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Cosmopolitan Normalisation?
The Culture of Remembrance of World War II and the Holocaust in Unified Germany

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, Germany has dealt with the difficult integration of collective and individual memories from East and West Germany. Alongside the publicly more prominent remembrances of perpetration has occurred an upsurge in the memories of German suffering. At the same time, Europe has increasingly become a point of reference for national cultures of remembrance. These developments have been influenced by post-national factors such as Europeanisation and transnationalisation along with the emergence of a more multicultural society. However, there have also been strong trends toward renationalisation and normalisation. The last twenty years have witnessed a type of interaction with the 'other' as constructively recognised; while at the same time it is also excluded by renationalising trends. Researchers have described the combination of the latter two trends as the cosmopolitanisation of memory. This article adopts the diachronic perspective to assess the preliminary results since 1990 of the actual working of this cosmopolitanisation process within the culture of remembrance of World War II and its aftermath in Germany.

Keywords: culture of remembrance, World War II, cosmopolitanisation, Europeanization, renationalization.

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1. Introduction: The origins of a Holocaust-centred World War II culture of remembrance in Germany and the concept of Cosmopolitanisation

This paper investigates the inherent tensions and complex interrelations among the various factors in the evolution of the culture of remembrance concerning World War II and the Holocaust in Germany since the mid-1980s. In order to do so, I will first outline the specific interplay of media and language in these processes and elaborate on generation and time as defining features of the culture of remembrance. After that, I will focus on three aspects that, in my opinion, have been central to the tensions brought about by transformations of the culture of remembrance: Europeanisation, transnationalisation and normalisation. A short conclusion will then delineate the main traits of its overall development.

To begin with, I will go back to the mid-1980s, when the basic characteristics of the current culture of remembrance were established, which

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have entered a process of constant transition after unification.[1] During the foundational period of the current culture of remembrance in Germany between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, there existed a kind of uneasy dual leadership regarding Germany's Nazi past, led by long-term chancellor Helmut Kohl (1982-1998) and two-term Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker (1984-1994). While both were representatives of the West German conservative milieu that had come to accept Western European and transatlantic integration as prerequisites for Germany's renewed sovereignty, their respective outlooks on the Nazi past had distinct differences. Kohl stood for political and societal forces that saw coming to terms with the Nazi past as a means to the return of normality for the German state and society. The reason for this concept was due to "the mercy of late birth" that allegedly exempted his generation of power-holders from ties with the crimes of the Nazi regime. Weizsäcker, who was ten years older than Kohl and had served as an officer in the army during World War II, instead represented those who emphasised the importance of actively facing the bitter truths of the past and assuming moral responsibility for them as an end in itself. Weizsäcker went on to become an authoritative reference for establishing and shaping meaning within the culture of remembrance for years to come, albeit for the left-wing of the political spectrum, rather than for the right-wing he belonged to. However, in terms of visible expressions of commemoration, Kohl clearly took the reins, exercising decisive influence on major projects such as the New Guardhouse and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin and the House of History in Bonn. In the New Guardhouse, Kohl and Weizsäcker even went head-to-head. An inscription referring to Weizsäcker's famous 8 May speech (1985) was later added to Kohl's choice of sculpture and its dedication. Especially interesting to note is

1 Eric Langenbacher, "The Mastered Past? Collective Memory Trends in Germany since Unification," *German Politics and Society* 94 (2010), p. 50.

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that in the actual speech, the Jewish victims were listed first among the groups of victims, whereas in the inscription, the German victims were named ahead of the Jewish victims, seemingly to hint at the perpetual tension over acknowledgement of the suffering and inherent power struggles within the realm of remembrance.

Over the last two decades, the outlines of an emergent transnational European memory space, which is not the same as the emergence of a common European memory, has taken shape, despite a renationalisation of memories also increasingly building up momentum in Germany and in other European countries, most notably in Eastern Europe. Efforts in the transnational sphere saw Polish and German scholars and politicians couple their respective contradictory national memories on a Europeanised cultural level. This initiative is supported by the "European Network Remembrance and Solidarity", which was established in 2005. Thus far, however, the initiative represents only an attempt by political and academic elites at finding transnational consensus.[2] In a similar vein, Konrad Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger have pointed out that authors of schoolbooks across Europe attempt to deconstruct national prejudices to help reduce them. At the same time, they consider genuinely transnational cultural and social history research on a European scale an exception, noting that contemporary historians continue to work within a national framework.[3]

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2 Stefan Troebst, "Halecki revisited: Europe's Conflicting Cultures of Remembrance," in *A European Memory*? *Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, ed. Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), p. 61.

3 Konrad H. Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger, "Introduction: Contours of a Critical History of Contemporary Europe: A Transnational Agenda," in *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*, ed. Konrad H. Jarausch and Thomas Lindenberger, in collaboration with Annelie Ramsbrock (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), pp. 5-6.

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Sociologists Ulrich Beck, Daniel Levy, and Harald Welzer have described commemorative processes that work in opposite directions. In transnationalising processes, the 'other' is constructively recognised, while in renationalising processes, it is excluded. They have termed the combination of these processes the cosmopolitanisation of memory.[4] According to their findings, this combination is characterised by a blurring of the boundaries of one's own and external memories; *i.e.,* the formerly separate stories of victims and perpetrators are increasingly harmonised by emphasizing a more neutral observer position between them. Levy and Natan Sznaider have elsewhere continued to develop even more elaborate conceptions as to the dynamics of the cosmopolitanisation of memory. In a joint publication,[5] they interpreted cosmopolitanisation as an increase of the media-based connectivity of memories, which is increasingly framed by a globalised morality. This idea contributes to the formative background of this article insofar as it points to the interplay between medialization and the moral charging of remembrance processes. Elsewhere, both authors have described a cosmopolitan memory-scape as the reconstruction of the image and identity of a nation along transnational criteria. The moral conceptions of indemnification that have resulted from this conceptualisation also serve to establish a new relation between perpetrator and victim. Thus, the entanglement of the processes of cosmopolitanisation, acknowledgement of the "other" and renationalisation of memory is further emphasised.[6] In yet another

4 Ulrich Beck, Daniel Levy, and Harald Welzer, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich, *Final report of the research project "Europeanization of National Memoryscapes"*(2009), http://memory-research.de/cms/k25.Europeanization-of-National-Memory-Scapes_The-Europeanization-of-National-Memory-Scapes.htm (accessed 31 December 2012).

5 Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "Memory Unbound. The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2002), pp. 87-106.

6 Michael Heinlein, Daniel Levy, and Natan Sznaider, "Kosmopolitische Erinnerung und reflexive Modernisierung: Der politische Diskurs der Zwangsarbeitsentschädigung," *Soziale*

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publication, Sznaider has further detailed the process of cosmopolitanisation. With a view especially to countries in Eastern Europe after the downfall of the communist regimes, he characterises as cosmopolitan any attempts to reconstruct national identity or a nation's outlook on history that are inherently shaped by a readiness to apply an attitude of self-criticism. Subsequently, Sznaider sees discourse on guilt and forgiveness as signs of a post-national historical consciousness and an increasingly important factor in international politics.[7]

2. Approach, sources, and current state of research

In this paper, historical discourse analysis[8] was applied as the main methodological approach to records from the Federal Parliamentary Archive of Germany as well as to texts from major daily and weekly papers and magazines, such as *BILD-Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Der SPIEGEL*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die WELT*, and *Die ZEIT*. Actual remembrance practices, including those at sites of perpetration like exhibitions, seminars, and publications of memorial sites that show the history of Nazi persecution, were also considered. The reason is that these practices are integral parts of the discourse of memories of World War II and related events. Combining various types and origins of sources can help to solve what historian Andreas Landwehr has called the question of the historical processes that have brought current

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Welt 56, no. 2-3 (2005), pp. 238-239.

7 Natan Sznaider, *Gedächtnisraum Europa: Die Visionen eines europäischen Kosmopolitismus. Eine jüdische Perspektive* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008), pp. 99-100.

8 Achim Landwehr, *Geschichte des Sagbaren. Einführung in die Historische Diskursanalyse* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 2001), pp. 103-114. Philipp Sarasin, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse* (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp, 2003).

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forms of knowledge and reality into being.[9] This cannot be done simply by looking at individual people or groups as the creators or origins of a certain term or definition of World War II remembrances. Rather, one has to reconstruct the circumstances and structures that have enabled those actors in significant social roles to say certain things at specific locations and points in time to evoke specific, but changeable, meanings. Thereby, publicly accepted views of the past are continuously re-constructed within the coordinates of the present. Thus, one needs to engage with the possibilities opened up by texts and speeches where meaning is constituted. At the same time, one needs to examine its correlates of language, historical experience, and the reality of current representations.[10] Swiss historian Philipp Sarasin, an important researcher in this field, has explained the material texture of discourses as characterised by mediality; *i.e.,* the means of production and reception, the ambiguity of possible scopes of meaning, and the use of metaphors within them.[11]

Parliamentary records were relevant for this investigation, as many issues and controversies related to the remembrance of World War II and the Holocaust have been mediated through centres of political power. Moreover, due to a media culture characterised by lively debate in Germany, relevant news outlets must also be considered major players in the cultivation of the German culture of remembrance. The sustained sensitivity to the events of World War II in Germany certainly contributes to the close examination of everything said and done in political and/or publicist debates in print and online media. This close examination in turn makes them a rich source of information on this topic.

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9 Achim Landwehr, *Diskurs und Diskursgeschichte*, Version:1.0, 11 Februar 2010, pp. 4-6. Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte, http://docupedia.de/zg/Diskurs_und_Diskursgeschichte (accessed 31 December 2012).

10 Michael Maset, *Diskurse, Macht, Geschichte. Foucaults Analysetechniken und die historische Forschung* (Frankfurt / Main: Campus, 2002), pp. 199-201.

11 Sarasin, *Geschichtswissenschaft und Diskursanalyse*, pp. 38-40.

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The topic of remembrance is far from being uncharted territory, though, and valuable progress has been made, especially since the turn of the millennium.

Among others, British historian Bill Niven has highlighted that since 1990, Germany has faced the task of mediating two very distinct memory traditions from the former East and West Germany. This process of mediation has resulted in widespread public urge to voice Germany's own World War II suffering. Nevertheless, Niven insists that the status of the Nazi era will remain higher in the culture of remembrance than will that of the GDR (i.e., East Germany), despite German participation in the current "cult of self-pity", which is especially obvious in the national cultures of remembrance of Central and Eastern Europe. He also does not think that this public sentiment indicates a lack of awareness and readiness to remember Germany's World War II crimes.[12] Elsewhere, Niven and political scientists Eric Langenbacher and Ruth Wittlinger have stated that the Holocaust-centred remembrance has shifted into the background to make way for a more inclusive notion of remembrance of World War II victims, with Germans included as victims, too. They refer to the phenomena of renewed national pride and a more self-interest driven foreign policy as signs of Germany's normalisation based on the achievements of the former West Germany. At the same time, the search for the correct balance in adequately representing the GDR's past within the framework of the culture of remembrance remains an on-going issue.[13]

Aleida Assmann, a leading voice in memory studies, indicates two main tendencies in the politics of memory in Europe since 1990: the development of

12 Bill Niven, "German Victimhood Discourse in Comparative Perspective," in *Dynamics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Eric Langenbacher, Bill Niven, and Ruth Wittlinger (New York / Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013), pp. 187-189. For the quotation, see p. 191.

13 Eric Langenbacher, Bill Niven, and Ruth Wittlinger, "Introduction: Paradigm Shift?" *German Politics and Society* 89 (Winter 2008), pp. 1-3.

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an "ethos of self-criticism" and, in parallel to that, a renewed "ethos of pride".[14] These tendencies are accompanied by a growing trend among European states to enact laws that suggest or even stipulate specific ways to remember the past, accompanied by the threat of persecution for transgressions. Since 1989, this development has gained in significance, but historians have played a minor role in it at best.[15] Although Assmann observed a fundamental "lack of space" for foreign memories within a national culture of remembrance due to the dominance of a nation's own suffering, this lack did not prevent Germany's involvement in developing a Western European consensus on the fundamentals of a common culture of remembrance with the Holocaust at its core.[16]

Political scientists Claus Leggewie and Eric Meyer have argued that facing Germany's Nazi past has the potential to become a tool of cultural integration for foreigners living in Germany or for naturalised Germans.[17] As coming to terms with the Nazi past has become such a salient feature of German national identity, it enables foreigners living in Germany to share in this aspect of German identity by actively engaging with this part of its history. In terms of foreign policy, the trend toward the universalization of Holocaust remembrance has developed together with an increasing importance of the politics of history in general. The politics of history have arguably been most effectively applied by Eastern European countries during or after admission to the European Union, with a strategic aim to press claims of "double victimhood" by Nazi Germany

14 Aleida Assmann, *Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Gedächtniskultur?* (Vienna: Picus, 2012), pp. 52-54.

15 Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, "Introduction," in *A European Memory*, pp. 9-10.

16 Assmann, *Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Gedächtniskultur?*, p. 63. For the quotation, p. 54.

17 Claus Leggewie and Eric Meyer, *"Ein Ort, an den man gerne geht," Das Holocaust-Mahnmal und die deutsche Geschichtspolitik nach 1989* (Munich / Vienna: Hanser, 2005), pp. 341-343.

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and the Stalinist Soviet Union, respectively.[18] In Germany's relationship with Israel, Leggewie and Meyer have predicted a tendency toward normalisation. However, it must be pointed out that this is arguably a paradigmatic diplomatic relationship in terms of the influence of the politics of history, one that has shown the remarkable sustainability of its allegedly exceptional status. Leggewie and Meyer also observed a certain distance of red-green governments (1998-2005) from the culture of remembrance, but there are no immediate signs of an attempt to sort out and discard this part of Germany's past because of its perceived irrelevance. Furthermore, according to these two authors, its status will still have to be adjusted to serve Germany's renewed self-perception as a political power and its present ambitions. In a similar vein, historian Wulf Kansteiner has pointed out that the main aim of the Kohl government has been to expunge the collective symbolic guilt of the Nazi era. Its successors have used the past to redefine Germany and Europe's foreign policy and interests, while at the same time streamlining the European Union's internal policy-making procedures. In the meantime, the memory of the Holocaust has been transformed into an abstract, universally applicable negative counter balance for European human rights initiatives.[19] However, especially in Germany, any initiatives toward globalised approaches to the remembrance of Nazi crimes almost immediately come under suspicion of neglecting the accuracy and precision that is purportedly needed when addressing Germany's Nazi past.[20]

The historian and director of the memorial site of the Buchenwald concentration and special camps, Volkhard Knigge, has cautioned against any

18 Niven, "German Victimhood Discourse in Comparative Perspective," p. 182.

19 Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), pp. 315-317.

20 Norbert Frei, *1945 und wir. Das Dritte Reich im Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2009), p. 55.

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clear-cut overall assessments of the internal development of the culture of remembrance in Germany. Noting how the widespread implementation of self-critical remembrances and the tendencies undermining it simultaneously occur, Knigge sees two factors behind the current state of affairs: post-unification controversies surrounding the major overhaul of national memorial sites of the former GDR, and the debates surrounding the inauguration of the New Guardhouse in Berlin as the central memorial of the Federal Republic of Germany for the victims of war and tyranny. According to Knigge, these conflicts have accelerated a process of flattening out the specificity and accuracy of historical interpretations of Nazi-era history in public discourse, and they have also led to the transformation of formerly critical remembrances of the Nazi past into an affirming national project.[21] Following this train of thought, eminent contemporary historian Norbert Frei has hinted at an on-going process of rewriting the view of the past and turning Germans into victims. Frei sees the current project to establish a memorial for German victims of flight and expulsion during and after World War II as an outright attempt to compete for societal remembrance with the victims of the Nazis. Following Frei, this competition leads to levelling claims for recognition of a "double dictatorship" in Germany (National Socialism and the GDR) as simply one historical complex of totalitarianism, and also to a shift in political discourse toward remembrances of German victims and heroes who represent freedom.[22]

However, thus far only Wulf Kansteiner has truly taken note of the potential of language in signifying these shifts in meaning in the process of the

21 Volkhard Knigge, "Erinnerungskultur zwischen Vergangenheitsgerede, Geschichtspolitik und historischer Selbstreflexion," in *Die Zukunft der Erinnerung. Eine Wolfsburger Tagung*, ed. Manfred Grieger, Ulrike Gutzmann, and Dirk Schlinkert (Wolfsburg: Historische Kommunikation der Volkswagen AG, 2008), pp. 65-67.

22 Frei, *1945 und wir*, pp. 32-34.

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Europeanisation of the culture of remembrance in Germany.[23] Nor has enough attention been paid to the impact of the actual usage of language in World War II remembrance discourses. Also meriting closer attention is how the meanings of terms within the culture of remembrance have shifted over time, for these processes have not be examined on a longitudinal basis. In this article, such a perspective is applied to sources on World War II and its immediate aftermath.

3. Remembrance, language, and media: Who speaks when, where, and how

To better understand the degree of interconnectedness amongst remembrance, media, and language, we can draw on research by Austrian linguist Ruth Wodak *et al.*, who focused on these aspects in analysing the Austrian culture of remembrance during the 1980s. Their research also adopts a long-term perspective for reconstructing the current state of affairs as the preliminary outcome of on-going societal negotiations. These negotiations are effectively rooted in past events, their immediate impacts, and all the attempts at coming to terms with them since. Wodak *et al.* emphasised the interdependency of public commemoration and media, and they illustrated remembrance as a negotiation process between various competing conceptions of history. Adding even more to the complexity of influences, they also focused on the tensions in any attempts to come to terms with the past within remembrance and its historiography.[24]

Research carried out by cultural scientist Yvonne Robel also proved to be extremely helpful during the research phase for this article. Robel investigated

23 Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory*, pp. 304-306.

24 Ruth Wodak and others, *Die Sprachen der Vergangenheiten: öffentliches Gedenken in österreichischen und deutschen Medien* (Frankfurt / Main: Suhrkamp, 1994), p. 11.

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the discursive dynamics of remembrance as a triangle amongst Parliament, the media, and the public, especially regarding incidents of genocide. With reference to the German debate about building the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Robel brought attention to the subsequent build-up of victim competition that occurred when other groups tried to connect their claims to societal recognition to the mechanisms of recognition of the Jewish victims. Moreover, Robel indicated that the anniversaries of historical events, publications, and scientific conferences are the primary causes that trigger discourses on related topics.[25] These dynamics also depend on the concrete circumstances for remembering, namely, who speaks where, when, and to what kind of audience, which have tangible repercussions on any given culture of remembrance.

One textbook example of the intricate entanglement of actors, their social or political functions, and the place and time of speaking served as the immediate historical overture for the developments under consideration in this article. That example is a speech delivered by former German Parliamentary President Phillip Jenninger in a 1988 ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the November 1938 pogrom against Jews in Germany.[26] It led to a huge public outcry and his eventual resignation. What most upset political observers and survivors of Nazi persecution alike was Jenninger's seemingly care-free style, which strung together associations in an attempt to explain the possible motivations, both of the sizeable parts of the German population that, at that time, were turning toward anti-Semitism, and of the even larger proportion of the population that remained indifferent as they watched it happen. Jenninger started out with a couple of hackneyed anti-Semitic stereotypes,

25 Yvonne Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid. Zur Dynamik geschichtspolitischer Deutungskämpfe* (Paderborn: Fink, 2013), pp. 116-118.

26 Wodak and others, *Die Sprachen der Vergangenheiten*, pp. 163-165.

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reminded his listeners of their pervasiveness in the 1930s as part of government propaganda, and then described a growing public acceptance of these propaganda-based stereotypes as true.

Later on, Ignatz Bubis, then head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, extensively used parts of Jenninger's speech, with only slight modification and without encountering any type of critical protest, on two separate occasions. One in particular was the 9 November 1989 commemoration of the same event by the Jewish community. Bubis applied minimal cosmetic linguistics to some controversial parts of Jenninger's speech, namely by providing an explanatory context or rhetorical "inverted commas" to indicate a distancing from the alleged German public mainstream beliefs and opinions of the 1930s and 40s that Jenninger had stated. Where Jenninger mostly employed mock direct speech from 1930s ethnic Germans, Bubis added explanatory phrases such as "the Germans accepted those opinions of the Nazis" before indicating some examples.[27] However, the main issue that remained was whether these Nazi-style utterances, not framed by any historical or political interpretation, were made by a national of the country who perpetrated the atrocities, or came from victims and survivors of this persecution.[28]

Soon after the incident, and upon a close reading of the text of Jenninger's speech, a number of observers began to feel differently about Jenninger's dismissal. A display of identification with the victims had previously been the order of the day for this kind of occasion. The apparent lack of it in his speech, which had been the main target of criticism, was now understood as Jenninger's clumsy attempt at frankly facing the motivations of the perpetrators and their

27 Yasushi Suzuki, "Erlebte Rede versus Indirekte Rede – Ignatz Bubis zitiert Jenningers umstrittene Passage," *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik* 33 (2000), p. 94.

28 Jens Jessen, "Das Experiment. Zweierlei Rede: Ignatz Bubis sprach 1989 Jenningers Text," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (hereinafter *FAZ*), 1 December 1995, p. 41, http://www.seiten.faz-archiv.de/FAZ/19951201/f19951201jenni--100.html (accessed 12 September 2013).

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actions historically. However, the widespread perception remained that such an approach toward understanding the Nazi past required critical comprehension and assessment, and that it was necessary to avoid speech that sounded like tacit approval of the past. Critical assessment was seen as unlikely in a commemorative speech for victims, especially with a descendant of the perpetrator society speaking. Thus, Jenninger simply chose the wrong place and the wrong time for his adventurous historical examination.

This example goes a long way toward showing that certain infringements on the order and rules of the "space of the sayable" (Michel Foucault) of the culture of remembrance in Germany, including the where, the when, and the by whom, require consideration and public approval before they can induce any change. Beyond and despite the actual content, Jenninger's speech was perceived as an unbearable provocation. Right-wing conservatives felt attacked because of the outright connection Jenninger drew between 1930s societal mainstream opinions and anti-Semitic atrocities, while left-wing observers deemed Jenninger's exploration of the perpetrator mind-set as utterly out of place on this commemorative occasion. Eventually, what Jenninger did was that he took to a scandalising interpretation of the events and made himself out as a taboo-buster who rebelled against what he saw as politically correct constraints on the culture of remembrance in Germany.[29]

Obviously, in terms of the media coverage of World War II and Holocaust remembrance, some topics are less difficult and others more complicated. The more controversial ones may seem a matter for the media elite, such as the chief editors. However, especially in times of political or societal transition when certainties and meanings become more fluid and negotiable, an alternative is to

29 Constantin Goschler, "Die Faszination des Bösen und die Geburt des Tabubrechers. Phillip Jenninger und der 50. Jahrestag der Reichspogromnacht," *Münchner Beiträge zur jüdischen Geschichte und Kultur* 4, no. 2 (2010), pp. 79-80.

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delegate them to outsiders, such as independent writers, publicists, or journalists, to test the waters. One example from the media occurred in 1990, when the German weekly *Die ZEIT* focused on changes of the social positioning of Jews in Germany in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall. During the division of the country into East and West, the Jewish community in West Germany had slowly but steadily adopted an indicating role of how the relationship between the West German government and society and its Nazi past should evolve. However, the 1990 article, "Phoney reconciliation with history",[30] by the late publicist Eike Geisel, tackled the issue in a highly provocative fashion. He stated that, with East and West firmly on course for unification, Germans did not need Jews anymore, for they had finally and successfully established their own bystander identification with the victims of the Holocaust and were also able to redefine a national identity in which seeking Jewish forgiveness was no longer necessary.

Given the highly volatile atmosphere surrounding the process of German unification inside Germany as well as across Europe, it seemed a shrewd move to outsource this sensitive topic to an independent writer. If the article happened to attract negative attention, the paper could easily distance itself from the writer. Geisel had also made himself out to be an independent voice in Germany's media landscape, so a political disclaimer between the paper and the author would potentially have cut both ways when and if needed. No publicised reverberations immediately followed Geisel's article, indicating that his statement was either seen as too sensitive or silently acknowledged as an accurate portrayal of the situation. In any case, it helped Geisel to further establish himself as a strident advocate of Jewish affairs on the German media landscape.

30 Eike Geisel, "Faule Versöhnung mit der Geschichte," *Die ZEIT*, 5 January 1990, http://www.zeit.de/1990/02/faule-versoehnung-mit-der-geschichte (accessed 12 September 2013).

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Almost a decade later, eminent German writer Martin Walser gave a speech at an awards ceremony where he received the Peace Prize from the German book trade in 1998. In his speech, he publicly derided the German culture of remembrance of the Nazi era as obtrusive, suffocating deviant German memories. He also labelled it as moral and political blackmail for modern Germany, which was constantly reminded that it had perpetrated the Holocaust, while the proponents of the culture of remembrance consistently claimed the indisputable moral high ground. To illustrate his ideas, Walser used the phrase the "banality of good", inverting and infamously recharging Hannah Arendt's famous quote, the "banality of evil", which she used to represent Adolf Eichmann. However, the phrase had actually been coined several years earlier by Geisel as the title of his book "Banality of the Good", wherein he exposed what he perceived to be superficial and insincere displays of repentance by German society for the Holocaust and other World War II atrocities.[31] However, while Geisel had only provided a piece of a jigsaw puzzle for the debate, Walser successfully adopted the phrase and charged it with a contrary meaning to pinpoint widespread societal sentiment of late-1990s Germany to rousing public acclaim. Accordingly, the weekly *Die ZEIT* summed it up by stating that "now…the veil of a joint [Jewish-, CT] German culture of remembrance is torn apart".[32] In that article, written by established *ZEIT* staff writer Thomas Assheuer, the paper also took a critical stance on Walser's speech. They thereby actively adopted some of the substance of the ideas Geisel had brought up almost nine years prior, without referencing him.

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31 Reinhard Mohr, "Total normal?" *Der SPIEGEL* (hereinafter *SPIEGEL*) 49 (30 November 1998), p. 43.

32 Thomas Assheuer, "Ein normaler Staat?" *Die ZEIT* (hereinafter *ZEIT*) *Online*, 12 November 1998, German original: "Nun ist, …, der Schleier einer gemeinsamen deutschen 'Gedächtniskultur' zerrissen." http://www.zeit.de/2013/index (accessed 12 September 2013); This applies to all *ZEIT Online* articles.

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4. Generational and temporal dynamics of remembrance: Anti-aircraft warfare helpers,[33] war children, 68ers, the survivors, and the cycle of remembrance

The culture of remembrance in Germany is commonly understood as being strongly influenced by the respective generation the actors of remembrance belong to, as well as by their social status and political affiliations. With regard to World War II and the Nazi era, there have been three main groups of actors within German society. The first group is the so-called "anti-aircraft warfare helpers". Born in the late 1920s, they were socialised under the Nazi regime and forced into a radically new beginning after 1945. The second is the so-called "war children". Born after 1930, they suffered the most from the traumatic impact of growing up during World War II. The third and final group is the so-called "68ers", named after their involvement in the student rebellion of 1967/68. Born after 1945, the 68ers underwent an ambivalent socialisation between their (formerly) Nazi parents and Allied re-education.[34]

Their respective stances toward World War II and the Nazi era remembrances over time have revolved around certain core themes. For the first group, the theme was the search for ways to reinvent the German nation after 1945. For the second, it was German wartime and post-war suffering, and for the third, it was the suffering inflicted on others by Germany, especially the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Over the course of the last twenty years, the role that the victims and contemporary witnesses of the Nazi atrocities play for

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33 They received this moniker because many of their proponents had been drafted into the German army during the final stages of the war to help with the – by then militarily mostly unsuccessful and futile – defence against Allied air raids on German cities. German original: "Flakhelfer."

34 Aleida Assmann, *Geschichte im Gedächtnis. Von der individuellen Erinnerung zur kollektiven Inszenierung* (München: C. H. Beck, 2007), pp. 61-63.

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Germany's outlook on its past and the reconstruction of its identity has been the major aspect of the culture of remembrance. Nevertheless, currently, the development of a new focus of remembrances of the Nazi era and World War II for future generations appears an open-ended process.

Since 1995, every milestone anniversary has been dubbed as the last one that will be attended by survivors and eyewitnesses of Nazi persecution. This repeated declaration of their imminent demise has betrayed a widespread anxiety about their departure, especially by politicians. The declaration is usually accompanied by lamentation over a perceived inability to convey the Nazi-era experience in posterity because of the absence of first-hand witnesses.[35] However, around 2005, an air of established consensus on the Nazi past developed in the mainstream political arena: German responsibility for the war, genocide, and other crimes should not be discussed any longer by any sides. This consensus went together with comprehensive attempts at pedagogisation of the Holocaust to codify its meaning as a tool to further human rights education and civic values. These attempts at codification also had the potential to oust eye-witnesses from an authoritative position as testifiers to the events of the past, for their views suddenly seemed to be potentially undermining a sensitive social consensus. The practical implementation of this codification firmly rests with the teachers in schools and pedagogues in further education and at memorial sites, who are situated somewhere between political and social imperatives on one side and eyewitness experiences and authenticity on the other.

Furthermore, the alleged inability of younger generations to meaningfully connect with the atrocities of the Nazi era and World War II since 1990 has also

35 "Herzogs kluges Schweigen," *SPIEGEL*, 30 January 1995, p. 36; "Was heißt hier jüdisch?" *ZEIT Online Dossier*, 05 January 2000; "Gedenken," *ZEIT Online*, 27 January 2005; "Holocaust-Gedenktag," *ZEIT Online*, 27 January 2011.

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been troubling to politicians, journalists, scholars, and remembrance practitioners. The perspective on the role of young people has developed over the years into one that obligates them to preserve an established understanding of the lessons and legacy of Nazism and World War II,[36] such as safeguarding democracy and individual freedoms against political extremism, racism, and anti-Semitism. More recently, though, young Germans have finally been given more space to publicly articulate their own thoughts in this debate. They have shown an understanding of the events of the Nazi era, but they tend not to feel obliged to show concern on demand because they increasingly refuse to be drawn into the "choreography of emotions" that has been staged by earlier generations.[37]

Over the past twenty years, the ways how to integrate the past, the present, and the future within the culture of remembrance have been changed. The temporal dimensions have been rearranged according to the major anniversaries on the remembrance calendar. First, there has been a chronological and forward movement throughout the fifty-year anniversary cycle, which lasted from 1983 (to commemorate the devolvement of power to the Nazis) to 1995 (to commemorate the end of World War II). This movement shifted the vanishing

36 Parliamentary Archive - German Bundestag (PA-DBT) Plenary Sessions (3001) 11th Legislative Period (11. WP) Protocol (Prot) No. 154, Page No. 11633, Date 1 September 1989. See also Joachim Neander, "Der Holocaust und die Enkel," *Die WELT* (hereinafter *WELT)*, 7 May 1994, p. 6; Hans-Rüdiger Karutz, "Auschwitz – Die Stunde der Opfer," *WELT*, 27 January 1995, p. 1; Eva-Elisabeth Fischer, "Verordnetes Gedenken," *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (hereinafter *SZ*), 27 January 1997, p. 13; "Gedenken an Holocaust-Opfer," *FAZ*, 28 January 1999, p. 2; "Köhler: Es gibt keinen Schlussstrich," *SZ*, 09 May 2005, p. 1; Gerhard Gnauck, "Das Leiden, das Grauen," *WELT*, 28 January 2005, p. 3.

37 Matthias Heyl, "Der Holocaust im Unterricht. Entwicklungen der letzten zwanzig Jahre in Deutschland," in *Forschungsberichte 2010. Global-Regional, Macht, Ohnmacht, Gegenmacht. Themenschwerpunkt: Gelernte Erinnerung*, ed. Duitsland-Instituut (Amsterdam: Stichting Duitsland Instituut bij de Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2010), p. 71.

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point of remembrance from 1933 to 1945, via 1939 and 1941.[38] Since chronology and meaning are permanently intermingled, this movement has represented a change in the German outlook on history. From the confrontations and the onerous tasks of explaining the roots of Nazism, World War II, and genocide, Germans could slowly move on to eventually being allowed to modestly marvel at their remarkable resurrection after World War II.

As a consequence, after the disputed inauguration of 27 January as the day of commemoration for the victims of National Socialism, known as Holocaust Remembrance Day, 8 May is no longer tied to the war. Instead, that date is now freed up to tackle topics considered more relevant for today or the future. It is primarily connected to the reunification of Europe. Thus, the temporal reference to the importance of the remembrance of war crimes and the Holocaust for present-day Germans has undergone solid changes. In the 1990s and early 2000s, the question seemed to be how much longer these commemorative events would be continued. Since 2005, events of the Nazi past have been elevated in such a way that they are represented permanently in the memory, albeit with the need to be regularly reaffirmed within the realm of official remembrance.[39] This regular affirmation is accompanied by incessant claims that Germany cannot, must not, and will not draw a line under the remembrance and continued relevance of its Nazi past, even against a sometimes significantly rising tide of social opposition.[40] At the same time, Nazi crimes in general and

38 "Bundestag gedenkt der Opfer des Hitler-Regimes," *FAZ*, 26 January 2008, p. 1; see also Helmut W. Smith, "Jenseits der Sonderweg-Debatte," in *Das deutsche Kaiserreich in der Kontroverse*, ed. Sven Oliver Müller and Cornelius Torp (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck& Ruprecht, 2009), p. 43.

39 "Deutsche Sucht," *ZEIT Online*, 6 January 1995; "Auschwitz," *ZEIT Online*, 27 January 2005.

40 "Mehr verdrängt als bewältigt," *SPIEGEL Spezial*, 02-1992, pp. 62, 68; "Holocaust-Gedenkfeier 'in Scham und Trauer,'" *SZ*, 28 January 1997, pp. 1, 5; "Herzog mahnt Deutsche zum Bekenntnis zur Geschichte," *BILD*, 28 January 1999, p. 1; "Köhler: Es gibt keinen

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the Holocaust in particular have continued to attract considerable academic attention, yielding much research and many books. Therefore, what has to be seen as a firm acknowledgement on the one hand also indicates the gradual removal of the Nazi past from the agenda of current social issues on the other.

5. Ambivalent cornerstones of Holocaust remembrance: The 27th of January and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe

27 January has taken on the function of remembrance so that the actual commemoration of war atrocities and the Holocaust will have a fixed date to regularly return to the forefront of remembrance. This has gone hand-in-hand with a gradual rewriting of the origins of this commemorative date to make it less controversial. Its roots can actually be traced back to a proposal by Ignatz Bubis, then the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and to a draft law of the former Party of Democratic Socialism.[41] Today, it is commonly referred to as the invention of former Federal President Roman Herzog (1994-1999). He officially cited the future absence of survivors and eyewitnesses of Nazi crimes as the main reason for its introduction in 1996.[42]

Schlussstrich," *SZ* , 9 May 2005, p. 1; "Eine Nation auf der Suche," *SPIEGEL Spezial*, 02-2005, p. 16.

41 "Bubis dringt auf Gedenktag für die NS-Opfer," *SZ*, 9 May 1995, p. 6; Volker Zastrow, "Ein Wort für das Namenlose," *FAZ*, 27 January 2005, p. 3; PA-DBT 3001 13.WP PM 810, 15 March 1995. The Party of Democratic Socialism was the politically partly transformed successor of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, which had been the dictatorial rulers of the former German Democratic Republic. After further mergers and adaptations to changed political realities, they currently operate under the name of Die LINKE.

42 PA-DBT 3001 14.WP Prot 35, 2865, 22 April 1999; "Die Befreiung des KZ Auschwitz," *SZ*, 27 January 1996, p. 11; Eva-Elisabeth Fischer, "Verordnetes Gedenken," *SZ*, 27 January 1997, p. 13.

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During Weizsäcker's term in office, the discursive outlines of Holocaust remembrance had been spelled out, but Herzog's tenure saw political and social efforts to search for "the right way of dealing with remembrance" in terms of practising and interpreting these foundations.[43] Herzog is credited with coining the phrase "Human suffering cannot be netted out", which paved the way to meet growing public expectations of an integrative remembrance formula for both German and non-German victims, and to avoid the revisionist undertones which had previously accompanied the remembrance of German victims. However, this inclusive approach also appeals to those who advocate drawing a line under Nazi era remembrance, a mind-set that is commonly associated with the term "*Schlussstrich*" in German.[44] This is a further testament to the social strength of the attitude favouring "*Schlussstrich*", which has become too strong to remain excluded from official remembrance discourse, despite countless statements to the contrary by political representatives.

As for memorial sites, the debates surrounding the building of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe have been accompanied by similar undertones.[45] The monument has been called a "capstone of memory", which was exactly what was vehemently denied by all the leading political actors

43 Rudolf Augstein, "Politik der Erinnerung," *SPIEGEL*, 08 May 1995, p. 50. This and all other English quotes are author's translations unless stated otherwise. German original: "Richtiger Umgang mit dem Erinnern."

44 The English equivalent would be "final stroke." "Herzog: Aus der Vergangenheit lernen und die Wiederkehr des Schreckens verhindern," *FAZ*, 14 February 1995, p. 1; on the following see "Herzog lobt Debatte um Walser und Bubis," *FAZ*, 28 January 1999, p. 2; "Herzog: Ausblendung der Nazi-Verbrechen ist Feigheit," *SZ*, 28 January 1999, p. 5. German original: "Menschliches Leid kann nicht saldiert warden."

45 Jürgen Leinemann, "Feld ohne Eigenschaften," *SPIEGEL*, 9 May 2005, p. 35. German original: "ein Schlussstein der Erinnerung." A similar argument had already appeared in connection with the establishment of the House of the Wannsee Conference as a memorial site in 1992, see "Was fehlt," *Zeit Online*, 31 January 1992.

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involved. These undertones date back to the late 1980s, when "authentic" memorial sites (those immediately connected to actual Nazi crimes) in Germany started to draw sustained national attention for the first time. During the course of the 1990s, the debates about the erection of the so-called "Holocaust Memorial" even triggered a sense of unfair competition among some concentration camp memorial sites.[46] These feelings arose out of fear that this "non-authentic" site of commemoration might divert crucially needed subsidies away from the "authentic" sites. However, after its inauguration in 2005, the memorial quickly became a model for other victims' organisations in staking their claims on recognition of their own suffering during or after World War II.[47] The Central Council of Romany in Germany immediately saw their victim status as comparable to that of the Jews, and the League of Expellees later, in a similar fashion, presented a strong case for the prominent inclusion of German victims as part of the commemoration of World War II and its immediate aftermath. Yet only recently has the "Holocaust Memorial" been declared a success story of remembrance in the more conservative quarters of the public, which signals an increased readiness to reconcile the various strands of German history.[48]

However, all efforts of Holocaust remembrance have taken place amidst a discourse of liminality that permanently oscillates between images of scarcity and excess, hollowness and repleteness. That discourse had also surrounded the inauguration of 27 January as the day of remembrance, when the current culture of remembrance had been called "inflationary" and a "dead culture of representation" during attendant debates.[49] While the former term marked those

46 PA-DBT 3001 14.WP Prot 35, 2869, 22 August 1999.

47 "Steinbach-Debatte," *SPIEGEL Online*, 10 January 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/archiv/ (accessed 12 September 2013); This applies to all *SPIEGEL Online* articles.

48 Mariam Lau, "Wo man gerne hingeht," *WELT*, 27 January 2010, p. 3.

49 "Lust am Erinnern," *SPIEGEL*, 24 April 1995, p. 20; Eva-Elisabeth Fischer, "Verordnetes

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remembrance efforts as excessive, the latter criticised their allegedly blatant lack of authenticity and genuine societal involvement. Most notably, ex-chancellor Gerhard Schröder highlighted such social tensions in 2005 by giving voice to the "allurement of repressing and forgetting" the Nazi past, which had to be resisted by German society, thus illustrating the murky emotional dimensions involved in these contradictory processes.[50] These contradictory processes help explain why the inauguration of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe has come to be seen not just as the epitome of Nazi era remembrance but also as the starting point for a renegotiation of present-day Germany's culture of remembrance. The culture of remembrance has subsequently been declared a work in progress once again, with the explicit intention of creating a "historically just landscape of remembrance", one that has to be as inclusive as possible for Germans while still oriented toward reconciliation with their immediate European neighbours.[51]

6. After unification: Integration through remembrance or German memories on the way to Europe

EU influence on national remembrance efforts or, in a wider sense, the development of Europeanization of remembrance, is an on-going process with far-reaching repercussions. It is only now becoming obvious that the decisive

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Gedenken," *SZ*, 27 January 1997, p. 13. German original: "inflationär" and "tote Repräsentationskultur," respectively.

50 "Die Verlockung des Verdrängens ist sehr groß," *FAZ*, 26 January 2005, p. 1; "Der Verlockung des Vergessens widerstehen," *WELT*, 26 January 2005, p. 1, "Auschwitz-Gedenken," *SPIEGEL Online*, 25 January 2005. German original: "Die Verlockung des Verdrängens und Vergessens."

51 PA-DBT 3001 16.WP Prot 187, 20094, 13 November 2008. German original: "... eine historisch gerechte Erinnerungslandschaft."

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battles inside Germany over the interpretation of World War II and the Holocaust were fought between 1985 and 1995. Then, the forces of renationalisation and Europeanization were still locked in confrontation, which eventually led to the crucial 8 May question: whether the end of the war should be considered liberation or defeat.[52] For some time, there were no doubts among German officials as regards the correct answer, although within society, replies would have been more heterogeneous for some time to come. Therefore, the renewed upswing around 2000 demanding public presence of memories of Germans as victims of the war has given rise to renewed intent to revisit the question.[53] For the time being, a pro-European and more inclusive stance prevails. Ex-chancellor Gerhard Schröder aptly put this stance into words in June 2004, during remembrance of the June 1944 invasion of continental Europe, when he called the ensuing Allied victory not a victory *over* Germany but a victory *for* Germany.[54] This indirect claim of Germans being able to, at least passively, share the victors' status seems to go even one step further than the tentative inclusion of Germany into the war's victims, an inclusion that Schröder also insinuated on the same occasion, and it clearly indicates a remarkable elevation of Germany's status on the European stage.

Germany had originally stayed silent after its admission in the mid-1990s to joint remembrance occasions abroad attended by representatives from other countries. In January 1995, Herzog was the first German head of state to visit

52 "Nur im Untergang lag die Befreiung," *ZEIT Online*, 5 May 1995; "Eine Woche in Deutschland," *ZEIT Online*, 12 May 1995. German original: "Befreiung oder Niederlage."

53 Tanja Dückers, "Neue Bilder alter Prägung," *WELT*, 7 May 2005, p. 28.

54 Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory*, p. 304. On this aspect see also Wulf Kansteiner, "Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle: The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany," in *The Politics of Memory in Post-War Europe*, ed. Richard Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 130.

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the former Auschwitz concentration camp on the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of its liberation. He was widely lauded for his mostly silent participation in the remembrance activities. When he consciously stuck to this approach in the face of controversy at the event between Polish and Jewish representatives about their respective significance as victims' groups, Herzog was even elevated to the position of an observant "sovereign Third" by the German media.[55] This role of silence has over time been transformed into certain accepted forms of language.[56] A clear sign of reconciliation in this respect was ex-Federal President Rau's (1999-2004) use of the German language when addressing the Israeli Parliament in 2000, although that address was nevertheless still accompanied by a heated controversy in Israel in the run-up to and on the occasion itself.[57] This controversy reappeared in 2005, during a visit by ex-Federal President Horst Köhler's (2004-2010) to Israel. On that trip, he too addressed the Knesset. By 2005, the function of silence in remembrance activities for Germans had already been successfully transformed into a mere symbolic reference. In January of that year, ex-chancellor Schröder was able to say, "Actually, it would suit us Germans well to stay silent in the face of the greatest crime against humanity",[58] before he went on to deliver a

55 Judith Keilbach, "Politik mit der Vergangenheit: Der 50. Jahrestag der Befreiung der Konzentrationslager im US-amerikanischen und im bundesdeutschen Fernsehen," Zeitgeschichte-Online, Thema: Die Fernsehserie "Holocaust" – Rückblicke auf eine 'betroffene Nation,' ed. Christoph Classen (March 2004), p. 20; http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/md=FSHolocaust-Keilbach (accessed 12 September 2013).

56 Nico Fried, "Ein stummer Gast," *SZ*, 28 January 2005, p. 3; "Auschwitz," *ZEIT Online*, 20 January 2005; "Ohne Seele," *SPIEGEL*, 30 January 1995, pp. 36-38.

57 Hans-Joachim Noack, "Der alte Argwohn," *Spiegel*, 21 May 2001, p. 139; "Köhler vor der Knesset," *SPIEGEL Online*, 02 February 2005; "Rede vor der Knesset," *FAZ Online*, 02 February 2005, http://fazarchiv.faz.net/ (accessed 12 September 2013). This applies to all *FAZ Online* articles.

58 "Ich bekunde meine Scham," *WELT*, 26 January 2005, p. 3. German original: "Uns Deutschen

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speech on the topic without raising any notable objections.

In addition, the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in January 2000 and the three follow-up conferences have laid the foundations for coordinating and harmonising remembrance and policy on behalf of the EU member states with regard to Holocaust education and the battles against racism, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism. This is an on-going endeavour, one based on a common interpretation of history already applied as a pedagogical tool to raise public awareness against racist and anti-Semitic ideas and speech and to promote the development of civil society. Indeed, because of Stockholm and the subsequent conferences concerted policy initiatives at the European level, especially pedagogical efforts, have gathered significant momentum.[59] These initiatives are mostly aimed at schools and pupils, while there are calls for vigilance against racist tendencies targeting society as a whole.

Interestingly enough, although in the past, such calls for "vigilance" against racism and anti-Semitism in Germany used to come from foreigners, emigrants, and German Jews, in recent years, they have also been voiced more often by the mainstream and by politicians from the centre to the right.[60] There is a previous history to this discursive pattern, though, as the term "vigilance" was strategically employed by the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) and affiliated media outlets in 1950s East Germany. The hesitance of political and social proponents of contemporary German society to utilize the concept may originate from this association. In any case, it is somewhat telling that the

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stünde es eigentlich gut an, angesichts des größten Menschheitsverbrechens zu schweigen."

59 Jens Kroh, *Transnationale Erinnerung. Der Holocaust im Fokus geschichtspolitischer Initiativen* (Frankfurt / Main: Campus, 2008), pp. 111-113.

60 Rafael Seligmann, "Wachsamkeit tut not," *BILD*, 28 January 1997, p. 2; "Identitätsbruch," *ZEIT Online*, 19 February 2004; Heribert Prantl, "Schily will Neonazi-Aufmärsche verhindern," *SZ*, 26 January 2005, p. 1, "Bundestag gedenkt der Opfer des Hitler-Regimes," *FAZ*, 26 January 2008, p. 1.

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earliest reference, found during research for this article, to the importance of "vigilance" in the German Parliament against the wrongs of the past was made in 1996 on the occasion of the commemoration of the popular uprising of 17 June 1953 in East Germany.[61] Thus, it was employed as a defensive weapon against (communist) totalitarianism, not against xenophobia and anti-Semitism, thereby inverting its previous meaning but keeping its original function.

The eastward enlargement of the EU is another vital aspect of Europeanisation that has left its trace on the culture of remembrance in Germany. Before 1990, this enlargement even seemed to be in danger of being used for right-wing irredentist purposes.[62] Yet around 2005, it was firmly turned into a kind of ethical imperative. Viewed as one of the lessons that were learned from the aftermath of World War II, it was utilised to extend Western democracy and a liberal market economy to Eastern Europe. This change in the outlook on the eastward enlargement was accompanied by representatives of Eastern European countries rejecting the paradigmatic status of the Holocaust and its remembrance as the central event of World War II, and labelling it a Western cultural import.[63] They emphasized for some time the need to rewrite or at least to re-evaluate contemporary history and the corresponding culture of remembrance of the mid-20th century after the fall of communism in Eastern Europe.

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61 PA-DBT 3001 13.WP Prot 240, 22106, 17 June 1996. On the concept of vigilance in the Soviet Zone of Occupation and early German Democratic Republic see Christoph Thonfeld, "`Die Grenze zu erkennen ... ist Sache des politischen Instinktes.´ Anzeige und Denunziation in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone am Beispiel Thüringens," *Historical Social Research* 26, no. 2-3 (2001), pp. 98-99.

62 PA-DBT 3001 11.WP Prot 152, 11422, 22 June 1989.

63 Emmanuel Droit, "Die Shoah: Von einem westeuropäischen zu einem transeuropäischen Erinnerungsort?" in *Europäische Erinnerungsräume,* ed. Kristin Buchinger, Claire Gantet, and Jakob Vogel (Frankfurt / Main: Campus, 2009), p. 265.

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At the same time, a renegotiation of what is being considered "German" in the growing, unified Europe has also taken place. In 2005, the European Union officially adopted 27 January as the day to commemorate the victims of National Socialism, thereby endorsing an example set by the German government. In a corresponding resolution, the former Auschwitz concentration camp was not referred to as "German" but as "Hitler's Nazi-extermination camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau". This change in language made Hitler (once again) appear to be the sole culprit of Nazi atrocities and applied the political denomination "Nazi" instead of the national denomination "German" to ascribe responsibility. Initiated by some German Social Democrat members of the European Parliament, the resolution garnered votes from the majority of the European Parliament after some negotiations across party lines and national borders, and against Polish objections based on fears of the negative implications of this somewhat unclear reference, since the actual location of the former campsite is in Poland. This was the strongest official expression yet to dissociate present-day Germany from Nazi-era crimes and firmly embedded this period of German history into a European frame of reference. It was dutifully echoed by German voices declaring German history to have become a European matter.[64] In a similar vein, the Queen of England, in her commemorative address of 8 May 1995, had spoken about the wartime enemy without naming Germany, thereby setting an example that European politicians observed on similar occasions afterwards.[65]

However, these efforts at European reconciliation have a tendency to create evermore ambiguity, because they also tie in with then-chancellor

64 "EU tilgt Wort 'deutsch' in Auschwitz-Resolution," *SZ*, 27 January 2005, p. 6; "Kein polnisches Lager," *FAZ*, 28 January 2005, p. 3; Wolfgang Thierse, "Auch ich bin in Breslau geboren," *WELT*, 17 May 2010, p. 9. On this aspect see also Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory*, p. 307.

65 "Elizabeth II. eröffnet Feiern zum Kriegsende," *WELT*, 6/7 May 1995, p. 5.

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Schröder's calculated indirectness with reference to the beginning of the war. When speaking on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, he stated, "We Germans know perfectly well who started the war," without then actually saying who did it. Thus, he avoided the question of ascribing national responsibility to Germany.[66] Although this looks like a comfortable route for Germany to escape being eternally referred to as the nation that perpetrated the Holocaust, it should not only be seen as a potential evasion of responsibility. This Europeanised perspective can also help to safeguard Germany's unquestionable achievements in its own accounting of the Nazi past on a European level. After all, it was not least because of the self-critical stance toward the Nazi past that was achieved within Germany that it also became possible for other countries in Europe to reflect more openly on the dark sides of their World War II history, be it as collaborators in the deportation of Jews or as silent profiteers of Germany's wartime economic needs.

7. Around the millennium: Remembrance without integration or Immigration society, foreigners, and Germans with migrant backgrounds

Regarding migration as a salient part of society and culture and of memory studies has produced unexpected repercussions for the culture of remembrance. It has brought to the forefront the question of whether coming to terms with the Holocaust as an issue predominantly concerning Germans has inherently undervalued its actual European scope and relevance both as a historical event and as a matter of transnational remembrance. It looks as if there is a strong downside to the active acknowledgement of German responsibility for the past which had taken several decades to achieve. A further downside is that it now

66 "Wir verbeugen uns in Scham," *FAZ Online*, 2 May 2004.

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seems to imply a kind of exclusivity for Germans when it comes to accounting for the long-term effects of memories related to the Nazi era.[67] Whether or not Germany will eventually be able to create an integrative culture of remembrance that includes its immigrants and naturalised citizens is still debatable. The topic gained occasional prominence in German politics more than a decade ago, when ex-Federal President Rau addressed it in his opening speech of the 2002 German Historians' Convention.[68] However, not much has changed since, for the topic still receives little attention in public debates.[69]

Currently, the integration of youths with migrant backgrounds into the culture of remembrance is being considered more as a serious educational problem how to teach them the right attitude towards history rather than enabling them to develop their own outlook on history, especially since it has been identified by the European Union as an issue that allegedly concerns not only Germany but many European countries. This problem starts with the exclusive attitude that German mainstream society adopts toward immigrants when it comes to participating in the German culture of remembrance. Through educational policies and corresponding curricula and textbooks, this exclusive view is transmitted to schools, where it is again consolidated and thus established. This would be further exacerbated if the ethnic origin of students were made a defining coordinate when discussing and considering their historical outlook.[70] However, approached with a different mind-set, the current

67 Angela Kühner, "NS-Erinnerung und Migrationsgesellschaft: Befürchtungen, Erfahrungen und Zuschreibungen," *Einsichten und Perspektiven. Bayerische Zeitschrift für Politik und Geschichte,* Themenheft 1 (2008), p. 54.

68 Jan Motte and Rainer Ohliger, "Einführende Betrachtungen," in *Geschichte und Gedächtnis in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft. Migration zwischen historischer Rekonstruktion und Erinnerungspolitik*, ed. Jan Motte and Rainer Ohliger (Essen: Klartext, 2004), p. 9.

69 "Die Deutschtürken und der Holocaust," *ZEIT Online*, 21 January 2010.

70 Marcel Berlinghoff, "Geschichte in der Einwanderungsgesellschaft," *Jahrbuch für Politik und*

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situation might also generate an understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of history in all students.

For the time being, Germany still promotes its own achievements in coming to terms with the past vis-à-vis (immigrated) Turks and the government of Turkey in connection with their problems with acknowledging the mass-scale expulsions and killings of Armenians in 1915 as a crime committed by the Turkish state's historic predecessor and as an unresolved issue in Turkish history.[71] Thus, the controversy with Turkey has also become a case-in-point for the newly grown conviction among German politicians and journalists that an analysis of the dark sides of respective national pasts is part-and-parcel of a European culture of remembrance.[72] Accustomed to more than half a century of constant reproach from other countries because of Nazi-era crimes, Germany has finally turned the tables within the European framework, at least when it comes to other countries entering the EU, and become an example of how to appropriately account for the dark sides of national pasts.

It is no wonder that these initiatives come from within the centre-left political spectrum, because they pushed the same agenda inside Germany throughout the 1980s and 1990s. The centre-right parties have, quite understandably, kept a somewhat lower profile and adopted an attitude of respect for the sovereignty of other nations as regards efforts to come to terms with past wrongs. This respectful attitude appears to them to be a more presentable front vis-à-vis other nations' stances on their past wrongs, stances that mostly resemble German conservatives' previous refusal to admit past wrongs at a time when Germany's national past was a more pressing concern.

Geschichte 3 (2012), pp. 252-253 , also on the following.

71 PA-DBT 3001 15.WP Prot 172, 16127ff., 21 April 2005; "Genozid," *ZEIT Online*, 21 April 2005.

72 PA-DBT 3001 15.WP Prot 172, 16132ff., 21 April 2005; "Völkermord," *ZEIT Online*, 27 April 2005, also on the following.

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Although Germany has opened itself up on the European stage through acquiring some room to manoeuvre with regard to the politics of memory, things still look different when it comes to negotiating the remembrance of the Nazi past with immigrant groups in Germany. In principle, it currently looks as if immigrants and their descendants have remained the "Other" in the German culture of remembrance. This status has given rise to occasional objections from prominent members of German naturalised immigrant communities and triggered grassroots educational and remembrance projects, though these remain symbolic.

8. After the turn of the millennium: Remembrance through integration or Normalisation and the different strands of German memory

The discourse of "normalisation" that pertains to German history, memory, and identity has a long tradition politically, one that can be traced back to political agendas as far back as the early 1980s, and an even longer social tradition.[73] However, after the blunt initial attempts to reclaim normality for the German nation in the political arena under the auspices of Helmut Kohl,[74] the concept has become more complex.[75] Since 2000, the concept has served as a

73 Jeffrey Olick and Daniel Levy, "Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics," *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 6 (December 1997), p. 932; see also "Deutschland - ein normales Land?" *ZEIT Online*, 9 August 1991; "Deutsche Sucht," *ZEIT Online*, 06 January 1995; Rudolf Augstein, "Politik der Erinnerung," *SPIEGEL*, 30 November 1998, p. 50.

74 "Jedes Mehr ein Zuviel," *ZEIT Online*, 16 July 1993. See also Leggewie and Meyer, "*Ein Ort, an den man gerne geht*," pp. 38-40.

75 "Berliner Geschichtsaffären," *ZEIT Online*, 19 September 1997; "Die verfehlte Normalität," *ZEIT Online*, 24 May 2007; "Es hat sich trotzdem gelohnt," *ZEIT Online*, 20 March 2008.

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tool for the re-emergence of Germans as victims in World War II at the forefront of remembrance efforts and has been slated for sustained renegotiation in German society.[76] For the time being, the normalisation or re-invention of the German national identity remains double-sided, though.

Calculated ambiguity has always been a rhetorical technique in this debate, but in Germany's case, it has been especially applicable over the years. One valuable tool is the ingenuity of the genitive case in the German language, which allows the indication of various and sometimes contradictory semantic relations within one grammatical form. This has repeatedly proved remarkably helpful in the delicate process of the integration of German and other victims into the commemoration of World War II. Chancellor Schröder took advantage of it in May 2000 when addressing the opening of the exhibition "Jews in Berlin 1938-1945". There, he chose the formulation: "I am vehemently opposed to any discussion of the hierarchy of victims", deliberately leaving it open to interpretation by the public whether his opposition referred to questioning the established hierarchy of victims or to the very idea of such a hierarchy. By then, this hierarchy had developed into the most controversial aspect of the culture of remembrance in Germany and, around the millennium, had started to take shape as an urgent matter in terms of a growing social perception that German World War II suffering should be more prominently represented within the framework of the culture of remembrance.[77] During Schröder's term in office (1998-2005),

76 PA-DBT 3001 15.WP Prot 175, 16438ff., 12 May 2005.

77 Christiane Schlötzer, "Schröder: NS-Vergangenheit nicht verdrängen," *SZ*, 9 May 2000, p. 5. German original: "Ich wende mich entschieden gegen jede Diskussion der Hierarchisierung [alternative version: über eine Hierarchie, CT] der Opfer." In the previous sentence in brackets is a slightly different transcript of that speech available online which clarifies the meaning. However, in my opinion this shows already an attempt at interpretation by the transcriber. For this alternative reading see http://perso.ens-lyon.fr/adrien.barbaresi/corpora/BR/t/110.html (accessed 9 September 2013).

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German political representatives aimed not to offend non-German victims and foreign observers, but at the same time also not to denigrate Germany's own victims. This remained an issue during Horst Köhler's term in office, although by then commentators were used to judging his public commemorative speeches on whether or not he made any historical or moral mistakes. Reduced language, creating an air of distance toward the actual Nazi crimes through the usage of pronouns like "something of the sort" and "such a thing", has generally become more common in recent years in commemorative speeches when referring to Nazi crimes and genocide[78] and became a feature of Köhler's speeches. This mode of expression may have given his tenure a peripheral outlook in shaping characteristic terms for remembrance, but such an assessment would miss two major developments that manifested in his speech on the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

The stage was set by Köhler's rhetorically elegant, yet far-reaching inclusive turn of victims' remembrance. He managed to mould widespread contemporary social trends and political convictions by making use of the potential of the genitive case for double-layer dimensions of meaning into a formula that seemed acceptable for all, when he said, "We commemorate all of Germany's victims". This statement included both Germans who suffered and foreigners who suffered at the hands of Germans.[79] This new all-inclusive memory had been in the making since the mid-1990s, when Roman Herzog took office. However, this standpoint needed much more explanatory

78 Thomas Urban, "Die letzten Überlebenden mahnen," *SZ*, 28 January 2005, p. 1; "Jedem Anfang wehren," *SZ*, 28 January 2008, p. 5. German original: "derartiges" and "so etwas," respectively.

79 "Der Bundespräsident zum 8. Mai: Es gibt keinen Schlußstrich," *FAZ*, 9 May 2005, p. 1; "Köhler: Wir haben guten Grund, stolz auf unser Land zu sein," *WELT*, 9 May 2005, p. 1; "Wer einen Teil der Geschichte verdrängt, versündigt sich an Deutschland," *SZ*, 9 May 2005, p. 6. German original: "Wir gedenken aller Opfer Deutschlands."

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accessories and caveats before it could finally be uttered as a given.

The second, no less remarkable feat of transformation of meaning was the final shift of emphasis away from deciding whether 8 May 1945 signified defeat or liberation, and toward highlighting (West) German achievements in the post-war era. This shift paved the way back to "pride" as part of the culture of remembrance in Germany. Although still generally perceived as a bold and necessary strategy, the shift was based on growing social and political sentiments at the time. Ten years before, in 1995, then-SPD party leader Scharping publicly suggested the idea of pride in (West) German post-war achievements during an 8 May 1945 memorial debate. Back then, within Parliament and mainstream social opinion, the Basic Law was seen as the only acceptable source of pride.[80] Scharping's passing remark attracted little attention let alone approval, whereas Köhler's official reference in 2005 was met with approval or at least passive acceptance, and triggered only scattered left-wing criticism. Most notably, however, when asked for a reaction to Köhler's statement, ex-Federal President Weizsäcker declined to comment. This silence from a representative of a Holocaust-centred culture of remembrance, one usually known to be eloquent and outspoken on this matter, speaks volumes about the magnitude of the paradigm shift.[81]

Retrospectively, we can see that milestone anniversaries like 1995, 2000, and 2005 have often been used to give a fixed meaning to the remembrance of World War II and the Holocaust. The lesser anniversaries in between have been

80 Jens Jessen, "Wurden die Deutschen von den Nazis unterdrückt?" *FAZ*, 9 May 1995, p. 37; "Wir trauern um alle Opfer, weil wir gegen alle Völker gerecht sein wollen," *FAZ*, 9 May 2005, p. 8. For the German Basic Law as a source of price see "Ansprache von Bundespräsident Roman Herzog zum Gedenktag für die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus im Deutschen Bundestag," 19 January 1996, http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/DE/Roman-Herzog/Reden/1996/01/19960119_Rede.html (accessed 10 November 2013).

81 Johann Michael Möller, "Begabung zur Freiheit," *WELT*, 9 May 2005, p. 3.

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used to test the waters for inconclusive areas of remembrance or to tentatively start the shift of established meanings to better fit current needs. A speech given in Weimar by Hermann Schäfer, then the deputy head of the Federal Department of Culture, on the opening of the Kunstfest Weimar in the summer of 2006 can serve as a case in point.[82] Its opening ceremony is usually dedicated to the remembrance of the survivors of the Buchenwald concentration camp. However, Schäfer stirred up public controversy with his introductory address, which focused on the memory of the flight and expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe during and after the final stages of World War II, regardless of the fact that the event was called, "Buchenwald Remembrance". The organisers had allegedly asked him to talk about the "culture of remembrance in general".

There are conflicting accounts by the various parties involved as to exactly what had been arranged between Schäfer and Kunstfest curator Nike Wagner. However, the remarkable thing about this incident, even if Schäfer's version of the pre-arrangement for his speech is accurate, is his view that the memory of flight and expulsion of Germans qualified as the content of a speech in 2006 on the "culture of remembrance in general" in Germany, the particular venue and audience notwithstanding. Only five years earlier, this would have been virtually unthinkable, and the "shift in emphasis" explains the strong reactions from Buchenwald survivors and many political observers. Publicly, the minister of state for culture, Bernd Neumann, tried to quell any suspicion of a "shift in emphasis" by reconfirming his department's adherence to the understanding of the "unique character of the Nazi dictatorship and the Holocaust", which was known to be the unquestionable foundation of the (West) German culture of

82 "Buchenwald-Rede – Schäfer entschuldigt sich bei KZ-Opfern," *SPIEGEL Online,* 28 August 2006, http://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/buchenwald-rede-schaefer-entschuldigtsich-bei-kz-opfern-a-434052.html (accessed 12 September 2013).

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remembrance.

However, recently, it has developed into a standard formula to apply whenever debates about the potential reshaping of the culture of remembrance in Germany flare up. Groups who put forward claims for recognition, which substantially rival the "unique" status of Holocaust memory, do so by regularly confirming exactly the opposite and increasingly get away with it. To make things worse, Neumann, by referring to the incident as merely triggering "political misunderstandings" and not weighing in on the content of Schäfer's speech, left further room for conjecture. While it was deemed not the right time to attack the commemorative language outright, his statement was tantamount to condoning official and public attempts at its piecemeal erosion.

While the remembrance of Germans as victims of World War II was perceived for a long time as a rival claim to the process of coming to terms with the Holocaust and other Nazi-era atrocities, the two ambitions have been made more compatible over the years. Thus, to strive for normality is now being seen as the other side of the coin of Germany's acknowledgement of sustained responsibility for the remembrance of its Nazi past. Other initiatives to actively face those crimes, but from points of view that are still palatable for the majority of German society, are important in this transitory stage of a longer trajectory of remembrance. In hindsight, we see the above-mentioned speech of Phillip Jenninger as an ominous, though highly controversial, attempt at going even further down the road to regaining interpretational sovereignty over the memory of World War II and Nazi persecution from the survivors. Up to the present day, these endeavours still need to convince the political parties, Germany's European neighbours, and other EU member nations. Outright revisionist attempts to seize the momentum of the developing "historically just" culture of remembrance by former perpetrators and their descendants[83] remain

83 Thomas Schmid, "Honorig und doch schal," *WELT*, 28 January 2012, p. 2.

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on the fringes of society. It is remarkable, though, that these initiatives have become more frequent again since the millennium, after virtually disappearing in the 1990s.

The overall movement to normalisation continues to bear fruit, with tangible achievements that highlight the potential of historical lessons learned from the Nazi past to give present-day Germany a more prominent political role in Europe and beyond. The Nazi past is thus portrayed as a negative foundation for European unification and a contrasting background of post-war (West) German achievement. One part that has explicitly been exempted from normalisation for the time being is Germany's exceptional relationship with Israel, which has come to be considered the default status over the years.[84] This relationship seems to be an area of policy making that, since 2005, has provided balance against potential fears and its repeated reaffirmation has been especially influential among Jewish and foreign observers wary of the growing assertiveness of the German League of Expellees regarding their respective commemorative representation, in much the same way the Schröder government had ruled out any claims of compensation by the League to calm renewed Polish anxieties after 2000.

9. Current state of affairs: Normalisation of the exceptional?

Over the course of the last twenty years, the German culture of remembrance has been substantially renegotiated as an integral part of Europe since reunification. At the same time, it has retained a national character when it comes to bilateral negotiations with – mostly Eastern European – neighbouring countries, and with social groups who live in Germany as foreigners or

84 PA-DBT 3001 15.WP Prot 175, 16444, 12 May 2005; "Auschwitz," *ZEIT Online*, 27 January 2005.

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naturalised citizens.[85] Coherent museification, *i.e.*, authoritative forms of representation in museums, and memorialization of the Nazi past, have created an established set of lessons to be learned from this past. However, the significance of the culture of remembrance to future generations and its transformation into pedagogical efforts are still far from clear. This lack of clarity is partially due to a yet unresolved relationship between the Nazi past, the memories of German victims during World War II, and the history of the East German dictatorship, respectively, within the framework of the culture of remembrance in reunified Germany. It is also partially due to renewed convictions within the mainstream of German society that finally the time has come to scale back a perceived exaggeration of public remembrances of the horrendous crimes connected to National Socialism and World War II. There are clear signs of the cosmopolitanisation of memories highlighting a kind of observer memory vis-à-vis EU neighbours, while emphasising the recharged importance of elements of the national identity, such as the remembrance of German World War II suffering and the flight and expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe after 1944. These developments continue to produce friction because the allegedly internal memories are of immediate concern to Poland and the Czech Republic, other EU countries, and the remaining survivors of Nazi-era atrocities. Therefore, this conflict delineates exactly the part of the culture of remembrance that fuels controversy and confrontation. It is left open when, or even if, this restless chapter of the past will ultimately be considered settled.

The change of generations and their impact on and attitudes toward the national past are factors with an incalculable impact, insofar as previous generations are losing their dominance over the culture of remembrance. It is

85 Christoph Thonfeld, "Transculturality and the Perception of the 'Other' in Science and Teaching: A Research Outline," 《文化越界》(*Cross-cultural Studies*) 4, no. 8 (2012), p. 33.

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unclear what exactly will happen next. Similarly, the establishment in German society of a consensual view of the Nazi era, whilst ending a fundamental debate about it, has at the same time been dubbed a dangerous ossification or lifeless ritualisation of memory from the observers. Thus, it remains to be seen how durable the unquestionable achievements turn out to be. Ultimately, we can say that 70 years after the end of World War II, the legitimacy of the culture of remembrance in Germany is safe for the time being. However, its forms and internal hierarchy have increasingly come under scrutiny. As Thomas Lutz has pointed out, the efforts from politicians and social scientists to promote initiatives highlighting human rights and civic values as new guiding principles to remember Nazi-era events are still being controversially discussed among practitioners and researchers.[86] Thus, while there seems to be an increasingly homogenised basic understanding of this past in mainstream politics and media, it is still true that within society, in everyday life, and at actual memorial sites, this understanding remains more diverse and contradictory and has yet to arrive at its final conclusions.

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86 Thomas Lutz, *Zwischen Vermittlungsanspruch und emotionaler Wahrnehmung. Die Gestaltung neuer Dauerausstellungen in Gedenkstätten für NS-Opfer in Deutschland und deren Bildungsanspruch* (Berlin: Berlin University of Technology, 2010, electronic publication), p. 127.

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普世脈絡下的正常化？
統一後的德國關於二戰及大屠殺的記憶文化

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提　要

自 1990 年代以來，整合東德和西德的集體與個人記憶，一直是德國必須處理的棘手課題。對加害歷史的記憶，在公共領域中較為顯著；不過，關於德國受害的記憶也得到了更高度的關注。同時，歐洲逐漸成為在論及國家文化記憶時所參照的對象。這些發展受到種種後國家因素的影響，譬如歐洲化及國際化所帶來之不同層面的衝擊，以及多元文化在社會文化上產生的影響等。然而，記憶文化在德國也同時出現了一股再國家化（renationalisation）和正常化（normalisation）的強勁潮流。1990-2010 年這二十年間，在記憶文化中，「他者」一方面得到了積極的肯定，卻也因為再國家化的趨勢而被排斥在外，相關研究者將這個過程稱為記憶的普世化（cosmopolitanisation）。本文從歷時性的角度評估 1990 年代以來，這種普世化的過程在德國關於二戰及戰後餘波的記憶文化中實際運作的初步結果。

關鍵詞：文化記憶　二次世界大戰　普世化　歐洲化　再國家化

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