The Legacies of Soviet Repression and Displacement

The Multiple and Mobile Lives of Memories

Edited by Samira Saramo and Ulla Savolainen

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Fear, repression, arrests, displacement, and execution were key tactics of the Soviet state across its vast territory under the rule of Joseph Stalin. The repercussions of these displacements have been multiple, their reach mobile, and their legacy ongoing. This collection highlights the ways in which memories of Stalin-era repression and displacement manifest across times and places through diverse forms of materialization. By offering novel multi-sited and multi-media analyses of the creative, political, societal, cultural, and intimate implications of remembrance, this collection contributes fresh interdisciplinary perspectives to both memory studies and the study of Soviet repression.

The chapters of the book explore the concrete mobilities of life stories, letters, memoirs, literature, objects, and bodies reflecting Soviet repression and violence across borders of geographical locations, historical periods, and affective landscapes. These spatial, temporal, and psychological shifts are explored further as processes of textual circulation and mediation. Taken together, the book asks: what happens to memories, life stories, testimonies, and experiences when they travel in time and space and between media and are (re)interpreted and (re)formulated through these transfers? What kinds of memorial forms are gained through processes of mediation? What types of spaces for remembering, telling, and feeling are created, negotiated, and contested through these shifts? What are the boundaries and intersections of intimate, familial, community, national, and transnational memories?

In the Soviet Union, the consolidation and maintenance of Stalin's power from the mid-1920s into World War II (WWII) were accompanied by the centralization of all aspects of Soviet life. State control increasingly expanded from the political and the economic to the cultural and the everyday. Ideology and security were "inextricably intertwined" (Hoffman 2003, 176). As such, anything – or anyone – that did not fit tidily into the Stalinist mold was in danger of being sought out and repressed. All dissent, however mild or even unintentional, was seen as a threat to Soviet state security and, thereby, to the Communist project overall. By constructing an atmosphere of danger and marking, first, "kulaks," "class enemies," and "wreckers" and, later, the all-encompassing categorization of "enemies of the people," the Soviet leadership

attempted to make its vast population submissive to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Fitzpatrick 1999, 191–192).

The Soviet secret police during Stalin's rule, the OGPU (Joint State Political Directorate) followed by the NKVD (the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), the NKGB (People's Commissariat of State Security), and MGB (Ministry of State Security), were charged with the task of enforcing compliance and punishing "hostile elements" who were alleged to be working against the Party objective. Though calculations of repression are imperfect and debated (see, e.g., Wheatcroft 2000), an estimated six million Soviet citizens were forcefully displaced by the Stalinist state from the 1920s to the 1950s. The mechanisms for relocation included campaigns such as clearing border regions in response to alleged disloyalty to the state, broad campaigns of "dekulakization" in the 1920s and 1930s, mass arrests and executions during the Great Terror (1936–1938), the development of the expansive GULAG system, and extensive forced relocation during and after WWII (see also Harris 2013, 2–7). Entire communities and ethnic groups were labeled as dangerous and violently removed from their homes and homelands, resulting in a staggering loss of lives (see, e.g., Human Rights Watch 1991, 8).

Ethnic and minority communities in the Soviet Union often bore a disproportionate burden of the repression, violence, and displacement meted onto the Soviet population. The young Soviet State in the 1920s had developed "affirmative action" policies in an attempt to consolidate Soviet national consciousness and support for the state's ideology in a vast, diverse, and multi-ethnic empire (Martin 2001; Slezkine 1994). The extension of minority rights through the policy of *korenizatsiia* and the establishment of national territories and republics, however, proved short-lived and ethnic minorities continued to be perceived as harmful "foreigners" in the eyes of the Stalinist center. The violent acts targeted at ethnic and national communities that started in the late 1920s were justified on the false grounds that these communities were characterized by "bourgeois nationalism" and "backward" peasant sentiment and, as such, threatened the Soviet Union (Slezkine 1994). The active Russification of minority and national group regions and the suppression of minority languages, cultures, and leadership became primary tactics of Soviet control from the mid-1930s onward (see, e.g., Baron 2007, 172). These intensified campaigns of repression aimed at minority and ethnic groups have come to be seen as clear examples of ethnic cleansing and even genocide (Kostiainen 1996; Martin 1998).

Those who were not directly impacted by sweeping and arbitrary arrests, interrogations, imprisonment, exile, or execution were nonetheless impacted by uncertainty and fear. Cruel and often false denouncements could instantly turn lives upside down. No one could be sure when their turn would come, either directly implicated or as a shunned family member of the repressed. As much as physical violence was a central feature of Soviet control throughout its territory, so too was the psychological tactic of surveillance and terror. As Hannah Parker succinctly summarizes in her contribution to this collection,

'terror' was as much the fear of persecution as persecution itself: its emotional ubiquity permeated the psychosocial space of everyday life, further constricting the already controlled repertoire of permissible styles of expression, to which Soviet citizens were required to adapt their social identities and communications.

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The threat of repression, its impact on behaviors and psychologies, and the actual physical and often violent displacement of individuals and whole communities have had lasting consequences on identities and notions of place and belonging.

Neither this introduction nor the collection as a whole can do full justice to the complexities and specific contexts of repression and the mechanisms of terror and displacement in the whole of the former Soviet Union during the long rule of Joseph Stalin, from 1922 to his death in 1953. Yet, by bringing together studies from a variety of national and cultural perspectives, and specifically Russian, Lithuanian, Estonian, Romanian, Moldovan, Ingrian Finnish, Ukrainian, Russlanddeutsche (Russian German), and Jewish, as well as perspectives complicating these categories, this book provides an opportunity to see shared experiences of repression in different parts of the Soviet empire, while also highlighting the nuanced contexts of history, place, ethnicity, and national aspirations. Furthermore, the case studies presented in this collection exemplify how the myriad interpretations of the consequences and extensiveness of Stalinist repression expand well beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union. With its focus on the versatile movements of memory, the collection situates itself in the continuum of transnational, transcultural, moving, and traveling memory studies.

As such, this collection takes to heart Marianne Hirsch's call to move beyond comparative histories to "connective histories." According to Hirsch (2012, 19–21, 206), a connective approach enables us to pay attention to affiliations and shared motivations between divergent histories and memories without obscuring their differences or reducing their authenticities. Moreover, by moving between global and intimate scales and paying attention to delicate details related to everyday life, familial and domestic spheres, as well as to affect and emotion, connective interpretation enables analyses of the broader political dimensions of memories (see also Saramo and Cenedese 2020).

Research and Cultures of Memory

Although the chapters of this book draw from multiple disciplinary and research traditions, the collection as a whole makes its primary contribution to the field of memory studies. Since the 1980s, memory studies has become an expanding and global multi- and cross-disciplinary research field preoccupied with the link between identities and collective/social/cultural remembrance. Memory studies is premised on the idea that social memory

is dependent on the continuous transmission of narratives, which is only possible with the help of diverse forms of media. The field explores versatile manifestations, acts, expressions, politics, and consequences of remembrance at different presents (see, e.g., Erll 2011a). Art, especially literature, as well as other kinds of "carriers" have been treated as memory media through which narratives are transferred and identities negotiated (e.g., Erll 2008a; Rigney 2012). Media are not understood as passive channels or containers but rather as active partakers, which mold and reconfigure memory, as well as laying the foundations for future remembrances. Moreover, the field has focused on examining the dynamic processes of mediation and remediation, or the travels of memory, through which remembrance occurs (e.g. Erll and Rigney 2009; Erll 2011b).

The initial emergence of the research field of memory studies connected to a broader cultural and political fascination and concern over social memory in the latter half of the twentieth century. Memory's cultural historians (e.g. Nora 1989; Terdiman 1993; Fritzsche 2004) agree, however, that the roots of active cultural, societal, and political interest in the role of the past in the present go further back and connect to processes of modernization. In addition to industrialization and urbanization, large-scale migrations and societal upheavals in the nineteenth century created a new kind of experience of being in the present, especially in Europe. This modern present was conceived of as being radically different than, and detached from, both the future and the past. The new sense of temporality produced both an anxiety over loss and various endeavors to restore and collect symbols of the past in the present for the future. Connected to the founding of archives and museums as institutions dedicated to re/storing and cherishing tangible and intangible fragments of the past (e.g., in the form of heritage and folklore), this phenomenon inherently also connected to nation-building projects. Notably, it also developed into an interdisciplinary interest in the links between culture and memory at the turn and beginning of the twentieth century. These scholarly interests manifested in the works of Maurice Halbwachs and Henri Bergson among others, before temporarily declining after WWII (Olick and Robbins 1998, 106–107; Erll 2008b, 7–9).

After a decades-long lull, a "new" memory studies emerged in the 1980s as a multidisciplinary research field focusing on social and cultural remembrance and the role of the past in the present. Connected to a rise of interest in the consequences of WWII and especially the Holocaust, which was readily evident from art and (popular) culture to institutional policies and politics, the field of memory studies started to expand robustly (e.g., Huyssen 2000, 22–23; Erll 2008b, 9). In Western Europe, for example, the Holocaust became "a foundation myth of the European Union" (Assmann 2013, 27–29) that manifested the success narrative of Europe as a unified community committed to dealing with its totalitarian, divided, and violent past(s). However, the disintegration of the Soviet Union made visible the role of memory in culture and politics in Europe in a new way. The significant geopolitical rupture generated a need

to critically re-evaluate abruptly outdated official histories and memories and to create space for both new and previously silenced interpretations of the communist past, particularly in many Eastern European countries that were (re)gaining their independence and forming new global connections. These societal and political circumstances fostered fertile grounds for the academic study of memory (see, e.g., Kõresaar, Lauk, and Kuutma 2009).

As memory studies has evolved and expanded, the field has increasingly come under criticism for its naturalization of Western European interpretations of the European past and for its strong preoccupation with the Holocaust. This connects to a broader critique on European politics of memory and the policies reflecting them. The critique has targeted both the unbalanced recognition of different memories, namely the memory of the Holocaust in contrast to the memory of communism, and on the too narrow or culturally biased frames through which memory cultures or acts of remembrance are interpreted (e.g., Assmann 2013; see also Mälksöö 2009, 2014). European institutions' memory policies have also been criticized as reflecting an uncritical, biased, and righteous Western European ethos (e.g., De Cesari 2017). According to Máté Zombory (2017, 1028–1029), in many studies of European memories and memory politics, this critique has led to the (rather uncritical) promotion of the narrative of two separate yet equal memories – the western memory of the Holocaust and the eastern memory of communism. Zombory (2017) also argues that rather than recognition of historical experiences of communism per se, this institutionalized European memory of communism reflects the post-Cold War transnational political context, mimics the memory of the Holocaust and the related (western) European values and norms, and produces a problematic competition of victimhood (see also Hirsch on connective memories/histories). These discussions reflect a much broader scholarly interest in memory in Eastern Europe and Russia as well as remembrance of the communist past during the past decade (e.g., Blacker, Etkind, and Fedor 2013; Pakier and Wawrzyniak 2015; Sindbæk Andersen and Törnquist-Plewa 2016; Fedor, Kangaspuro, Lassila, and Zhurzhenko 2017; Miklóssy and Kangaspuro 2021; Koleva 2022; Mitroiu 2022; McGlynn and Jones 2022).

Furthermore, over the last two decades, the critique of methodological nationalism and the related development of methodological tools for the analysis of social and collective remembrance beyond national frames has come to characterize the field of memory studies. In response, the field has now evolved to focus on transnational and transcultural memories as inherently mobile and to approach memory as a process between several national or other kinds of frameworks (see, e.g., Crownshaw 2011; Erll 2011b; Bond and Rapson 2014; De Cesari and Rigney 2014; Erll and Rigney 2018; also Lewis, Olick, Wawrzyniak, and Pakier 2022). Moreover, it has become common to view memories not as taking space from one another but rather as multidirectional. As Michael Rothberg's (2009) notion of multidirectional memory suggests, memory related to a certain history (e.g., the Holocaust) has evolved in tandem with other processes of dealing with the past (e.g., decolonization),

all feeding into each other and creating space also for new memories. In the present collection, memories of Soviet repression and displacement are, likewise, analyzed in relation to remembrances of other pasts and their analytical treatments are contextualized as part of a broader contemporary interest in and theories of memory.

Mobile Materializations of Memories

Memories related to the Soviet Union and communist repression underscore the essential need for a transnational analytical lens. Certainly, as a context, the Soviet Union presents a complex constellation of ethnic, cultural, national, transnational, multinational, and international constructs, which have also guided the violent policies of the regime, specifically during Stalin's rule. As Blacker and Etkind (2013, 2–3) have noted, the preservation of the memory of the victims of the Soviet regime has been a distinctively international endeavor from the beginning. Before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, activists, academics, artists, and politicians in the US and Western Europe, together with writers and dissidents on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain, were responsible for the commemoration of the victims of communism collaboratively (see also Toker 2000). As an example of modern cosmopolitan memory (Levy and Sznaider 2002), memories were mediated and preserved transnationally as testimonies, letters, memoirs, writings, and art were transported and smuggled from the Soviet Union to the West.

The first section of this book focuses on the spatial and temporal travel of testimonial objects, namely letters and photographs. The three chapters of this section explore how representations of experiences produce remembrance when they travel to other locations and are re-interpreted and re-used at different times. Hannah Parker's and Gintarė Venzlauskaitė's chapters focus on letters. Hannah Parker analyzes citizen letters written by women and sent to central Soviet leaders between 1936 and 1940. By treating letters as multiply mobile social and emotional agents, Parker explores the letters as media for women to ask for material help, to articulate appropriate feelings, to materialize their personal memories, and to reflect their identities and relationships with the Soviet power. Though serving a very immediate need for the writers, these letters have taken on new transnational lives – and thereby meanings – as they offer critical documentation of women's strategies and positions in different parts of the Soviet Union, particularly during the height of the Stalinist Great Terror. As such, the material forms of the letters have become mobile micro-monuments to the history of Soviet repression.

Gintarė Venzlauskaitė's chapter examines correspondence and parcel sending between Lithuanians in the Soviet Union and North America. The chapter discusses the rules and regulations related to sending and receiving parcels in the Soviet Union and the economy that emerged around it in the West, but also explores how correspondence enabled the articulation of the stories and experiences of Lithuanians living in the controlled public space

of the Soviet Union, as viewed from the perspective of the North American diaspora. Letter sending from the Soviet Union to the West enabled expression of silenced experiences and stories of individuals and helped foster the development of Lithuanian North American organizational life and identity. Additionally, it also facilitated further interpretations of Lithuanian history and cultural memory in new media (e.g. scholarly and popular literature). Parcel sending, in turn, functioned as an important tool for offering and receiving material support and as a method of maintaining connections. However, the chapter demonstrates the mixed feelings of discomfort and gratitude surrounding the practice. Parcels underlined the disconnection between relatives and friends living on both sides of the Iron Curtain, caused by growing economic inequality and contrasting societal environments, and served as materializations of power imbalances and differing lived experiences.

Blacker and Etkind (2013, 2–3) note that while testimonials that traveled from the Soviet Union to the West offered material for scholarship on totalitarianism and produced mourning in the West, on the other side of the Iron Curtain, public memory of oppression and violence was non-existent or highly controlled until the late 1980s. However, the lack of public representations or remembrance does not correspond with their absence altogether – the concept of "kitchen-table talk" in the Soviet context being the obvious example of this. Still, as Catherine Merridale's (2000) research shows, controlled public space in the Soviet Union had a pivotal effect on how individuals and families were able and willing to mourn their loved ones and which experiences and events became commemorated in society and how. Nanci Adler (2002, 2012a) has illustrated the multiple ways in which the survivors of repression have themselves made sense of their past experiences. Moreover, Adler's works depict the versatile ways in which issues related to survivors have been treated in the Soviet Union and specifically in Russia at different times.

In the multilayered context of Soviet repression, it most often took decades for the silences surrounding these experiences and traumas to begin to be unpacked. The public atmosphere regarding remembrance of repression also fluctuated in the Soviet Union, through relatively more permissive and open phases and more restrictive periods (see, e.g., Etkind 2013). Formal rehabilitation of wrongfully and unlawfully repressed and displaced people began only in a trickle in 1956 following Stalin's death and Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," which condemned the actions of Stalin and his inner circle during the purges of the 1930s. Under Leonid Brezhnev, however, the space for addressing the profound harm caused by decades of terror, violence, and displacement was again restricted. As the foundations of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) began to crumble in the late 1980s, Mikhail Gorbachev opened the door for new explorations of Soviet repression and its legacies.

Nanci Adler (2012b) has noted that at least two competing narratives of the repression have existed also in post-Soviet Russia: one focusing on the survivors' and victims' experiences and the other firmly focused on ensuring

the state's survival by downplaying victims' perspectives and efforts to gain recognition. While the first narrative also had influential promotors such as the non-governmental organization (NGO) Memorial (see also Adler 1993), the second has been and is still promoted by the state with known consequences. Memorial, for example, was shut down in 2021 and opportunities to publicly remember victims of repressions in Russia have become (again) even more restricted (see, e.g., Adler and Weiss-Wendt 2021). Instead, public memory in Russia is very much centered on the memory of the so-called Great Patriotic War (see, e.g., Malinova 2017; Petrov 2021). The highly controlled public space of memory in Russia reflects the meager possibilities of civil society to operate more generally.

Eventually, as Merridale (2000) suggests, the absence of public interpretive frames in the form of narratives, concepts, and rituals related to Soviet repression affect the conditions of memorability (on memorability, see, e.g., Rigney 2016; Savolainen 2021) of these pasts and experiences. Indeed, Alexander Etkind (2013) has argued that even though the Soviet Union and now the Russian Federation have not sufficiently promoted public remembrance, or reconciled with its violent past, it does not mean that this has not been happening. Rather, these conditions have produced cultures for "warped mourning" of the "undead" and "unburied," where difficult pasts continuously return in different forms, "haunting" society.

Theorists of social and cultural memory have emphasized that forgetting or silence should not be treated uncritically as negative or uniform phenomena, or as something opposite to remembrance, but rather as another side of remembrance that is always a highly selective process (e.g. Connerton 2008; Winter 2010; Beiner 2018; Saramo 2022). As it is impossible to record everything, remembrance always comes with forgetting. Exploring the preconditions of memorability has the potential to open interesting vistas to the cultural dynamics of valuation, visibility, grievability, and ultimately, power (Rigney 2021; see also Butler 2009; Stoler 2016). The chapter by Ulla Savolainen focuses on exploring conditions of memorability on multiple scales by analyzing the mnemonic affordances of family photographs. By applying assemblage theoretical thinking to the analysis of a traveling family album of the Ingrian Finnish writer Ella Ojala, the chapter explores the photographs' affordances in generating, firstly, memory of dispersed family; secondly, Ojala's personal life story; and thirdly, acknowledgment of the history of the group known as Ingrian Finns in Finland more generally. As memorability is inherently connected to the conditions that allow histories and experiences to be articulated and shared, it also connects to issues of acknowledgment and justice.

In addition to exploring spatial and temporal shifts of memories and experiences as concrete and material transitions of letters, material objects, and stories, the book examines the movement of memories as processes of textual circulation and mediation, through which memories become materialized and then further re-materialized. Although memory exists only

through mediation and remediation, memories can also materialize through stable and long lasting memorial forms and attach to certain locations, objects, and bodies. Indeed, mnemonic sites and memorial forms are different in terms of their mediating capacities. While a historical event (such as the Holocaust, for example) can operate as a mnemonic site that generates multiple decentralized articulations, a certain historical location, space, or a monument can function as a mnemonic site that attracts multiple and sometimes conflicting interpretations of the past and thus operates as a centralized platform for them.

The second section of this collection focuses on materialization of memories in specific mnemonic sites and through versatile mnemonic practices. Anastasia V. Mitrofanova's and Svetlana V. Riazanova's chapter focuses on the museum of the history of political repression Perm-36, located at the former detention facility site in Perm, Russia. The chapter discusses how the museum has moved through different phases and narratives guided by versatile and sometimes conflicting ideals, ideologies, politics, and restrictions related to history and memory representation (see also Barnes 2021). Moreover, it explores the polyphonic and conflicting interpretations of the history of the site by analyzing interviews conducted among former political detainees, the facility's former staff, and local residents. The authors suggest that rather than striving for the representation of a singular narrative, a non-narrative museum exhibition including polyphonic interpretations could offer a more productive mnemonic space with reparative and productive potential.

Often public sites materializing memory, such as museums, memorials, and monuments, have been analyzed from the perspective of collective memory construction and how they can provide individuals with a platform for remembrance. The second chapter of the second section of this book by Ene Kõresaar and Terje Anepaio approaches public memorial initiative from another perspective. By combining economic, biographical, performative, and narrative approaches, the chapter turns the focus on the role of the individual in generating commemoration through memory labor. Kõresaar and Anepaio discuss the commemoration of Stalinist repression in Estonia by analyzing the activities of the NGO Broken Cornflower and its founder Enno Uibo, who is a 1.5-generation survivor of the mass deportation of 1949. Through an exploration of the influence of material and symbolic resources as well as individual creativity in producing affordances for commemoration, the authors suggest that, in addition to the intimate capital of an individual decision maker, successful commemorative activities rely on the creative capitalization of the existing mnemonic resources of the national textual community. The chapter offers important insights into economic and biographical circumstances affecting memorability.

The final chapter of the second section of the book by Elena Liber presents three stories that focus on materialization of the memory of hunger and bread in the city of L'viv, Ukraine. On the basis of fieldwork undertaken between 2016 and 2018, Liber firstly analyzes how young people living in present-day

L'viv fast and cause hunger to themselves to commemorate the *Holodomor*, the man-made famine that took the lives of millions of people in Ukraine in 1932–1933 under Stalin's watch. Secondly, the chapter explores the practices of an elderly man related to collecting and storing bread that draw from memories of hunger from the past but are at the same time strongly future oriented. Thirdly, Liber discusses a small rosary crafted in a Soviet prison from small pieces of bread deposited in a museum as a material witness of the symbolic value of bread for survival and resistance. Through these vignettes, the chapter illustrates the rich and versatile meanings connected to bread in Ukraine, diverse contemporary commemoration practices, and the legacies of Stalinist violence and suffering.

Transgenerational Implications of Suffering

Repression and displacement always cause multifaceted ruptures of people's and communities' senses of security, belonging, and identification. Moreover, violent and traumatic dispersals of communities and families have always had an effect on memory transmission. Dominick La Capra (2001, 161–162) has written about the significance of "founding traumas" in the forging of community identity. The resulting history of violence launched by a distant and often "foreign" seeming Soviet center motivated strong ethnocultural identification and nationalist movements, which ultimately led to independence in many cases, such as Estonia, Lithuania, and Ukraine, among others. Yet, state violence also fostered a much broader community, united by their experiences of repression and displacement. On both the national and pan-Soviet level, the telling of stories – autobiographical and fictional writing and other creative media, family history narratives, and collective commemoration – supports a vast community connected through their entanglements in the Soviet legacy, both in the past and now. Such storytelling, furthermore, has emerged as a key tool of "working through" and "making sense" of the trauma that has made its (ongoing) mark on generations and across transnational spaces (see also La Capra 2001, 22; Etkind 2013, 87). The chapters of this collection bring us into close contact with different strategies for making sense of the histories, meanings, and memories of Stalinist violence.

The third section of the book focuses on exploring the consequences of displacement and repression from the perspectives of belonging and family memory. Nerija Putinaitė's chapter analyzes memoirs and life stories of people who experienced deportations from Soviet Lithuania to remote places of the Soviet Union, far away from their homes. Although the deportations took place between 1940 and 1953, these memoirs were published, and some also written, at the end of the Soviet era and the beginning of the era of newly independent Lithuania. Eventually, these memoirs and life stories also formed the basis for a collective national narrative of independent Lithuania. By reading the life stories through the trope of "homeland," Putinaitė explains

how it provided the writers with means to both express and interpret their experiences of deportation related to extreme suffering and death, and to reflect on their experiences of rejection and discrimination after their return to Lithuania. Although for the writers the symbol of homeland operated as a tool for coping with experiences of suffering and creating a sense of belonging in spite of many obstacles, the former deportees' experiences were marginalized as the collective political narrative of the suffering Lithuanian nation took its form.

Many of the chapters in this collection are linked through their use of the concept of *postmemory* to demonstrate the ways memories of displacement and Soviet repression move between family members and generations, and to reflect on how experiences of the generation displaced and repressed go on to mark the lives and identities of their children and subsequent generations. Postmemory, as conceived of by Marianne Hirsch (1997), has become an extremely popular and poignant theoretical concept to reflect the intergenerational transmission of traumatic memories. Originally, postmemory was developed to conceptualize the transmission of Holocaust survivors' memories and traumas to the next generation and the new articulations that these memories and traumas acquire through this transition. Since its original coinage, however, it has been extended well beyond memories of the Holocaust. As the next generation does not have personal recollections of the events that their parents have experienced and witnessed in the past, postmemory requires different forms – art or literature, for example – in order to become communicated and reflected. Although making a distinction between memories and postmemories might lead to treating personal memories of the first generation as unmediated (and as such somehow more "real") and memories of the second generation as more mediated (and as such less "real"), the concept of postmemory instead enables recognition of the essential difference between them without creating comparison with valuation. Thus, postmemory is essentially also an ethical notion that recognizes the distinct authenticities of memories of different generations. Moreover, it highlights that even though memories of different generations are not similar, they are intimately connected.

The chapter by Marja Sorvari investigates the movement of traumatic family histories, lived experiences of the Soviet past, as well as postmemories across spatial, linguistic, and cultural borders. The chapter analyzes literary works by two bilingual authors Katharina Martin-Virolainen (*Im letzten Atemzug: Erzählungen* "In the Last Breath: Stories," 2019) and Anna Soudakova (*Mitä männyt näkevät* "What the Pines See," 2020). Both writers were born in the Soviet Union but currently live outside Russia. Martin-Virolainen's autobiographical short stories deal with the experiences (both personal and family members') and life of Russlanddeutsche in the Soviet Union and in Germany. Soudakova's work builds around the life story of the author's grandfather, whose parents were murdered in the Soviet Union in 1936–1937, when he was five years old. Sorvari's chapter illustrates that

in addition to being markers of the authors' linguistic and cultural identities, the multilingual practices in the analyzed works highlight the multiple languages, places, and identities linked to their and their families' traumatic pasts, which they still carry with them. Moreover, Sorvari suggests that the personalized narrative perspective exemplified in the analyzed works reflects a more common feature of post-Soviet literary works dealing with memory that manifests a shift from monumentalizing historical narratives to minorities' and individuals' perspectives on the past.

Anna Helle's chapter explores intergenerational transmission of family memories and the issue of transnational identities and belonging through analysis of novels by Juhani Konkka (*Kahden maailman rajalla* "On the Border of Two Worlds," 1939 and *Pietarin valot* "The Lights of St. Petersburg," 1938) and Anita Konkka (*Musta passi* "The Black Passport," 2001). Juhani and Anita Konkka are a father and a daughter with Ingrian Finnish backgrounds, and they both have written about Soviet terror and its consequences on their family in their literary works – Juhani Konkka based on his personal memories and Anita Konkka by creatively reflecting her father's and uncle's experiences and accounts. By analyzing the Konkkas' works as an exceptional case study that reflects intergenerational literary remembrance of Soviet terror and the history of Ingrian Finns, the chapter opens a micro-perspective on the ramifications of political repression and displacement on the lives and identities of the members of one family.

The chapters of the final section of the collection attend to the implications of suffering from the perspective of critical analysis of literary articulations of Soviet repression and its afterlives. The chapters discuss suffering as a complex phenomenon that emerges from the traumatic experiences of violence and oppression as well as from the complicated webs of complicity and implication that characterize not only the remembered pasts and their legacies but also our contemporary societies (on the concept of implication, see Rothberg 2019). As Juliane Prade-Weiss, the author of the first chapter of this section, notes, contemporary literatures from Central and Eastern Europe are characterized by the tendency to deal with the issue of involvement in violence and totalitarianisms in the past. Prade-Weiss suggests that these testimonies formulate remembrance as investigation of convergences between the complicity in violences in the past and involvements in multiple injustices related to neoliberalism in the present.

Against this background, the chapter focuses on reading Памяти памяти (*In Memory of Memory*, 2021), an essayistic novel by Maria Stepanova, which discusses the problematics related to the construction of the familial memory of the author's relatives who belonged to a Jewish Russian community with a repressed memory of both Nazi and Soviet violence. According to Prade-Weiss, by discussing theoretical concepts of memory studies (e.g. postmemory), Stepanova's novel critically evaluates the western biases in memory studies – especially the (transgenerational) trauma paradigm. Moreover, the chapter

suggests that this reflects a more general Eastern European condition in which experiences of political repression and violence do not stay confined to the past nor are they merely mediated transgenerationally to the present. Rather, they exist in the form of a "traumatic enfilade" by reaching multitemporally through generations and eras all the way to the commemorator's present in the form of both victimization and complicity.

The penultimate chapter by Iryna Tarku also explores the problematic issues related to the remediation and transmission of repressed memories of Soviet terror. It analyzes the novel *Mondegreen* (2019) by Volodymyr Rafeyenko that belongs to the canon of contemporary prose dealing with the Donbas War in Eastern Ukraine that began in 2014 and preceded Russia's broad invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. By drawing on theoretical discussions from memory, trauma, and resilience studies, Tarku explores the storytelling process in the context of *Mondegreen* as an effort to construct a coherent perspective through piecing together scattered fragments. The chapter treats the novel's supernatural motifs as a poetic means that enables the creation and exploration of parallels between experiences, narratives, and histories of Soviet terror in the past and those connected to the violence in the present. Rather than merely pointing to the process of transmission of trauma, Tarku's analysis foregrounds literature's potential to operate as "a productive counter-space" (218) for the creation of alternative realities and connections. As such, it can function as a reparative means for overcoming trauma and promote resilience and understanding between humans.

The collection's closing chapter by Simona Mitroiu and Roxana Patraş focuses on four literary works, both autobiographical and fictional, by authors from Romania and the Republic of Moldova, that open multilayered perspectives on experiences of repression and Gulag survival. The chapter analyzes *Twenty Years in Siberia* (1991) by Aniţa Nandriş-Cudla, *And in the Morning the Russians Will Come* (2015) by Iulian Ciocan, *Atemschaukel* (2009; *The Hunger Angel*, 2012) by Herta Müller, and *The End of the Road* (2018) by Liliana Corobca. Mitroiu and Patraş note that regardless of the works' nature as referential to factual/experienced events or being straightforwardly fictional, memories of the Gulag are "neither unidirectional nor easily discernible" (233). By especially applying and reflecting the theoretical concepts of multidirectional memory (Rothberg 2009), the chapter illustrates how different strategies of representation can be put into dialogue to challenge dominant interpretations, memories, and ethical assumptions and subject them to further negotiation, thus underlining the reconstructive potential of literary works and critical readings to (re)work the past in a dialogical way. The chapters together highlight the many ways that the borders between the scales of the institutional and the vernacular/everyday, public and private, as well as shared and personal are always permeable and interactional.

Conclusion

As the twelve contributions of this collection make clear, the legacies of Soviet repression, colonialism, and forced mobility live on today. Over the course of preparing this collection, we began to be further confronted with these histories in new and immediate ways. As we witness and live with the current violent Russian occupation of Ukraine and the dangerous rhetoric of the leadership of the Russian Federation, the experiences of Soviet repression and the struggle of republics to (re)gain their independence just some thirty years ago feel tangibly close. The memories and repercussions of displacement are front of mind as we recognize that from the beginning of the occupation in late February 2022 to the end of August 2022, approximately 14 million Ukrainians had fled their homes (UNHCR 2022). Additionally, and in violation of the laws of war, an estimated 900,000 to 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens have been forcefully relocated into Russia by Russian authorities (Human Rights Watch 2022; U.S. Department of State 2022). In contrast to the ways former Soviet states and survivors of Stalinist repression were left alone to work through the consequences of displacement and the meanings and burdens of their experiences, the global attention and empathy to the current occupation offers hope that Ukraine and Ukrainians will not be left to bear the material, physical, and psychological damages alone.

Just as with the current Russian war on Ukraine in contrast with the Soviet past, the specific contexts of the different ethnic and national cases analyzed by the chapters of the collection are by no means identical. However, we argue that there is productive power to bridging them in order to explore the connections, overlaps, and intersections of how Soviet repression and forced migration has and continues to mark and shape memory, identity, and history. By favoring a connective approach over comparative, we find the potential to promote repair and justice in the future (see Hirsch 2012, 206).

The case studies in this collection focus on the personal and collective representations, experiences, and practices of remembrance of Stalinist repression and displacement, as they are mediated through memoirs, fiction, interviews, and versatile commemorative practices. By grounding different geographical and cultural contexts within broader memory discourses, the chapters of this book offer rich and multilayered takes on the ramifications of communist repression. The collection demonstrates that these multiply moving – as in mobile, fluid, and emotive – memories not only reflect Eastern European or even European memory culture but also reach far beyond. The significance of these histories and memories is transnational and transgenerational. As such, this work is essential and timely.

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