbing: many of the people were not dead yet. The whole mass of bodies kept moving slightly as they settled down and were pressed tighter by the movements of the ones who were still living. (1972, 110)

Pronicheva creeps over the settling bodies that night to escape from the ravine:

Finally she got herself out from under the earth.

The Ukrainian policemen up above were apparently tired after a hard day's work, too lazy to shovel the earth in properly, and once they had scattered a little in they dropped their shovels and went away. Dina's eyes were full of sand. It was pitch dark and there was a heavy smell of flesh from the mass of fresh corpses. (ibid., 111)

It is this experience of Babi Yar, of an immersion in a topography of death, that I wish to take forward in my discussion of literary remediation. Kuznetsov's text incorporates Pronicheva's testimony alongside his own recollections of Babi Yar, which themselves contribute to an intensely geographically orientated account overall. Initially, for Kuznetsov, Babi Yar is a landscape of childhood. He had played there, and his book opens with his recollection of it:

The ravine was enormous, you might even say majestic: deep and wide, like a mountain gorge. If you stood on one side of it and shouted, you would scarcely be heard on the other.

It is situated between three districts of Kiev – Lukyanovka, Kureniovka and Syrets, surrounded by cemeteries, woods, and allotments. Down at the bottom ran a little stream with clear water. The sides of the ravine were steep, even overhanging in places; landslides were frequent in Babi Yar. In fact it was typical of the whole region: the whole of the right bank of the Dnieper is cut into by such ravines... (1970, 15)

One day soon after the end of the war Kuznetsov visits the ravine with a friend. Although he knew that people had been brought to the ravine and shot, and that the bodies had later been burnt, throughout the occupation the area has been fenced off and out of bounds; the two boys were curious to see what had been left there.

We knew the stream like the palms of our hands. As children we had made little dams to hold it back and we had often swum in it.

The river bed was of good, coarse sand, but now for some reason or other the sand was mixed with little white stones.

I bent down and picked one of them up to look at it more closely. It was a small piece of bone, about as big as a fingernail, and it was charred on one side and white on the other. The stream was washing these pieces of bone out of somewhere and carrying them down

with it. From this we concluded that the place where the Jews, Russians, Ukrainians and people of other nationalities had been shot was somewhere higher up.

[...] the ravine became narrower and split into several branches, and in one place we saw that the sand had turned grey. Suddenly we realised that we were walking on human ashes [...]

We walked around the place and found many whole bones, a skull, still not dried out, of someone recently buried, and more pieces of black ash amongst the grey sand. I picked up one of the pieces and took it with me to keep. It contains the ashes of many people, all mixed up together – a sort of international mixture.

It was then I decided I must write it all down, from the very beginning. (1972, 17)

It is, then, with the corruptive transformation of landscape that Kuznetsov's text begins. As he makes clear, Babi Yar, like the mass graves across the country as discussed above, became synonymous with death and disaster for local people, not only during the war but long after its conclusion. It was a constant threat: "Do you want to end up in Babi Yar?" his mother asks when he makes an anti-fascist leaflet. He refers to it as being a place with "abhorrent associations" throughout Kiev (1972, 301). It becomes the centre of what sound like urban myths, but which all too often turn out to be disturbingly accurate. The rumour that Ukrainians refused for years to eat cabbages grown on the farms around Babi Yar because of the human ashes sprinkled on them has somehow lived on in contemporary accounts of the massacre (see for example Frederik Pohl's *Chernobyl: A Novel* 1987, 233). Although it seems impossible to trace the origin of this rumour as far as Ukrainian reactions are concerned, Kuznetsov's account documents in full the practice of distributing the ashes in his description of the "gardeners" (one of the many groups of prisoners forced to work to obliterate the bodies at Babi Yar): "their job was to load the ashes onto barrows and distribute them under escort around the environs of Babi Yar and scatter them over the vegetable gardens" (1972, 376). His discussion of the vegetable gardens resonates with Desbois experience many years later, as he encounters a plot where "the bodies of shot Jews" rested "under the tomato plants". Thus Kuznetsov's own memories, along with those of Pronicheva, offer up an image of Babi Yar grounded in explicitly geographical terms: Pronicheva relates a phenomenological experience of that geography, and Kuznetsov observes the transformation of the same landscape in a way that corresponds to witness experience across Ukraine. I now move on to consider how this geographical engagement is transposed and extended in *The White Hotel*.

The White Hotel is a heavily inter-textual piece of documentary fiction, comprising a formal structure of prologue and six sections which together build a pseudo-Freudian psychoanalytic case study of fictional patient Lisa Erdman. Lisa is the character that 'takes

on' Pronicheva's memories. Early sections of the text integrate Freud's own case histories and letters, and present what appear to be Lisa's hysteric symptoms and vivid sexual fantasies. In the penultimate section 'The Sleeping Carriage', these symptoms are revealed to be real injuries, mental and psychological, sustained during the Babi Yar massacre, which is described in detail and incorporates lengthy sections of Kuznetsov's text. Lisa has a form of 'second sight' that manifests itself not only in her mind but in her body; a physical, pre-emptive form of memory making. Sue Vice's critique describes *The White Hotel* as a "narrative satire on backshadowing", as frequently repeated tropes and events build up a "particular view of time and history" (Vice 2000, 38). I will consider these tropes in a somewhat different light throughout this section, arguing that they are important structural devices in the development of contemporary memories of the Holocaust in Ukraine and pursuing the notion that the landscapes which shape *The White Hotel* provide the reader with a displaced topography of the Ukrainian Holocaust. This displacement is dually manifest: in the psychologically constructed world of mountains, lakes and forests in which the white hotel stands, and in the imaginations of Thomas' readers as they follow the narrative from this symbolic landscape to the topography of the ravine in Kiev.

'The Sleeping Carriage' was the only section of the novel I remembered clearly when re-reading *The White Hotel* around ten years after my first encounter with it. It was a shock to discover later that the author had taken the original narrative from a real testimonial account, but it was certainly this that prompted me to read Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar*, a further example from my own experience of a remediated literary journey. Substantial sections of Thomas' Babi Yar chapter are based on Kuznetsov's documentation of Pronicheva's oral history testimony. Major criticism was levelled at Thomas for his integration of Kuznetsov's work, and thus Pronicheva's testimony, into *The White Hotel*. In addition to prompting outrage by bringing sexual fantasy and the Holocaust together in the same literary space, he was accused of plagiarism. Thomas himself responded with a description of his book as "a synthesis of visions and voices" and reminded critics that he had formally acknowledged his use of Kuznetsov's work (in Hilton 1982). The controversy surrounding the text proved to have a certain value. There can be little doubt that *The White Hotel* made a considerable global impact. An international bestseller, translated into at least thirty languages since its publication in 1981, the novel has also been awarded an LA Times Fiction Prize, a Cheltenham Prize (for books that receive 'less acclaim' than they deserve in their year of publication), and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. It is certainly possible to speculate that the book was in part responsible for a reinvigorated

popular interest in Kuznetsov's work. Thomas himself pointed out that *Babi Yar* was reissued by publishers in the wake of *The White Hotel's* controversial reception (Vice 2000, 40).

Arguably, Thomas can be seen to have made an important contribution to the integration of Ukrainian history into the Holocaust master narrative. As I have suggested throughout this thesis, literature facilitates a different kind of imaginative engagement to other forms of media. Langer has called attention to the centrality of literature in rendering "the experience of horror" accessible to readers (1993, 12). To Langer, such literary renditions should rightfully be produced by the survivor-writer. Whilst *The White Hotel* is a piece of fiction by a non-survivor, the passages about Babi Yar are largely directly transposed from Kuznetsov's text;²¹ and Kuznetsov transcribed Pronicheva's testimony as rigorously as he documented the entirety of the data he collected for *Babi Yar*.²² The original testimony, therefore, is remediated but still explicitly present in these later works. Whilst Thomas was accused by Hana Wirth-Nesher of "appropriating Pronicheva's pain" (in Vice 2000, 39), the author himself argued that "it would have been 'immoral' if he, 'a comfortable Briton, fictionalized the Holocaust'" in the production of a new imaginary narrative (in Vice 2000, 39). Arguably, then, both Kuznetsov and Thomas' texts function as vehicles for introducing Pronicheva's testimony to a broader audience than it would ever otherwise have received. In order to define in more precise terms the details of this imaginary world, I take the intertextual sections of *The White Hotel* as meta-narrative guides to the exploration of Babi Yar's atrocious topography.

The White Hotel, unsurprisingly given its form as a Freudian case study, has frequently been discussed in relation to psychoanalytic theory. Laura Tanner describes Lisa's symptoms – hysteria, hallucinations, pains in the areas in which she is later injured at Babi Yar – as "the transformations of real facts into the symbols of memory. Trauma from the past which is not consciously acknowledged is symbolized bodily in the present; the repressed memory is a signified whose signifier is the symptom" (Vice 2000, 45, summarising Tanner). In Lisa's case, the symptoms are related to an event in the future. Trauma is clearly central to *The White Hotel*, both overtly as pseudo-Freudian case study and implicitly in the physical manifestation of Lisa's experiences at Babi Yar. It makes

²¹ Whilst criticism has been directed at Thomas for altering and adding to Kuznetsov's transcript, as Vice has remarked, "Thomas's version is remarkable for what it keeps as much as for what it adds" (42), and ultimately the result is that "we can still learn what happened to [Pronicheva]" (41).

²² Kuznetsov repeatedly re-affirms the veracity of his account from the first page of the text; "This book contains nothing but the truth" (1972, 13) "I am writing it as though I were giving evidence under oath in the highest court and I am ready to answer for every single word. This book records only the truth - AS IT REALLY HAPPENED" (ibid., 14). Immediately before embarking on Pronicheva's story, he claims: "I am now going to tell her story, as I wrote it down from her own words, without adding anything of my own" (ibid., 98).

sense that Lisa's individual experience be considered from the perspective of traumatisation; but this has been done, most precisely, in existing criticism to which Tanner's piece contributes. As I have argued already, theories of cultural trauma are prone to the overextension of individual symptoms to collectives. It is with this in mind that I wish to reconsider Tanner's concept of the "transformations of real facts into symbols of memory" away from the framework of trauma, examining the way in which tangible phenomenological tropes become key signifiers for secondary witnesses of historical suffering, providing a way into an experience which can be encountered but not fully inhabited. Again, the tropes I focus on here reinforce the geographic dimensions of atrocious human experience. The imaginary landscapes that dominate *The White Hotel* are for the most part geographically distant from the Ukraine but direct the reader's imagination back to Babi Yar; furthermore, Thomas' landscapes are transformed by disaster, becoming radically altered topographies which correspond to those of the Ukraine Holocaust as a whole as described by Kuznetsov and more recently by Desbois and his interviewees.

Vice's analysis of *The White Hotel* suggests that key tropes in the novel function to trigger a post-war reader's "knowledge of the vocabulary and geography of genocide" (2000, 61), in many cases specifically related to the events Babi Yar. Those that relate to geographic elements are of particular interest to this analysis. Central events of the novel, whether described in verse (as in the first section 'Don Giovanni') or in narrative prose (as in the longer, later section 'The Gastein Journal') take place against a mountainous backdrop, with white hotel at the edge of a lake. Thomas draws attention to the contours and tones of this landscape early in both sections, depicting an initially tranquil scene which calls to mind an alpine idyll, with blue skies, "snowcapped mountains above the trees" (1981, 19) and a brilliant emerald lake (40). In these descriptions the only implicit parallel to the Ukrainian landscape can be found in the dark green of the fir trees (21); ubiquitous in Ukraine and the only trees mentioned in Kuznetsov's descriptions.²³ As the landscape around the hotel is disrupted by extreme weather and surreal natural disasters, more explicit echoes of Babi Yar appear. A violent gale rips the roof off the nearby summerhouse and overturns a boat, killing several people (41), and a storm causes a flood (43-4). The "trail of debris" left behind is lit by flashes of sheet lightning (46). Almost immediately afterwards the hotel is struck by a fire, apparently caused by the reflection of the sun's rays on the snowy mountain; many more people die. A funeral is held, and as a group of mourners stand on the edge of a mass grave in the shadow of the mountain,

²³ See for example 'pines' (1972, 448) ('fir' is a synonym).

thunder arrives. A landslide descends on the mourners, who “fall, one by one, into the trench, as if intolerable grief afflicted them [...] they twitched a little and the earth and rocks began settling on them” (67-8). Finally, a cable car crashes and more guests fall to their deaths on the mountainside. A notable number of the examples of a genocide “vocabulary” that Vice identifies as trigger-tropes –the “mass graves” of the drowned hotel guests (Thomas 1981, 66) the vast “trench” in which mourners are buried (68) consolidate the argument that Thomas deliberately mobilizes land forms to create a parallel between this imaginary place and Babi Yar.

In both ‘Don Giovanni’ and ‘The Gastein Journal’, explicit descriptions of the protagonist’s sexual relationship are juxtaposed with the details of the natural disasters that shape this landscape: “I jerked and jerked until his prick released / its cool soft flood. Charred bodies hung from trees”; “it was incredible, / so much in me, yet still I was not full / they bore the bodies from the flood and fire / on carts, we heard them rumbling through the pines / and fade to silence” (1981, 26). After the cable car crashes, a drunken observer, a German named Vogel, comments that “it might have been worse – there were a large number of Yids among the victims” (1981, 78), a thinly veiled reference to the SS at Babi Yar who were reported to have remained inebriated throughout the extermination process (Thomas himself mentions this specifically further on, in ‘The Sleeping Carriage’ (1981, 222); see also Kuznetsov (1972, 374).

The hotel itself is resonant with the logistical battle for space and resources of which the destruction of Kiev’s population at Babi Yar was ineluctably part: “[T]he white hotel was extremely popular and there were [...] more requests for rooms than they could possibly accommodate. From this point of view alone, the catastrophic deaths of the past few days were a godsend; but even this unusually rapid turnover could not keep pace with the demand” (Thomas 1981, 79). Accounts of the operations at Babi Yar, too, frequently suggest that soldiers were struggling to keep up with the task of shooting, burying and later burning those transported there (see Kuznetsov 1972, 377). Geographical descriptions are among the lines that Thomas transposes directly from Kuznetsov; not this time from his documentation of Pronicheva’s testimony, but from Kuznetsov’s own memory of Babi Yar as a child as included in the above discussion of his text. Thomas’ version is noticeably transposed (direct examples of words which duplicate Kuznetsov’s own in bold):

There was a steep wall of sand, behind which the firing could be heard. They made the people form up into short lines and led them through the gap which had been hurriedly dug in the sand-stone wall. The wall hid everything from view, but of course the people

knew where they were. The **right bank of the Dnieper is cut by deep ravines**, and this particular **ravine was enormous, majestic, deep and wide like a mountain gorge. If you stood on one side of it and shouted you would scarcely be heard on the other. The sides were steep, even overhanging in places; at the bottom ran a little stream of clear water.** Round about were **cemeteries, woods and allotments.** The local people knew the ravine as Babi Yar. (1981, 213).

Pronicheva appears in Lisa Erdman's tale, as an old friend she knows from the theatre. She survives again in Thomas' hands; Lisa becomes the dead for whom Pronicheva lives to bear witness: "Yet it had happened thirty thousand times; always in the same way and always differently. Nor can the living ever speak for the dead. / The thirty thousand became a quarter of a million. A quarter of a million white hotels in Babi Yar" (Thomas 1981, 221). Lisa's description of the mass grave is as follows:

The rustle of cockroaches filled her mind. Then she started to understand that the sound came from the mass of people moving slightly as they settled down and were pressed tighter by the movement of the ones who were still living. / She had fallen into a bath of blood. (Thomas 1981, 218)

Lisa, not yet dead, is discovered, groaning, by a soldier who beats her and rapes her with a bayonet. She dies in the ravine.

During the night, the bodies settled. A hand would adjust, by a fraction, causing another's head to turn slightly. Features imperceptibly altered. 'The trembling of sleeping night,' Pushkin called it; only he was referring to the settling of a house. (ibid., 220)

There is no doubt that Thomas deliberately integrates an accidental fire at the hotel, a natural mudslide and flood into the landscape surrounding it, echoing the burning of bodies, the dynamiting of the ravine walls to fill the mass grave at Babi Yar and the later collapse of the dam in 1960. In a short section at the conclusion of 'The Sleeping Carriage', he provides a brief overview of the landscaping of the ravine, including the construction of the dam, stating that "the effort to annihilate the dead went on, in other hands" after the war (Thomas 1981, 222).

I have suggested throughout this section that the life-time of Pronicheva's story in the hands of Kuztnetsov and Thomas can be effectively conceptualised via application of Erll and Rigney's theorisation of memory's 'mediation' and 'remediation'. The model significantly echoes Confino and Fritsche's argument as discussed in the introduction, revising the concept of static *lieux de mémoire* to accommodate memory's dynamism. "As the word itself suggests, 'remembering' is best seen as an active engagement with the past, as performative rather than reproductive [...] If stories about the past are no longer performed [...] they ultimately die out in cultural terms" (Erll and Rigney 2009, 2). Particularly in view of Thomas' appropriation, it is also worth reiterating Erll and Rigney's

statement that throughout performative processes, texts “may be replaced or ‘over-written’ by new stories that speak more directly to latter-day concerns and are more relevant to latter-day identity formation” (Erll and Rigney 2009, 2 with reference to Irwin-Zarecka). The controversial reception of *The White Hotel* is all the more valuable when we keep in mind that “fighting about memory is one way of keeping it alive” (ibid.). Throughout the central narrative of *The White Hotel*, Thomas presents a series of imaginary natural events which can be directly related to the real history of Babi Yar. None of the original events were natural; they were, conversely, the results of human-perpetrated violence. Yet by mobilizing them in fiction, Thomas captures the both the phenomenological experience of the mass grave and the radical disruption of landscape that characterised both individual and collective suffering at Babi Yar and across Ukraine under Nazi occupation. His remediation thus contributes to the evolution of cultural memories of Babi Yar whilst preserving its fundamental geographical, and to some extent experiential, specificity. Pronicheva, Kuznetsov, and Thomas between them present a powerful mediation and remediation of Babi Yar, as an “experience of the real” (to refer back to Erll and Rigney) – albeit with the inevitable limitations of hypermediacy – which I propose has structured contemporary imaginations of the Ukraine Holocaust. I now move on to consider one result of this awareness of the massacre beyond Ukraine: the creation of the Babi Yar Memorial Park, Denver.

II.III. Travelling memory: from Kiev to Denver

The Babi Yar Memorial Park, Denver: the Holocaust and the War on Terror

As noted in the introduction of this chapter, the Babi Yar Park in Denver was inaugurated in the 1980s. This was a result of a series of discussions held in the 1960s by a group of American Jews who were motivated by the marginalisation of Holocaust memory in Ukrainian territory, and who perceived a continued persecution of minority groups in the Soviet Union as a whole. To draw further attention to these issues in their local community and beyond, they decided to create a memorial space for the victims of Babi Yar on American soil. They aimed to give Ukrainian Holocaust memory the place it was being denied in Ukraine. The lack of commemoration in Kiev at the time was central to the park's stated agenda. This is mentioned frequently in early speeches and press releases made by the Babi Yar Park Foundation, and further suggested by the choice of the following lines from Yevtushenko's poem as a header on Foundation stationary: "There are no memorials over Babi Yar / Only an abrupt bank like a crude epitaph rears." The early stated aim of the park was to "commemorate the tragic events which occurred in 1941 at Babi Yar" (Babi Yar Park Foundation, planning document, *n.d.*). Initially, then, its premise can be seen as both ethical and political. The nucleus of the idea came from the Colorado Committee of Concern for Soviet Jewry (CCCSJ), an organization formed to educate people about the plight of Soviet Jews, particularly those who wished to emigrate to Israel but were prevented from doing so by the Soviet government (known as "refuseniks"). The first plans for a memorial were comparatively modest; organisers thought to name a street after Babi Yar. Whilst no streets were then nameless, an area of Denver parkland was available and subsequently earmarked for a memorial project in September 1969. Both Yevtushenko and Kuznetsov wrote to support the endeavour, in an extension of their existing role in promoting awareness of Babi Yar on an international level. A separate committee, the Babi Yar Park Foundation, was formed in 1970 to run the project. A series of disagreements about the appropriate use of the space led to a rift between the CCCSJ and the newly formed Foundation,²⁴ and from this date architect Alan Gass and local activist Helen Ginsburg became the key "memorial entrepreneurs".

²⁴ The rift was two-fold: the Ukrainian community in Denver wanted to be involved in the development of the park, because "the Jews killed at Babi Yar were Ukrainian Jews" (Morrison 1994, 6), but the CCCSJ argued that the collaboration of Ukrainian nationals with the Nazi perpetrators rendered their involvement inappropriate. Furthermore, the CCCSJ were concerned that their plan for a park which was "beautiful and meaningful in a simple and unadorned manner" was being replaced with a much more expensive project: "To think of the expenditure of dollars when our brothers in Israel and the Soviet Union are in such need is contrary to the very core of our Jewish

There are certain characteristics of the park as it was originally landscaped which significantly illuminate its relationship with its Ukrainian counterpart and demonstrate the way in which soil and topography have become central in remembering and commemorating Babi Yar. I am not suggesting that the texts discussed in the previous section all played a part in the way the park was developed; rather that, in both this literature and the commemorative endeavour in Denver, natural forms and the way we experience them are central co-ordinates. From its earliest incarnation, certain resonances between the park landscape and that of Ukraine have been essential to its design. The park bears a topographical similarity to Babi Yar itself; the land includes a small ravine, which, according to Babi Yar survivor Batya Barg, who visited the park in 1971, is reminiscent of the one in Kiev. This resemblance is frequently referred to in speeches and planning documents relating to the park and associated fundraising campaigns, and such documents make clear that this geographical correspondence became a guiding principle in its curatorship and design. Ginsburg argued that a “topographical and climatic comparison of Denver and Kiev, as well as typical flora are concerned” was “astounding” (Ginsburg, *n.d.* speech draft); and furthermore that a “study has revealed that the flora and topography of Denver’s Babi Yar Park [are] similar to, and bears a haunting resemblance to, the original ravine in Kiev, as it was in 1941” (transcription of early Babi Yar Park voice over, Helen Ginsburg, *n.d.*). The extent to which the ravine in Kiev as it was in 1941 (see figure 2.12) really resonates with the one in Denver (see figure 2.13) can only be judged according to photographic evidence, due to the extensive re-landscaping of this site and the mudslide of 1961 as discussed earlier in this chapter. Certainly a difference in scale must be taken into account, for the ravine in Denver is too small to have functioned as a substantial mass grave. Other resonances are easier to establish. Whilst there is no evidence of the mentioned ‘study’ into the flora and topography of Denver and Kiev in the Mizel Museum’s archive, the claim is verified by a brief examination of the physical geography of these two areas. Both the prairie land of the American West and Eurasian steppe are classified as natural temperate grasslands.²⁵ Whilst they are often supported by different types of soil, grasslands, with their flat, rolling form and limited arboreal features, they are visually “remarkably” similar (Chiras 2010, 94). Specifically, Catherine Cooper (2006, 17) has noted that “[i]n many respects, Ukraine’s natural vegetation

religion” (in Morrison 1994, 6). From Gass’s later overview of the park’s history, it becomes clear that the Park Foundation themselves only agreed to input from the Ukrainian community after they had made a financial contribution to the park’s development.

²⁵ Such environments are typically located in the interior of large continents, in the rain shadow of mountain ranges, with continental climates characterised by cold winters and dry, hot summers (Stuart Chape et al. 2008, 58). Denver, lies on a high plain, in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Much of Ukraine, too is flat, but the plains are surrounded by the Carpathian mountains to the West and the Crimean mountains to the South East.



Figure 2.12: Babi Yar, Kiev, 1941 © US Holocaust Memorial Museum



Figure 2.13: Ravine, Babi Yar Park, Denver

landscapes are very similar to those of North America's interior", and further cites this resemblance as influential to the attraction of early migrant settlers from Eastern European grasslands.

Unsurprisingly given the similar climatic and topographic features that support them, plants native to the steppe and the prairie are also of notable similarity. Their appearance is determined by their need to function in dry climates: bunch forms and narrow leaves which help to retain moisture, and light colours which reflect the sun. (Cushman and Jones, 2004, 18-20). Thus Gass and Ginsburg's claims for the topographical similarity of their location in 2011 to the Ukraine in 1941 are sound, in geological terms. Beyond this resonance, Gass also states that it has become important to preserve the prairie land that still covers much of the Babi Yar Park, because there is very little left elsewhere in Denver. He recalls the landscape surrounding the park from his own childhood, before the prairie had been destroyed to make room for the encroaching sprawl of the city.²⁶ Thus conservation, as well as symbolism, has played a role in determining the appearance of the park. However, in embracing this opportunity for conservation and avoiding the typical 'lawn', the park overall does not correspond to the Babi Yar site in Kiev *today*; certainly in the eastern half, lawns rather than prairie grasslands are the aesthetic of choice. In commemorative terms, this perhaps allows the Babi Yar Park a claim to apparent 'authenticity' that its counterpart in Kiev cannot share.

There are, however, other resonances between the two sites today which emerged long after the design for the park was conceived; these are in no way deliberate and, in fact, even the current curators of the Denver memorial are unaware of them.²⁷ Both sites are surrounded by busy, multi-lane roads (see figures 2.14 and 2.15), creating juxtapositions between the parks and the larger landscapes within which they exist; both are peaceful green spaces within larger urban areas, with the result that both are used by local communities for everyday, non-commemorative activities: jogging, dog-walking, and sunbathing, for example. Rather than normalizing the memory of atrocity, there is a sense, for Premack and Ginsburg at least, that this is an appropriate way for the park to be used; the memory of Babi Yar is integrated into the lives of those who visit it, a constant reminder to consider the lives of others.

²⁶ The loss of this prairie land is commensurate with the fate of much temperate grassland worldwide; Chape et al (2008, 59) state that "little [...] is now in anything like its natural or undisturbed state". Whilst Chiras (2004, 92) notes that in many cases this is due to the exploitation of the land in agricultural practice (grassland soils "are probably the richest in the world as a result of thousands of years of plant growth and decay", *ibid.*), in Denver and the surrounding area the gradual eradication of prairie lands is due to modern urban landscaping (Nelson 2008, 47).

²⁷ As Ginsburg explained, neither herself nor Gass ever visited the site in Kiev themselves; for Ginsburg in particular, her awareness of Ukrainian anti-Semitism had for many years resulted in a reluctance to visit the country. Premack, too, has not had the opportunity to compare the sites first hand.

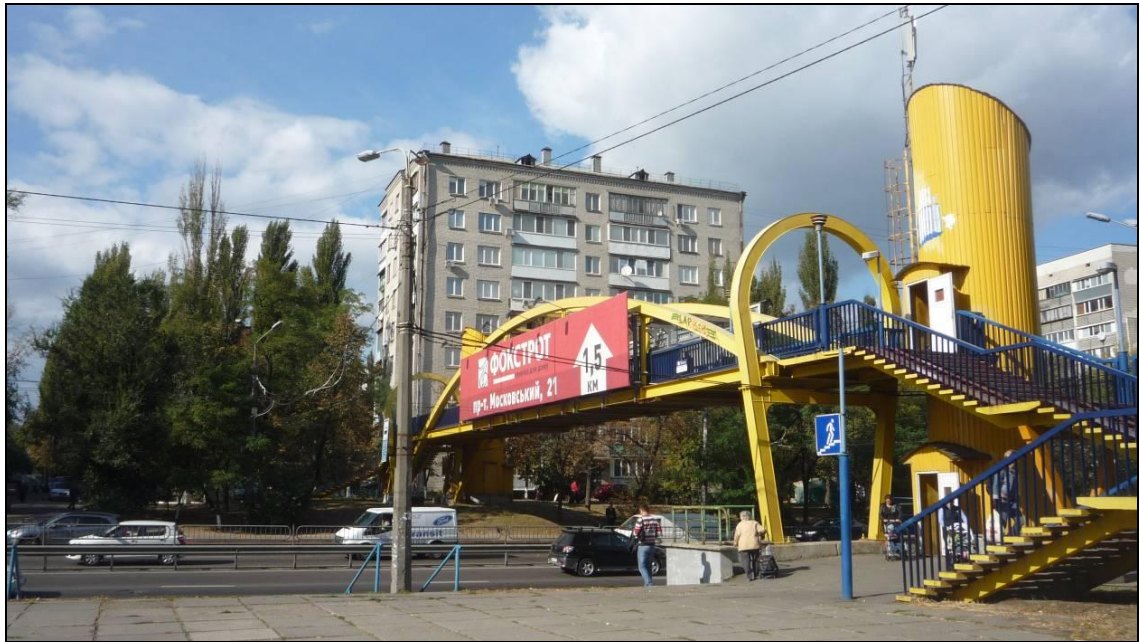


Figure 2.14: Road alongside Babi Yar, Kiev



Figure 2.15: Road alongside Babi Yar Park, Denver

All planting was to reflect the aforementioned similarity between the two landscapes. The haunting resemblance is mentioned in a speech dated 1974, author unknown, which is noted as written for the occasion of the unveiling of the first sign at the site:

General landscape construction would be harmonious with the site. The plantings and planting areas will be designed using plant materials which are native to, or compatible with, the rigorous climate of both Denver and the Babi Yar of Kiev. (Babi Yar Park Foundation, Planning document, *n.d.*)

The aforementioned manually activated voice-over at the entrance to the Park – which is formed from two blocks of stone with a space between them to echo a ravine (see figure 2.16) – tells visitors the history of Babi Yar and the park, informing them that the place they stand bears a “haunting resemblance to the original ravine in Kiev as it was during 1941” (transcript of narrative recorded 2011; this extract was also included in the earliest version of the transcript in the archives). The idea that the park’s landscape, in its resemblance to Babi Yar, could bring visitors somehow ‘closer’ to the tragic history of the original ravine, was implicit in the Park Foundation’s rhetoric. Plans for landscaped features also included a ‘Forest that Remembers’ and a ‘People Place’, an amphitheatre with a cylinder of earth from the original ravine at Babi Yar at its centre (see figure 2.17). The earth was transported by Denver State Senator John Bermingham when he visited Kiev, according to Ginsburg’s recollection, at some point early in the 1970s. Apparently, Bermingham had, upon visiting Babi Yar, felt a sudden compulsion to scoop some soil into his bag to take back to Denver with him. He presented it to the Park Foundation on his return, and its burial at the centre of the park in Denver serves to highlight the notion that the earth itself constitutes a carrier or vessel of memory. Having travelled across the international cultural imaginary, prompted in part by literary remediation, Ukrainian soil itself now took a transcontinental journey.²⁸ The soil ‘mixture’, to use Kuznetsov’s description, was now operating within an international context, as well as being internationally constituted.

For Gass and Ginsburg, however, along with other members of the Babi Yar Park Foundation, the symbolic resonance of the park’s natural features goes beyond its

²⁸ In another recollection of this soil, Gass intriguingly recalls that at one stage the park was vandalised, and the seal that covered the hole where the cylinder was buried was stolen. The culprit was never discovered, and a new seal was commissioned from the original design. Gass was present when the new seal was fitted. He remarked, casually, that as far as he could see the cylinder was no longer there. It had been buried a few feet underground, but apparently the workers fitting the seal had to dig quite far down to insert the anchors that held it in place. Whether Gass simply did not catch sight of the cylinder or it was truly missing is impossible to say without again removing the seal and excavating the ground. Yet this raises intriguing questions about the symbolism of the soil itself; if it is no longer there, is it right to mislead visitors by signposting its presence? Or is the very idea of the soil enough to facilitate some kind of engagement regardless? These questions deserve further attention.



Figure 2.16: Entrance to the Babi Yar Park, Denver. The button that starts the voiceover is on the stone pedestal on the right hand side



Figure 2.17: Seal over the earth transported from Babi Yar, at the centre of Babi Yar Park's 'People Place'

similarity to Babi Yar. From its earliest inception, the space was designed to be a 'living monument'. It was meant, not only to present visitors with a 'Ukrainian' topography, but to restore and perhaps even redeem that topography in Denver. Coincidentally, in doing so, they re-inscribe a faith in nature that Kuznetsov and Grossman, albeit in different ways, imply was lost throughout their exposure to atrocity in Ukraine. This is evident in the park's design, for example the 'Forest that Remembers'. A draft inscription for a sign planned to stand next to it reads:

In this grove [...] one hundred trees stand tall. Each a living memorial to men, women, children [...] In every leaf, their lives; in every branch, their families; in every rooted trunk, their past. / Life courses even when leaves have fallen. Memory persists even after presence parts. / Can we not learn from the trees? Each stands alone – yet, flourishes in the benevolent shade of the others. / Seasons change, so must we. Winter's madness must not dry the sap of loving life again. (Babi Yar Park Foundation, Planning document, *n.d.*)

As a way of fundraising for the planting of the grove, the Park Foundation ran a scheme in which participants could sponsor an individual tree. They received cards on which the following legend was printed: "Why a Tree? It is a 'being' and a 'becoming' – symbolizing the promise of a continued circle of life"²⁹. The memorial potential of the forest as presented diverges notably from the "treacherous" realm described by Grossman, in which the relationship between natural forms is instead defined by constant battles and struggles (Grossman 2006, 391).

The rhetoric surrounding the forest fits into the larger discourse of the Foundation, positing the park as a "place of life" in opposition to Babi Yar as "a place of death" (speaker system narrative, *n.d.*, ca. early 1970s). Such is notable throughout their promotional and fundraising endeavours, for example in the juxtaposition of the seeds "of human agony" sown at Babi Yar with "seeds of conscience and concern" from which the park in Denver was to grow (sign unveiling speech, unauthored, 1974). These statements also prompt us to consider another element of the park's remit: its transcultural slant. "The concept of Babi Yar reflects a spirit of humanitarianism that transcends all boundaries" (Ginsburg, *n.d.*, ca. early 1970s).

Because Judaism's love of its own, and love for all mankind are inextricably interwoven, the Babi Yar Park concept has evolved beyond commemorating solely the tragic history of the Jew [...] With the aid of people throughout our country, this park will grow in beauty and viability, thriving on its message of freedom and dignity for all men, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or national citizenship. It will speak out against anti-humanism anywhere in this world of ours... for wherever a man is harmed, we are all hurt. (Ginsburg, 1974)

²⁹ A mock up of the original card design can be found in the Penrose archive.

By this stage, then, it becomes clear that the specific political thrust of the CCCSJ had been replaced by a more general message promoting international solidarity beyond national and cultural boundaries. From 1971 to 1983 the park was developed in phases as a result of the Park Foundation's persistent dedication to raising awareness and funds (see Gass 2010 and Park Foundation correspondence and minutes throughout this period). Significantly, Gass recalls, "[t]he support of the Jewish community was astonishingly meagre" (2010). For 23 years, the Park Foundation continued to develop the site. Although they do not corroborate Young's description of a park fallen into disuse, Gass certainly acknowledges that both himself and Ginsburg, recognizing [their] own mortality" (2010), were aware that their ultimate goals for the park would require new collaborative partners in order to be fulfilled. With this in mind, the Park Foundation was eventually disbanded in 2005 and the stewardship of the Park passed to Denver's Mizel Museum, although members of the original Foundation continued to play a key role in the park's development in an advisory capacity.

From 2005 the aims to "improve the public visibility of the park and adapt it to the museum's program" became central to its development (Gass 2010). With regards the former point, conversations with Gass, Ginsburg and the Mizel's Executive Director Ellen Premack reveal that 'visibility' was and continues to be both a local and a global issue: the way the park has been landscaped to date meant that there was little view over it from the surrounding area, thus casual passers-by were unlikely to realise its presence and significance; Premack also believes that the park potentially has relevance to the national and international community and that its profile should be raised accordingly, as do both Gass and Ginsburg. In order to say a little more about the latter point that the park should be able to enhance the Mizel Museum's program, it is necessary to briefly foreground its main aims and remit as an institution, that is, to function as a "portal to the contemporary Jewish experience. Its exhibits, events and educational programs inspire people of all ages and backgrounds to celebrate diversity" and "offer interactive experiences that promote community, understanding and multiculturalism" (Mizel Museum website 2012a). The permanent exhibit is focused on a "Jewish journey across time and space from a contemporary perspective", with an essential goal "for each visitor, in examining the experience of the Jewish people, to think about and feel proud of his or her own personal journey, and to feel inspired by the fact that journeys don't end but rather continue to unfold" (ibid.). Thus whilst it centres on Jewish culture specifically, it is used as a platform for engagement *across* cultures; Premack sees the museum's exhibits and education programmes as ways "to open minds, change attitudes, and discover paths that tie our

world together through respect for our common humanity” (Mizel Museum website 2012b). These are what we might call transcultural priorities.

In 2006 the Mizel announced an international competition for a design to develop Babi Yar Park, and in 2009 confirmed that a design by the artist-architect team Julian Bonder and Krzysztof Wodiczko had been selected to take the project forward. The development, as previously, is currently taking place in stages by necessity, for substantial – and as yet to be found - finances are required to carry out the design as a whole. However, it is possible to assess the nature of what it is hoped will unfold via the publicity brochure produced by the Mizel Museum to showcase Wodiczko and Bonder’s design. Notably, elements such as the ‘People Place and the ‘Forest that Remembers’ are to be maintained (although the latter is referred to in the new design as the ‘Grove of Remembrance’), and integrated into what Wodiczko and Bonder describe as “an active site of memory” which will facilitate “three kinds of memories”: the first focused “on maintaining the memory of the Holocaust and of Babi Yar”, the second “on present and historic events and their immediate emotional aftermath”, and the third “on active emotional and thinking responses to new, unfolding world events that contain and bring back the memory of past terror and genocide which elicit a call for action towards a better future” (Wodiczko and Bonder 2009). In order to achieve this the team propose the addition of four new elements to the original design: an Empty Volume (an empty space surrounded by “monumental” walls with square holes running through them containing memorial flames; the empty space is to be a “forum for conversations, [...] contemplation and solitude”); the transformation of the ravine into a “reflective and active path” with a stream of “continuous running water” to “represent on going life”; and a Monitoring and Information centre where “the world situation indicating all points of emerging terror activities” will be displayed to visitors. Throughout, the new design functions in accordance with recently emerging scholarship in acknowledging and further encouraging the dialogical nature of the memorial experience in landscape. Given that Bonder’s published work (2009) on commemoration has been part of this discourse, this is unsurprising. The team suggest that their Working Memorial “will significantly transform Babi Yar Park into a unique and new kind of public landscape: a participatory public place and an active agent for culture and dialogue” that “encourages visitors of all ages to be conscious and productive” (Wodiczko and Bonder 2009). The new park is to be as much about the visitor as the victim.

It is thus obvious that the new design echoes the Mizel Museum’s transcultural priorities. However, a more specific narrative arguably emerges prominently in the

brochure, in sections authored by both the design teams and the Museum respectively: the integration of Babi Yar within a discourse on acts of terror. In this respect, the new design can also be seen to complement the aims of the Mizel Museum's partner museum, another Denver institution also founded by Larry Mizel, the Counterterrorism Education Learning Lab (CELL). Inevitably, this is another project that deserves a more thorough analysis than can be offered here. For the purposes of this argument, it is sufficient to note the main stated purposes of the CELL and its permanent exhibition, *Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere: Understanding the Threat of Terrorism*: "educate and empower citizens and organisations with the tools to become more informed, prepared and involved with their own communities in order to help combat the threat of terrorism"; the exhibit "provides visitors with an in-depth understanding of the history of terrorism, the methods terrorists employ and the extent to which terrorism impacts societies around the world" (CELL Visitors Guide leaflet 2011). The CELL, the Mizel Museum, and the Babi Yar Park now form a triangle of sites in Denver with intimately related concerns.

In the first phase of Babi Yar Park's redevelopment, a significant addition is being made to the site which is not referred to in the brochure but certainly fits its rubric; the aforementioned sculpture made from World Trade Centre steel. The steel, which arrived in Denver in July 2011, is being used to construct two sculptures, one for the CELL and one for the Babi Yar Park. The latter "will feature a so-called 'earth sculpture' [...] a vertical surface with a marble and glass reflective wall leading to a plaza" containing the steel (Marcus 2011). Both Ginsburg and Premack reject firmly the notion that inauguration of the sculpture is in any way intended as a political gesture. As far as Gass and Ginsburg are concerned, their aims have not changed since they became part of the Babi Yar Park Foundation in 1970-71; they see the new developments, including the inauguration of the steel, as commensurate with their original agenda to encourage "freedom and equality for all men."

The questions raised by the Park are thus: what are the real similarities and differences between two events such as 9/11 and the massacres at Babi Yar in 1941, and do their differences matter if by focusing on their similarities a genuine feeling of differentiated solidarity can be produced? Furthermore, is it possible, as Ginsburg and Premack suggest, to leave out politics in a memorial endeavour?

The Holocaust, the Holodomor and the War on Terror: shared ground?

Across the two parts of this chapter, the dynamics of two memoryscapes have been uncovered. In pursuing this exploration, I have taken a necessarily brief glance at certain other museums and memorials within the larger landscapes inhabited by these sites (the Holodomor 'Memory Candle' in Kiev and the Mizel Museum and CELL in Denver). I have demonstrated the way in which designers and curators at the Babi Yar Park, Denver, have embraced a transcultural approach to Holocaust representation of the type that, to date, has been refused in Ukrainian memory discourses. The 'Anyone, anytime, anywhere' narrative in Denver finds its opposite at the site of the original Babi Yar atrocity, where memorials to a number of cultural groups jostle for space in the shadow of the monumental Soviet sculpture group. The 'memory competition' between the Holocaust and the Holodomor as discussed early on in the chapter serves to accentuate this lack of cohesion within the Kiev site as a whole. In this final section I evaluate some of the questions raised by these two memoryscapes.

To take first the examples from Ukrainian territory, I would argue that the Holocaust and the Holodomor share more ground than current memory discourse and landscapes suggest, and that any competitiveness that does exist could be productively neutralised by an official recognition of this ground. Both the Holocaust and the Holodomor can be seen as the result of attempts to colonize Ukrainian land. Snyder's research draws attention to the forces that shaped Ukraine under Stalin and Hitler, revealing many parallels – both political and experiential – in the process; furthermore, such parallels become even more pronounced when taken alongside the accounts given by Desbois of his field work across Ukraine and other available testimonial accounts from both periods, particularly those of Kuznetsov. In both the Holodomor and the Holocaust, people who occupied this territory were forced to fight against each other for survival, experienced or witnessed fatal starvation, were driven to murder and cannibalism. Victims of both regimes were buried chaotically, in mass graves full to overflowing which have come to characterise Ukrainian memories of landscape in these periods. The traditional relationship between those who lived in Ukraine and the nation's soil was also subverted by both regimes. This subversion was a reality for a number of cultural and ethnic groups; more Ukrainians may have died in the famine, and more Jews may have been killed in the Holocaust, but the two atrocities both affected each of these groups and a number of others besides. Only ten years apart, many people from these groups suffered under both regimes, and the commonality of this suffering is explicit in their testimonies, and in the case of Grossman, in his integration of testimony into fiction.

Yet recognition of these similarities is frequently refused both within and beyond the Ukraine.

The identification of the Holocaust with the Holodomor has [...] been rejected by most non-Ukrainian historians. It challenges the singular and exclusive place of the Holocaust and Auschwitz in the collective memory not only of Jews but also of most other Western Europeans and Americans. (Kappeler 2009, 59)

Within Ukraine itself, Kappeler suggests that whilst “the revived Ukrainian national history [...] constituting above all a history of the Ukrainians, has its merits. It fulfils the important task of legitimizing and strengthening the new Ukrainian state and the fragile Ukrainian nation”, on the other hand, a “historical narrative that excludes non-Ukrainians” fails to articulate much that is central to the country’s development; it is on this basis that Kappeler pleads for “the opening up of the narrow mono-ethnonational approach and for a multiethnic history of Ukraine” (2009, 61). It is unclear in Kappeler’s argument exactly who is being excluded – whether “non-Ukrainians” is a reference to Jews, which confuses the issue as some Ukrainians are also Jewish – but his argument that instead of engaging in an ethnocentric competition centring on the questions “Who has suffered most?” and “Who had the greatest number of victims?” one should “tell what is known about all the atrocities of the past, their victims and perpetrators, regardless of ethnic origin” (ibid., 62) is one which deserves to be taken forward.

Based on the noted parallels between victim and witness experiences of atrocity throughout the Holodomor and the Holocaust in Ukraine, I would suggest that recognition of this commonality presents an opportunity to move beyond competitive memory and focus on what those who have lived on Ukrainian soil have shared. Whether the new museums to be built at Babi Yar and elsewhere in Kiev will take up this opportunity and engage with the longer history of atrocity, suffering, and perseverance that has characterised the experiences of all cultures on Ukrainian territory, remains to be seen. Based on activity up to 2010, it seems fair to suggest that the political concerns which have dominated the Kiev memoryscape have not resulted in any commemorative practices at the original Babi Yar site that attempt to harness its potential to facilitate transcultural identification.

Such an attempt has clearly been central to the redesign of the Babi Yar Park in Denver. The park curators decision to link the events at Babi Yar to those at the World Trade Centre in 2001 is made explicit with the installation of the aforementioned steel sculpture. However, the connection between the Holocaust and the War on Terror which grounds this attempt is rather different to that I have suggested as existing between the

Holodomor and the Holocaust. On both 29th-30th September 1931 and 11th September 2001, lives were unjustly cut short by regimes which used terror as a weapon against particular cultural or national groups. However, the disparities between the two events are arguably more notable. The attack on the twin towers was a challenge to the hegemony of the United States, but it cannot be regarded as an attempt to erase that nation and its citizens from the face of the earth. The Babi Yar massacre took place during the occupation of the Ukrainian capital by German troops, and it was one of many similar mass shootings then taking place throughout the country. The attack on the World Trade Centre was an isolated, unexpected event for those whose lives it took and for those who witnessed it.

Some feel that such divergences are of little note: “[a]s the Holocaust has been for many Jews, 9/11 is now for many Americans; though of course radically different in scale, timing and circumstance, both events are emotionally devastating and morally clear cut since the murder of innocents is always, utterly wrong” (Schweber and Findling, 2007, 1). Such arguments resonate with the approach adopted by the Babi Yar Park’s curators. They do not state that the two events were the *same*; their concern is directing positive and active responses to the persecution of others, whoever they are. That both Babi Yar and 9/11 are “emotionally devastating” and “morally clear cut”, to their respective constituencies, is central to their integration. Yet without attending to the specificity of the two events and their larger contexts – to their “radical difference” – sameness is implied. As Peter Novick has argued, “collective memory simplifies: sees events from a single, committed perspective”, and may be “in crucial senses ahistorical, even anti-historical” (2000, 3-4). Whilst curators of the park in Denver laudably integrate the Holocaust into what they hope to be an ethically productive multidirectional narrative – one which acknowledges the extent to which memory is subject to “borrowing” – the collective memory they promote risks overlooking the specificities of the events it brings together. The co-ordinates upon which parallels between Holocaust and 9/11 have been based – whether in the museum environment, the media, or in academic discourse, both within and beyond America itself – are not always, I would argue, justified or desirable. Laub’s suggestion of a resemblance based on their “equally unimaginable” nature as events (2003, 204), for example, repeats the fundamental assumption I argued against in Chapter I: that some experiences are completely ineffable. Furthermore whilst the specific motivations that have prompted the curators of the Babi Yar Park should be given due attention in any attempt to evaluate the project overall, it must also be acknowledged that it takes place within, and is perhaps inspired by, a particular national context, one in

which, as Novick argues, the Holocaust had “become a moral and ideological Rorschach test” (Novick 2000, 12) even before the attack on the World Trade Centre had taken place. In some instances since, for example at a *Day of Reflection and Remembrance* at the USHMM a year after 9/11 during which Holocaust survivors read out the names of those killed in the attack, this use of the Holocaust as a template effectively “emptied each [event] of their historical particularity” (Bernard-Donals 2005, 79). This is the existing national backdrop against which the re-orientation of the Babi Yar Park is taking place, and, regardless of the particular aims of those who conceived this re-orientation, in contributing to this discourse a subscription to its main tenets is implied.

Thus, I would argue, the potential of the site to develop a sense of differentiated solidarity may be somewhat undermined if the new design fails to adequately “distinguish” two very “different histories of violence” from one another. Nonetheless, the curators have not gone as far as to imply that any particular trauma is “bigger” than another (to refer back to Moses’ description of the phallic nature of zero-sum thinking); it would be more accurate to say that they are in some sense equating two ‘traumas’ that perhaps do not share enough, particularly in terms of victim experience, to warrant that equation.

The future of memory in Ukraine and beyond

By considering these two memorial environments alongside other co-ordinates in the respective surrounding cityscapes – the Memory Candle Holodomor memorial and museum in Kiev, and the Mizel Museum and CELL in Denver – I have drawn attention to the dialogical networks of memory discourse in which they exist. I have suggested that the landscape of Babi Yar, Kiev, and the surrounding cityscape, has been largely shaped by political and national concerns: initially those of the Soviet Union, and since 1991, those of Ukrainian nationalism. Conversely, the designers and curators of the Babi Yar Park in Denver, in spite of its political origins in the 1970s, are primarily driven today by a desire to promote ethical engagement beyond national boundaries. Both landscapes are seen, to some extent, as a means to a particular end; as is always the case, memoryscapes reveal as much about present concerns as they do about the pasts they commemorate. In comparing the two, I am left questioning whether it is ever possible to create memorial space that combines an ethical politics of memory with a politically responsible ethics. The Holocaust in Ukraine, in both territorialized and re-territorialized spaces, is yet to find such expression.

Whilst these two memorial spaces say so much about their respective present contexts, it is also worth drawing attention to the varying degrees to which they have retained a specificity with regards to the Ukrainian Holocaust and the way it was experienced. In a discussion of literature and testimony in this chapter – from Pronicheva’s testimony to that of Desbois’ interviewees, and from Kuznetsov’s memoir Thomas’s fiction – I have demonstrated the way in which this experience was one of a disrupted landscape, embedded in the very soil of the Ukrainian topography. Babi Yar, too, I have suggested, is a microcosm of this. Whilst the landscape of the ravine itself has been radically altered, transformed into an incoherent memorial space which bears little resemblance to the place experienced by victims in 1941, the Babi Yar Park in Denver, to some extent, takes that original landscape as a starting point for developing memories of Babi Yar for those who did not witness it. Furthermore, they attempt to transform the atrocious experience of that landscape into something more positive for the future; whilst the rhetoric is at times somewhat redemptive, the ‘living memorial’ functions as a way of keeping memories of Babi Yar alive in a way that responds to and recognises memory’s dynamism and metamorphosis.

It should be no surprise, given this dynamism, that the Ukraine’s competitive memory terrain may be about to shift; indeed many would argue that that shift has already begun. On 10th December 2010 Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich’s website announced that the running of the UINM was to be transferred to Ministers in the Ukrainian cabinet. Effectively, the government will directly control the Institute’s budget. Whilst Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov insists that the related museum will not be closed as a result, as various media sources have suggested,³⁰ the transfer of the budget is suggestive. The former director of the UINM has been replaced by Valery Soldatenko, a member of the Communist Party who outraged a number of Ukrainian historians and political opponents by arguing that the Holodomor was the "the result of difficult circumstances," and had not been artificially produced (Radio Free Liberty, 2010). This was a direct counter to the law of 2006 that pronounced the Holodomor to be an act of genocide, and entirely opposed to the rhetoric employed in the Candle of Memory. Meanwhile, the 70th anniversary of events at Babi Yar seemed to prompt a resurgence of interest in the Holocaust in Ukraine in late 2011. Delegations to the site itself were frequent; a touring exhibition showcasing Desbois’ project visited Kiev for the first time to coincide with the anniversary; and in October the aforementioned plan to build two new

³⁰ See for example Roman Kabachiy, (2010), who highlights various ways the change has already begun to affect the activities of museums controlled by the UINM.

Jewish museums in Kiev, one at Babi Yar itself, was announced. The memory of Babi Yar was also politicised anew in January 2012, when a new international Jewish organization, 'The World Forum for Russian Jewry', was inaugurated at the United Nations Holocaust Memorial Day service and conference, with images of Babi Yar on screens in the background (Alperin 2012). Alexander L. Levin, president of the Greater Kiev Jewish Community, announced the forum's purpose: "to bring together the Russian-speaking Jews of the world and save us and others from the next catastrophe and to protect our national land and the State of Israel. We stand ready to unite against the nuclear program of Iran [...] We will not let another Holocaust engulf us" (in Alperin, 2012). The Holocaust is here mobilized in a way that conflates the historical and political specificity of both the Nazi genocide and the conflict between Israel and Palestine, much as Bernard-Donals argues has been the case in American memorial practices that take the Holocaust as a framework for the commemoration of 9/11. In the case of the World Forum for Russian Jewry, the mobilization is simply more transparent in using the Holocaust to justify continuing military conflict.

Meanwhile in Denver, commenting on their inclusion of 9/11 steel in the park landscape, Premack and Larry Mizel argue that "[i]f you want a site to be relevant and meaningful and bring it to life, you have to go forward [...] This is Babi Yar Park. We're bringing additional elements to it, but we're not taking anything away" (in Jacobs, 2012). Furthermore, with regards educating visitors about the War on Terror, Mizel argues that "Jews, who have a tie to Israel, had a better awareness of terrorism before the US woke up to it on 9/11 [...] I felt we were uniquely situated to provide the proper background and support to educate the public on the nature of terrorism" (ibid.). Whether or not one agrees with the notion of a specifically Jewish appreciation of the threat of terrorism, it is clear that Mizel and Premack do not envision that the historical or political specificity of either the Holocaust or 9/11 will be elided at the new Babi Yar Park. It is not that these memory entrepreneurs necessarily encourage such an elision; however, there is no way of ensuring a confluence between their own ethical intentions and the collective memories produced, shaped, or mobilized as a result. As commentators, it lies with us to exercise vigilance about these memories as they unfold in the future. Whilst on one hand the comparative memorial frameworks mentioned here – both at the Babi Yar Park and as set up by the Soviet Forum for Russian Jewry – urge an increased understanding and recognition of the way in which "different histories of violence" may be "implicated in each other", the way in which they do this does not necessarily imply or promote due attention to the factors that differentiate them (see Rothberg, forthcoming).

It is fairly certain that, as the political landscape of Ukraine continues to change, so too will its memoryscapes. The inauguration of two Holocaust museums would do much to redress an enduring imbalance; yet clearly this should not be at the expense of understanding the Holodomor and its place in Ukrainian history. The danger is that one zero-sum competition will simply evolve into another; as Rothberg notes, “[t]he struggle for recognition is fundamentally unstable and subject to ongoing reversal [...] today’s ‘losers’ may turn out to be tomorrow’s ‘winners’” (2009, 5-6). For a never-ending reversal to be avoided, I would argue, memory culture concerning Ukraine – be it at the centre of the nation or 6000 miles away – must aim to combine the ethics of remembering with a reflexive awareness of political context. If this can be achieved, between the diverse cultures of present day Ukraine and the US there exists a potential platform for ethically oriented transcultural memory work: the creation of a genuine differentiated solidarity. Whether such a platform can be achieved is a question for the future, but if the rapidity with which cultural memory discourse in Ukraine has evolved in recent years is anything to go by, that future may not be far off.

* * *

I visited Babi Yar, Kiev, in late September 2011, around the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the massacre. The day before many official delegations were due to visit, the area around the Soviet era memorial was being re-gravelled and the monument itself was being intensively cleaned. Amidst this activity, groups of Ukrainian school children lined up in front of the sculpture group to have their photo taken by their teachers. Many held carnations to leave at the foot of the monument; others talked on their mobile phones. A visit to Babi Yar is part of normal school life in Ukraine today, which, after years of amnesia, is no small achievement. Yet something about the memorial complex makes it difficult to imagine what happened here in 1941, a feeling perhaps down to, or at least exacerbated by, the knowledge that the original ravine does not exist anymore. You cannot be sure, as a result, whether you’re standing in the ‘right’ place.

At the bottom of the small ravine south of the Menorah, an A4 paper sign in a plastic cover reads (in Ukrainian; tr. Olga Yelchenko):

RIBBON ALLEY

This is our memory of the victims of Babyn Yar and the Kurenivka tragedy of 1961

TIE YOUR OWN RIBBON!

A collection of ribbons are tied to surrounding tree branches (see figure 2.18). This area, unlike the memorial complex, has not been cleared up for the anniversary; empty bottles, plastic bags, and the remains of a small bonfire litter the ravine's floor. Nonetheless, somehow it is easier to think about Babi Yar's past – about man's capacity for destruction beyond the limits of the human imagination – here, amongst the ribbons and the rubbish, than it is anywhere else in the park.

It seems to me that Kiev today is no longer silent. Before leaving the city, I make a stop at the "Museum of Microminiature" in the Perschershk Lavra; one room in which the miniature works of Ukrainian artist Nikolay Syadrisky are displayed behind a row of microscopes: a caravan of golden camels set inside the eye of a needle; a model of a windmill perched on half of a poppy seed; a chess set, poised ready for a game, sits atop a pin head. It is hard to comprehend how Syadrisky makes these tiny objects. He has to "catch the moment of absolute silence between two heartbeats" to create them (*HH Journal* 2008). They force the viewer to marvel at man's capacity for creation beyond the limits of the human imagination. The last of his sculptures I see before leaving is an engraved human hair. Faintly visible, under the microscope, are the words "Long Live Peace" in Ukrainian. The city's co-ordinates speak to one another, today, in unexpected ways that only those who travel through it can hear.



Figure 2.18: "Ribbon Alley", Babi Yar, Kiev

Chapter Three

Lidice

Through the brilliance of an image, the distant past resounds with echoes, and it is hard to know at what depth these echoes will reverberate and die away

Gaston Bachelard (1969, xii)

The village of Lidice in the Czech Republic was razed by Nazi soldiers in 1942 as an act of retaliation for the assassination of *SS-Obergruppenführer* Reinhardt Heydrich.¹ Today, rebuilt, it has become a symbol of memory's resilience in the face of destruction. Originally home to 483 people, the population of Lidice was decimated by the attack: 173 male inhabitants, mainly miners and factory workers, were shot in the head, and the remaining women and children were forcibly deported, many to concentration camps. 82 of the children and 60 of the women died before the war ended.² A total of 340 people were killed. The destruction of the village itself was undertaken with extraordinary attention to detail; it took over a year to complete ordered alterations to the topography of the land, which was to be covered with soil imported from Germany (Stehlik 2004, 96–7, see figure 3.1). Disproportionately, the Nazis took this opportunity to display the extent of their power in occupied Europe. That they chose to do this via a topographical territorialization

¹ Two airmen from Lidice, Josef Horák and Josef Stříbrný, were accused of complicity in the assassination; despite lack of evidence for their involvement Hitler announced that Lidice was to be destroyed to “make up for [Heydrich’s] death on 9 June 1942” (Stehlik 2004, 71).

² The majority of the children were sent to the Chelmno extermination camp, where it is suspected they were killed on the day of their arrival (2 July 1942) (Stehlik 2004, 100). Seven others who had been selected for ‘Germanization’ were sent to an orphanage run by *Lebensborn*, an SS organisation established to “reinforce the German population” (ibid., 101). The women were initially sent to the Ravensbrück Concentration Camp; some were subsequently moved to Majdanek or Auschwitz (ibid., 104-5). 143 women and 17 children survived and returned to Lidice after the war.



Figure 3.1: Postcard showing Lidice before and after the Nazi's destruction and re-landscaping

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is consistent with the argument pursued throughout this thesis: that the Nazis were significantly centred, both practically and ideologically, on landscape, in terms of both means and ends. Landscape was as much a representative, symbolic medium as it was a physically facilitative platform for warfare. The Germans renamed the place where Lidice had stood *Vorwerk* [tr. 'outlying estate'] (ibid.). Its destruction, conceived by the Nazis as a warning to partisans and agitators, was publicized internationally as a demonstration of German domination. Following a fundraising campaign in the United Kingdom, which will be considered in more detail later in the second part of this chapter, a new Lidice was built overlooking the site of the old village almost immediately after the war ended, allowing the few survivors of the original settlement to return and build new lives. To date there is relatively little scholarly work about Lidice, yet the memory of events there exists today in a number of communities around the world which have, at first glance, no connection to it.

Echoing the trajectory of the previous chapter on Babi Yar, this examination of Lidice begins at the site itself as a landscape of memory before moving on to consider how memories of the events that took place there have travelled across the world. Lidice became notorious almost immediately after it was razed as a symbol of complete destruction. As a result of the attention to detail with which this destruction was pursued, there was little left to memorial entrepreneurs; occasional foundations are perceptible in Lidice's landscape, but the almost complete lack of physical remnants differentiates the original village site from many other site-based commemorative spaces. Whilst the Nazi endeavour to eliminate Lidice from history was frustrated by the international response to its destruction, extensive topographical alterations permanently altered the geography of the area. Beyond the few foundations, the original village has disappeared from view. This chapter demonstrates the way in which Lidice has become a co-ordinate at the centre of a transcultural nexus of memory work which itself operates across local, national, and global levels of engagement. Looking firstly at site-based memorial endeavours, before progressing to an analysis of the ways in which the village (and the memory of what occurred there) interacts with a broader Holocaust memoryscape, I finally consider the effects of mobilizing the Lidice massacre; of constructing it as an analogical parable for a contemporary culture of cosmopolitan memory.

At Lidice today, a substantial memorial complex, including a rose garden, a museum, and an art gallery, now stands; these features have been introduced gradually since 1950 and been subject to substantial development over time. As was the case with Buchenwald and Babi Yar, the way this development occurred was partially dictated by political factors, not least by the communist approach to Holocaust memory and

commemoration. Accordingly Lidice's curation and maintenance – again like both Buchenwald and Babi Yar – changed quite radically in 1990. In the years between 1948 and 1989, when the communist government was in place, the site was primarily used for “political gatherings which the power-wielders of that time abused to present their own ideological clichés” (Stehlik 2007, 142). This approach to some extent explains the monumental architectural style of the museum and memorial complex, which was completed in 1962 and was the primary site of the aforementioned political gatherings. That the communists had utilized the site throughout these years radically affected the way Lidice developed after 1989; the memorial's website asserts that “state representatives wrongfully connected” the village with communism, thus “did not provide any financial support to the village so that the museum and the rose garden could be sustained. They requested for all control over the memorial and the pious area including the rose garden to be taken over by the village.” The village could not finance the continued management of the space, and it was largely neglected until 2000, when the responsibility for its care was transferred to the Czech Ministry of Culture. The rose garden was restored almost immediately; in 2005-6 the museum was overhauled and fitted with a new permanent exhibition; and a separate education centre particularly designed for use by Czech schools now sits alongside it (inaugurated 2008). The art gallery is home to an International Children's Exhibition, showcasing the results of an annual art competition ongoing since 1967³ which functions as an active memorial to the children who died in Lidice; the 2011 competition received 25,400 entries by children from 65 countries (Kasalicka 2011), testifying to a considerable global interest in the village.

As in previous chapters I pay particular attention here to the outdoor landscape of the memorial, which is today rigorously curated and maintained, the planting in particular designed to function symbolically within the memorial space. Via Lidice's rose garden, in particular, I consider both the affective and ethical potential and limitations of natural ‘curation’ in the Holocaust context. The approach to managing Lidice's landscape, I suggest, is notably divergent from that found at other prominent Holocaust memorial sites. At Lidice, with few architectural remnants to ‘stand in’ for history, designers have had to find alternatives. This analysis is undertaken with particular attention to National Socialist landscaping practice and associated ideology, and to their original attempt to territorialize Lidice with German soil. Whilst landscape scholar Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (2001, 298) has concluded a discussion of similar issues with regards to the

³ Initially a national event, the annual art competition has been international since 1973 (International Children's Exhibition of Fine Arts Lidice, 2011).

development of Bergen-Belsen with the statement that “[e]cological ideas are of no importance for [its design] ... they are not relevant to its history or to its meaning for the future”, I argue that ecology is as central to Holocaust commemorative landscaping as any other element of curatorial strategy. This argument is pursued via an examination of ideological and practical strategies of ‘fencing in’ and ‘weeding out’, both during the Holocaust itself and at Lidice today, based in part on Bauman’s contention that the logic of gardening was central to the creation of a world in which the Holocaust could happen.

Away from the site itself, many memorial texts appeared almost immediately after the massacre, including works of literature, music and film, prominent examples of which will be discussed in the second half of the chapter. Notably, I will suggest, beyond demonstrating a sense of differentiated transnational solidarity with the Czech people, these representations of Lidice utilize imagery of disrupted seasonal and pastoral landscape to frame the destruction of the village and its population. This section will also consider the commemorative endeavour of re-naming; from Europe to South America, community groups renamed towns, neighbourhoods, streets and squares, to confound the Nazis’ attempt to erase it from memory; parents even named their daughters after the village (Stehlik 2007, 114). I continue to consider mobilizations of Lidice since 1990, when many European archives became accessible to historians for the first time since World War II. As a result memories of Lidice have been connected with those of two other villages which had been subject to similar violent destruction by Nazi forces: Oradour-sur-Glane (France) and Putten (Netherlands). The result is an emerging network of local-global memories of resistance and suffering particular to continental Europe.⁴ Whilst the relationship between Lidice, Oradour, and Putten is firmly rooted in related historical events, my own discussion examines a recent activity which connects the site at Lidice to international locations which appear disconnected from the Czech village itself: the recently reported town twinning of Lidice with Khojaly, Azerbaijan (February 2011)⁵ and proposed twinning of Lidice with Stoke-on-Trent, England (the planning for which has been underway since September 2010). Twinning such as these, I suggest, continue the collective effort to keep the Lidice name alive in popular consciousness.⁶ Together, Lidice, Stoke-on-Trent, and Khojaly form a network of mobilized memories, a close examination

⁴ For a full discussion see Madelon de Keizer (forthcoming).

⁵ It should be noted that whilst the Khojaly twinning has been reported repeatedly in the press, in April 2012 Lidice Mayor Kellerova told the Czech magazine *Orešer* that Lidice and Khojaly were not ‘sister’ cities (*Panorama.am* 2012). These contradictory reports demand further investigation, but in this chapter I consider the motivations of those who advocate the project rather than its official outcome.

⁶ It should be noted that the two projects have respectively been referred to by the press as ‘twinning’; in the case of Khojaly, Azerbaijan the actual link was formalised by the signing of a ‘protocol of cooperation’ document by local authority figures from both areas.

of which facilitates not only a new understanding of Lidice as a symbol of the Holocaust in a global age, but also, and perhaps more crucially, an interrogation of the emerging critical frameworks which ground the very notion of memory's mobilization. Of particular interest is the model of cosmopolitanism – a “process of ‘internal globalization’ through which global concerns [increasingly] become part of local experiences” (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 2; after Beck 2004). For Levy and Sznajder cosmopolitanism leads to positive institutional change, opening the way for “ethically driven politics in the global arena” (2006, 161); the cosmopolitan memories formed against the Holocaust ‘backdrop’ have led the international community to establish “global human rights conventions as [guiding principles] in international peace- and wartime politics” (2006, 183). In examining transcultural mobilizations of Lidice, an opportunity arises to assess the extent to which theoretical models of memory, in particular the move towards cosmopolitanism exemplified in Levy and Sznajder’s work, can be seen to coalesce with actual, instrumental memory practices taking place in the world around us. The two Lidice twinning campaigns came about as a result of different motivations, and are characterized accordingly, yet they both emerge throughout this analysis as mobilizations of memory which suggest a disjuncture between the theorization and practice of cosmopolitanism.

III.I. Between the past and the future

That Lidice's landscape was radically altered by German soldiers was nothing new in itself, for, as discussed previously in this thesis, the Nazis transformed landscapes all over continental Europe; what differentiates the razing of Lidice from most other examples is that topographical re-structuring was the primary aim, not merely an incidental result. This section provides an overview of commemoration at Lidice itself, with a view to revealing how history and memory interact within its memorial landscape. In delineating the way this landscape functions at a local level, I establish a foundation for the broader analysis of national and global activity to come. Lidice lies approximately 20km from Prague, and is easily reached from the city by an hourly bus. It is one of two prominent site specific Holocaust memorial spaces in the Czech Republic, along with the former concentration camp and ghetto Theresienstadt (or Terezín in Czech). Czech land was being taken over by the German government in two stages after the Munich Pact of 1938 was signed by representatives from the UK, France and Italy, allowing Hitler to incorporate first the Sudetenland and, within six months, the remainder of Czechoslovakia, into the Reich. Hitler announced the creation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939. Officially it was an independent state within the Third Reich, but in actuality a "puppet government" (Crowe 1994, 48) put in place by the Germans ensured them of ultimate control over the land and its people. The central concern for this government was to aryanise the Protectorate, and Jews were initially the primary victims of the German campaign in what is today the Czech Republic.⁷ This is not to say that the Nazis cherished the Slavic races; indeed according to National Socialist ideology they were an inferior people,⁸ but in 1942 the 'Jewish problem' was foremost in Hitler's mind. Lidice was thus a special case, in the sense that non-Jewish Czechs were targeted, primarily as a result of the aforementioned assassination of *Reichsprotektor* Heydrich. Beyond the examples of Lidice and Terezín, the main impact made by the Nazis on Czech territory was the removal of Czech Jews from all over the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia: of 118,310 people listed as Jewish, 78,154 were to die at the hands of the Nazis by the end of the war (Burton 2003, 73). Because the Germans needed Czech armaments and agriculture, much of the

⁷ Winstone records the first stage in the campaign against the Jews in the Protectorate as a decree for the aryanisation of the economy in June 1939. When Reinhardt Heydrich took over the role of *Reichsprotektor* in October of the same year, Theresienstadt was transformed from a garrison town to a holding camp from which Jews were deported, most to Auschwitz (Winstone 2010, 157).

⁸ "Hitler was convinced that the Slavic race was incapable of forming its own state and hence had to be ruled by others"; rather than being eliminated, like the Jews, "Slavs were to play the role of slave labour and serve the master race" (Schneider and Wette 2006, 15). It is worth noting further that Czech Slavs were also differentiated from other Slavic races in the National Socialist hierarchy, and some argue that they fared somewhat better overall as a result (Berkley 1993, 19). Czechoslovak Gypsies were certainly an exception in this regard, and many thousands lost their lives to the Nazi campaign (Bugajski 1995, 296).

country, including its capital Prague was left intact. This was also in part due to the fact that the Nazis were able to occupy it without the need for a military defeat (Wolf 2007, 14). Thus whilst the Jewish population was decimated in this period, and is still far smaller in the city today than in the years before the war, “the contrast between the richness of the city’s preserved Jewish culture and the relative absence of modern Jewish life [is] greater than almost anywhere else in Europe” (Winstone 2010, 160).

This, then, is the larger landscape in which Lidice exists today. I here provide a brief overview of the landscape as a way into exploring the relationship between history and commemoration at the site itself. As was found to be the case at Buchenwald, different areas can be seen to reflect different moments in this relationship. Both the village and Terezín are frequently associated with the fate of child victims of the Nazi regime.⁹ As noted above, the Lidice children were deported and either exterminated or sent for ‘Germanization’, and their absence from the village is today made present in Lidice’s landscape with a bronze sculpture group (see figure 3.2).¹⁰ The creation of the art gallery, with its International Children’s Competition, further provides an active way in which Lidice’s lost youth can be remembered. They are also represented in the permanent exhibition in the site’s museum, where the postcards and letters they wrote to family members at the last stage of their deportation are displayed. The murdered men also have their own memorial in the landscape, at the site of the mass grave in which they were buried, which is today marked by a bed of rose bushes (see figure 3.3). An image of the mass grave filled with men’s bodies is projected on the floor in the museum, allowing the visitor to contemplate it as it was on June 10th 1942. The bed of roses now over the grave aesthetically mirrors the much larger aforementioned rose garden planted on another area of the site in 1955. This larger garden is dedicated to all the deceased inhabitants of Lidice: women are represented by pink roses, children with yellow, and men with dark red. Elsewhere at the site the Lidice women are also represented by three separate statues of female forms: one holding a rose which, according to the Lidice Memorial guide

⁹ Terezín was used by the Nazis as a model to show the international community that their camps were well-organized and humane internment spaces, an impression successfully corroborated by the Red Cross after a pre-arranged inspection there in 1944, preceded by a “‘beautification action’ [...] in which buildings were cleaned up, new facilities created and entertainments organized” (Winstone 2010, 168). Unknown to the Red Cross, the order they saw when they arrived was achieved only by frequent deportations of internees to Birkenau, thus limiting numbers and preventing overcrowding. That Terezín was in part run as the public face of the concentration camp system meant that those children who were not deported fared better than those in other camps. The Germans allowed the camp Jewish Council of Elders to institute special homes for children to “protect [them] as much as possible from the rigours of adult existence whilst also engendering a communal spirit [...] Within each home, children were organized into groups which were encouraged to develop a collective identity through activities such as sport and entertainment” (ibid.,171).

¹⁰ Named the ‘Memorial to the Children Victims of the War’, the sculpture group was created by artist Marie Uchytilová as a “symbol for [the] 13 million children who died in the Second World War” (Stehlik 2007, 144).



Figure 3.2: Monument to Lidice's children



Figure 3.3: Mass grave of the Lidice men

pamphlet, is a “symbol of new life in Lidice” (Vlk 2006), one with a child representing the plight of Lidice’s mothers, and one crying with her face buried in her arms, expressing “deep sorrow” (ibid.).¹¹ I will discuss the curation of this part of the site in more detail in the next section. Elsewhere, three sets of foundations remain in the grassed expanse between the rose garden and the memorial complex and museum: those of the farm owned by Lidice residents Stanislav and Anastazia Horák, which warrant preservation particularly because the farm’s garden was the location of the mass shooting of the Lidice men (see figure 3.4). They waited for execution in the cellar, thus the farm’s foundations are granted a particular significance in the landscape and marked accordingly with a memorial tablet. The other foundations still visible are those of Lidice’s St Martin’s church and former local school.

The memorial complex overlooking this landscape comprises a monumental hexagonal plaza with a fountain at the centre (figure 3.5), flanked by colonnades, the walls of which are decorated with three reliefs depicting the events of June 1942, and a pillared *gloriet* (a structure not unlike a gazebo) containing an eternal flame. The education centre, museum, and “memorial hall” (a room used for temporary exhibitions) open onto this space. From here visitors can view the gentle sloping valley where the original village once stood, which is divided from the new village by the rose garden (see figure 3.6). Other than the marking of the mass grave with a monument built by the Red Army in 1945, the first area to be transformed in the wake of the initial destruction was the site of the new village, which was ready for inhabitation by 1949 (Stehlik 2007, 137). The rose garden, named the ‘Friendship and Peace Park’ was added in 1955 (ibid.). These initiatives were primarily the result of the English campaign, which will be discussed further in the second half of this chapter.

Thus the topographical diversity of Lidice as it exists today can be seen to reflect the different stages of its historical development. It is notable, too, that Lidice now has its own ‘life’ beyond its function as a commemorative space, and the rose garden is both commemorative space and wedding venue (it is hired out to couples for ceremonies throughout the summer months). Thus memories of the past cohabit with present concerns and future hopes in Lidice’s diverse landscape. The new village (see figure 3.7), whilst still home to the last living survivors of the original massacre, is popular with commuters to nearby Prague; so much so, in fact, that a new development of 39 houses

¹¹ The woman with the rose and the Lidice mother were created by the sculptor Bedřich Stefan in the late 1950s and early 1960s; the crying woman was a later addition designed by sculptor Karel Lidický to “counterbalance” the woman with the rose (Vlk 2006).



Figure 3.4: Farm foundations



Figure 3.5: Lidice plaza and fountain



Figure 3.6: Postcard; aerial view of memorial landscape © Památník Lidice



Figure 3.7: Approach to the new Lidice village

began in April 2011, offering “comfortable living” in “modern and energy-efficient” surroundings (Prague Real Estate Website 2012); furthermore, plans for another development of 45 houses are also in place, by M&A Property Investors, “a private equity real estate investment company focused on opportunistic mid-size deals throughout Europe” (Businesswire.com 2011). The new village is in some ways very different from the original Lidice. Its working population in 1942 largely comprised farmers and miners who worked at the Poldi Smelting Works in nearby Kladno. Many had been skilled craftsmen in preceding years, but were forced to find alternative labour as a result in the worldwide economic crisis during the 1930s (Stehlik 2007, 22). Mining provided a comparatively stable source of income, despite the fact that industry across the country had been adversely affected by the Great Depression across Czechoslovakia (Agnew 2010, 191). Many miners and their families also farmed small patches of land to supplement this income. Beyond a few large farmsteads, the houses were small and often home to two or three families.

That a new Lidice exists today overlooking the old is partly the result of the fact that its men had turned to mining during the economic downturn. The aforementioned English fundraising campaign to facilitate rebuilding – named ‘Lidice Shall Live’ – was organized by a group of coal miners in Stoke-on-Trent. They heard about the village’s destruction when it became international news immediately after the massacre; they appear to have felt a sense of identification with Lidice’s inhabitants, a group of miners like themselves, who lived in a relatively poor rural location.¹² The miners voted to have part of their monthly pay deducted from their wage packets; they collected a total of £32,375.¹³ Employees at the potteries and various trade unions followed their example, and together they raised enough to build the new Lidice (Wheeler 1957, 18). The leader of the initial fundraising movement, Dr (later Sir) Barnett Stross, proclaimed that “the miner’s lamp” of Lidice could “send a ray of light across the sea to those who struggle in darkness” (1942).¹⁴ The ‘Lidice Shall Live’ campaign is now the foundation of the aforementioned twinning campaign between Lidice and Stoke, which I will return to in the second half of the chapter. The original achievement of the campaign was the complete reversal of the Nazis’ aims for Lidice. Hitler’s desire to completely erase the original village

¹² Stoke-on-Trent, or Stoke, a city in England’s West Midlands, has been historically dominated by industry, foremost as a producer of earthenware and china in its well-known potteries, but also as a significant centre for coal and iron mining (Fogarty 1945, 824).

¹³ As Robert Ffello commented during a House of Commons Debate in which Stoke’s connection with Lidice was discussed, “That is the equivalent of about £1 million in today’s money, which is not a bad feat for an impoverished community in north Staffordshire” (in Francis 2012).

¹⁴ Stross was a family doctor and Member of Parliament for the Stoke district of Hanley.

was almost completely achieved during the course of the year 1942-3. A visitor to the area shortly after the war ended recorded the landscape as follows:

Lidice was a typical Czech village, with low, cream-coloured houses clustered around a six-hundred-year-old church that had a baroque cupola. Nobody in Lidice had much money and nobody was very poor. Automobiles, radios, moving pictures, and newspapers were practically non-existent. There was a school, a firehouse, a sports club, and a reading circle. The men worked in the coal mines and foundries of the nearby town of Kladno, and the women tended the fields and gardens on the slopes behind their houses. [...] As I gazed down on the site of Lidice from a hilltop overlooking the green valley, it was not difficult to imagine the village as it once was. It was harder to visualize the details of what happened to it [...] From my hilltop, I could see that, topographically, the erasure of Lidice has been complete. (Wechsberg 2003, 272-3)

Although whatever long term intentions Hitler may have had for 'Vorwerk' never came to pass simply because the Germans lost the war, the destruction of the village in itself was an extraordinary project, revealing much about the Nazi's approach to both the mechanics and ideology of their campaign to extend the German empire. Having dynamited and burned all buildings, the topographical re-landscaping process ran as follows:

Stupendous volumes of rubble from the torn-down houses were deployed at various places so that the relief of the landscape around Lidice was changed as much as possible. Some of the hillocks disappeared completely, others were created artificially. The entire area was subsequently covered with imported soil [...] The piles of rubble coming from the demolished houses in Lidice were also used to level out Podhora Pond, around which most of the tall-grown trees were felled down. So as to make the identification of the exact place where Lidice once stood impossible in the future, even the course of the brook was altered in a few places, which had once flown down the middle of the village. (Stehlik 2007, 66-7)

John Bradley's description of the destruction of the village further stresses the technical difficulties faced by those responsible for diverting the brook, removing trees and moving 84,000 square metres of soil to level the land and prepare it for the sowing of grain (1972, 111). The southern area of the former village was to be turned into grazing ground for sheep (ibid., 114). Stehlik also notes that "[i]n spite of hundreds of RAD [Reich Working Service/*Reichsarbeitsdienst*] men being employed, the works did not proceed as fast as presumed, and had to go on all through the year 1943" (Stehlik 2007, 66). That Lidice's destruction was planned as a symbol of German domination is borne out in associated correspondence, for example in this letter from Karl Hermann Frank (SS police leader and Secretary of State of the Protectorate) to the Reich Labour Director in July 1942:

The elimination of the village is a political measure of the first order, as it makes the Czech population see very clearly that the Reich is not going to allow any centers of resistance under any circumstances, not even in the remotest corners of the Protectorate. This measure has made a corresponding impression on the Czech population. The duration of this effect requires that the village be literally levelled to the ground. As concerns the use of

the village property and land, it is planned to be converted to arable land, which will be allotted to the adjacent state farm, already under German management. (in Stehlik 2007, 62)

All the cattle from Lidice were driven to a German farm in nearby Buštěhrad on the same day the inhabitants were executed (Stehlik 2004, 81). There was also an educational element to the destruction, as revealed in the following excerpt from a letter from RAD head Alexander Commichau to the Reich RAD Commander August 1942:

The young man in the Reich Working Service sees that the German sword will fall hard and destroy entirely the sources of disturbance not only at the front, but also in the hinterland; and especially where the secret front emerges and dark elements are at work. The worker experiences directly the effect of such measures on the Czech population, and his work leads to the utter levelling of such centres of resistance. The deepening of the emotions of the men deployed in this place will certainly co-work on the consolidation of German power; but it will only be achieved after his work results in the complete disappearance of the village and after the earth is ploughed where the enemy of Germanhood had once resided. (in Stehlik 2007, 63-4)

The destruction of Lidice was to be used as a training exercise: “The Nazis filmed every step of this destruction as a training film – the shootings, the burnings of bodies and homes, all evidence of a town burned into oblivion, plowed under. A training film. To help others learn to leave no traces behind” (Walders 2006, 282).¹⁵ Ideologically, to plough the earth inhabited by enemies of the Nazi regime was the ultimate triumph; when the German soldiers’ work was done, the German ploughs could begin theirs. This was, as discussed in chapter 2, crucial to Nazi aims in Ukraine, and such was Himmler’s vision for Poland in 1939. Standing with him overlooking the land, “Himmler’s amanuensis” Hanns Johst recalls: “And so we stood there like pre-historic farmers and laughed... All of this was once more German soil! Here the German plough will soon change the picture” (in Kiernan 2007, 428). The traditional notion of *blut und boden* had to be slightly re-fabricated to accommodate this rhetoric. As noted in relation to the Nazi colonization of Ukraine, “[s]acred German soil, in the Nazi view, had no specific boundaries” (Kiernan 2007, 432), yet *blut und boden* logic also relied on the premise that generations of Germans had lived and died on their native soil, their blood a unique, territorializing fertilizer. Accordingly, following this logic, many generations of German peasants would have to farm the colonized land in order to endow it with the ‘unique’ properties of true German soil. Nonetheless the arrival of the German plough symbolized, at the very least, the beginning

¹⁵ The order to film the proceedings was given by Frank. Whether this was because, as Walders suggests, it was to be used as training purposes, or because, as Stehlik proposes, it was to be used as part of the campaign to spread awareness of German domination throughout the international community (“The Germans [...] were going to have it included in the official newsreel” (2007, 59), is not clear. Ultimately sections of the material filmed were discovered after war and shown during the Nuremberg trials as evidence of Nazi crimes (ibid., 59).

of the transformation. Thus it is slightly anomalous that what the Nazis planned to be the last Czech inhabitants of Lidice were buried in this same soil. As one prisoner from Terezín, Rudolf Mautner, who had been ordered to assist with the burial of the men after the mass shooting, later recalled:

I was ordered to dig a hole and bury everything left behind by the dead. I set about it on my own to spare the boys the awful sight. I piled up all the bodily remains of all the poor souls. I found a cap with the forehead cut straight off – full of bone and brain; perhaps a machine gun job. More brains, bones, entrails, intestines scattered about. I put the blood – the blood of our Czech people – into the pit carefully. Czech blood went into Czech earth. (in Stehlik 2007, 52)

As another Terezín survivor stressed, “the ground was saturated with blood” (in J. Bradley 1972, 111). Perhaps the transportation of German soil to the area was supposed to counteract the presence of the Czech bone, brain and blood. The RAD were also ordered to destroy Lidice’s graveyard, and “60 vaults, 140 large family tombs and about 200 single graves” (Stehlik 2007, 63) were plundered in the process; the land was no longer to be the final resting place of previous generations of Czech citizens. One of the soldiers who took part in the exercise, a boy of 16, recalled: “The greatest fun was when we loaded the cemetery with explosives. You should have seen the cadavers fly in the air! Heads, legs, arms; some of the heads had long hair, that was the women... When we’re finished there, it’ll all be smoothed out and sown with grain. Then all the land of Lidice and around will be given to Mrs Heydrich as a present” (in Stehlik 2007, 65).

Given that Lidice’s destruction was mainly symbolic, the labour expended on the project was remarkable. Stehlik reports that around 100 RAD men spent around 20,000 hours on this work (2007, 61), in addition to support from the Waffen-SS and a Wehrmacht unit (ibid., 60). In June 1942 Hitler was experiencing his “last high moments” as a military leader: as German troops were driving back the British in Egypt, and his previously faltering campaign against Russia at last appeared to be making headway (Bendersky 2007, 183). Perhaps, at such a time, he felt some resources could be spared to make this symbolic gesture. Taking a broader historical view, the razing of Lidice resonates with other apparently pointless acts of violence, such as took place on *Kristallnacht* in 1939; in Württemberg, for example, locals criticized the destruction of valuable assets when “an official campaign against waste and encouragement to recycle” was otherwise in place (Stephenson 2006, 144). These issues aside, the complete topographical elimination of Lidice was very nearly achieved. The landscape left behind by the RAD when the work was finally completed was radically altered

Curating Nature: Fencing in and Weeding Out

Lidice today resembles neither the original village nor the topographically re-constructed space left behind by the Nazis. The foundations visible today were excavated from their covering of German soil in the years after the war. The excavation restored something of the shape of the original landscape, but it would have been impossible to put things back exactly as they had been. The decision to leave the foundations and restrict the addition of commemorative features to limited areas effects the way the landscape is perceived; the foundations seem to provide an element of that authenticity so commonly attached to ruins. As Stehlik comments: “Nowadays, the place where old Lidice was looks more like a well-manicured park than a place of bestial crime. However, the foundations of Horák Farm make sure that everybody knows this was the place where people stopped being people” (2007, 149). If the foundations remind visitors of the past, the roses in the ‘Friendship and Peace Park’ symbolize “new Lidice” (Stehlik 2007, 148 and Vlk 2006). When couples are married in the Park they plant a new rose bush to honour “the memory of the shot dead Lidice inhabitants in 1942 and also the remembrance of this significant day for the married couple” (Lidice Memorial website 2012); the planting is as much about two people embarking on a new life together as it is about remembering past lives cut short. I discuss the symbolism used to achieve this effect in further detail in this section as a way into considering the ethics and impact of various horticultural and landscaping techniques in the context of Holocaust commemoration.

This discussion picks up on two connected yet distinct questions which have been the subject of particularly passionate scholarly debate: firstly, whether gardening practice can conceivably be linked to the way of thinking that led to the Holocaust; and secondly, the connected issue of whether particular horticultural or landscaping practices are fundamentally tainted by the National Socialists’ embrace and development of them. I referenced these debates in the introduction, citing Bauman’s view that the logic of gardening was implicit in ethnic cleansing, and argued accordingly that debates on museum practice concerning “unwitting” parallels with National Socialist perpetration should be expanded to consider the realm of the outdoor memorial environment. Thus I now move on to consider Lidice within the broader landscape of contemporary Holocaust commemoration. In doing so, I reference the design and management of two other prominent sites, Auschwitz Birkenau and Bergen-Belsen, which serve to further illuminate the elements of the practices employed at Lidice.

The idea for a rose garden at Lidice came from the leader of the same English group that had campaigned for the re-construction of the village, Sir Barnett Stross, and the choice is arguably consonant with a specifically British landscaping culture. The design is notably influenced by the formal planting strategies popular in England during the Victorian era, particularly the presentation of vividly coloured blooms in geometric beds, statues, and fountains within Italianate terraces (Scott-James and Lancaster 2004, 70) (see figures 3.8 and 3.9). The beds in the Lidice garden are laid out to form a larger image of a rose which is only discernible from above (see figure 3.10). Appropriately for the commemorative context of Lidice, in the Victorian period roses – either fresh or engraved – were a favourite choice for the adornment of gravestones (Rich 1998, 57). Their perceived meaning was two-fold, encompassing both love and death (ibid.), each colour carrying a particular resonance: the red rose, for example, signified passion, but was also symbolic of “the blood of [Christian] martyrs” (Bruce-Mitford 2008, 84).¹⁶ The rose is thus arguably a fitting symbol, given the rose garden’s dual functions as memorial and wedding venue. The Victorians also set a precedent for integrating imported plant varieties into their landscaping projects, a strategy embraced in Lidice’s rose garden. 7,000 of the original bushes were donated by a propagating company from Nottinghamshire, the other 23,000 from 35 countries around the world. Thus the roses are almost entirely non-native exotics in the Czech context. Far from forgetting Lidice, many national communities contributed towards de-territorializing the Nazis’ claim to their ‘outlying estate’.

The exotic planting of the traditional formal garden rejects, intentionally or not, landscaping practices which became popular in Nazi Germany; practices which clearly reflect eugenic policies of ‘weeding out’ unwanted non-Aryan or unfit elements. Prominent German landscape gardener and official ‘Reich Landscape Advocate’ (*Reichslandschaftsanwalt*) Alwin Seifert “rejected the use of foreign plants in landscape design” (Wolschke-Bulmahn 2001, 3) and was “radical in his attacks on non-native species” (Uekötter 2006, 79). Seifert’s passion was for nature in its ‘natural’ place, and, freed from the shadow cast on his work by his association with the Nazi party, his approach is fundamentally a holistic one which calls attention to the “interconnectedness of nature” (ibid.). A more openly hostile approach is suggested by a comment made by the head of the forestry policy unit of the Nazi party, Willi Parchmann. Assuming an ideological compatibility between racial superiority and the protection of the German trees, he stressed the need to “cast out the unwanted foreigners and bastards that have as

¹⁶ Whether or not this is a deliberate inference, it resonates with a description of the execution by Harald Wiesmann, the chief of the Kladno Gestapo: “The men of Lidice walked free, straight and brave. There were no unmanly scenes” (in Stehlik 2007, 46).



Figures 3.8 and 3.9: Rose garden

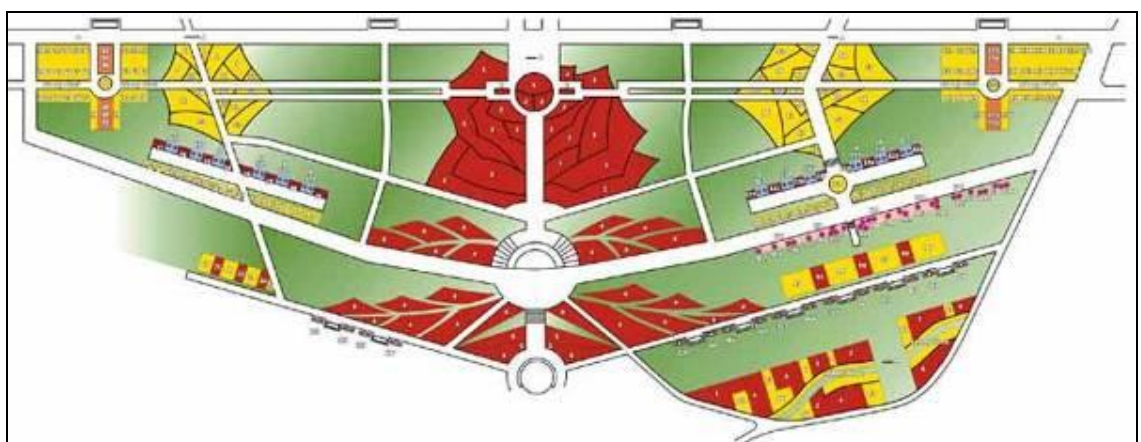


Figure 3.10: Map of the rose garden © Památník Lidice

little right to be in the German forest as they have to be in the German *Volk*" (in Imort 2005, 44). Thus it is possible to see Lidice's curators' inclusive donations policy as constituting, whether consciously or not, a laudable rejection of Seifert's purist nativism and Parchmann's vitriolic aversion to foreign species.

Formal gardens, however, necessitate a high level of maintenance and control, another form of 'weeding out'. In Lidice substantial alterations had to be made to the landscape to accommodate the rose garden, including a new series of significant topographical engineering. Chemical soil enhancement was also essential. Without regular pruning and weeding, rose gardens go wild, as did the Lidice garden between 1989 and 2000 when funding was in short supply for political reasons, as noted previously. The plight of the weed, the "wild plant growing where it is not wanted" (OED), highlights certain contradictions inherent in human responses to nature; the instinctual longing to encounter nature at its most 'natural' is frequently complicated by a desire, indeed a necessity, to control and manipulate. Similarly, pruning aims to cut away any areas that appear diseased or damaged, a form of selective destruction undertaken to protect the overall health of the plant. Gardeners are motivated to remove weeds, not simply because they may appear unsightly – indeed, many 'weeds' are attractive plants and are featured in more 'natural' designs – but because they will inevitably take up space and resources such as water, light and nourishment that might be saved for more desirable plants. There are unsettling precedents; Bauman's argument explicitly ties weeding to Nazi eugenics, suggesting that "[g]ardening and medicine are functionally distinct forms of the same activity of *separating and setting apart useful elements destined to live and thrive, from harmful and morbid ones, which ought to be exterminated*" (1991, 70). The Nazis infamously put in place a series of programmes and laws to effectively destroy any element perceived as physically diseased within a larger move towards a biopolitical state (Agamben 1995). The 'Euthanasia Program for the Incurably Ill' (*Euthanasie-programm für unheilbaren Kranke*), for example, was designed to eradicate all "life unworthy of being lived" (Agamben 1995, 138). Having decided which lives were of value and which were not, the government was able to isolate, detain and destroy any people who were making use of resources and space which could otherwise contribute to the health and wealth of Germany's native population. It is possible, then, to draw parallels between the gardening methods used to maintain a rose garden and those employed by National Socialism to transform the racial landscape of Europe.

The effect of the careful management of the Lidice site overall, and the rose garden in particular, is one of formality and precision very different to that apparent at many

concentration and death camp memorials. Auschwitz-Birkenau, so central to international Holocaust collective memory, serves as a useful point of comparison. The memorial at Auschwitz I, housed predominantly in brick barracks requires relatively little in the way of outdoor landscaping beyond the maintenance of a few neat lawns here and there. It is with the far larger Auschwitz II Birkenau site that a notable comparison with Lidice can be made. The size of several football fields, Birkenau is a grassed expanse scattered with intermittent fences and ruins. The ruins are frequently overgrown and appear to be gradually disintegrating; “the flat expanse of desolation is interrupted only by signs of absence” (Keil 2005, 489). In this way they diverge considerably from the Lidice site, both at the rose garden in particular and the larger landscape, which is kept in good order throughout the year; whilst both Lidice and Birkenau rely on architectural remnants, nothing is allowed to even partially obscure them at the site of old Lidice. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis via the example of Dalton, the atmosphere of Birkenau has a considerable impact on visitor behaviour and experience. Bohdan Rymaszewski, from the Conservation Department at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, has suggested that “[l]ush vegetation... lends peace to what was once a malevolent landscape... The idea is not to reconstruct the look of the camp from half a century ago, but to maintain a historical landscape marked with the presence of nature” (2003, 32). The curatorial role, as Rymaszewski argues, is to maintain the vegetation so that original architectural elements are not eventually destroyed; this is carefully balanced with a desire to retain an impression of nature in its most “natural” form (ibid.). According to Rymaszewski’s colleague Barbara Zajac, vegetation control at Auschwitz gives visitors better access to the camp and at the same time “shapes their emotions” (2003, 62). This aspect of the site’s management, initially taken up by Charlesworth and Addis, is further scrutinized in Keil’s discussion of Birkenau. He notes that visitors are in fact “presented with a series of simulacra” at the site (2005, 12); what appear to be “unmediated fragments” are in fact installations in which ‘natural’ elements are controlled as much as manmade structures. The nature/architecture balance is maintained at considerable effort and expense (Zajac 2003, 62-75). The processes and resulting aesthetic at Birkenau are thus similar to those of the nature-garden, in that practices of cultivation produce a deliberate appearance of non-cultivated ‘wildness.’ The affectivity of nature’s own ‘work’ – the perceived capacity of natural forms to lend peace as they overtake malevolent ruins – is not something on which the landscape design at Lidice attempts to rely. Peter Herbstreuth describes the re-discovery of the mass grave in the Lidice area by local farmers, who noticed discoloured crops above it several years after the war. Herbstreuth argues that this discoloration was “impossible to improve on as an image of the massacre” for “the ground preserves an

image that can be read like an archive on the surface ... an image of the human imagination that strains the limits of language" (2000, 151). Whatever its commemorative qualities, the rose bed that now stands in place of the discoloured crops does not make use of this "archive on the surface"; in fact, it effectively erases this imprint.

The ethics of manipulating emotional responses by 'faking' nature raises as many questions as the landscaping of Lidice; both the formal and the 'wild' approach provoke resonances of National Socialist ideology. The nature-garden is an umbrella term for various models of garden design advocated particularly by early-twentieth-century landscape architects (Wolschke-Bulmahn 1997, 1-4). Whilst some proponents agreed that exotic plant species were suitable for use in nature-gardens if they had a physiognomic fit with the larger environment, others, such as Seifert, rejected any non-native varieties. The terms employed by many nature-garden proponents in this latter category are markedly similar to those of fascist rhetoric; exotics were "Barbarians" and "aggressive interlopers" that gardeners feared would bring "great destruction" (Wolschke-Bulmahn 1997, 2- 3). For Wolschke-Bulmahn, the consonance between politics and landscaping goes beyond the metaphorical: "[n]ationalism and racism have been [...] factors in the rise of natural garden design" (ibid., 3). Certainly, ideas that fuelled the nature-garden fit with the Nazi party's original sentiments about preserving and propagating their own traditional forests and landscapes, as was discussed in chapter 1 with regards to the Buchenwald landscape on the Ettersburg.

Despite these onerous origins, the sense that the nature-garden aesthetic is appropriate for commemorative purposes can be seen in the reactions of Jewish survivors of Bergen-Belsen to the Allies' plans for a formal garden at the site. Arguments appeared in a local Jewish magazine insisting that a formal garden at this site would elide the reality of the original events, for "the tree of forgetfulness would be planted". In leaving the site as a field, on the other hand, they might achieve a "field of memory":

the earth bedizened by nature with plants and wild herbs sustained by the blood and bones, the wild flowers dancing in the wind, glad to be alive and each plant embedded in a human soul. The wild flowers are a sacred carpet and we approach the field filled with a sense of awe (in Wolschke-Bulmahn 1997, 280).

Despite his concluding argument that ecological ideas are irrelevant to this space, even Wolschke-Bulmahn is compelled to question whether victims could "be honoured properly" by a "design forged in harmony with nature [...] that so strongly echoes the landscape ideals of their persecutors" (ibid., 298); landscape ideals which were themselves partially predicated on ecological sensibilities. Perhaps, however, those most

suiting to approve a commemorative strategy were the survivors mourning their loss; if they are not concerned with parallelisms, perhaps curators should follow their example. At Lidice, where a formal garden now replaces what might otherwise have been left to become a “field of memory” or, in Herbstreuth’s phrasing, “an image that can be read like an archive on the surface”, parallelisms which might echo the landscape ideals of the Nazis as persecutors are avoided, but an “image of the massacre” which “could not be improved on” is perhaps lost.

However, just as the meadow at Belsen could never be made to last, neither could the image Herbstreuth finds so exemplary at Lidice be maintained for perpetuity; the sentiments of the Jewish survivors as described above raise practical issues aside from any echoes of Nazi aesthetics, issues inherent to the ongoing management of apparently ‘wild’ gardens. In order to be maintained over time, the meadow – like the nature-garden – must be deliberately curated, organised, and ultimately, constructed. The wild flowers that were so appealing at Belsen, and which arguably encompassed a sense of natural authenticity, would not have appeared each year had the space been left alone, just as the discoloured crops could only ever have had a fleeting presence at Lidice. What was comforting for survivors to see in the immediate aftermath of the war is an effect that could only be temporarily authentic. Such a programme is untenable at memorial sites as their curators look to the long-term future, as is so apparent from Rymaszewski’s comments about the need to protect original structures from nature’s encroachment at Birkenau. As a result, any aesthetic suggestive of authenticity created by the juxtaposition of ruins and natural growth will always be, as Keil suggests, a simulacrum. At Birkenau, in order to create the impression that nature is taking over and lending peace to the landscape, it must be carefully cultivated and contained; fencing in becomes essential, although it occurs in a very different way at Birkenau than in the Lidice rose garden, where boundaries explicitly mark out sections of the overall design. The staff employed to limit the potentially destructive spread of natural materials at Birkenau use significant quantities of weed-killing herbicides on plant roots (Zajac 2003, 58). Forestry firms and schools in the local area aid the museum in curbing the growth of vegetation (Rymaszewski 2003, 32). The visitors’ emotional response to their ‘natural’ surroundings is in fact deliberately calculated.¹⁷ This simulacrum of authenticity introduces yet another politicised precedent to the approach to nature at Birkenau. Nazi propaganda integrated a calculated appropriation of traditional *Heimat* ideals, as “[s]entimental love of the soil was ...

¹⁷ Certain trees at Birkenau constitute a notable exception to the overall approach. Older trees known to have been alive at the site during its years as a concentration and extermination camp are designated mute witnesses to Nazi atrocities, and are protected as such.

combined with its practical political appropriation” (Glaser 1978, 155). Close scrutiny of Nazi environmental policy reveals that, although the attachment to traditional *Heimat* landscapes was crucial to engaging the public support that brought the party to power, “racism and the expansion of *Lebensraum*, rather than homeland sentiment, lay at the heart of Hitler’s naturalistic conception of history and national fate” (Lekan 2004, 158). Bearing the above legacy in mind, the calculated manipulation of nature in order to achieve a particular emotional connection is rendered somewhat problematic. Given an awareness of this legacy, the statement that ‘lush vegetation lends peace’ to Birkenau has certain complex connotations which are not raised by the memorial landscape at Lidice, where the formal strategy results in a clear demarcation between remnants of the past and contemporary planting.

That compelling parallels *can* be drawn between past and present has been highlighted by a focus on processes of weeding out and fencing in. However, it is also evident that multiple interpretations of such practices can exist simultaneously, undermining frustrating any attempt to impose a deterministic reading of spatial aesthetics.; as discussed in the introduction to this thesis, to treat landscapes only as representative mediums is delimiting. Recalling the debate also referred to in the introduction over curatorship at the USHMM, whilst noting the unfortunate replication of perpetrator objectification, Crownshaw argues that exhibition space can be read “against the grain”; “the meaning of an artefact is determined not only by its placement or emplotment in a narrative matrix [a curatorial construct], but also by the museum visitor” (2010, 210). As I have argued, if the logic of representational decoding is problematic in the museum, it is arguably more so in the ‘natural’ memorial environment, where space evolves according to both curatorial endeavour and the inexorable dictates of nature. Perhaps the way to overcome this problem in considering sites such as Lidice would be to embrace a more holistic approach to landscape interpretation, much as the discipline of cultural geography in recent years has embraced a ‘more-than-representational’ method focusing on a range of experiential expression from “fleeting encounters” to “affective intensities” (Lorimer 2005, 84). As Martin Jay’s discussion of Bauman’s argument suggests, his “stress on the link between weeding and pruning and the sinister selection and breeding of humans, however exaggerated it may seem, alerts us to the importance of the non-visual component in any analysis of the gardening impulse” (2007, 58). This urges us to embrace a ‘more-than-representational’ analysis, which may involve closer study of the behaviour and impressions of those who visit the spaces. Nonetheless, I would suggest that even this more nuanced and inclusive approach does not necessarily preclude a

discussion of nature and associated processes and ideologies, which are in themselves affectively intense. I return, then, to Wolschke-Bulmahn's thesis that ecological ideas are irrelevant to the Holocaust memorial environment. It seems clear that, in focusing on resonances between genocidal practices and commemorative processes without taking into account the motivations that lie behind each example, we risk a lack of specificity which potentially undermines the reality of the suffering that characterised the Holocaust and the intentions of those who design and manage contemporary memorial spaces. As German conservation historian Frank Uekötter argues, "the need for nuance in moral judgement is imperative [...] a uniform indictment ends up putting very different types of behaviour on a par" (2006, 206-7).

Whilst, as Uekötter points out, the recognition of parallelisms may only constitute a first step, it may still contribute something to a broader analysis. This approach does not necessarily abandon representation, in looking beyond parallelisms we do not necessarily either leave them behind or cast them as the end point of discussion. Criticism and practice do not exist in isolation, and new ways of analysing space inform new methods of management and mediation. As Jay suggests, "however imprecise the fit between [Bauman's] broad generalizations and the actual practices of Nazi landscape design, his argument helps to undermine the assumption that gardens are best understood as absolutely distinct refuges from the rest of the world, as Edenic places of a grace that is lost outside their boundaries" (2007, 58).

Furthermore, an awareness of the ecological ideologies of perpetrators, and how they may be echoed in current process, may act as a prompt to the curatorial imagination – and consequently the imaginations of those who visit these sites – to engage with particular histories in new ways; these parallels could be starting points for the invention of new practices, as well as for critical scrutiny of how that practice works. The destruction of the planet and its species – including human beings – is an issue for the curators of Holocaust landscapes today as much as it was for Schrader in his laboratory in 1939 when he accidentally discovered the lethal properties of organic phosphates (see Carson 1962, 42). The destruction of the environment exists in intimate relation to man's destruction of man, and the magnitude of this connection is slowly beginning to emerge in genocide scholarship. Mike Davis, for example, proposes that apparently 'natural' disasters are rarely divorced from cultural activity; he argues that Victorian "imperial policies towards starving subjects" were in fact the "exact moral equivalents" of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Dresden (2002, 22). Mark Levene articulates why the interconnectedness of nature and politics is of such significance for the future of

human relations: “[a] world without genocide can only develop in one in which principles of equity, social justice, *environmental stability* – and one might add genuine human kindness – have become the ‘norm’” (2004, 440, my emphasis). For Levene, man’s behaviour on earth has exacerbated the power relationships between both “man and nature” and “man and man” (Levene 2011). To view these disintegrations in isolation is both critically short-sighted and ethically irresponsible. Levene highlights that there is a pressing need to contemplate the relationship between ecological destruction and genocide, an issue which implicitly relates to the way in which the Holocaust and other atrocious historical events are assimilated and represented. Perhaps as commemorative landscapes continue to evolve, and as awareness of this polemic interconnection increases, ecological ideas will come to be seen as relevant and indeed instrumental to their future curation; not simply because the sensibilities of the past remain visible at these sites, but because the very existence of such landscapes becomes a reminder of the deeply interconnected nature of destruction in all its many guises, a phenomenon of which the Holocaust provides such a compelling paradigm.

The ways in which different events and places can be brought together is the focus of the next section. In tracing the global trajectory of Lidice’s memory to new localities, I uncover a similar dynamic to that visible between Babi Yar, Kiev, and the Babi Yar Park in Denver; mediated by memory texts, cultural memories of Lidice are framed within a dialogical cosmopolitan network reminiscent to that outlined by Levi and Sznajder. In exploring this network, I take the opportunity to think in further detail about the way such theories, for better or worse, are manifest in practice.

III.II. Lidice Travels

The memorial network: global Lidice

Just as Lidice has survived, albeit in a different form, at the site of the original village, its fate lives on in international consciousness, further refusing the Nazis' desire to erase it from memory. Whilst the Stoke campaign was perhaps the most prominent example of the activism that kept this memory alive, there were other key co-ordinates in a broader network of commemoration surrounding Lidice. In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned the production of various memorial texts and the naming and renaming processes, for example, which were also central to the creation of this network. In this section I consider its dynamics in a little more detail, setting up the context in which the recent twinings – discussed in the second half of this section – have taken place. I take first the texts initially created when news of what happened at Lidice was broadcast to the world. As noted previously, these texts constitute early examples of cosmopolitan, 'glocal' memory work, and furthermore they present the events at Lidice against a deteriorating pastoral landscape which resonates with that of the Ukraine as discussed in Chapter 2.

As was the case with Babi Yar, literature played a role in preventing the memory of Lidice from being completely erased, and has mediated the cultural memories that circulate around its history as a result. Amongst the most prominent of these to appear in the immediate aftermath was a book-length verse play, *The Murder of Lidice*, written by the American poet and playwright Edna St Vincent Millay in response to a request from the Writer's War Board. First published as a straight poem in *Life* magazine in October 1942, set somewhat oddly alongside advertisements for corsetry, Scotch whiskey, and after-dinner mints, the play version was broadcast on the radio the following month. The poem starts with the construction of Lidice, painting an image of a rural idyll:

It was all of six hundred years ago,
 It was seven and if a day,
 That a village was built which you may know
 By the name of "Lidice."
 They built them a church and they built them a mill,
 All on the fair Bohemian plain,
 For to shrive their souls and grind their grain,
 And each man helped his neighbor to lay
 The stones of his house, and to lift its beams;
 Till strong in its timbers and tight in its seams
 A village arose called Lidice.

How did the year turn, how did it run,
 In a village like Lidice?
 First came Spring, with planting and sowing;
 Then came Summer, with haying and hoeing;
 Then came Autumn, and the Harvest Home

And always in Winter, with its brief bright day,
 Toward the end of the quiet afternoon.
 (Children at school, but coming home soon.
 With crisp young voices loud and gay;
 Husband at Kladno, miles away.
 But home for supper, expected soon)
 Toward the end of the Winter afternoon...

The wise, kind hands and contented face
 Of a woman at the window, making lace...
 A peaceful place ... a happy place...

Proceeding to describe events of 10th June, the poem tells of the deaths of the men and deportation of the women and children as the bucolic landscape is engulfed in “terrible flame” from the sky to the earth. The seasons, presented as a harmonious and productive cycle in the second stanza, are then disrupted by the arrival of Heydrich “the hangman, the Hun”. In this way, the poem resonates notably with an earlier work by Millay, ‘Justice Denied in Massachusetts’ (1927), concerning the execution of Ferdinando Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, two Italian immigrants convicted of murder in South Braintree, MA; speculation at the time of their execution was rife as to whether the two men were really innocent of the charges and were purely convicted due to prejudice against them as immigrants. The poem follows a similar course to ‘The Murder of Lidice’; As Michael Thurston has suggested, ‘Justice Denied in Massachusetts’, “[w]ith stock images of death and a deadly change in the natural cycles of growth, [registered] the despair many writers and intellectuals felt over the case’s outcome; the very earth is, literally, appalled” (2001, 15). Whilst Thurston’s insistence on literality here ignores the way in which “[t]he naturally existing external world [...] is wholly ignorant of the ‘hurtability’ of human beings” (see Scarry 1985, 288), his statement reflects how much the structure of landscape – in this case Lidice’s landscape – “*is the structure of a perception*” (ibid., 289).

The last stanza asks Americans to take Lidice as a warning of what Hitler might do on their own territory:

Careless America, crooning a tune:
 Catch him! Catch him and stop him soon!
 Never let him come here!
 Think a moment: are *we* immune?

Oh, my country, so foolish and dear,
 Careless America crooning a tune,
 Please thing! – are we immune?
 Catch him! Catch him and stop him soon
 Never let him come here!
 Ask yourself, honestly: what have we done? –
 Who, after all are we? –
 That we should sit at peace in the sun,
 The only country, the only one
 Unmolested and free?
 Catch him! Catch him! Do not wait!
 Or will you wait, and share the fate
 Of the village of Lidice?
 Or will you wait, and let him destroy
 The village of Lidice, Illinois?
 Oh, catch him! Catch him, and stop him soon!
 Never let him come here!

The Lidice, Illinois, Millay refers to here was the first neighbourhood to be renamed to commemorate the events at the original village. I discuss this within the broader context of international renaming shortly. By invoking the Illinois Lidice in this way, Millay was warning Americans against a complacency that could ultimately result in the destruction of their own neighbourhoods. She later referred to the work as “hot-headed” and said it has been a “‘mistake’ to write bad wartime poems even to buck up morale” (Fussell 1989, 175). Nonetheless, as Guy Stern argues, “[w]ilst it is anything but good poetry, it has the virtue of being good propaganda and a moral response to utter immorality” (ibid., 161). Thurston’s suggestion that the poem was Millay’s call for “American entry to the war on the Allied side” (2001, 15) does seem justified by this last stanza, although if she was attempting to mobilize events at Lidice to this end she must have been encouraging the country to take further action, since America had officially joined the war in December 1941. Certainly, by evoking the same disruption of the seasons in ‘The Murder of Lidice’ she had used in ‘Justice Denied in Massachusetts’, Millay was, either consciously or unknowingly, presenting a parallel between an instance of the failure of humanity in the US and that which resulted in the Nazis’ brutal act in the Czech Republic; in both cases, the earth itself was presented as “appalled” by this failure.

Another poetic response to the events at Lidice, written by exiled Czech government official and poet Victor Fischel, prompted the emergence of a more complex and multifaceted transnational parallelism. Fischel decided that the poem would be effective as the basis for a film. He wanted to recreate the tragedy at Lidice in a Welsh village to make this film.

The way from the film to the poem was not so long. My philosophy in life was that if you can think yourself into somebody, if you can feel yourself into somebody, if you can try to live the life of somebody else, if we could do that in the world, then our life would be easier and much better. So I had the idea of trying to replace what happened in Lidice to a village in Wales, and I knew of course that there were many differences between a Czech village and a Welsh village, but there were also many similarities. (In Philip Logan 2011, 223)

Fischel's suggestion that to focus on the similarities rather than the differences between two contexts could potentially be a rewarding enterprise could be considered an example of truly cosmopolitan Holocaust memory work long before Levy and Sznajder theorised it as a phenomenon of the contemporary global world. The project was taken forward by British documentary maker, Humphrey Jennings. He decided the film was to focus on the idea of what had happened rather than recreating step by step the events themselves; according to Logan's discussion of the process, this was partly pragmatic, as there was little detailed information of what had actually taken place at Lidice available to the British public at this stage (July 1942) (Logan 2011, 223-4). He cites Jennings: "we decided to focus on the *ideas* that must have led to the final solution; the *idea* of a mining community in no matter what part of the world, the *idea* of fascism, the *idea* of struggle between the two, the *idea* of the obliteration of a community" (ibid., 224). Whilst this approach might have risked an elision of what actually happened at Lidice, potentially replacing the actual experiences of victims with a fiction primarily designed to express such ideas, Jennings maintained the specificity of the original events by using as source material certain documents which recorded exactly what had been said by Germans about the massacre, before, during, and after it took place. These words were to run through the film, read by a German speaker, either emanating from a radio, loud speaker, or simply as a voiceover; Jennings insisted: "these documents are perfectly accurately monitored and they do say the most astonishing and hair-raising things: we have not invented any of them" (in Logan 2011, 224).

Logan's discussion makes two further points about the Jennings film which are notable in light of the trajectory of commemoration traced throughout this chapter: that the production was undertaken with a particular focus on ensuring enthusiastic involvement and transnational sensibility from the Welsh local community of the village selected; and that the village itself, which was chosen in part for its topographical resemblance to Lidice, was presented as a pastoral idyll disrupted by the Nazis. A sense of "international solidarity" was central for Jennings (Logan 2011, 226). He worked closely with the inhabitants of Cwmgiedd, the mining village chosen; they were to be his actors, and many were also involved in the filming process. He wanted to ensure that the life of

the village, in “Social, Cultural, Religious, Trade Union, and Political” terms, would be presented in the film, and Jennings and his film crew spent around two and a half months living in the village (ibid., 227). It seems that Jennings felt he would only be able to make the film say anything meaningful about Lidice if it could capture something of the essence of the place he selected to be its counterpart. Thus, by using the transcripts of words spoken at Lidice itself in combination with his determination to present the real life of Cwmgiedd, Jennings’ project was notable in its attempt to maintain the respective specificity of both these local contexts even as it brought them together.

The resulting film, *The Silent Village*, shows a “series of vignettes” constructing “a day in the life” of Cwmgiedd, encompassing church, school, domestic and working life, showing the village inhabitants of all ages going about their usual activities (Logan 2011, 233). Each vignette is followed by a shot of the broader landscape in which each activity takes place, which, set against the orchestral strains provided by a harp and trumpet and birdsong, provide a typified image of rural harmony. The ‘fascists’ arrive – peace is shattered with the arrival of gunfire, as a group of miners taking part in a secret meeting to organise resistance against the invaders are discovered and shot. Showing a miner, close to death amongst his family, and a funeral in the chapel, the film implies that “the cost of physical resistance is absorbed by the community” (ibid.). The following day sees the culmination of this absorption – without showing a single German soldier (the invaders are represented, as Jennings had planned, only by the voiceover and various symbols such as boots and machine guns), the women and children are herded together and deported and the men lined up against a wall. The film cuts to a view of the chapel graveyard as the order to fire is given, thus there are no graphic images of slaughter, but the village itself is shown in flames. The final oration at the end of the film explicitly tied the two communities together via the mining profession:

The Nazis are wrong. The name [Lidice] has not been obliterated. The name of the community has been immortalised, it lives in the hearts of miners the world over. The Nazis only want slave labour and the miners refuse to become slave labour. That is why they murdered our comrades at Lidice. That is why we stand in the forefront of resistance today, because we have the power, the knowledge, the understanding to hasten the coming of victory. To liberate oppressed humanity and make certain that there shall be no more Lidices and then the men of Lidice will not have died in vain. (Jennings, 1942)

In this respect, the film echoes the motivations behind the Stoke-on-Trent fundraising campaign; Jennings, like Barnett Stross, wanted to keep Lidice alive, and in order to do so he mobilized the solidarity of miners with other miners. One of the members of the Stoke campaign, Arthur Baddeley, was part of the delegation that travelled to Lidice in 1947 to

see the laying of the first bricks of the new village. His daughter, Murial Stoddard, explains his motivation as follows: "I suppose it was because it was to do with the mining community [to] which all his life he belonged [...] He was very concerned about anything to do with mining" (Truswell 2010b). The movement itself, 'Lidice shall Live', is suggestive of a transnational identification of one mining community with another; the fabric of localized, daily life in this case provided a platform for memory practice. The campaign promotes the notion, in fact, that people employed in particular industries are in some ways bound to one another; that factors such as a person's economic status and professional lives potentially transcend national or ethnically rooted notions of personal and collective identity. In fact, the members of this group enrolled themselves, along with the survivors of Lidice, in what could be described as a memory community; individuals brought together by a shared desire to remember something, or more specifically to Lidice, not to let something be forgotten. In the case of Lidice, this shared desire led to an extremely successful campaign; 'Lidice Shall Live' raised enough funds to facilitate the construction of a new Lidice overlooking the site of the old in 1947. The small number of women and children who survived the war subsequently had a place to which they could return. The Stoke fundraisers, led by Sir Stross, were apparently substantially motivated by humanitarian aims, which were borne from a form of transnational identification projected from one community to another.

This identification, so fruitful in terms of results, may be considered surprising given the official British attitude towards the Republic of Czechoslovakia at the start of the war; anxious to avoid entering into conflict with Germany, Chamberlain, along with representatives from France and Italy, played a key role in permitting Hitler to annex Czech land. The strategy was one of appeasement. In a radio address to the British nation defending the Munich Agreement, he announced: "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks because of a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing" (in Cravens 2006, 13). For the miners of Stoke-on-Trent, the people of Lidice were more than strangers of whom they knew nothing, solely on the basis of their shared profession and the way of life that went with it. Their empathic response to the plight of these strangers seems to have been completely unaffected by the political line of the British government. *The Silent Village* relies on the same transnational affinity. In stating that the inhabitants of Lidice were targeted because of their profession, it does present a distortion; the inhabitants of Lidice were targeted for the spurious connection perceived by the Nazis between them and the assassination of Heydrich, rather than for their identity as miners. However, this was

perhaps an understandable distortion at the time, for the link between the village and the assassination remained unproven and to have directly referred to it may have implied otherwise. As Logan notes, this last statement also served the purpose of “highlighting the necessity of the miners to the war effort” whilst “indirectly [providing] echoes of the historic pre-war struggles and the contemporary problems surrounding the industry” (2011, 237); it gave a voice to the miners of Cwmgiedd, who were struggling with their own problems (see *ibid.*, 226), as well as uniting miners all over the world in a transnational alliance.

Logan summarises the way in which Jennings’ handling of sound and imagery “draws associations between aspects of the natural world – the land, forest and water for example – and the qualities of the community, while using extreme conditions – the river in spate, the wind and cold – to frame the qualities of fascism”, and comments that in doing so the director was using a technique he had practiced in previous films: drawing “on a range of pastoral themes to embellish his story” (2011, 229). The various juxtapositions – the harp and birdsong replaced by the sound of marching and excerpts from Wagner’s *Twilight of the Gods*, a sunny sky clouding over, the formerly peaceful village engulfed in flame – explicitly signpost the destruction of rural harmony, framing the transformation of the community of friends and family into victims of fascism within a landscape that is sympathetic to their plight. Thus the poem echoes Millay’s suggestion of a witnessing earth appalled by inhumanity, a trope which in both cases is mobilized to resonate across cultural and national differences.

Amongst many positive reviews, the film was criticized by one reporter for a “strangely oblique approach” which “[robbed] the film of any direct impact because it has been translated into ‘It might have been like this’ not ‘It was like this’ (Logan 2011, 240). As Logan notes, however, Jennings was reassured by the fact that the miners involved in the project were pleased with the outcome (*ibid.*), again demonstrating his dedication to producing something meaningful by harnessing genuine solidarity. A similar sense of transnational engagement is suggested by the renaming of places and the naming of children as Lidice – acts which introduced the name of the village into new communities and lives – all of which took place in locations far from the Czech Republic which have, certainly at a superficial glance, little to do with the village or its people. These initiatives can be seen as an example of what Avishai Margalit argues to be an ethical imperative: remembering a name is a “special obligation” to be honoured in the face of loss (2002, 20). Some of the many places now named Lidice include a street in Leipzig, Germany, a road in

Humberside, UK, and towns and villages in Rio de Janeiro, Panama and Caracas. The extent to which engagement went beyond the act of renaming varies in each instance. Wheeler reports that one inhabitant of a new Lidice in San Jerónimo, Mexico, “a village so poor that most of the children had to go barefoot” sent a message to the women of the original Lidice which ran: “widows in a concentration camp who do not know where your children are, our home is your home.” After the war the bond became reciprocal when “the Czech Lidice women heard of the poverty in the sister village [and] sent the children a large shipment of shoes” (Wheeler 1957, 17). A somewhat disproportionate number of the re-namings occurred in South America, phenomenon which requires further scrutiny if it is to be fully understood. By way of explanation, Wheeler suggests that the South American people’s response stemmed from the fact that they “had known for centuries the contempt that colonialists feel for other races” (1957, 18). Nonetheless North Americans too wanted to show their support. The first place to be re-named, as noted, was the Illinois neighbourhood housing development in Joliet, Crest Hill, formerly known as Stern Park. *Time* magazine reported the renaming of the area a little over a month after the original massacre, July 20th 1942. Indeed, exactly one month after the destruction of Lidice, a granite and sandstone monument to Lidice was inaugurated in a Stern Park field, bearing the inscription: “In memory of the people of Lidice Czechoslovakia, destroyed by barbarism, but living forever in the hearts of all who love freedom, this monument is erected by the free people of America at Lidice Illinois. Lidice Lives” (Menaker 1992). As a resident of the town, 83-year-old Jim Krakora, recalled in 1992 on the 50th anniversary of the tragedy at Lidice, “[t]here was no time to waste [...] Hitler announced that Lidice had been destroyed and that it would never rise again. We wanted this to be the American response, that Lidice, indeed, does live again, even if it happened to be in this empty field” (in Menaker 1992).

Yet in 1950, the *Nevada Mail* had printed an article suggesting that there had been little genuine concern about Lidice’s fate in the renaming of Stern Park, and that, in fact, officially, it had not really happened. “Lidice [Illinois] is not even a village, it never has been. It never had a post office [...] Lidice was just a promotion scheme to sell lots” (*Nevada Mail* 1950). This statement, from the secretary of the Mayor of Joliet, was made in reference to the sale of many new houses that had been built in the area around the memorial over the intervening years. The article also states that the memorial itself had been moved to make way for new housing within a year of its inauguration; it then stood elsewhere, chipped, muddy, and used as little more than apparatus by playing children (ibid.). Nonetheless, the memory of the original tragedy at Lidice had been preserved by

some members of the Stern Park community up until 1992, such as Krakora, who organised the 50- year anniversary ceremony:

We have to face reality [...] It's pretty damned hard to get people interested [...] A lot of the older people who were around when it happened are gone or have drifted away; the younger ones just don't have the sentimental attachment [...] But we want the monument to remain. Even though we might not be able to get people excited about it, we still want it to be a symbol of what America stands for and for how it denounces brutality and oppression. (in Meneker 1992)

Despite the fact that much of the town had seemed to have lost interest by this time, an annual event still occurs every June in the area (Czechoslovak American Congress 2012). That Krakora's explanation of why he and the other organisers of the 50th anniversary events wished the original monument to remain was to symbolize America's intervention – its denunciation of “brutality and oppression” – rather than to memorialise the victims, demonstrates a particular facet of cosmopolitan memory practices that will be explored further in the following section, alongside the various other elements that have so far come to light in this brief discussion of transcultural commemorations of Lidice.

III.III. Cosmopolitan Memory: Twinning Lidice

Lidice, Stoke-on-Trent and Khojaly

The cosmopolitan emphasis, as noted, initially filtered into cultural memory studies in Levy and Sznajder's project. Their application of Ulrich Beck's model of globalization to memory practice takes Holocaust remembrance as a contemporary paradigm of cosmopolitanism. Following Levy and Sznajder's logic, potential does exist for places such as Lidice to become more accessible to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, as new global geographic links, such as those I will consider here, consolidate their position at the centre of a dynamic creation of "new connections that situate ... political, economic, and social experiences in a new type of supranational context" (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 10). This process, like an effective transport system, may do more than connect one place with another; a network of pathways may emerge, allowing memory to travel between a series of locations. Memory travels in different ways and for different reasons. The journeys I consider here are discussed as *mobilizations* because they are guided by particular polemics which dictate their constitutive forms and processes. In other words, the 'travel' in which I am interested could also be described as a harnessing of memory for particular purposes, be they cultural, political, ethical or otherwise. I will interrogate the extent to which the particular new pathways currently emerging around Lidice can be seen to represent a form of globalized 'supranationality'.

For Levy and Sznajder, as noted in the introduction, cosmopolitanism foregrounds the way in which site-specific atrocities become de- and re-territorialized from their original locations via related mediatory, commemorative and social processes, generating new global trajectories. The various texts and renamings discussed earlier in this chapter could be considered co-ordinates within this framework. Cosmopolitanism is facilitated by "universal values that are emotionally engaging, that descend from the level of pure abstract philosophy, and in to the emotions of people's everyday lives" (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 3). In the related process of 'glocalization', in "which the global becomes internalized", Levy and Sznajder argue that no "convergence [or] homogenization" of Holocaust memory necessarily occurs (2006, 10), a theory which the following analysis interrogates. If we consider, in line with Erll (2011), that Levy and Sznajder's project is of "fundamental importance" to the larger movement of transcultural studies, it should also involve a turn towards 'the other'. Indeed, whilst acknowledging that "the global individual is not completely self-sacrificing", Levy and Sznajder highlight the global potentiality of rendering comprehensible the current suffering of others via memory

discourses (2006, 28). In looking at the distinctly polemic harnessing of Lidice's memory in the 21st century, I also question to what extent the motivations involved in twinning projects may interfere with this possibility of cosmopolitan memory's 'supranational' transcendence, and the potential for a turn to the other implied within it.

The mobilization of memory and history implicit in twinning as a form of mobilization is characterized by distinctly 'glocal' values. It emerged as a major European trend in the years following the Second World War, primarily to encourage peaceful relations between disparate communities. According to An Verlinden, town twinning can be defined as follows:

a formal partnership between municipalities, aimed at encouraging cooperation and mutual understanding between their citizens in order to foster human contacts and cultural exchange, to exchange experience, to promote peaceful co-existence and to raise awareness about the daily lives and concerns of people living in other countries. It relies upon the voluntary commitment and participation of citizens, in collaboration with their local authorities and local associations. The cornerstone of town twinning is real, mutual interaction and concrete problem solving. (2008, 208)

Such sentiments are resonant of the descent of "abstract philosophy" to the "emotions of people's everyday lives" (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 3). Furthermore, Verlinden argues, the process of twinning has now evolved to offer "a possibility to implement trans-national dialogical spaces ... as a means to shared dialogical spaces at grass roots level, [town twinning] succeeds in making concrete the adagio [sic] 'think local, act global'" (2008, 208). Thus it potentially presents a network of places, which harbour the possibility for "cosmopolitanism as a process of 'internalized globalization' ... a non-linear, dialectical process in which the global and the local exist not as cultural opposites but, rather, as mutually binding and interdependent principles" (Verlinden 2008, 9–10).

Twinning, then, potentially opens up the "intercultural delimitation" implicit in container culture as conceived by Welsch, thus combatting the "thinking that generates racism and other forms of tension between local, ethnic, and religious groups" (Erl 2011, 8). As a process, it certainly serves to exemplify the way in which site-specific memory is inscribed into new local contexts via processes of de- and re-territorialization (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 26–28); whether memories of Lidice are homogenized in these processes, contrary to Levy and Sznajder's assertion, will be considered here. Furthermore, whilst the advent of cosmopolitanism seem to mark the end of a spatially fixed understanding of culture (Levy and Sznajder 2004, 6), this analysis asks to what extent this can be seen as a reality in the examples of Stoke-on-Trent, Lidice, and Khojaly.

The two sections that follow consider to what extent cosmopolitanism's potentiality comes into being in processes of memory mobilization, at least in the specific contexts of Stoke and Khojaly. Notably, Levy and Sznajder argue that "place ... loses its meaning" as an effect of 'glocalization' (2006, 28). I will argue that the transcultural turn need not necessarily preclude discussion of place and territory; as the examples considered here will demonstrate, the transcultural lens facilitates a focus on the de- and re-territorializations of site-specific memory as process, in which sites in themselves are not dismissed but maintained as essential coordinates in new dynamic movements.

Lidice/Stoke-on-Trent: 'a ray of light across the sea'

The campaign to twin Lidice and Stoke-on-Trent, England, is currently underway, largely under the auspices of local couple Alan and Cheryl Gerrard. Their motivation is based on the shared history of their hometown with Lidice, which, as discussed earlier in this chapter, dates almost as far back as the village's destruction in 1942. The renewing of this bond in the present day is the result of different motivations to those which shaped original fundraising campaign. Whereas this was primarily an act of solidarity, Stoke twinning campaigners in 2010–11 aim to do more than "formally restore" the town's "emotional bond" with Lidice and permanently celebrate the humanitarian work of Sir Stross" (Gerrard and Gerrard 2011). The campaign's website states:

For Stoke-on-Trent there are aspirational issues involved, but across the country the story of Barnett Stross and Lidice can be used to stamp out racism and bigotry in all its forms [...] support the campaign in order to:

- 1) Inspire our young people and raise their aspirations;
- 2) Celebrate the legacy of the achievements of Sir Barnett Stross and the working people of Stoke-on-Trent in helping to rebuild Lidice;
- 3) Actively pursue the future regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent;
- 4) Stamp out racism in Stoke-on-Trent (Gerrard and Gerrard 2011)

Alan Gerrard also elaborates on the potential of the twinning project as a strong message of anti-racism at a time when "much latent racism exists – particularly among disaffected working class people", perhaps a reference to Stoke citizens (Gerrard 2011a). He hopes that, beyond paying tribute to Sir Stross, the project may be an important inspirational tool, combating the generally low aspirations of the working class of Stoke-on-Trent (Gerrard 2011a). His own statement about his personal inspiration is clearly central to the formulation of the campaign's official message:

I'm native to Stoke-on-Trent and am disappointed in its perceptions and profile. But though appearing drab and unremarkable, Stoke-on-Trent and its people are responsible for some wonderful feats. This is a fine example. Lidice is promotionally powerful to this city as the 'Lidice Shall Live' campaign's home is Stoke-on-Trent. ... That is why I started the campaign – because I believe this uniqueness can be exploited to change perceptions for the better, raise the city's profile ... (2011a)

Further statements from Gerrard in a Staffordshire newspaper also illuminate the aims of the twinning: "Stoke-on-Trent could become the hub for a commemorative place for Lidice. We could see a lot of visitors to Stoke-on-Trent each year" (in Truswell 2010a).

Thus there are (at least) three factors to be taken into consideration in an interpretation of the Stoke-Lidice twinning campaign as cosmopolitan memory work. In commemorative terms, Gerrard is primarily concerned, and quite legitimately, with the creation of a platform for the remembrance of Sir Stross and those who gave up part of their small incomes to help rebuild Lidice in the 1940s. The reference to contemporary latent racism is also significant, and aligns Gerrard's motivations with those of major institutions, particularly museums, who take examples from the Holocaust as starting point to engage people in discussions about tolerance and human rights. Thirdly, though, Gerrard aims to provide his city and its residents with a shared history; a source of pride, to change the way a regional group sees their own identity as well as how that identity is perceived by others.

This drive to boost the local economy and to change public perceptions of Stoke should be seen in the context of the West Midlands' recent history. The economic security that the pottery and mining industries lent to Stoke-on-Trent and the West Midlands in the first part of the 20th century aligned it with the historically prosperous cities of the South until the 1980s, when economic recession had an extremely negative impact on the region according to the *Financial Times* in 1989: "If there is a north-south divide in Britain ... the recession of the early 1980s placed the West Midlands firmly to the North of it" (in T. Casey 2002, 157). The area still depends on manufacturing as a source of employment beyond the national average (ibid., 145). The shared history of Lidice and Stoke-on-Trent is expected to improve tourism to the region, generating revenue, thus there is some economic motivation at stake. Beyond this, a main aim of the campaign is to set up an arts centre to become the UK home of Lidice's annual children's fine art competition. In 2010, there were only 9 entries from the UK, none of which were from Stoke-on-Trent; Gerrard's work is perhaps rendered most visible by the fact that thirty-eight prizes were made to children from Stoke-on-Trent in the 2011 competition (Gerrard 2011b). Campaigners also hope to set up a museum of heritage based on Lidice and its connection with Sir Barnett

Stross and Stoke-on-Trent; an exhibition has already been held on this history at the museum at the commemorative complex in Lidice itself. Yet the economic goals that partially ground the project potentially dilute its cosmopolitanism; the Holocaust is arguably appropriated in order to pursue a goal that is unrelated to the memory of its victims and has little to do with the development of human rights directives.

These activities in Stoke, guided by the multi-faceted motivations discussed, simultaneously reinvent and reinvigorate the memory community of 'Lidice Shall Live'. Yet the original community was predominantly concerned with rebuilding Lidice for the few survivors who would be able to return to it after the war. The extent to which this present day community involves the people of Lidice – beyond being a symbol of successful humanitarianism in which the residents of Stoke-on-Trent can take retrospective pride – remains to be seen as the campaign's future unfolds. It is worth noting, however, that the bond is largely reciprocal; in addition to hosting the exhibition about Stoke-on-Trent's role in rebuilding the village, the authorities in Lidice have named a street there after Sir Barnett Stross, who was himself made an honorary citizen of the village in 1957. When Alan and Cheryl visited Lidice, together with other campaigners from Stoke, in 2010, their efforts were reciprocated by a delegation from the village, who toured the Staffordshire potteries in November 2010. According to the Mayor of Lidice, Veronika Kellerova, who had relatives killed in the 1942 tragedy: "For us Barnett Stross was an inspirational man. We'd be very glad to make a friendship between Lidice and Stoke-on-Trent because that's where Barnett Stross was from" (*The Sentinel*, 2010).

Thus the proposed twinning of Lidice with Stoke-on-Trent bears many hallmarks of model town twinning as described by Verlinden; the Gerrard's "voluntary commitment and participation" as local citizens "in collaboration with their local authorities", is firmly geared towards a future of "mutual interaction" (see Verlinden 2008, 208) with Lidice. The twinning, even before any protocols have been signed, promises to involve Lidice and Stoke in a process of cultural exchange, at least as far as the International Art Competition is concerned. Furthermore the current campaign brings to attention the original fundraising movement, which in its own time resonated distinctly with the notion of a cosmopolitan recognition and investment in the everyday lives of others. However, as noted, the current campaign's focus on attracting tourism to Stoke-on-Trent and improving the city's profile and economic prosperity cannot be so smoothly integrated into a transcultural, cosmopolitan model; whilst the relationship between Lidice and Stoke-on-Trent is fundamentally an example of 'glocal' connectivity, this particular

element of the contemporary campaign's direction at the time of writing seems to constitute more of a turning inwards to regionalism than a move towards cultural 'others'.

Lidice/Khojaly: 'Different places, same brutality'¹⁸

The twinning of Lidice with the town of Khojaly represents a divergent form of transcultural identification from that seen in the example of Lidice and Stoke-on-Trent. In the Khojaly massacre of 1992, part of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between ethnic Armenians and the Republic of Azerbaijan (1988–1994),¹⁹ 613 civilians were killed by Armenian troops in a 48-hour period (Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 10). Whilst many Armenians insisted that deaths were sustained in the course of legitimate military operations, international human rights organisations asserted that the event was unjustifiable and significantly contravened human rights conventions.²⁰ Given this history, the twinning of Khojaly with Lidice arguably constitutes a polemic harnessing of the Holocaust paradigm, officially aligning the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with the most internationally recognised genocide of the 20th century. In this respect, because the twinning aims to draw attention to a recent violation of human rights, the mobilization of Holocaust memory initially seems to resonate with Levy and Sznajder's assessment of the cosmopolitan memory's global potential.

The link between Khojaly and Lidice, as with Stoke-on-Trent, is apparently a reciprocal one. Reports suggest that a street in Lidice is also to be named after Khojaly; an act that mirrors rumours of an earlier naming of a street after Lidice in Khojaly. A memorial event for victims of the massacre was held in Lidice in 2010. The link has not been without controversy, however; according to press reports, the Armenian ambassador to Vienna, Ashot Ovakiman, sent unsuccessful protests to Lidice authorities about the 'twinning' in an attempt to block the initiative (*News.Az* 2010). Whilst the proposal is reported to have gone ahead nonetheless, as noted previously the mayor of Lidice has refuted any official twinning; she also denies the naming of any street in Lidice after Khojaly. Nonetheless, it is worth considering the dynamics of the project. The destruction

¹⁸ Azerbaijani Embassy in Prague (2010).

¹⁹ The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict can be seen as part of a larger struggle for space and resources throughout the Caucasus region after the demise of the Soviet Union (see Krüger 2010, xi–xii).

²⁰ See Parliamentary Assembly Doc. 9066 2nd edition, written declaration no. 324, 2001 ('Recognition of the genocide perpetrated against the Azeri population by the Armenians') and United Nations Economic and Social Council, commission on human rights, 58th session ('Question of the violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in any part of the world'), republished in Heydarov and Bagiyev (2007, 46–7).

of Lidice and Khojaly do share certain characteristics. In both cases unarmed and peaceful civilians were attacked and killed and their bodies stripped of valuables (Stehlik 2004, 79; Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 78). Structures in both settlements were also destroyed (Stehlik 2004, 92–7; Denber and Goldman 1992, 20). However, there are also some substantial differences. More children, men and women died in Khojaly in 1992 than had been killed at Lidice fifty years earlier. The nature of the attacks themselves was also somewhat different. Whilst both cases were undeniably brutal, the Nazi slaughter of Lidice's men was a regimented, highly methodological exercise in which groups of between 5 and 10 were lined up and shot, and their bodies laid out in neat rows. Prisoners from Terezin concentration camp buried the bodies over the course of the following two days. The massacre at Khojaly was a comparatively chaotic and disordered event. The killings were characterised, not by cold uniformity, but by extreme and uncontrolled violence; 56 of the bodies, according to autopsy reports were killed with "especial cruelty: they were burnt alive, scalped, beheaded or had their eyes gouged out, and pregnant women were bayoneted in the abdomen" (Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 10). The corpses were left scattered over the surrounding countryside (*The Times* 1992). The extremity of the violence at Khojaly and the transparently civilian status of the victims garnered immediate attention from the international press (see Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 13–33). Far from aligning what had happened with any other genocide, Agdam militia commander Rashid Mamedov stated upon seeing the scattered bodies in the wake of the massacre: "The bodies are lying there like flocks of sheep. Even the fascists did nothing like this" (Killen 1992).²¹ Similarly, French journalist Jean-Yves Junet, a witness to the massacre, reported: "I had heard a lot about wars, about the cruelty of German fascists, but the Armenians outdid them, killing five- or six-year-old children, innocent people"²² (Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 77).

The twinning campaign aligns the events at Khojaly with those at Lidice in public consciousness, but a close examination of what happened in the two communities reveals many specific differences. Arguably, linking Lidice and Khojaly isolates these two events from their larger respective contexts. At stake, potentially, is a conflation of events, something with which Levy and Sznajder are apparently unconcerned in their discussion of cosmopolitanism's facilitation of "new sensibilities and solidarities" (2006, 18). It

²¹ When this statement was reported, the journalist – correctly or incorrectly – cited this reference to 'fascists' as relating to Nazi invaders in World War II.

²² It should be noted that Junet's distinction seems to overlook certain aspects of the Nazi campaign involving the deaths of young children and other civilians.

remains in question, I suggest, whether the alignment of the Khojaly massacre with the destruction of Lidice and its people is justified in casting aside the fundamental historical differences between their respective contexts, to which I now draw attention.

The massacre at Khojaly, not unlike many of those that took place during the Holocaust, was part of a longer struggle for land. Conflict between the Armenians and the Azerbaijani people dates back to at least 1905, and escalated considerably following the establishment of Soviet rule in Armenia in 1920 (Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 7–8). Since the conflict began, many Azerbaijani settlements and national cultural monuments have been destroyed (2007, 7–8). The destruction of Lidice, as discussed, was deliberately publicized by the perpetrators as a warning to the international community, in particular to resistance groups. In fact, the nature of the massacre was quite unlike the majority of such acts during the Holocaust, which were often more directly connected to the Nazis' colonization of land (as discussed in Chapter 2), and which the Nazis often went to quite considerable lengths to mask (Lang 2005, 14). Whilst the events at Khojaly in 1992, too, were made public almost immediately by the global media, Armenian officials continue to this day "to deny responsibility for the crimes committed during the [Nagorn-Karabakh] conflict, including against the population of Khojaly" (Heydarov and Bagiyev 2007, 10).

Furthermore, whilst the massacre at Khojaly allows a fairly straightforward categorisation of victims and perpetrators, the larger Nagorno-Karabakh conflict suggests a more complex oscillation of collective innocence and guilt. According to Human Rights Watch (then Helsinki Watch), both sides have committed acts that violate the laws of armed conflict:

while legitimate military targets were apparently interspersed within these locales, neither party had unlimited licence in attacking these targets. Armenians and Azerbaijani forces had a duty to observe the law of proportionality and to take the necessary precautions in launching attacks in order to avoid, and, in any event, to minimize civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects incidental to such attacks. Both sides appear to have flagrantly disregarded these obligatory legal restraints on attacks in these particular military operations. (Denber and Goldman 1992, 31)

The Holocaust, to which the Lidice-Khojaly twinning inevitably aligns the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute, allows a less problematic division; if not between Germans as perpetrators and other National groups as victims then certainly between the Nazi party and the cultural and ethnic minorities they proposed to enslave or annihilate. Bearing this in mind, the extent to which the Armenians can be decisively designated perpetrators within the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict overall is somewhat less straightforward than the

one example of Khojaly suggests, although the victimhood of civilians attacked in such cases remains indisputable.

Perhaps inevitably given the extent to which it has been circulated, Adolf Hitler's speech of August 22, 1939 about the Armenian genocide is brought to mind by discussions of Armenians as perpetrators or victims throughout the 20th century as a whole.

I have issued the command – and I'll have anybody who utters but one word of criticism executed by a firing squad – that our war aim does not consist in reaching certain lines, but in the physical destruction of the enemy. Accordingly, I have placed my death-head formations in readiness – for the present only in the East – with orders to them to send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language. Only thus shall we gain the living space (*Lebensraum*) which we need. Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians? (in Lochner 1942, 1)

Perhaps it is simply more difficult to firmly designate the Armenians as perpetrators of genocide when they themselves, as a people, have also been victims of genocidal violence; whether or not this should interfere with the commemoration of events in Khojaly as an isolated case requires further debate.

The twinning of Lidice with Khojaly potentially opens up a new supranational context for Holocaust memory. However, crucially, “[s]upranationality presumes some surrender of sovereignty by the member nations” (Etzioni 2001, xix). In other words, within such a body individual nation states potentially agree to be “bound against their will” (Kembayev 2007, 15) by any weighted majority vote by other members. In a supranational organization, “sovereignty is shared between central and political bodies” (Heywood 2000, 260). As one of the most prominent features of post-1945 world politics, supranationalism recognizes “that globalization has perhaps made the notion of nation state sovereignty irrelevant”. Furthermore, advocates of supranational organizations argue that nation state sovereignty “produces an anarchical international order that is prone to conflict and war”, although its opponents “stand by the principle of the nation-state, and argue that supranational [organizations] have not, and can never, rival the nation-state’s capacity to generate political allegiance and ensure democratic accountability” (Heywood 2000, 260).

Thus supranationality implies a transference of responsibility from individual nations to independent others; certainly the notion that “shared memories of the Holocaust [harbour] the possibility of transcending ethnic and national boundaries” (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 4) is fundamentally supranational in character. However, the Khojaly massacre, like many Holocaust atrocities, was part of a larger struggle for land, a struggle

which continues to motivate border disputes between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis to date. According to Thomas de Waal:

The cultural and symbolic meaning of Nagorno Karabakh for both peoples cannot be overstated. For Armenians, Karabakh is the last outpost of their Christian civilization and a historic haven of Armenian princes and bishops before the eastern Turkic world begins. Azerbaijanis talk of it as a cradle, nursery, or conservatoire, the birthplace of their musicians and poets. Historically, Armenia is diminished without this enclave and its monasteries and its mountain lords; geographically and economically, Azerbaijan is not fully viable without [Nagorno] Karabakh. (2003, 3)

Whilst the twinning of Lidice and Khojaly may be suggestive of a supranational affinity between the Czech and the Azerbaijani people, the unresolved battle for land in Nagorno-Karabakh undermines any suggestion that either the Azerbaijani or the Armenian groups involved are willing to surrender territorial sovereignty. The Nagorno-Karabakh war, which began in earnest in 1988, ended in 1994, yet up to a million refugees are still living in camps in the affected region. Nagorno-Karabakh's national status remains in question.²³ On Tuesday March 22, 2011, Azerbaijani soldier Samir Agayev became the eighth to die this year in the ongoing conflict between the two national groups ('Yerevan' 2011). According to the Azerbaijani national press, the twinning of Lidice and Khojaly was made official by the signing of a protocol document on February 26, 2010 (*Today.az* 2010). The twinning is a polemic act; the Holocaust is mobilised for political ends and sends an uncompromising message to the international community about the nature of what took place in Khojaly in 1992; yet it says little about what happened to the inhabitants of Lidice fifty years earlier, and the existence of a new supranational memory context is problematised by the ongoing struggle for the territorial sovereignty of Nagorno-Karabakh.

This section set out to discuss the dual town twinning of Lidice as a dynamic network of 'glocalisation'; a processual creation of "new connections that situate ... political, economic, and social experiences in a new type of supranational context" (Levy and Sznajder 2006, 27). The idea of town twinning has been considered with a view to its potential as a productive platform for cosmopolitan memory. Whilst different motivations prompted the twinning or proposed twinning of Lidice with Khojaly and Stoke-on-Trent respectively, both cases rely, to some extent, on an initial sense of global-local solidarity rendered possible by the mobilization of Holocaust memory. However, the emergence of a

²³ Leaders within the region have announced the existence of the 'Nagorno-Karabakh Republic' but '[t]o date the international community has not recognized Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state or as a part of Armenia'; simultaneously, whilst Azerbaijan still 'asserts that Nagorno-Karabakh is an integral part of its territory', Karabakh Armenians 'reject any part of integration into Azerbaijan' (Heiko Krüger 2010: xi).

“supranational” context for Lidice’s commemoration has not been conclusively indicated; in exploring these cases, it is clear that both communities involved are intensely characterized by the needs of their very distinct constituent groups to reassert particular identities.

In the case of Khojaly, this identity is a national one, based on the Azerbaijani’s insistence on their inalienable right to a specific geographic homeland (Nagorno-Karabakh). It is, in fact, motivated by an arguably anti-supranational instinct in which national sovereignty is reasserted rather than surrendered. In the case of Stoke-on-Trent, the identity in question is a regional one, which is also based on an attachment to a particular geographical context. In neither case do the group identities involved transcend their original geographical boundaries, indeed those involved attempt to bind themselves more closely to their particular territories. To what extent the global network they suggest promotes an increased solidarity beyond such boundaries in any sustained way also remains to be seen. They are also not straightforward as examples of supranationalism as defined by political theorists such as Etzioni and Kembayev; in taking part in a larger framework – in this case a memory network – neither community surrenders sovereignty. Place and territory, rather than losing meaning, is re-asserted as a central concern in both twinning campaigns.

Furthermore, if we assume, following Welsch and Erll, that a turn *to the other* is an important aspect of transculturalism, and that, following Erll, Levy and Sznajder’s project indeed falls within the transcultural sphere – and their interest in ‘universal values that are emotionally engaging’ does seem to support an interest in an improved self-other relation – then it is also worth noting that neither Stoke-on-Trent or Khojaly’s contemporary mobilizations of Lidice’s memory seem to consistently fit such a model. In both cases, rooted cosmopolitanism, or a turn towards the other and the fabric of their everyday lives, is to some extent present in the act of twinning; but it occurs, at least in part, as a precursor to self-affirmation. It is not the intention of this analysis to undermine the motivations or actions of those involved in these twinning projects. It is, however, worth considering whether examples such as these may call for a re-interrogation of existing theoretical co-ordinates. For example, in the twinning of Lidice and Khojaly, I have argued that a slippage takes place; the contextual differences between the Holocaust and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict are necessarily precluded by this action in order for the similarity, rather than the difference between the two cases, to have meaningful political resonance. Yet the twinning also fits a ‘glocal’ model, as an internalization of the global within a local context. Levy and Sznajder’ argument, as already noted, is that globalization

“does not lead to ... convergence or homogenization”, and indeed it may not *necessarily* do so; but perhaps in some cases individual contextual specificities are lost during this process, as is arguably the case in the twinning of Lidice and Khojaly.

In considering Khojaly as a case study of glocalization, it becomes apparent that Levy and Sznajder’s model may overestimate the extent to which “earlier catastrophes become relevant in the present and can determine a future that is articulated outside the parameters of the nation-state” (2006, 29). Whilst Lidice becomes relevant to current perceptions of the Khojaly massacre, Nagorno-Karabakh shows no signs of carving out a future identity beyond the parameters of the national territory. In the case of Stoke-on-Trent, the community is mobilizing Lidice’s memory as a way of celebrating their own region and the past activities of those who lived there. The twinning is not concerned with the current suffering of others; it is concerned with memories of suffering only as an element within a larger historical narrative. This is not to say that an engagement with the ‘others’ of Lidice will not result from the twinning endeavour; indeed such engagement is quite likely to result from the events associated with the campaign. This indicates a need to reconsider transcultural and cosmopolitan memory models as *necessarily* concerned with the human rights of the other; thus the extent to which a *turn to* the other is a definitional element of associated practices is called into question.

Despite their differences as case studies, in drawing attention to the massacre at Lidice, both Khojaly and Stoke-on-Trent’s twinning campaigns reinvigorate memory of the village on national and international platforms. Whatever the underlying motivations, and whether or not the campaigns themselves completely fit any particular model of memory practice, in very real terms they continue to defy the Nazis’ attempts to obliterate Lidice, and in doing so forge new dialogical connections which promise to shape its future in a globalized world.

This chapter has examined the multifarious ways in which memories of Lidice have remained robust, constituting a refusal of the Nazis’ original goal to erase the village from geography and memory. Whilst topographical revision characterized many Nazi campaigns, Lidice’s fate was unique in that its destruction was a primary aim rather than an incidental legacy. Beginning at the village itself, I have tracked the development of a diverse memorial complex which calls attention to the various different historical and political factors that have shaped it. In scrutinizing the design and maintenance of the Lidice memorial environment in comparison to those of prominent death camps, I argued that a more-than-representational approach could productively be used to interpret such

spaces. I then moved on to consider certain prominent examples of the global network of memory which emerged almost immediately after the village was razed, and which continues to evolve today.

Another way of bringing together the various arguments I have made throughout this chapter is offered by a consideration of the relationship between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic. To return, in the first instance, to the discussion of landscaping techniques; like other scholars who have previously worked through the issues raised by Bauman's link between the ideologies of gardening and National Socialism, I was confronted with what at first glimpse appears to be a conflation of innocence and guilt. All Nazis are not gardeners, and all gardeners are not Nazis. However, as Richard Etlin's introductory note to a collection on Third Reich art and culture suggests:

On the microcosmic scale, we find a deep penetration of Nazi attitudes towards race, both in the definition of the German essence and in the excoriation of the alien essence, considered typically as Jewish or Slavic, seen as penetrating into the most minute particulars of each domain of human endeavour [...] The Nazi *Weltanschauung* contained no innocent or neutral detail in any aspect of thought or activity. (2002, xvii)

Whilst there is clearly a danger putting very different actions on a par without due attention to moral nuance, if we recognize that in some instances the macrocosmic *can* penetrate into the microcosmic we must be willing to consider that possibility in any given context. Crucial to this consideration is that we question how the relationship between the two spheres works; if a racial policy of a nation state can penetrate into the microcosm inhabited by the gardener, is it also true that the microcosmic activity of gardening can lead, as Bauman suggests, to a nation state policy of ethnic cleansing? Perhaps this is in fact an interpenetration which works both ways, and which needs to be teased out carefully in each individual instance.

Similarly, the relationship between the local – the microcosmic – and the global – the macrocosmic – is fundamentally dialogic: when the Nazis razed Lidice, it became global news; the response from another local community (that of Stoke-on-Trent) – resulted in its recreation; the poetry of Millay and the documentary film of Jennings found a way into dealing with an issue of global concern via attention to the microcosmic environment of the tragedy at Lidice, an environment which could be mobilized to produce a differentiated solidarity capable of transcending national boundaries. There is a palpable need to question the dynamics of the relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm. In my analysis of the twinning of Lidice with Stoke and Khojaly, I attempted to enact such a scrutiny by examining the variety of mobilizations that are

taking place in each respective campaign. These examples simply suggest, I would argue, that the frameworks we generate to examine the future of Holocaust memory – and cosmopolitanism will no doubt continue to be significant in this discourse – need to be flexible enough to take into account the sheer variety and complexity of evolving memory practices as they take place in the world around us; to examine the relationship between macrocosmic and microcosmic activities and environments without assuming that travelling only ever occurs in one direction.

* * *

I visited Lidice in the early spring. One of the first things I asked my guide during my tour was where particular village landmarks had been before its destruction. I had already been shown several photographs of aerial views of the village by the museum curator at my earlier visit to the education centre, each presenting it at a different time: before the massacre, in 1945, and in the present day. The best view for a visitor to the site itself is from the edge of the memorial complex outside the museum, which is where my tour began. My guide pointed out the foundations of the church and the Horák farm, and approximately indicated where other buildings had stood and where the boundaries of the original village had been. She also pointed out the stream that the Nazis had diverted in their topographical alterations.

It is easier to get a sense of where things happened at Lidice than it is at Babi Yar in Kiev; with the foundations of two buildings still present and the photographic images of the village itself to use as a point of comparison, it is possible to visualize something of what it might have looked like in June 1942. In a way, though, the relative absence of ruins here has a disorientating effect; it is tempting to try and fill in the contours of the landscape as it is now – its gentle slopes, hollows, and ridges – with one's eyes, to bring the village back to life in the imagination. It is easy to forget that these contours bear little reference to either the original village or to the results of the Nazi re-landscaping; as I have noted here, the landscape was 'put back' as much as possible to what it had been in the years immediately after the war according to an approximation of its original topography. Sympathizing with my struggle, my guide tells me to come back in winter; when it snows heavily and the sun comes out, she says, the foundations of the original village are faintly visible as the light reflects off the surface, magnifying otherwise hidden contours. I am not

sure whether to believe this, but it is an appealing idea: that the snow could, in covering the landscape, uncover its past. It calls to mind Dixon Hunt's comments about the affective potential of natural materials; their capacity to register the "passing of the seasons", to continue with "their own" lives and offer either their "pathetic sympathy" or a "consolation of seasonal renewal and regeneration" (Dixon Hunt 2001, 22). In finding the idea of the snow's capacity to show me the past appealing, am I falling prey to something of which I claim to be wary – a sentimental indulgence, an anthropomorphic impulse? Perhaps. After all, what is being renewed as the seasons change? The past cannot be regenerated. But it does impress on me anew how much the weather matters when it comes to how a particular place is experienced. This is something I hear most often from people keen to tell me about their visits to Auschwitz. So familiar with rather ubiquitous images of the camp in the snow, in black and white, and with internees' descriptions of intense cold, the extreme heat suffered by Auschwitz prisoners during the fierce Polish summer seems to be less prominent in people's cultural memories of the camp. Thus those who visit from spring through to autumn are often surprised that there is not, somehow, at least two feet of eternal snow where they have always imagined it to be.

I think again of the weather when the Lidice Memorial website announces its programme for the 70th anniversary of the massacre, on June 10th 2012. It will be the beginning of the wedding season at Lidice, when the roses are coming into bloom under the early summer sun and the foundations illuminated by the snow are once more invisible. As preparations for the 70th anniversary of the destruction of Lidice are underway, the 2012 Eurovision Song Contest is hosted in Azerbaijan. A celebration of "supranational identities" (Stokes 2004, 103), the contest was first held in 1956, the same year the first significantly publicized city twinning in Europe, between Rome and Paris – itself likened to "a wedding, after a long flirtation" (Vaughan 1979, 208) – was inaugurated. The dignitaries from both cities made an oath to "to develop, by means of a better reciprocal understanding, a lively sentiment of European fraternity; and to join our forces to promote with all our powers the success of that undertaking so essential for peace and prosperity: the creation of European unity" (in Vaughan 1979, 208). Its stated aims were much like those attributed to the first Eurovision Song Contest; to "unify post-war western Europe through music" (Raykoff and Tobin 2007, xvii). In the 2012 competition, the Armenian entry withdrew in April, and does not perform at the contest. Their reason for withdrawing is the continued hostility in Nagorno-Karabakh, and the death of another soldier – this time an Armenian – at the border earlier this year (Kramer 2012). The Armenian Public Television network made the following statement:

Despite the fact that the Azerbaijani authorities have given security guarantees to all participating countries, several days ago the Azerbaijani president made a statement that enemy number one for Azerbaijan were the Armenians... There is no logic to sending a participant to a country where he will be met as an enemy. (In *Huffington Post* 2012)

One musician from the Azerbaijani entry, Elvin Kerivov, 29, expressed relief that things had not been the other way round: "It's better for Eurovision to be here in Azerbaijan than in Armenia. If Armenia won, our delegation would have to go to Armenia to sing, which is not good for our pride" (in Herszenhorn 2012). Johan Fornäs has argued that "[s]ome potential may lie hidden in Euro football and the Eurovision Song Contest" (2008, 137); his mention of Euro football reminds me of the controversy that met leaked proposals to build a hotel at Babi Yar, expressly for international visitors for Euro 2012. The dynamics of each case is clearly different: in Kiev, the proposal seemed to be yet another attempt to bury Holocaust memory, whilst for the Armenians, the recent past is still too much in the present to be set aside. As Fornäs concludes, whatever the potential of events designed to bring Europe together, there are "few signs of emerging transnational and supranational forms of life and identity" to be observed in reality (ibid.). It is too early to say the same for the town twinnings discussed in this chapter. Nonetheless, the examples presented are suggestive of one element of supranational activity that demands more interrogation: its selective dynamics. Antonio D'Alfonso has argued that, in their attempts to create supranational cultures, nations simply "attract whatever acceptable elements of neighbouring cultures from within and outside their geographical territory, and of course, make sure to expel all undesirable elements of foreign culture" (2005, 57). As far as cultures of memory are concerned, the dawn of supranationalism may do little more than legitimate what has already become the norm: for those with power to decide which memories are to be mobilized and which are best left behind. Like the snow at Lidice, this may, in some cases, reveal pasts which might otherwise have been lost or forgotten; but whereas the snow has no agenda guiding its fall, for those in a position to illuminate the past, the demands of the present will never be far away.

Conclusion

Travelling to Remember

*I hate conclusions.
A good book, essay, course, or lecture should open up its
subject, not shut it down*

Lawrence Buell (2005, 128)

Memorial texts, like good conclusions, should open up their subjects rather than close them down. That was the premise with which I began this thesis, and throughout each of the three case studies I have discussed here I have endeavoured to suggest how such an opening up might work. Primarily, I have done this by travelling and writing about what I found. With travel, as with memory, one thing leads to another. I do not imply that a particular path awaits the traveller: each, as de Certeau suggests, is a poet of their own acts; we all find our own way. John Zilcosky argues that both writing and travelling – as forms of “going where one isn’t” – suggest “the openness of the unimaginable” (2008, 6). In planning a journey, as in planning the construction of a text, certain co-ordinates can be determined in advance; but both the journey and the text will always, to some extent, be shaped by a series of incidental encounters the nature of which cannot be predicted.

The first chapter, on Buchenwald, explored a concentration camp in the homeland of the German Enlightenment as a space of a dialogical engagement between ‘victim’ and ‘visitor’. Via an ecocritical reading of the testimonial project of former inmate Jorge Semprun, the chapter demonstrates landscape as palimpsest – multi-layered, multi-dimensional and texturised. Following Semprun’s phenomenological immersion in a

landscape seemingly saturated with German cultural history, I explored the potential of textualised topography as facilitative of an intense and reflective empathic unsettlement. The following chapter on Babi Yar examined spatial and literary de-territorializations; beginning with Babi Yar's disjointed memorial landscape in Kiev, I traced a trajectory of travelling memory in literature from Kuznetsov's *Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel* to D.M. Thomas' *The White Hotel*. I argued that this mediation, prompted in part by an evasion of Holocaust memory in Ukraine itself, played a part in the evolution of a new landscape 6000 miles away: the Babi Yar Park, Denver, Colorado. In examining the relationship between the original mass grave site and its transcontinental counterpart, the chapter interrogated Ukrainian and American public memory of the massacre, and uncovered the centrality of soil and topography within associated discourse and practice. The final chapter, on Lidice, turned to a complex international memorial network surrounding a landscape which the Nazis infamously attempted to erase from memory and topography and cover with German soil. Again I began with the site itself, examining the possibility of curating nature to appropriately 'landscape' the Holocaust, before moving on to consider memories of Lidice in the global community. I interrogated the twinning of the village with Khojaly, Azerbaijan and with Stoke-on-Trent, UK, positing the resulting network as an example of cosmopolitan 'glocalisation'. In, both cases, I suggested, despite their motivational specificities, the twinings rely on a sense of global-local solidarity rendered possible by the mobilization of Holocaust memory.

As a way of concluding, I turn to the encounters that have shaped my own engagement with the landscapes of memory discussed throughout. As Susannah Radstone contends in a recent review of emerging models of memory scholarship: "One of the fundamental insights provided by memory research [...] is that memory constructs the past *in the present*. So any story that I might tell about the history and development of memory studies will be a story that I tell from, and inside, not just the present, but my present" (Radstone 2011, 111-112). Thus in attempting to better define the intervention I have pursued within this field, it is inevitable that at least part of the story comes from my own present. As I stated in the introduction, the final challenge of this project is to situate not only an abstract idea of *the self*, but also *myself*, in relation to the Holocaust and its landscapes. I consider this story here alongside the work of the writer whose work perhaps most closely embodies the methodology I have advocated here: that of W.G. Sebald. Sebald's literature is concerned with the "history of modernity" and frequently the Holocaust in particular (Long 2007a, 14-16) and with the workings and ethics of memory in relation to and beyond particular historical contexts. Whilst likened to travel-writing,

his works have also been interpreted as inversions of the paradigms of travel;¹ as Wylie has argued, Sebald's writing is unique in its "treatment of landscape's essential tension in-between movement and dwelling, outsider and insider [...] Caught precisely between staying and moving on, Sebald's writing is *of* landscape, not simply about landscape" (2007, 208). Characterised by a denial of "redemptive closure" (Kilbourne 2007, 140) and "an ethos of embodied uncertainty" (Walkowitz 2007, 169), Sebald presents us with travels structured by what Jessica Dubow discusses as a condition of incompleteness (2004, 2007). These travels, however, are not evacuated by their open-ended nature. The places encountered in Sebald's texts are co-ordinates that both reveal imbrications of past narratives and invite their implication within new trajectories of thought and response. Sebald presents landscape as W.T.J. Mitchell has conceptualized it; circulating as a "medium of exchange" (1994, 1), always becoming but never completed.

In order to elucidate in precise terms how this thesis has come together, I discuss the encounters that have structured the experience behind it alongside examples from Sebald's *The Rings of Saturn* (2002). The purpose of this discussion is not to provide a new reading of a novel of which so many thorough and nuanced readings already exist. Indeed, scholarly discourse on Sebald, now almost a sub-discipline of literary criticism in itself, better enables me to elucidate the particular conceptual model I wish to present; Sebald scholarship is a rare instance in which literary critics have brought cultural geography and cultural memory together, very much as I advocated in introducing this thesis. Neither is my intention for this conclusion to function as a chapter on Sebald as such. Whilst many of the methodologies utilized and perspectives taken throughout echo those present in Sebald's literature of landscape, it is the way in which his literature creates a textualised network of many places – as opposed to illuminating one place in isolation – that renders it so suited as a structural device for this conclusion, which attempts to bring three places together as well as to articulate the relationship between landscape, literature and memory proposed throughout the thesis.

Apparently from a hospital bed, the narrator of *The Rings of Saturn* recalls a walking tour through East Anglia. Like many other protagonists in Sebald's texts, his subject position in relation to the histories revealed by the text is fundamental to the author's treatment of landscape. Sebald, as Eric Santner suggests, presents a "narrator-witness-listener" (2006, 138), a subject who "takes on the responsibility of mourning" (Schlesinger 2004, 54) without lapsing into nostalgia; a "subject of the age of mass-

¹ John Zilcosky (2004), for example, considers four Sebald novels as inversions of usual forms of travel writing. See also Bianca Theisen (2004).

mediated reality [constituted] in the awareness that any nostalgia for lost authenticity is a myth and that there could be no comfort in this awareness” (Kilbourne 2007, 139). Each place he visits – and the walks that link them – anchors new stories. He does not go in search, as I did, of atrocity beneath the surface, yet a history of destruction haunts his travels. Each story leads the reader to a place and time far from the East Anglian coast in 1992 as experienced by this narrator, and as such a historical meta-narrative that shadows the tour from start to finish is constructed. The stories told in *The Rings of Saturn* are generated by a diverse range of encounters and scrutinised with reference to a plethora of mediated and remediated sources. Whilst the initial journey is structured according to pre-determined co-ordinates and existing routes, the experience of the narrator is shaped by the incidental encounters that occur along the way. As such, it echoes my own journey – one which is left open-ended, here, as much as concluded. I use three guiding principles of Sebald’s text to structure this overview of what this thesis has demonstrated: a transition from *lieux de mémoire* to landscapes of memory, based on recognition of their evolving, processual and social lives and the ways in which they are subject to mediation and remediation; the potential of such sites for the facilitation of cosmopolitan engagement; and the value of seeing Holocaust texts through an ecocritical lens that situates Others as part of the world around us, a world for which we have a universal and ineluctable responsibility.

Landscape beyond the *lieu*: mediation, remediation and incidental encounters

A key aim of this thesis was to demonstrate the dialogic and evolving nature of memorial landscapes in order to overcome a critical sense of monument fatigue. Sebald’s narrator reveals much about the problems that may face a visitor to a commemorative site who tries to recapture the past, problems which have perhaps contributed substantially to this fatigue. He recalls a visit to an official memorial for the Battle of Waterloo, a “circus-like structure” where the battle has been recreated with wax figures in authentic uniform:

This then, I thought as I looked round me, is the representation of history. It requires a falsification of perspective. We, the survivors, see everything from above, see everything at once, and we still do not know how it was. The desolate field extends all around where once fifty thousand soldiers and ten thousand horses met their end within a few hours. The night after the battle, the air must have been filled with death rattles and groans. Now there is nothing but the silent brown soil. Whatever becomes of the corpses and mortal remains? Are they buried under the memorial? Are we standing on a mountain of death? Is that our ultimate vantage point? Does one really have the much-vaunted historical overview from such a position? (*Rings* 125)

As Simon Cooke suggests, the example demonstrates the Sebaldian logic that “official or institutional storage sites for cultural memory [...] serve, literally as well as figuratively, as cover-ups of the past” (2009, 16). Hence, perhaps, Confino and Fritzsche’s suggestion that it is time to focus on memory “out of the museum and away from the monument” (2002, 5). I have argued, however, that official sites of memory can be experienced, as Crownshaw suggests, “against the grain”; that by focusing on the dialogical, processual and social interactions that take place in and around the memorial environment, we may better recognize their potential to facilitate an empathically unsettling engagement with the past which is of some ethical value. This is precisely the way in which Sebald’s narrator in *The Rings of Saturn* travels through and encounters landscape, as his “mental wanderings [take] cultural memory so persistently on the move” (Cooke 2009, 27).

The Sebaldian narrator is a rather particular traveller, who self-consciously distinguishes his own activities from those of “holidaymakers” who “cross the threshold” only to “leave again after they have taken a brief look around in the uncomprehending way characteristic” to them (*Rings* 92-3). In lingering over details about each place on his route, he becomes immersed in them and their particular histories. Whilst his larger trajectory itself is determined by pre-existing routes, such as an old diesel train track that runs from Norwich to Lowestoft (29), his choice of destinations pays heed to no conventional hierarchy of popular attractions. In spending so much time in the places others merely dismiss after a “brief look around”, he constructs his own unique path through the East Anglian landscapes. His selection of stops, such as a Sailor’s Reading Room in Southwold, or a deserted hotel in Lowestoft recommended from a guidebook “published shortly after the turn of the century” (42), takes him away from the tourist route as often as it coincides with it. As such Sebald alerts us to what we may gain from an exploration of the larger context, be it cultural, social or geographic, in which a particular place exists. Accordingly he pays close attention to the artefacts he stumbles across, such as a *Daily Express* photographic history of the Second World War, frequently relying on sources of “unofficial knowledge” and “public history” such as Raphael Samuel has argued must be sought in order to comprehend not only historical events but the memories that circulate around them (1994, 1-6). Throughout this thesis, I have relied on both official and unofficial sources, both sought and stumbled across: archives, guidebooks, testimonies, fictions, internet forums, newspapers, magazines, interviews and informal conversations. The importance of the latter, in particular, is clearly indicated in *The Rings of Saturn*, in which the narrator falls into conversation with people as he travels, from the gardener at a country house (*Rings* 38) to a property investor in a hotel bar (*Rings* 193-4).

These encounters offer him new perspectives on the landscapes through which he travels and tell him stories that send his imagination to landscapes far away. Throughout the sections that follow, I briefly introduce some examples of the encounters I have had during my research, to elucidate the ways in which “the gloriously unavoidable nature of human interaction” (MacDonald 2007, 21) facilitates memory-work. It is these encounters, alongside those mapped out in advance, that have mediated and remediated my own experiences of place, and which subsequently alerted me to the ways in which memories of them have travelled.

It is in part this approach to travel that allows Sebald’s narrator to reveal the intricately textured and textualised nature of place; at Somerleyton Hall, residence of Her Majesty’s Master of the Horse, for example, one cannot “readily say which decade or century it is, for many ages are superimposed [...] and coexist” (*Rings* 36). Such a superimposition of many ages has been revealed in discussions of each of the three case studies considered here. At Buchenwald, the ages of the Dukes of Saxony-Weimar, Goethe and Eckermann, the SS and their prisoners, Soviet and post-reunification commemoration are laid bare in topography and narrated by Semprun’s testimonial project. At Babi Yar in Kiev and across the Ukraine, despite new vegetable gardens and the construction projects of the Soviet government, a landscape transformed by years of mass death and burial awaits close scrutiny. At present day Lidice, where the razed village and its replacement sit either side of Barnett Stross’ rose garden, three temporalities are imbricated in one diverse landscape.

That literature both prompts and mediates experience of inhabiting and travelling through landscape is an essential premise of this enquiry that is also evident in Sebald’s work. The writings of Thomas Browne, a seventeenth century doctor and son of a silk merchant, provide an initial point of departure for the narrator of *The Rings of Saturn*. Browne’s view of the world, “as no more than a shadow image of another far beyond” (*Rings* 18), also grounds the meta-historical perspective of the text. It is in this spirit that the narrator records his travels; the histories behind the places he visits take over the description of his journey. Semprun’s writing, D.M. Thomas’ novel, and Peter Herbstreuth’s passing comment about discoloured crops at the Lidice mass grave were my own points of departure. Each set in motion a unique trajectory. Semprun led me not only to Buchenwald, but to Goethe, as writer, traveller, meteorologist, and cultural symbol, and to the cultural dichotomy of Weimar’s legacy. *The White Hotel* led me, not only to Babi Yar, but to Pronicheva and Kutnetsov, to the experiences of Holodomor victims, and ultimately to the Babi Yar Park in Denver. In my search for Lidice’s discoloured crops, I went from the

site itself to Stoke-on-Trent's fundraising campaign, to Millay's poem and Jennings's *Silent Village*, and from these texts to a global network of twinning and renaming from Illinois to Azerbaijan.

The way one thing leads to another in travel is exemplified by my first evening in Weimar, where I met two English people living and working in the city: Sonja Bruendl and Howard Atkinson, who heard me speaking in English and stopped to say hello. I invited them to accompany me on a visit to a restaurant called *Zum Zwiebel* [the Onion]. I was interested in *Zum Zwiebel* because I had heard a rumour that Hitler had been there for a drink, and I was interested in Sonja and Howard because they lived in Weimar. Citizens of Weimar, they told me, were very conscientious about Buchenwald. Howard suggested that this is easier in Weimar than it might be in other cities with a shameful element to their pasts because here there are so many positive narratives to counteract it. It was Howard, as much as Semprun and his imaginary Goethe, who prompted me to consider the dichotomous nature of the memories circulating between the city and the camp, Gorra's "coincidence in something more than space" (2004, 16). I became interested in how this dichotomy was played out, not initially via academic commentary, but whilst walking around Weimar's marketplace and noticing a post box commemorating the twinning of the city with Stratford-Upon-Avon as part of the Weimar 1999 Capital of Culture programme. Similarly, it was an incidental visit to the Holodomor Memory Candle in Kiev, where I saw so many images that reminded me of the pastoral destruction described in Kuznetsov's text that suggested the value of pursuing a multidirectional comparison of Holocaust and Holodomor experience.

As Sebald's narrator demonstrates in his walk around East Anglia, whilst you do not always find that which you set out in search of,² there is a value to simply getting lost in landscapes. Long has referred to Sebald's walkers as "deliberately inefficient", and argues that the tendency to "explore byways rather than make beelines" is best understood as a response to the "increased efficiency in economic and bureaucratic life" germane to modernity (2007b, 140). As happens "so often in unfamiliar cities" (*Rings* 84), I went the wrong way in Kiev many times, not in a purposeful response to modernity but purely by mistake. The city's metro system, which has the deepest tunnels in the world, is a spectacular but confusing place for the non-Ukrainian visitor. The signs are all in Cyrillic script; no condescension to the West in Kiev's sprawling underground marble halls. Street signs, too, are not in abundance. Maps are either in English or Ukrainian, but never both, it

² In *Rings*, for example, the narrator sets out to discover the whereabouts of Browne's skull, which by coincidence is said to be stored where he had been a patient; whilst he fails to find the object itself, he goes on to trace its history.

seems, so cross-referencing is difficult. Navigating the city demands encounters, if only because it is necessary to keep asking someone where you are. Whilst my strategy was not deliberately inefficient, I nonetheless came to appreciate the value of the byway over the beeline. One of the many places we got lost was in the hillside of the Pechersk Lavra, on the way to the Museum of the Great Patriotic War. This is not a museum it should be difficult to find. A 62m high statue, *Rodina Mat* (literally 'Nation's Mother', formally referred to as the 'Defence of the Motherland Monument') made from titanium, stands on the hillside over the Museum, visible from miles around. However, when standing at the bottom of the Lavra, a veritable maze of monks' vegetable gardens, chapels and paths lies between the approaching visitor and the Iron Lady. The long walk put me behind schedule and I got to the museum later than planned. The museum is a hangover from the Soviet era, a gloomy and forbidding place where museum employees follow the visitor from room to room. The rooms are lined with glass cases of exhibits. Captions are in Ukrainian only. In one of the dimly lit, sterile rooms a man was setting up a table of books in front of several rows of chairs. One of the titles looked familiar, and upon talking to the man – who spoke a little English – we learned that he was the son of Anatoli Kuznetsov, there to launch a French translation of his father's book. He showed us a typewriter in a case in the corner of the room: the typewriter on which Kuznetsov had written *Babi Yar*. He pointed to the machine with pride. This was the typewriter Kuznetsov has risked his life to collect, along with his manuscript for Babi Yar, and his Cuban cigars, before escaping from his minder when he defected to Britain. I was left thinking about how getting lost in the labyrinthine Lavra had resulted in this chance meeting. Ten minutes before or after I would have missed that window of opportunity, to see that famous typewriter and shake hands with a descendant of Kuznetsov, whose writing was one of my central co-ordinates and whose stories were in my head as I had walked through the city.

The encounter demonstrated a way in which the museum environment can become dynamic through social mediation. In the room next door to that in which I saw the typewriter are displays relating to the Holocaust in Ukraine. A spotlight cutting through the gloom illuminates a hangman's noose. A glass case on the wall contains two exhibits rarely exposed to the light of the public museum: a shrivelled glove and a desiccated fragment of soap, both made from human remains. With no available means of contextualising these objects, they appear to refer only to themselves. Some encounters open up the imagination; others close it down.

Later that night we saw protestors with tents lining Kiev's main street, Kreschatik. Encountering protest facilitates an awareness of individual and group values and affinities.

I recognized one of the words in a repeated chant by a group in Kreschatik as the name of the former Ukrainian Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, who was at that point in court being tried for abuse of office.³ Seeing the protestors had made me interested in the case and I followed it after returning to England. Tymoshenko was sentenced less than two weeks later, to seven years in prison (a conviction which the European Union have called "justice being applied selectively under political motivation" (in BBC News 2011). To reduce ten years of complex political change to brief summary, Tymoshenko was a leading figure in the Orange Revolution of 2004 (Herb 2008, 1629). Whether guilty or innocent of abusing her position, Tymoshenko was key to securing Ukrainian independence (ibid.). The protests against her trial and conviction suggest her role in that process has not been forgotten. It is impossible to go "travelling in search of the past", to borrow the title of Martin Gilbert's account (1997), without incidentally encountering present concerns. Her husband, Oleksandr Tymoshenko, was granted political asylum in the Czech Republic. He bought a house in Lidice, which I had visited myself in April 2009, seven years after reading Peter Herbstreuth's comment about crop discolouration over the mass grave. Due to a broken metro train, I got a taxi from Prague to Lidice. This was not a completely straightforward operation. Lidice is not pronounced as it is spelt. When journalist Howard Brubaker covered the renaming of Stern Hill as Lidice for the *New Yorker*, he remarked that "the name which Nazis thought they had extinguished" would be "mispronounced for all time" in Illinois (*Time* 1942). But perhaps it is better to be mispronounced than forgotten. To my disappointment, my guide at the memorial did not know about the discoloured crops, just that the Red Army had put a temporary monument in place over the grave at the end of the war. Whilst reading all available accounts about Lidice to search for the origin of this rumour, I noted that the young Germans drafted in to destroy the Lidice graveyard were from Thuringia (J. Bradley 1972, 114), where the forests had been cut down to build Buchenwald. Once you start seeking connections, they will never stop appearing. They are like the quirks of fate that structure life and history, which Semprun revelled in exposing: "The history – the stories, the narratives, the memories, the eyewitness accounts in which it survives – lives on. The text, the very texture, the tissue of life" (*WBS* 39). These are the co-ordinates upon which cultural memory, like life itself, is formed, and in embracing them we may reinvigorate both our experiences at and our interpretations of memorial environments.

³ The accusation being that Tymoshenko's 2009 deal with Russian energy suppliers was politically motivated (see BBC News 2011).

Margaret Bruzelius' discussion of Sebald draws attention to his compulsive tangential connection of "wildly different disparate people and events" (2007, 198). Not unlike the quirks of fate in Semprun's texts, in *The Rings of Saturn* these result in the creation of "networked" and "cosmological spaces" with "expansive and complex" "spatial and temporal dimensions" (Hui 2010, 277). In expanding on the nature of these spaces, Barbara Hui brings together two key thinkers on place from the fields of cultural geography and cultural memory: Doreen Massey and Andreas Huyssen. Massey's understanding of space acknowledges that "its specificity is not some internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (in Hui 2010, 279), whilst Huyssen's "present pasts" articulate something of how Sebald is most concerned with "investigating and exposing history" (in Hui 2010, 283). For Hui, the result is distinctly cosmopolitan, a "travelogue narrative" that "builds for the reader a sense of the local that is neither inward looking nor bounded but rather shows the area's particular character of place to be fundamentally defined and shaped by its location at the intersection of multiple global histories" (ibid.). It is to this dimension of Sebaldian space – its exposure of a local-global nexus – to which I now turn.

Cosmopolitan engagement

Travelling through and immersion in landscape forces a re-evaluation, both of what we know about ourselves and our own culture – whatever we perceive that to be – and what we think we know about others. Debbie Lisle suggests that the most interesting of travel writing exposes a confrontation, for both readers and writers, "with the problem of global community – of what values might cut through cultural difference and make it possible to develop a global order based on shared understandings, norms and sensibilities" (2006, 4). In *The Rings of Saturn*, landscape is presented as an affective medium which is central to the emotional life of the narrator; it forces a *positioning of a self* in relation not only to history but also to others, whilst remaining constantly aware of the caesura between past and present, self and Other. The networked and cosmological spaces Hui observes are shaped by the Sebaldian narrator's consciousness (Hui 2010, 260), thus one landscape will often lead to others which are spatially and temporally distant: a bridge he sees over the river Blyth between Southwold and Walberswick, for example, prompts him to recall the Taiping revolution in the 1850s and 60s and the subsequent fall of Nanking: the "bloody horror" of the Chinese landscape, (*Rings* 140) the mass suicide of the Taipings (141), the

violent destruction of Yuan Ming Yuan's palace near Peking by allied troops (144-55); all this stems from the narrator's realisation that the train that used to run over the Blyth bridge "had originally been built for the Emperor of China" (138). Thus landscape experience as presented in *The Rings of Saturn* suggests both the affective impact of place and its potential to facilitate a cosmopolitan ethics and productive multidirectionality. A cosmopolitan value system is intrinsic to Sebald's work, borne out in part by his efforts to: "consider how the lives of people in one place rely on, exploit, or benefit the lives of people elsewhere" and to "compare, distinguish and judge among different versions of thinking beyond the nation" (Walkowitz 2007, 169). Faced with the empty expanse of coast at Lowestoft, he thinks of a dying fisherman whose boats have vanished and in whose legacy "[n]o one is interested" (*Rings* 53). Sebald thus forces us to question that which I attempted to unravel at Buchenwald through the work of Semprun, in the Ukraine through the testimony of witnesses to the Holodomor and the Holocaust, and in the case of Lidice's twinning with Stoke and Khojaly, asking: "Across what distances in time do the elective affinities and correspondences connect? How is it that one perceives oneself in another human being, if not oneself, then one's own precursor?" (*Rings* 182). The importance of being able to put oneself in the place of another, without either losing one's own self or vicariously inhabiting that of an Other, I have argued, is central to the creation of differentiated solidarity – in terms of both local and global dynamics – in the examples discussed in this thesis.

Throughout my travels, I have encountered barriers which I have been unable to overcome, but on many more occasions I have discovered the existence of values that cut through cultural difference. One of the many incidental conversations I have had with visitors to memorial sites foregrounded my own interrogation of cosmopolitanism. Returning from Buchenwald to Weimar on the bus, I met two history teachers from Los Angeles: Elizabeth Azedoohi Kocharian and Yim Tam. They were making a stop on their journey across Germany to see the camp; they had ideally wanted to take a detour to Poland and see Auschwitz but the proximity of Buchenwald to Frankfurt, one of the pre-determined stops on their journey, made it a more practical option. Their students, they told me, were deeply interested in the Holocaust.

EK: Teaching history is a struggle, but whenever we talk about the Holocaust students pay attention, and students want to learn more.

YT: I think the students are so intrigued by it because it's so horrific. And I teach in an area where there is quite a lot of violence, and I think to see something a little bit more extreme than what their daily life is, is fascinating for them.

EK: Our kids only associate the Holocaust with attacks on the Jews, and when I tell them about, that other groups were there, they're extremely surprised, our young homosexual kids in high school, they're just starting to come out of the closet, and when they find out that homosexuals had been persecuted and were sent to the camps years before the actual Holocaust began, they do identify with that, they do especially want to hear more about that.

For Elizabeth and Yim, a visit to Buchenwald was an opportunity to engage anew, for themselves and their students.

YT: We teach students about the Holocaust, they're usually familiar with the book *Night*, and familiar with Elie Wiesel [...] I'll take pictures and go back to school and tell the kids, he stayed at this camp, it's going to mean so much more [...] for us there's a definite purpose, I mean, we teach it, and I think it becomes more real to us if we've seen it. I feel emotionally connected to this place now, and I think I would teach it a lot better, and I definitely want to go back home and re-read *Night*. I want to look up Weimar a little bit more and find out more about the history and how it's tied to Hitler, why it was named the Weimar Republic, you know, all these questions start to pop up.

The Holocaust, it seems, creates opportunities for the students to define themselves, be it with or against a particular identity. Their students, Elizabeth explains, are obsessed with Hitler, as the "ultimate evil power. And it's not that the kids really want to be him, but they want to know a lot about him because he was so charismatic and was able to lead so many people, even if they recognised how wrong [he was]. And so anything that has to do with Hitler they're very impressed with." I tell them they should visit the Hotel Elephant, and offer to take them to *Zum Zweibel*, where Hitler might have been for a drink. Here I ask them what the difference is between visiting a site where something actually happened, to visiting somewhere like the USHMM; does it provoke a different feeling?

YT: You know what's amazing is, I kept on telling Elizabeth, this is unreal. I feel like this [the camp] is fake almost, and the reason why I say this is that back home in LA we do have so many fake things, we do have replicas of stuff, and I almost felt like I was walking on a movie set, something unreal. When I'm in a museum, in the Holocaust Memorial at Washington DC, it's alive for me, because you see all these pictures, and I guess maybe it's an American way of displaying things, every angle you turn there's something screaming at you, it's much louder, it's much, I want to say it's much more Hollywood and flashy, everything draws your attention. And I guess it hasn't quite sunken in yet [...] why I was here, in that many people died [here].

What creates an experience of the real may be to some extent culturally (and in this case nationally) conditioned. Yet the motivations behind seeking this experience may lead outwards, to the fostering of concern for Others:

EK: We just finished our study of World War II and what we ended up doing is we had a member from a group called STAND which is the organisation that's trying to alleviate the genocide in Darfur come to our room and talk to the kids and they collected money and they encouraged a lot of students to join the STAND group at school. So in a way it got them

affected and interested in something current. But then when it comes to the war they'd rather ignore it because they don't really understand what it's about, it doesn't make sense to them at all.

YT: It's sad that many of our students forget that we're at war right now, because it's not on our soil, you know. And it's awful. It's awful. I would say our students don't understand war, because we've never had it in our country. And even what happened on September 11th doesn't affect our students the same way [...] most of them don't have any connections to New York. They saw the bombing, but you know, we see so many horrific things on television anyway, a lot of our kids are desensitized to what's reality and what's not and how it's really affecting us.

EK: Mine forget that we're currently fighting two wars right now, and part of it is that they haven't sacrificed anything.

In attempting to mobilize their students' fascination with Holocaust victims and perpetrators in order to make them recognize the atrocities taking place around them, including those in which their own government was complicit, Elizabeth and Yim contributed to my own sense that multidirectional memory should be approached as Rothberg presents it; "under the sign of optimism" (2009, 19), but an optimism which remains vigilant of contextual specificities. This encounter at Buchenwald shaped my experience and analysis of the sites and memory work I discovered later, at the Babi Yar Park in Denver and in the global memorial network surrounding Lidice.

Another of the encounters that contributed to my understanding of multidirectional memory work in practice occurred in Denver. Denver does not feel as easy a place to have incidental encounters as Weimar. You can walk from one end of Weimar to another in an hour accompanied by tourists from every part of the globe; you can walk for an hour in Denver and not see another person. The Denver Metro area is 8,414 square miles to Weimar's 32. You almost certainly would not walk for an hour in Denver, in any case, because everyone drives everywhere.⁴ Having toured the Babi Yar Park with Ellen Premack and Helen Ginsburg, we had lunch together in a restaurant across the road, which we drove to from the Memorial's car park. Walking is anathema in Denver. From a theoretical perspective I found Ellen and Helen's comments - made over lunch - that the inclusion of World Trade Centre steel at the Babi Yar Park could remain free of political connotations, somewhat difficult to agree with. Nonetheless, it would be impossible to talk to Helen and not recognize the importance of looking beyond politics. It is hard to reconcile her with the label of memorial entrepreneur; it says so little about her

⁴ Nonetheless, it was in Alan Gass's car, travelling through the grey urban landscape between the Babi Yar Park and the Mizel Museum later that afternoon that I heard about his childhood memories of the Denver landscape around the park before it was built up and neat lawns and flower beds replaced the native prairie grass. That to this day the landscape of his memory is preserved at the park can be partly put down to his involvement.

emotional involvement with the Babi Yar Park. She described the initial phase of her work for the project as the most wonderful and painful time of her life. Even the 'official' documents relating to the Babi Yar Park, in archives held at the Mizel Museum and the Penrose Special Collection at the University of Denver library, are full of Helen's life; the letters and speeches she wrote to raise funds and awareness about the project; the photos of her: at the unveiling of the first sign at the park, with Denver Mayor William McNicholls in 1974; garnering support at the White House with President Jimmy Carter in 1978; at the inauguration of the park in 1983 with another Denver mayor, Federico Pena. Helen's distinctive handwriting runs through the archives, a point of continuity across diverse documents spanning forty years of planning, developments, setbacks and achievements. Thus visiting sites of memory may alert us to the motivations of those that shaped them, whether their involvement has been elected or forced, politically or emotionally grounded.⁵

Helen's self-imposed role in the creation of the Babi Yar Park, her desire that it should "[thrive] on its message of freedom and dignity for all men, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or national citizenship" and "speak out against anti-humanism anywhere in this world of ours" relies on the premise that "whenever a man is harmed, we are all hurt." Whilst I could not share Helen's suggestion that to align the Holocaust with 9/11 carried no political implication, and her belief that such an implied parallel did not erode the specificity of each event, I could share her optimistic insistence on cosmopolitan ethics. Similarly, whilst I may doubt whether the twinning of Stoke-on-Trent with Lidice really constitutes an example of outward facing supranational engagement, I cannot but be encouraged by the way it has facilitated an increased involvement of the children of that city with the International Children's Exhibition of Fine Arts, Lidice (ICEFA).

The ICEFA project itself deserves more scrutiny than I have been able to give it in the context of this thesis, not least because, as the number of children entering each year increases, along with the number of countries involved, it becomes increasingly global in scope. Each year the organisers set a theme, recommended by UNESCO, to inspire entrants. Whilst the competition was established to "commemorate the child victims from the Czech village of Lidice murdered by German Nazis as well as all other children who have died in wars" (ICEFA 2011), the themes are not specifically related to these subjects (given the age range of entrants – between four and sixteen – this would clearly raise

⁵ As a counter-example, I fell into conversation with a man at Buchenwald who has been ordered, as a member of the Weimar's population in the 1950s, to lay the gravel over the muster ground; part of an initiative to both landscape the camp as a memorial and make local people atone for having lived alongside it.

innumerable issues). Rather the competition aims “to enable children from all over the world to express themselves through art, demonstrating their desire to live in a world without wars where there is room for realising children’s wishes” (ibid.). Thus in recent years themes such as “Happiness” (2005), “the Universe” (2009) and “This is where I live, that is me” (2011) have been typical. 2010’s theme was “Biodiversity”. I am interested to find that, whilst the theme apparently inspired many entries depicting “living nature in its diversity”, “the sad fact” remained that “the children from war-stricken countries painted pictures that are full of suffering, pain and despair” – “in spite of the recommended theme” (ICEFA 2011). None of the other themes seemed to have warranted the same comment, although without a thorough knowledge of the entries over the years it is impossible to say whether “suffering, pain and despair” has always characterised at least some participants’ work. It does not seem, from the website’s presentation of those pieces selected for a medal or an “honourable mention”, that any pieces which show these darker emotions are represented. There is no explicit statement about the criteria which guide the judge’s selections, thus it is difficult to know whether those entries which do not seem to sufficiently reflect the theme are less likely to be awarded. Nonetheless in the context of my own enquiry the idea that “in spite of the theme” of biodiversity, some children did not simply respond by representing “living nature” takes on intriguing dimensions; for there is more than an incidental link between war and biodiversity, albeit the destruction, rather than the celebration of diverse living forms. To unpack the centrality of this connection to my own argument, I turn again to the world as it is inhabited by the Sebaldian narrator.

Encountering nature and history: towards Holocaust ecocriticism

The third aim of this thesis was to demonstrate something of what might be gained by taking an ecocritical perspective to memorial texts, particularly but not solely within the Holocaust context. Episodes throughout *The Rings of Saturn* consistently direct attention to the complexity of human emotions with regards to the natural world, and the narrator takes an ecological approach to landscape; that is, one “concerned with the limits of nature, and with our need to value, conserve and recognize our dependence upon it” (Soper 1995, 7), a discourse which focuses on “the ‘nature’ that we are destroying, wasting and polluting” (ibid., 4). Anne Fuchs’ discussion of “perspective and subjectivity from a phenomenological perspective” (2007, 122) outlines the opposition constructed by Sebald between two paintings. In Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson*, contemplation of which

distresses the narrator, a surgeon dissects the cadaver of a thief for an audience of other surgeons. The gaze of the viewer is directed to the corpse. The audience of surgeons in the painting gaze, not on the body, but on a set of charts beyond it. The surgeons present a Cartesian model of perception, highlighting an opposition between the body and the mind and a devaluation of biological life and resulting in the reduction of animal to automata. Flesh is categorised according to utility; ‘unnecessary’ flesh may be discarded. Fuchs links this perspective to the trajectory of European rationalism and biopolitics, which, as suggested by Agamben, has resulted in a climate in which ‘Auschwitz’ (as a metonym for the concentration camps) was - and remains - possible. He articulates the problem as a matter of perspective, in this case a falsification as discussed in relation to the ‘impossible’ view represented in van Ruisdael’s *View of Haarlem with Bleaching Fields*. Whilst contemplating the Cartesian objectivity displayed in the Rembrandt highlights man’s responsibility for a “historical acceleration of natural destruction” and distresses Sebald’s narrator (Fuchs 2007, 123), he is temporarily calmed when he moves on to study van Ruisdael’s pastoral landscape. *View of Haarlem* is able to relieve his distress because it poses, unlike *The Anatomy Lesson*, a harmonious relationship between man and the natural world. The painting shows “an almost imperceptible transition from the cultivated landscape to the cityscape on the horizon [which] suggests unity between the two spheres” (Fuchs 2007, 128); the man/nature relation is depicted as one of transcendental promise and imaginary unity. The ultimate evacuation of this perception of unity is highlighted by Long’s analysis of the context in which the paintings are viewed: that of the Mauritshuis in The Hague, “initially a private display of personal wealth and power, but one that also embedded this individual power in the geopolitical framework of national colonial interests” (2007b, 32).

Each site I have examined in this thesis has demonstrated ways in which the Holocaust radically altered the human relationship with the natural world, presenting an interruption of perceived harmony. In all three chapters a trope emerged – the Holocaust has been conceptualised, across cultures, within a framework of the disrupted pastoral. At Buchenwald, the deforestation of the Ettersburg to build a concentration camp revealed the emptiness of National Socialist forest protection, and sent the birds away; in Ukraine, ethnic cleansing policies disrupted a long-standing productive relationship between man and nature to leave behind a landscape of mass graves, a place presented by Kuznetsov and Desbois as “no longer blessed”, where the beauty has been “taken from everything”; and at Lidice, a rural village was razed to the ground and covered with German soil, prompting the use of imagery in which the destruction of rural peace and seasonal

continuity communicate a sense of what was lost in the massacre; Millay's poem and Jennings's filmic rendition both cast the destruction of Lidice within a frame of a disrupted pastoral. It must be noted, however, that the calm achieved by Sebald's narrator is undermined by his own acknowledgement that van Ruisdael's vantage point could only have been from "an imaginary position some distance above the earth. Only in this way could he see it all together" (*Rings* 83). Indeed, according to Fuchs, Sebald knowingly invokes the affectiveness of contemplating a harmonious nature/culture relationship whilst well aware of its roots in an obsolete artistic tradition, thus highlighting the narrator's fundamental "awareness" as noted by Kilbourne: "that any nostalgia for lost authenticity is a myth" which offers no comfort (2007, 139). In invoking the notion of a pre-Holocaust pastoral, the above-mentioned texts inevitably elide the fact that a harmonious balance between man and nature is rarely found throughout human history, ignoring the obsolete nature this particular mode of representation, but they also testify to the affective properties of such imagery in connection with human perpetrated destruction. A reliance or mobilisation of this affectivity in memorial landscapes has been identified at various points throughout this thesis.

Furthermore, there may be a value to mourning a lost harmony, whether it ever existed or not, if it prompts "an ability to see ourselves in an environmental context and to think in connective processes" fundamental to ecocentric thought (Riordan 2007, 108); for this in itself may contribute to the development of an inclusive humanity. This, I have argued, is what Semprun's project advocates. He immerses himself in the natural world, and seeks encounters within it which he wishes others to share. Only in this way could the Nazis biopolitical territorialization of the Ettersburg be uprooted. An ecological perspective, which highlights a historical acceleration of natural destruction (Fuchs 2007, 124) dominates *The Rings of Saturn*. The notion of this process, the place of the Holocaust within it, and how this might conceivably be related to commemorative space is something I have begun to explore here but of which, in many ways, I have yet only been able to scratch the surface within the remit of this thesis. In order to offer little more exposition of what seems to me to be an infinitely rich area for future consideration, and one with a potentially urgent dimension, I turn to Sebald's text in a little more detail; taking, perhaps, a byway rather than a beeline towards a final concluding statement.

The world of the Sebaldian narrator echoes many of those I have discussed in this thesis, constituting as it does "a historically marked space that provides a living archive of the history of catastrophes for which mankind is responsible [...] a disruptive space which carries the traces of its ongoing destruction" (Fuchs 2007, 129). Whilst beauty still exists

in nature “the encounter is generally accompanied by or related to historical factors of disruption” (2008, 130); only a world in which the subject is “[f]reed from the restraints of Cartesian reality” – one which, for Sebald, only exists in a “time after the end of time” – can come the “end of man's exploitative relationship with nature” (Fuchs 2007, 135). There is as suggestion here of a dialectical disjuncture between ecocritical and biopolitical logic, which is explicitly interrogated elsewhere in *The Rings of Saturn*. Mary Cosgrove, for example, argues that the text instantiates the new branch of genocide research conducted from this standpoint (including the work of Davis and Levene), linking global warming, natural hazards and “the creation of conditions favourable to genocide” (2008, 109). In Sebald's retelling of the life of Joseph Conrad, love of the sea prompts the explorer to travel to the Congo, where he becomes ill. This, it is implied, is a reaction to his contemplation of the atrocities committed under the colonial banner.

There is an urgent political dimension to this reminder [...] that is not exclusively focused on the destruction of nature as a tragedy in itself. Taken alongside Sebald's interest in twentieth century genocide, in particular the Holocaust, his discourse on the human harnessing of the environment, its natural resources and its physical space during the period that A. Dirk Moses terms the racial century of 1850 – 1950, can be seen not just in the economic terms of peripheralisation... but more disturbingly as a basic premise of the political struggle for more land, territory, lebensraum that goes hand in hand with the perpetration of genocide. (Cosgrove 2007, 109-10)

As Mary Cosgrove notes, research that attempts to concretise these links has begun to advance this theory beyond metaphor and rhetoric. In reference to Davis' *Late Victorian Holocausts*, she argues:

Both Davis's and Sebald's respective historical enquiries acknowledge the natural environment as the “ultimate context”: the insight that we in the Western (and westernized) world do not entirely run the show on planet earth [...] This view serves as a sobering reminder that historical understanding of the twenty-first century should expand “ecocentrically” to take account of human interaction with and exploitation of nature. (Cosgrove 2007, 109)

Such an ecocentric view of the Holocaust emerges in *The Rings of Saturn*. The history of the production of silk is a theme that runs through several stories in the text, including the Empress of China's love of the silk worm, and in a final passage on silk towards the end of the book, the narrator recounts a drive towards national self-sufficiency in 1930s Germany which included a plan to launch a new era of national silk cultivation. The production of silk was considered likely to become an increasing priority because of “the importance [it] would have in the dawning era of aerial warfare and hence in the formation of a self-sufficient economy of national defence” (*Rings* 293). The narrator

comes across a pamphlet and a film promoting German silk cultivation, made for primary schools; part of the drive to increase the practice of sericulture, which suggests that silkworms, “quite apart from their indubitable utility value,” were:

an almost ideal object lesson for the classroom. Any number could be had for virtually nothing, they were perfectly docile and needed neither cages nor compounds, and they were suitable for a variety of experiments. They could be used to illustrate the structure and distinctive features of insect anatomy, insect domestication, retrogressive mutations, and the essential measures which are taken by breeders to monitor productivity and selection, including extermination to preempt racial degeneration. (*Rings* 293-4)

The corresponding film showed “a silk-worker receiving eggs despatched by the Central Reich Institute in Celle, and depositing them in sterile trays” (294). Celle is the nearest city to the famous Bergen-Belsen camp, and the two are historically connected. It was an important garrison location and the seat of a military district command during World War II. The only serious bombing attack on Celle hit a train which had been transporting prisoners to Bergen-Belsen; the SS officers and the citizens of Celle hunted down several hundred of the prisoners who managed an initial escape. Today tourists to the Bergen-Belsen memorial site will generally stay in the city, the closest place to the camp with large hotels. None of this is mentioned by Sebald, who focuses on the lives and deaths of the worms in Celle as shown in the film.

We see the hatching, the feeding of the ravenous caterpillars, the cleaning out of the frames, the spinning of the silken thread, and finally the killing, accomplished in this case not by putting the cocoons out in the sun or in a hot oven, as was often the practice in the past, but by suspending them over a boiling cauldron. The cocoons, spread out on shallow baskets, have to be kept in the rising steam for upwards of three hours, and when a batch is done, it is the next one’s turn, and so on until the entire killing business is completed. (*Rings* 293)

These deliberately unemotional and reductive descriptions of the silk worms bring to mind both the relationship between European rationalism, biopolitics and the Holocaust noted by Fuchs in relation to the narrator’s experience of viewing the Rembrandt and Agamben’s discussion of the same terrain in *Homo Sacer*. A parallel between his model of Third Reich biopolitics – as reliant on the construction of a category of ‘life that does not deserve to be lived’, and which should in fact be destroyed if it may be damaging to the German race – and Sebald’s silk worms – on which “essential measures” were taken “to monitor productivity and selection, including extermination to preempt racial degeneration” (*Rings* 294) – is palpable. Sebald’s description of the silk worms’ extermination as shown on the video constitutes another implicit Holocaust parallel, highlighting as it does the development of a new method of destruction. They are exposed to steam in batches, and the gas chambers may be present in the reader’s imagination.

Fuchs' analysis explores the farming of herrings earlier in the book in a similar biopolitical context which also prompts a connection to Belsen. In this story, the steady flow of toxins into the sea from irresponsible industrial actions results in the death of much sea life. The narrator recalls: "It was not without reason that the herring was always a popular didactic model in primary school, the principal emblem, as it were, of the indestructibility of Nature" (*Rings* 53). The poisoning of landscape which marks an end to this reliable promise of cyclical nature encapsulates the overall text's presentation of an accelerated history of destruction. Indeed the narrative immediately moves on from the fate of the herrings to a story about a man who had been among the liberators at the Bergen-Belsen camp. Five pages after a photograph of a pile of dead herrings, a photograph of bodies at Belsen appears. Whilst this may be "a daring juxtaposition" (Fuchs 2007, 126), there is arguably a fundamental rationale to it, one which is echoed in Pogue Harrison's decision to employ the term "holocaust" in a discussion of capitalist economies: "The daily holocausts that supply the world markets' demands for meat, fish and poultry take place in another world than the one most of us inhabit. And yet we live off such holocausts, inevitably" (Pogue Harrison 2003, 31). Legitimizing these juxtapositions is the premise that the Holocaust's victims were perceived by their persecutors to live on a purely biological plain. The destruction of the natural world and its animal population therefore resonates, in Sebald's fiction, with the destruction of people, and both forms of destruction are intimately bound to the way in which modern society sought to produce and master the natural world. At its most nuanced, ecocritical logic draws together, but does not conflate, the destruction of nature and of people.

Sebald's work renders the question of human value within nature meaningless; nature can never be external to us because it is central to our affairs. In Sebald, Riordan has argued, the problematic modern understanding of nature is revealed: we fail to see ourselves in context due to an over-extension of Otherness; our value judgements are perverted by self-obsession. As I argued earlier, nature is not traumatised by human action; catastrophe, stresses Riordan, is always human. Modern views see nature as either malleable to human will or indifferent to it; hence Riordan's point that Sebald succeeds in maintaining an ecocritical perspective: "In refusing to acknowledge the value of the non-human world, we are simultaneously devaluing ourselves" (2007, 52). Hans-Walter Schmidt-Hannisa's essay on the relationship between man and animals in Sebald's work similarly argues that he constantly displays an anti-Cartesian recognition of and respect for animals' ability to suffer. On the herrings sequence he notes that a reduction of animals to a series of quantities, revealing "the perverted relationship of a civilization which has

succumbed to the dialectic of the Enlightenment” (Schmidt-Hanissa 2007, 59) is countered by the Sebaldian narrator’s empathic perspective when considering the vast numbers of these fish that were caught annually:

the natural historians sought consolation in the idea that humanity was responsible for only a fraction of the endless destruction wrought in the cycle of life, and moreover in the assumption that the peculiar physiology of the fish left them free of the fear and pains that rack the body and souls of higher animals in their death throes. But the truth is that we do not know what the herring feels. (*Rings* 59)

This passage not only raises the possibility of empathy but highlights the inherent difficulty of achieving it – the problem of not being able to *know*. He goes on to describe the unique physiology of the herring. Sebald’s narrator makes a distinction between the kind of knowledge that results from learning and the more complex endeavour to ‘know’ the experiences of others. The standpoint of the narrator strikes a balance between attempting an empathic relationship with the unknowable other and acknowledging that that the endeavour may eventually be impossible; that he continues to relay details about the life of the herring is testament to his attention to its specificity.

I proposed initially that encounters with nature in topographies of suffering could potentially be of ethical worth; this relies, perhaps more than anything, on maintaining such specificity. This notion was drawn out in some detail in discussing Semprun’s engagement with one of the many beech trees on the outskirts of the camp at Buchenwald, his “willingness to look at and listen to the world [...] a letting go of the self which brings the discovery of a deeper self” (Bate 2000, 155). I continued to push the notion that nature should be attended to in the second and third chapters; in my consideration of the topography of Holocaust memory in Ukraine, it was by attending to the experiences people had with nature that I was able to suggest a way of diluting the existing memory competition. The aforementioned affective properties of natural forms, natural growth and topographical resonance has been considered in some detail in chapters 2 and 3; in the present landscape of the Babi Yar Park in Denver, where topography and soil are perceived as having unique symbolic value, and at Lidice, where I took the opportunity to examine the various theoretical questions raised by this kind of signification for both curators and visitors. I conclude from this exploration that it would be undesirable to echo what Bate has called Heidegger’s “appalling error of judgement” by comparing practices which are intrinsically very different, and that do so is to “fail to grasp the unique evils of the Holocaust” (2000, 272). Yet in considering Bauman’s argument about the confluent logic of gardening and ethnic ‘cleansing’, we can use the comparison permitted by Celan: that which recognizes the importance of diversity in a stable world. At the Babi Yar Park

and Lidice, perhaps it does not matter so much which practices are utilized, as long as we attend to the specificity of each form – be it a rose, a tree, or a handful of soil – alongside that of those whom their presence is employed to commemorate.

Encountering the Holocaust in literature, landscape and memory: topography beyond the ineffable

In the above integration of *The Rings of Saturn* and my own case studies, I have attempted to demonstrate a particular model of approaching memorial landscapes, as both writer and visitor. I have advocated an evolution from the conceptualization of such landscapes as *lieux de mémoire*, in order that we may better recognize the ways in which encounters and texts mediate an ever-evolving experience of memorial sites. I have also suggested that we examine, accordingly, their potential to create an ethically oriented cosmopolitan engagement. I have taken this point further, advocating a specifically ecocritical cosmopolitanism, predicated in “our ability to see ourselves in [an] environmental context” that we share with others, “and to think in connective processes” in which those others are also intimately involved. Each of the three sites discussed in this thesis has addressed these issues in different ways.

In Chapter 1, I presented Semprun’s testimonial project as an example of the ways in which a landscape may invite an immersive, phenomenological engagement with nature and cultural history through a literary mediation that both constitutes and urges a de-territorialization of rooted superorganicism, biopolitics and exclusive humanism. Semprun, dispossessed like Celan, managed to imaginatively reanimate the Buchenwald landscape, and invites us to do the same. His work compels us to attend to the trees, the wind, the snow and the seasons. Like that of Celan, his work opens itself to multiple readings. Unlike Celan, however, Semprun managed to find an earth which he could, if not dwell, at least de-territorialize from the clutches of his persecutors. The result is an inclusive space which, even if it does not provide us with the elusive “sense of what it was like to be there” as a victim (to refer back to Bernard-Donals and Glejzer 2001, 2), presents opportunities for “acts of remembrance” which are worth pursuing nonetheless.

Chapter 2 discussed another site rendered dynamic through literary mediation, in this case via a series of texts from testimony to fiction which introduced the events at one ravine in Kiev to the global imagination. This mediation, I suggested, was central to the way in which cultural memories of Babi Yar travelled to Denver. That Babi Yar in Kiev and

the Babi Yar Park in Denver share a particular biosphere and topography was presented as an example of the perceived significance of landscape for the representation of atrocity and a singular ability to act as a carrier of the essence of atrocious experience. I identified the emergence of a mode of transcultural identification, visible in the very creation of the Denver park and also central to its current attempt to draw implicit parallels between the Holocaust and the war on terror. Such an identificatory mode is refused within Ukraine in terms of any recognition of the shared ground between Holocaust and Holodomor memory. I concluded that there is something to be gained from a focus on actual experience as far as drawing events into a multidirectional nexus is concerned; that one way we might overcome zero-sum logic is to pay attention to something that draws apparently disparate cultures together: in this case, the experience of landscape as disrupted by atrocity and the disconnection of people from their lived environments.

Such a disruption, I have suggested via Millay and Jennings, was implicit to the way the destruction of Lidice was presented to the world in 1942. The Nazis' attempt to territorialize the land on which it stood can be understood within a similar framework of ruptured pastoral. I took the opportunity, in a scrutiny of curatorial practice at Lidice, to consider the impact and implications of mobilizing particular landscaping approaches at places of such disruption. Whilst aware of the de-specification that might result from putting very "different types of activities on a par" (Uekötter 2006, 206-7), thus overall rejecting a purely representational approach to decoding landscape and landscape practice, I came to the conclusion that ecological considerations may yet have a place in the future of sites such as Lidice – to do so represents another step towards recognizing the interconnectedness of all things. I further presented Lidice as a central co-ordinate in a nexus of transnational memory activity which is suggestive of various attempts to develop and affirm such an interconnectedness amongst people from diverse cultures. Whilst a scrutiny of the background and motivations of each instance examined suggested that such activities must be approached with due attention to the polemic motivations that may lurk behind cosmopolitanism, there can be no doubt that Lidice is remembered on a global level as a result; the Nazis' attempt to erase it from history continues to be refused.

Throughout the three case studies, I have demonstrated the diversity of Holocaust topography, taking my analysis beyond the death and concentration camps to places where there is no architecture of destruction. I have argued that that these topographies of suffering can offer meaningful spaces for ethically oriented memory work, which may take place both within the landscape itself and away from it. The thesis has defined three trajectories of mediation and remediation – through literature, film, twinning, networks,

new memorial spaces, and examined the potential and the limitations of the multidirectional networks that have appeared as a result. Throughout I have emphasised that an awareness of a site's history within a particular cultural context can enrich our encounters with it. In undertaking this analysis, I aimed to demonstrate the potential of landscape for facilitating an ethically motivated encounter with Holocaust history according to the Levinasian demand that we enter into relationship with others without immediately divesting them of their alterity. Inevitably, in limiting the analysis to three landscapes, I cannot as a result claim to make any generalisations about the way such places 'work'. Each is open to different ways of reading and habitation, according to the way in which it is approached. Yet it is in their very openness that landscapes are rendered productive; they are endlessly open to us, and our interventions within them have the potential to change us just as we change them. These topographies of suffering, in their dynamism, refuse the possibility that there is a massive, passive memory awaiting us when we confront the past; as spaces of encounter, they present us with realms in which we may be touched but never completed.

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