Assembly of Sleepless Matter

On traces of Jewish and transit migrant Cemeteries in Greece.

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The work presented in this thesis is the candidate's own.

many thanks to

the spirits and creatures who have left me on this journey,
and to all those I have left behind.
Thanks to the ghosts that continue their passages - all those who have accompanied me and all those tender forces and spirits that continue to journey with me.

Abstract

My practice-based research, *Assembly of Sleepless Matter*, investigates minoritarian memory, rebellious mourning and death at the border in post-austerity Greece. The project starts from the vanished Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki and the recent 'refugee cemetery' in Lesvos, both contested sites that point to reminiscences of traumatic traces and produce spatial-auto-temporalities (Parr, 2008) of nomadic matter through city and landscapes. It is developed through a video essay (Thessaloniki) and essayistic text (Lesvos) based on research interviews and fieldwork around the two contested cemeteries. This results in resonances that relate traumatic histories to each other, thus creating a sensitivity for different (transgenerational) affects that make critical memory work possible. The border, difference and racialisation are inevitable aspects of migration and diaspora history that persist in their singular memory despite attempts at 'purification' and 'civilising' (Hamilakis and Greenberg, 2022; Goldberg, 2009) within official commemoration. Fragmented gravestones and neglected cultural material of the dead become legacies of racial violence and 'bad debt' (Harney and Moten, 2010) that circulate through the soil and oral histories of local agents. My research, situated at the intersection of multidirectional memory studies (Rothberg, 2009), philosophy, and cultural studies, illuminates the pressing question of responsibility between the dead and the living. It traces a complex interaction between cartographies, sites, cultural matter, and affect. I investigate cemeteries as cartographies and burial grounds as sites to challenge neoliberal abandonment, 'implicatedness' and places of transcultural (co-) figurations. I rethink by questioning necropolitical theoretical fields (Mbembe, 2003, 2018, 2019) with materialist philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1987, 1992, and 2009): How does port-austerity shape transcultural memory activism? What affects are produced by the violation of the dead and their resting places? And how do 'ambiguous loss' (Boss, 1999) and 'ungrievabilty' (Butler, 2009) shape the need to re-think ethical imbrications?

CONTENTS

List of Figures

CHAPTER ONE

18. Post-war Member ID of Jewish Community Munich, and an identity card ‘recognition as a persecuted person’ by the state compensation office in Bavaria in the 1950s. Source: My family archive.
19. Student Protest for a Memory Park at Eleftherias Square and Poster of March of Remembrance and March of the Living Thessaloniki, Video stills from *Outtakes 1*, produced in the realm of the exhibition; *we can never fly first class*, Munich City Museum, Gallery Einwand, 2023.
20. Vardaris District. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
21. *Souvenir*, Superimposition. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021. Source: Courtesy Archive of Thessaloniki History Centre.
22. Solomon Parente on the left with my grandfather and my father on the right in the 1960s in front of the tailor shop and family house in Vardaris. Video still from *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.
23. Markos Parente in front of his tailor shop and family house in Vardaris, 2011. Video still from *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.
24. Last Jewish family house in the Vardaris district of the Parente’s, 2011. Video still from *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.
25. Vardaris, house demolition 2015 to broaden the street for a parking lot. Video stills from *Outtakes 2*, produced in the realm of the exhibition: *we can never fly first class*, Munich City Museum, Gallery Einwand, 2023.
26. Walk through Vardaris to the parking lot where the house was demolished. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
27. Mourning ceremony on the site of the faculty of philosophy. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
28. Max Merten on trial in 1959. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
29. Student protest on Eganatia Street at the centre of Thessaloniki. The video footage was kindly contributed by the journalists Litsardakis and Avramidis. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
30. The Burial of the photograph of my grand uncle behind the monument of the cemetery on the Aristotle University campus. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
31. Police evict the student protest on the Aristotle University campus. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021. Journalist Litsardakis kindly contributed the footage.
32. Thessaloniki after the Liberation. Photograph taken by *ELAS* Source: Courtesy of The Museum of Photography (PHMK).
33. Exhibition view, *we can never fly first class*, Gallery Einwand, Munich City Museum, 2023.
34. My grandfather, during post-war times, exhibition view, *we can never fly first class,* Gallery Einwand, Munich City Museum, 2023.

CHAPTER TWO

35. Lesvos, Mytilene, 2016. Source: My archive.
36. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.
37. The ICRC worked together with local authorities to tend to 85 graves of unidentified deceased migrants. Lesvos, Mytilene, Aghios Panteleimonas cemetery. Source: Photothèque CICR. Source: Courtesy of ICRC Audiovisual archives.
38. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.
39. Lesvos, Mytilene, 2022 and 2021. Source: My archive.
40. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2013. Source: Courtesy of Photo archive by M.S.
41. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.
42. Fading plaque of unidentified person. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.
43. 'Unknown' contains no further information about the unidentified person. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.
44. 'Unknown' with date of death and reference number. Video still, Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.
45. Handwritten in Arabic, the plaques are fading and do not include the date of death. Video still, Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Source: My video archive.
46. Container to wash the dead. Kato Tritos cemetery, 2022. Video still. Source: My video archive.
47. My first visit with M.S., Kato Tritos cemetery, 2021. Video stills. Source: My video archive.
48. Two dead were found near the coast of Plomari. Kato Tritos cemetery, 2022. Video stills. Source: My video archive.
49. Village View, July 2022. Source: My archive
50. Orthodox Church, Kato Tritos. Source: My archive
51. A Demonstration organised by the *No Border* Camp Thessaloniki, 2016. Video still, Source: My archive.
52. A burned-out excavator (German brand Liebherr) after a controversial protest against constructing the new hot spot camp Vastria, Mytilene 2021. Source: My archive.

Introduction

For the recognition of the dead, a place should be reserved for them and the living. Otherwise, the living will remain sleepless together with the dead. But what happens when the dead have no place reserved for them anywhere, and their bodies become anonymous or lost? Are the ghosts of the dead and the living cursed by insomnia and doomed to be haunted?

My analysis and practice-based research address spatial and temporal shifts in precarious times of minoritarian memory, 'ungrievability' (Butler, 2009) and border violence. I focus on two contested topographies, the vanished Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki and the recent so-called 'refugee cemetery' in Lesvos; both sites unfold insights about the vulnerable relation between the dead and the living.

Through a journey through Greek crypto-colonial history and gathering recorded interviews of local actors, the micro-histories of social historicity unfold, making the agency of the lived worlds of experience around these violated places tangible. Their narratives, together with the affects of the conversations, become testimonies that generate manifold '(auto-) temporalities' (Parr, 2008). The stories recall animated wounds in relation to the generated traumatic traces and, thus, 'singular memory' (Parr, 2008) along the routes of the racialised dead and their legacies.

The question of opaque policies and the abuse of power by the government (and European central powers) from the founding of the nation-state until today's ruins of neoliberal post-austerity run through my research, making it clear who is 'grievable' and who is not. In this context, I explore the question of responsibility, grey zones of 'implicatedness' (Rothberg, 2019) and traumatic 'ambiguous loss' (Boss, 1999) as challenges for struggles for rebellious mourning within memory activism from below.

In the video essay *Precarious Twilight Zones*, submitted as the practice-based component of the dissertation, I approach paradigmatic sites that tell the story of the obliteration and absence of Jewish history in Thessaloniki. The work makes visible both analogies and ruptures of the nationalist and modernist project of Hellenisation, which today is articulated through neoliberal abandonment that continues to "keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage" (Benjamin, 1940, edited by Howard E. and Jennings M. W., 2003: p. 392). The camera follows a young student from Aristotle University, built on the former Jewish cemetery. She uses her body to scan the urban space through a web of connections, encircling the scattered fragments and rearticulating violent events of the past through material traces in the present. During her dreamlike walk during twilight, she discovers hidden messages and activates sedimentary remnants with texts and archival findings. The film maps six topographies of vulnerable surfaces, embracing layered temporalities and transitional zones, in which the hyperreality of each scene appears permeated by affects between body (mnemonic) and

places (spatiality). The composition of papers and stones in interaction with the passing of the performer animate gestures as poetic tools and intervention in the cityscape during the Pandemic and Student protests.[1]

These former and current cemeteries are associated with discomfort because they are resting places that challenge normative identity and remembrance within official historiography. The violation of these sites has far-reaching cross-generational effects on descendants and simultaneously on local societies (Preitler, 2015). Reminiscences on and across these sites form complex assemblages. Simultaneously, the dead are carriers of 'auto-temporalities', while their 'singular memories' (Parr, 2008) in difference-making permeate the modernised and ideologically 'purified' (Hamilakis and Greenberg, 2021) spatio-temporal stratification.

One can see the matter migrating. Penetrating and circulating through the cityscapes and soil, resonating and morphing with manifold molecules. Many Jewish tombstones and plaques from deceased transmigrants can move freely without official control; they are not fixed or fenced in. Their partial inscriptions are multilingual or titled as 'unknown', while these traces become minor monuments as nomadic agencies and carriers of 'bad debt' (Harney and Moten, 2010). By challenging European 'racelessness' (Goldberg, 2009) after the Holocaust, these remains depicted as 'oriental' and 'foreign' don't pay and are not credible according to cultural-national values, such as surplus-generating apparatuses of archaeology or commodified memory.

Slow violence through the logic of credit and debt-imposed Austerity measures by European policymakers led to the pauperisation of a large majority of the society in contemporary Greece. It simultaneously acts against dignified existence for (non-) humans, matter, and landscapes (Alliez and Lazzarato, 2018). Since 2008, these policies led to extreme precarisation (i.e. living under vulnerable social-political conditions) through all areas of life, foremost the humanitarian government of 'refugees' trapped within the border violence in combination with the vast privatisation and ecological destruction of the commons. Transit migrants and minorities are those who are most affected by neoliberal abandonment. Hitherto, the precarisation through areas of death and collective memory in relation to cemeteries has not been investigated.

Against the framework that understands collective and public memory as competitive memory, Michael Rothberg interconnects in his book *Multidirectional Memory* holocaust studies with postcolonial history. Thereby, he examines the relationship between different social groups in histories of victimisation and questions a straight coherence from memory to identity. The suggestion

[1] Panourgiá, N. (2010) 'Stones (papers, humans)', Journal of Modern Greek Studies, 28 (2), pp. 199–224, Available at: DOI:10.1353/mgs.2010.0423

is that one history not necessarily erase the other and "to consider memory as *multidirectional*: as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative" (Rothberg, 2009, p. 3) Thus, thinking of collective memory and group identity beyond the notion of identities and memories that are pure and authentic, differentiating between 'we' and 'you', bears the potential to create new forms of solidarity and visions of justice.

Along the lines of Rothberg's concept, my thesis addresses multi-layered temporalities in Greece, decisively from the construction of modernity in Southeast Europe until the present outskirts of the European borders. My multidirectional enquiry is not exclusively about two past moments but about the ongoing racialised violence that permeates the resting places of the dead. What 'affect economies' emerge in these places where the violation of the dead and their resting places has become part of everyday precarious life? What mnemonic resonances emerge in the collective and singular involvement concerning the immediate surroundings of these former and current burial grounds in confronting what remains, escapes or is made to disappear? How does post-austerity shape transcultural memory activism, including the need to challenge and re-think the ethical imbrications of the generated 'ambiguous loss' (Boss, 1999) and 'ungrievabilty' (Butler, 2009)? My practice-based work is, therefore, to be understood as an intervention of care and memory from below deriving from the force of microhistories applied to artistic research and practice that brings into conversation these two forms of racialised neglect for the first time.

The geopolitical implication is particular since, in Greece, holocaust studies have not been deeply processed or entered into the collective consciousness as is the case in other Western countries.[2] The Greek Jewish history is still side-lined in official memory discourses. According to Henriette-Rika Benveniste the first steps of this process did only start in the 1990s in the realm of memory studies, arguing that first and foremost, Greek historiography has to dismantle powerful meta-narratives and has to "open itself to subjects other than national history, as well as to its deconstruction" (Benveniste, 2008, p. 6) and that has to include awareness of antisemitism and nationalism.

Therefore, I examine trajectories of the micropolitics of affect (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 1987; Massumi 2008, 2015) within memory activism as a socio-political practice that intervenes in power formations such as soft power, neoliberal sovereignty and bio- or 'necropolitics' (Mbembe, 2003; 2019). I practice multidirectional memory (Rothberg, 2009) in dialogue with approaches to the *Autonomy of Migration* (Mezzadra and Nielson, 2003; 2020; 2021; Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos, 2008; Tazzioli, 2021) in relation to the economy of loss and death, which represents a gap within this theoretical formation. Within this realm, my practice-driven thesis generates an audio-

[2] In fact, Greece keeps the highest score in Europe in terms of antisemitic prejudices within the population; at about 69 percent: https://global100.adl.org/country/greece/2014 (Accessed: 11 May 2022).

visual ‘interassemblage’ of the current spatial-temporal cartography of transcultural memory in Greece from the perspective of tracing violated traumatic legacies.

Trajectories and Methodology

Forgetting is part of remembering; that is to say, blind spots and gaps are embedded in memory itself. Revising past events retrospectively means that constellations of time and space become actualised in the present. The past is foremost fabricated out of the historiographies of the victorious, evoking linear narratives that represent national identity and political conformity (Benjamin, 1940, edited by Howard E. and Jennings M. W., 2003). That is why, over centuries, indigenous, minority and colonised peoples have raised their voices to narrate their unacknowledged and silenced (collective) memories that point to the gaps in dominant (colonial, imperial or national) tales within official historiography (Halbwachs, 1992; Young, 1993, Radstone and Hodgkin, 2003).

My methodological approach, involving video-based interviews, archival visits and investigations of the two cemeteries, enabled me to engage with the different scales and scapes of these imbrications. Research Interviews and archival visits form the basis for gaining insights into policies and subjective lines of references concerning these places. In contrast to findings that reproduce the information of public discourses and (trans)national institutions, I focus on tracing grey areas within the liminal spaces (threshold) to twilight (circular) temporalities. This method generates multidirectional cartography, an ‘interassemblage’ that serves as a counter map to official narratives. Across both sites of the field work, my research was based on networks that have developed over many years and consist of my reactivated family’s connections, my friendships with (transnational) activists concerning migration struggles and beyond, and my academic and artistic involvements. In many cases, I started interviews with the background of my (grandfather's) family story and the erasure of nearly all traces of Jewish history to affirm a relation to gaps in official and collective memory in Greece.[3]

Across the material I collected using this approach, cartographies, sites, cultural matters and affects emerged as four levels of analysis. I map two cemeteries that inhabit the legacies of violent events, producing audio-visual cartographies of burial grounds existing as contested sites that produce ‘ungrievability.’ Fragmented tombstones as cultural matter continue to generate anachronistic indications in the immediate vicinity. Affects of mourning oscillate between non-human matter and social bodies, which might transverse the field of grief with acts of (artistic and activist) remembrance. Prior to the speakable, these sites and the ‘ungrievable class’ affect their surroundings. Their materialities form complex temporal ‘interassemblages’ that might point to what has been side-lined, neglected, and missing within official memory. Through film practice, it becomes possible to capture

[3] Including the mutual reading of the informed consent form.

constellations of time and space that acknowledge human and non-human forces in discovering neighbouring zones that take the place of language.

Where visits to Thessaloniki generated fieldwork for my video-based submission and Chapter I, the fieldwork in Lesvos generated material for Chapter 2. During my journeys before and during the so-called summer of migration in 2015/16, local activists in Lesvos told me about the fight for the cemetery. Unlike Chapter 1, this second chapter is based on my interviews and video recordings, to be understood as preparatory work for a second audio-visual work. Here, I have assembled the multidirectional connections from the recorded and researched material through non-linear written composition. The future video on the cemetery in Lesvos will be conceptualised and coordinated in collaboration with local actors. Due to the repressive and delicate situation on the island, certain actors appear as anonymous.

Working with this material, the question arose: How can today's erasure of almost all traces of deceased transmigrants be read in the grey areas of the opaque politics of today's migration regime? What are the resonances between this and the cruelly calculated erasure experienced during the Holocaust under other historical conditions? To answer these questions, I began tracing the micro-histories between both sites through gaps in cross-generational relations.

In these two chapters, I use the format of the video essay. My approach is informed by documentary, diary forms, (auto-) biographical and interweaving references to performative elements in feminist film practice. Apart from the film *Chronicle of a Summer* (1961) by Edgar Morin and Jean Rouch (cinéma vérité), feminist experimental and avant-garde cinema has influenced me during my film studies.[4] Against the previous dominant tendency to work with the nature of the medium to employ iconographic conventions, the different waves in women's movements embraced the reclamation of the body – especially through performance and reflexive techniques that ruptured cultural codings (of women) as resistance (De Lauretis, 1984). The famous claim in the 1960s that 'the personal is political' would be developed within second-wave feminist struggles – therewith problematising the notion of the personal realm and troubling the very condition in which subjectivity and identity are constructed.[4]

The artists' inscription as authors was often combined with the performance of their bodies, highlighting their subjective position.[5] The body produces meaning regarding cultural and historical (dis-) placement and inhabits the memories of sensual lived experiences. It is in the body that

[4] Hanisch, C, (1969) The personal is political. Available at: https://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html (Accessed: 24 March 2024). Further: Lorde, A. (2018) *The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house*. London: Penguin.
[5] I have outlined this in my master's Thesis, "Autobiographical Film on Landscapes of Intimacy and the Power of Fragility" (2015), and the accompanying video series, *I don't write diaries: On Love and Crisis I* and *the Power of Fragility II* (2014-2016) in the realm of the MACBA PEI and Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

memory is activated because sensations associated with remembered events can be called up, repeated, or ruptured.

The student protagonist in my video essay *Precarious Twilight Zones* moves silently through Thessaloniki. Her body becomes a strange medium that does not leave any shadow in the cityscape. Her passage becomes a minimal performative gesture, while the video is shot entirely at twilight. The latter indicates a temporality 'entre chien et loup', i.e. 'between dog and wolf': an in-between space of visibility and invisibility made up of two kind of lights (Minh-ha, 2011, p. 74). They do not form a contrast to one another; rather, one light transforms into the other. Twilight marks a circular passage whereby something happens that is not yet known – where identities can be confused.

Here, inhabiting reflexive modes of re- and deconstruction opens up relational psychosocial landscapes of forgetting and remembering. Memory processes are non-linear and pre-verbal functions within connecting brain waves (electrical grid) and stored processually in the body and, therefore, in flux, blocked or deviated. The non-linear and non-pre-scripted offered by video montage has also been used throughout, to generate (subjective and subjectivising) spaces of memory. As a time-based medium, video practice offers the (com-) possibility of assembling overlapping temporalities and thereby creating mnemonic affective constellations. A film can become a 'sensing device' like processual remembering (and forgetting) that stimulates chains of images, sounds and (melodies of) spoken language (associations) that create (transference of) sensations.

This is in keeping with my broader artistic practice, which consists of process-based inquiry usually created over extended periods and characterised by the tension between interviews, theoretical approaches, and artistic production.

Resonant temporalities of the precarisation of death

Alongside the famous film *Night and Fog* (1956) by Alain Resnais, the nine-hour-long *Shoah* (1985) by Claude Lanzmann received leading awards worldwide and made the genocide against European Jewry by the Germans visible from a Jewish perspective. In one of Lanzmann's last interviews on his oeuvre, he points out that his film is not at all about surviving: it is about death – the radicality of death.[6] The precarisation of death in relation to the erasure of all possible traces marks an integral part of Holocaust Studies. In contrast, the erasure of current transit migrant cemeteries has not yet been investigated. Sandro Mezzadra pointed to the 'necropolitics' of the current European border regime by saying that: "As a border in motion, opened to adventures and exchanges of resources,

[6] Toute l'Histoire (2018) Claude Lanzmann, pourquoi Shoah - Toute l'Histoire. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JFBfEJrHJQ (Accessed: 12 April 2024).

the sea can be a living environment. As a space of disappearance, forced shipwreck, a barrier against the hope of a safe haven, it has become one of the visages of mass death."[7]

Borders zones nowadays are operated in manifold ways, ones which see violence become normalised worldwide. Would the precarisation of death and the production of 'ungrievability' transnationally imply what Hannah Arendt mentioned in relation to the Holocaust and the industrial fabrication of death: something happened that 'we' all cannot cope with?[8] Or, will the juridical distinction regarding the term 'genocide' – in which a particular ethnic or religious group is targeted – not be accurate when it comes to premeditated violence against migrants and refugees on Europe's borders, unlike the term 'crimes against humanity', which signifies violence that is not targeted against any specific group?[9]

My thesis bridges two case studies and attempts to draw analogies between different violent events in a multidirectional conversation with each other. Therefore, I am herewith mapping the transition from the Ottoman Empire and the making of modernity in Greece from a Jewish perspective as the point of departure, via the Holocaust in Greece and its aftermath, to the current necropolitical turn of the European borderscapes.

Besides the fact that deaths at the border and during wars and genocides, like in the Holocaust, have political, psychological, and social effects, they also have an affective – that is, micropolitical – impact both in transit zones and simultaneously far away (Kovras and Robins, 2016). This signifies that loss and grief take on transnational dimensions with related resonances.[10] With the term 'resonance', I refer to effects of oscillation: feedback and echo that materialise in subtle effects and affects transnationally, for example, in the case of the 'unattended loss' (Preitler, 2015) whereby families have no chance to bury their beloved ones since they died miles away. Preitler pointed to John Bowlby's (1980) four phases of mourning: numbing; yearning and searching, with accompanying anger and rage; disorganisation and despair, due to the unsuccessful search for the lost person or object; and, finally, reorganisation (ibid., pp. 24-25).

Nevertheless, a 'displaced' grieving process resonates not only for the families but also for collective memory in (local) societies. Social histories of affected places resonate across generations. The struggle for collective articulation and recognition concerns the affective dimension that highlights the displacement and contingencies embedded in all remembrance (Rothberg, 2009). Thus, the

[7] Mezzadra, S. Di Fazio, C., Balibar, E. (2020) 'A joint statement on sea rescue', *Open Democracy, 6 October*, Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/can-europe-make-it/joint-statement-sea-rescue/ (Accessed: 10 May 2022)
[8] Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) (1964) Hannah Arendt im Gespräch mit Günter Gaus. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J9SyTEUi6Kw (Accessed: 25 March 2024).
[9] Sands, P. (2016) *East West Street: On the Origins of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
[10] My definition of 'affect' follows Spinoza/Deleuze/Massumi. To sum up briefly: bodily capacitation, felt transition, quality of lived experience, memory, repetition, seriation, inclination.

question becomes one of the "politics and ethics of mourning: how remains are produced and animated, how they are read and sustained" (Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. ix).

Key Terms – Ungrievability, Multidirectional Memory, Necropolitics and Implication

In this dissertation, I draw key terms from the intersecting fields of memory studies and migration theories with poststructuralist, postcolonial and feminist thought. Informed by the concepts of 'ungrievability', 'multidirectional memory', 'implication' and 'necropolitcs', I'm working these with otherwise underrated micropolitical registers.

Cemeteries are considered collective sacred places and heritage because of their complex cultural, civic and religious facets over long periods. These sites inhabit the legacies of former lives, which can be regarded as sociohistorical archives. Such archives are where relatives missing their kin and community members can trace them back (Kovras and Robins, 2016). Historical, because they give information about how different communities were composed.[11] Cemeteries function as mourning spaces and are crucial in generating 'grievability' (Butler, 2009). When life is not considered 'grievable', it is not valued and regarded as such in the first place.

According to Judith Butler, 'ungrievability' concerns those not considered beings and subjects (that cannot be addressed outside analyses of power) in the first place because "lives cannot be apprehended as injured or lost if they are not first apprehended as living" (Butler, 2016, p.1). Butler theorises vulnerability and relational dependency as social conditions shared by all living beings (concerning gender, race and class). Vulnerability implies precariousness, in differentiation to the term 'precarity' as a governmental tool – which plays out, for example, as the imposition of austerity on a systemic level. That is, in being imposed and reproduced on/by society, such as the pauperisation in contemporary Greece.

One of the phenomena that characterises today's everyday shared experience is the process of precarisation that concerns the conduct of life and influences people's imaginaries and attitudes towards the future. Imagination is an important component of envisioning forms of justice, of making life 'grievable', and of inventing tools and practices to deal with neglected memory and the spatial inscription of violence. Precarity is a neoliberal form of power linked to the paradigm shift of the Fordist labour regime. It differs, as noted, from precariousness, which emphasises human and non-human life as vulnerable and fragile per se (Butler, 2004; 2009, 2016). How is this fundamental social interdependence in relation to 'grievability' – beyond the 'surplus citizen' (Kotouza, 2019) –

[11] Today, the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, for example, is still trying to reconstruct the last 500 years of life and customs in the city retrospectively. The inscriptions on gravestones would have made this much easier because they indicated a person's former profession and civil status.

ostracised and neglected by reactive modes of governmentality per the state tools used in austerity-shaken Greece today?

In his book *Multidirectional Memory*, Michael Rothberg approaches memory and trauma as a form of working through and action undertaken by multiple social actors. Thereby, he questions the notion of a straight line running from memory to (group) identity. Rothberg works along the lines of the synthesisation of concerns about history, representation, biography, memorialisation and politics: 'Memory captures simultaneously the individual, the embodied and the lived side, the collective and the socially constructed side of our relations to the past' (Rothberg, 2009, p. 4). He incorporates psychoanalytic insights, such as 'retrospective', 'anticipatory' and 'simultaneous' screen memory (Freud, 1899) – 'Deckerinnerungen' (literally, 'cover memories'). Projections can form a screen memory from repressed memories that 'the subject […] has screened out' (Rothberg, 2009, pp. 12-14). The multilayered temporal complexity of screen memory functions twofold: it acts as a barrier between the conscious and the unconscious. It also serves as a site of projection for unconscious fantasies, fears and desires. *Multidirectional Memory* tries to render visible these complex temporal relations and seeks to unfold what has been hidden and suppressed.

Beginning with the formerly destroyed Jewish and current transit migrant cemeteries, I trace the overlapping temporalities that unfold in relation to the past and present. How best to approach fractured memory and political neglect within these current circumstances – namely, in times of post-austerity, the pandemic, 'the war against migrants' and the rise of right-wing neoliberal governments in Europe? How do these cemeteries and mobile tombstones challenge local history and the official representation of shared memory in post-austerity Greece? And what falls outside the scope of representation? Further, I am interested in how the materiality of these topographies has, in its fragmented expression, created impact and meaning on the urban and rural social environment. What compositions of surfaces unfold, and can they point to what has been lost?

The reality of current border regimes shows partly how 'necropolitics' and the production of 'ungrievability' are nowadays exercised in Europe. The term 'necropolitics', coined by Achille Mbembe, derives from Michel Foucault's (1976) analysis of state racism. To this end, Foucault developed his writing on 'biopower', which looked at the domains of life over which power has asserted control – existing as constitutive elements of state power in modernity. Mbembe's 'necropolitics' (the administration of death) re-addresses this biopolitics (the governance of human lives) by asking who the subject of rights is and what implications this has for those who are put to death. Further, what is "the relation of enmity that sets such a person against his murder and do contemporary political takes primarily have the objective to murder the 'enemy' during wars, resistance and war on terror? When politics is considered as a form of war, where the place of life,

death and the (wounded) human body is contested," Mbembe asks, "how are these aspects inscribed in the order of power?" (Mbembe, 2019, p. 66).

Departing from totalitarianism (Arendt, 1966) and the 'state of exception' in relation to 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998), the two most influential works reflecting on the atrocities of the Holocaust, Mbembe views these forms of power as a central metaphor for sovereignty and the ultimate sign of absolute power of the negative (after Nazism). The designation of the Holocaust as the ultimate 'sign' of absolute power carries, however, the risk of shifting the systemic racist, murderous and suicidal state violence into a singular mode of representation. Nevertheless, a key aspect of sovereignty and biopower is the entanglement of Western modernity and dispossession as (warfare and slave) economy.[12] Therefore, multiple states of exception and siege are produced, posing questions on the relationship between politics and death in contemporary democracies based on racism and biopower.

Thus, concepts of late-modern criticism that distinguish reason from unreason (passion, fantasy) are produced with general norms by a body (demos) comprising free and equal individuals that encompass elements of modernity and ultimately reproduce the expression of sovereignty. These power structures indicate the reproduction of fictionalised enemies (internal and external), providing the enabling conditions for people being put to death. "Through biopolitical extrapolation of the theme of the political enemy, the Nazi state's organising of war against its adversaries and simultaneous exposing of its own citizens to war opened a formidable consolidation of the right to kill culminating in the 'final solution'" (Foucault, 2003, cited in Mbembe, 2019, p. 71). Foucault claims that biopower permeates all modern states while highlighting that particularly the Nazi regime operated on the one hand based on the management, protection and cultivation of life and on the other hand with simultaneously the sovereign right to kill.

This is undoubtedly an abbreviated summary when it comes to the question of the Nazi regime's grip on power because the question of the 'complicity' of, for example, the 'passive bystander' and of enablers is another wide-ranging topic concerning collective responsibility within Holocaust Studies.[13] In his recent book, Rothberg poses the question of how to understand 'implicated subjects' beyond the fixed categories of 'victims' and 'perpetrators.' Implication is not identical to complicity, it derives from 'implicare' – meaning to entangle, involve or connect closely. Complex and contradictory modes of implication thus "help propagate the legacies of historical violence and prop up the structures of inequality that mar the present; apparently direct forms of violence turn out to rely on indirection" (Rothberg, 2019, pp. 1-2). Rothberg argues that thinking about implications helps

[12] The Greek term for work is *δουλειά* (douleiá) and deviates from the ancient Greek word slave *δούλος* (doúlos). Slave in Middle English can be deduced back to Byzantine Greek *Σκλάβος* (Sklábos) and further from Medieval Latin *sclāvus* (slave) and in Late Latin *Sclāvus* (Slav), because Slavs were often forced into slavery in the Middle Ages.
[13] Arendt, H. (1987) 'Collective responsibility', in *Amor mundi: Explorations in the faith and thought of Hannah Arendt*. Dodrecht: Springer, pp. 43–50.

to dismantle how both violent histories and sociopolitical dynamics inform injustice today. My research touches upon the texture of destroyed and neglected grave sites as the nexus of racial inequalities in relation to implicated subjects. Further, Rothberg's approach offers the possibility to address blurred and subliminal phenomena within the larger framework of how power structures operate. These blurred contours happen between or simultaneous to the macropolitical events running through my research.

Mbembe's gesture is to move beyond normative readings of the politics of sovereignty within modern thought. Neoliberal democracies being viewed through a necropolitical lens evokes thinking about Europe from a postcolonial perspective, one that generates a 'constitutive reverse' – pointing to a racist ontology of Western modernity and governmentality (Mellino, no date). The relationship between biopower and the state of exception is set out by the idea that sovereignty has multiple forms and implies the "generalised instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (Mbembe, 2019, p. 68). The correlation between specific structures of modern terror (slavery being considered the first biopolitical experimentation) and territorial fragmentation is to render movement impossible. At the same time, the implementation of divide and separate – the creation of boundaries within a territory (inclusion/exclusion) –of dispersal and segmentation takes place. It creates a relationship of sovereignty and space in conjunction with manufacturing cultural imaginaries while keeping people in a 'state of injury.' Eyal Weizman has outlined this concept in 'the politics of verticality' in the case of Palestine/Israel.[14]

The notion of a state of injury might be an appropriate way to think about cruel border regimes constitutive of migrants' (porous) conditions, not as a form of death in life but rather as techniques of governmentality that keep migrants 'injured.' Martina Tazzioli points to opacities and grey areas (the temporary suspension of ordinary law and indistinctiveness between law and violence) within modes of governmentality (that include different forms of biopolitical techniques, according to Foucault). She refers to practices of 'choking' (following Frantz Fanon) without killing when it comes to the manifold forms of repression inflicted on migrants in transit zones. In her article, Tazzioli points to heterogeneous grey areas that cannot be grasped through binary oppositions – such as inclusion/exclusion or norm/exception – and concludes that such governmentality should be separated from a sovereign regime that centres on the indistinctiveness between law and violence.[15] This entails forging appropriate analytics to account for ambiguity, unpredictability and opacity in their specificity – and not as an expression of sovereignty. Grey areas consist of blurriness and are played out in-between full visibility and invisibility; they produce forms of ambiguity, uncertainty and ambivalence that remain unaddressed in Migration Studies, according to Tazzioli.

[14]Weizman, E. (2002) 'The Politics of Verticality', *Open Democracy,* 23 April, Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/article_801jsp/ (Accessed: 10 May 2022).
[15] Tazzioli M. (2021) 'Choking without killing": Opacity and the grey area of migration governmentality', Political Geography, 89, Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102412

Rothberg discusses grey areas or zones from the perspective of Holocaust studies in relation to the writer and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi. Levi's famous essay *The Gray Zone* describes the Nazi camps as a space of complicated internal structure made up of ambiguity and complexity. According to Rothberg, by following Levi, the camp is: "A space that bares affinity to the space of implication" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 37). In his essay, Levi "breaks with the simplified moralistic framework that has defined the dominant cultural memory of the Holocaust" (ibid., p. 38). Through his description of the 'Lager' that was also an 'indecipherable space', it becomes clear that conventional and strongly separated categories – such as good and evil, 'us' versus 'them' – did not apply in the concentration camp. This space is far more complicated, characterised as it was by heterogeneity.

The question is how such enclosed places are constituted in relation to power. For Levi, there are twin concerns here: the figures or subjects who inhabit this grey zone – that is, how degrees of privilege operate within the 'Lager' – and, simultaneously, the spatial dimensions of the power exercised within. This includes the economic infrastructure within and in close proximity to the camp system, like the many factories that took advantage of forced labour (Levi, 1986 in 2021, pp. 33-69). Similar to Mbembe, Rothberg asks: "To what extent does spatial configuration remain pertinent today?" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 39). He suggests that thinking about grey zones is closely aligned with the analysis of the transformation of power formulated by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze. Therefore, he points to shifts from societies of dominance and discipline based on 'spaces of enclosure' – for example, institutions (Foucault) – to the more fluid dominance of 'societies of control.' According to Deleuze, control (modulations) will continuously change and shapeshift, while enclosures (moulds) produce distinct forms of power (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 3-7).

Registers of Analysis: Affect and Micropolitics

Beyond the conceptual apparatus, the nature of working through questions of the 'ungrievable class' through interviews with the living necessitates shifts in register from the macro to the micropolitical. Interview and 'oral history' practice, for me, signify listening to how the stories are told, where melodies, tones, pauses, and flows point to 'explicit' (conscious recall of) memories and 'implicit' (subtle and liminal) memories stored in the body which expresses themselves through sensations. The act of storytelling inhabits multiple micro-layers of transference of 'explicit' and 'implicit' memories with all the in-between lines of lived (gender, class, racialised) experience that shape them. The settings within the acts of speech form part of the context of the moment of narration and include the unspoken and the preverbal while encompassing the 'here and now' of the specific location. The starting points were recording audio-visual material and conversations of situated knowledge in exchange with the dialogue partners while focussing on 'dissident' and contradictory

or between the line's articulations and their rebellious formations while tracing multidirectional connections via a chain of actors and two contested former and recent burial grounds.

As a critical reference work for questions of social change, I follow Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari from the point of view of micropolitics as potentiality to escape societal norms: "There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes binary organisations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine: things attributed to a 'change of values,' the youth, the woman, the mad, etc."(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 252). This accounts for the affective (transnational) scale of solidarities and potential social change in today's different forms of governmentality, such as memory activism and struggles for rebellious mourning. Further, my underlying question is: How do these micropolitical effects shape analogies of unacknowledged and 'ambiguous loss' (Boss, 1999) and precarious conditions of mourning today?

I discuss affective and ethical dimensions in relation to both cases. Affect theory refers back to the writings on ethics (of immanence) by the Dutch philosopher of Portuguese-Sephardi origin Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677). It is the ability to affect or be affected. The term 'affect' today belongs to the realm of micropolitics and operates bodily a priori to the subject or thing; it belongs to the field of imperceptible forces. Spinoza makes a clear distinction between what he calls 'joyful' or 'sad' passions, that increase or aid (or decrease and impede) the body's power of acting; the affect of joy is related to the mind and body he calls pleasure or cheerfulness, the affect of sadness belongs to pain or melancholy" (Spinoza, 1677 in Curley, E., M. (ed), 1985: pp. 491-542). In that sense, loss, grievability and mourning can be considered part of sad passions rather than of joyful ones. Bodies and minds for Spinoza are not substances or subjects but modes. His understanding of Life is that each individuality is not a form but rather a complex relation between differential velocities and between the deceleration and acceleration of particles (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 122-130). Relationality and one substance for all attributes (nature–body–particles), therefore, lie at the heart of his oeuvre, defining life as a common plane of immanence or consistency.

In the book *Escape Routes*, Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos extend the concept of 'the autonomy of migration' by introducing ideas on imperceptible politics and dis-identification as everyday social practices of subversion outside politics that precede and prepare "the practice of escape itself" (Papadopoulos, Stephenson, Tsianos, 2008, p. 81). Escape as a notion of social change and people's agency is the book's central argument, seeking to revise our perspective on sovereignty– the formation of power that presupposes capture and no outside of existing regulation of control. "We can understand the formation of power only from the perspective of escaping people, not the other way around" (ibid., p. 43). The authors ask how social transformation begins: which processes in everyday life change conditions of social existence, those that generate exits from a given (social) organisation without intending to create an event. These processes pave the way for

new transformations that people do not name as subversive practices, while imperceptible moments appear unexpectedly and often remain unidentifiable.

Imperceptibility concerns forces that operate outside the ability to detect them and subvert the realm of representation and captivation. The imperceptibility of social transformation happens not after control tries to recapture power but prior to its regulation. Thus, escape is primarily imperceptible and hints at social subversion practices exercised by people (on the move) within systems of capture (migrant regulation and management). Escape becomes a 'line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) between de- and re-territorialisation.

Therefore, I propose to stress the perspective of micropolitics, which emphasises movements and actions escaping the apparatuses of power through lines of flight that can occur predominantly within grey areas of governmentality (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 244- 270). Micropolitical attempts to draw on questions of agency within power formations are often side-lined in analyses of sovereignty – that is, in macropolitics. For Deleuze and Guattari, micro- and macropolitics function simultaneously.[16] The bodily capacity to affect and to be affected *in becoming*.

> "When you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected in turn […]. You have stepped over a threshold. Affect is this passing of a threshold, seen from the point of view of the change in capacity" (Massumi, 2015, p. 4).

In sum, to affect and to be affected implies constant movement: oscillation and the ongoing rupture of capacitation; captivation and flight; 'cutting in, interrupting whatever continuities' exist between reactive and active modes via bodily experience vis-à-vis transformation and movement.

In my interviews and conversations during fieldwork, I explore how these landscapes and the fragmented cultural material affect the social and political fabric. Cemeteries are spaces for the dead, yet ones that have a social function for the living, too: spiritually, politically, and personally. The depravation informs both sites of the dead as "a place reserved for nowhere, that take even the possibility of a vestige of a passerby's step (pas), we know that is depriving both the dead and the mourners of Sleep" (Nancy, 2009, p. 65). For example, the collective, self-organised burials of refugees in Lesvos have introduced an intervention of 'grievability.' Amid violence, the affect of caring for dead bodies and a sense of responsibility nurtured the desire to create ethical relations between the living and the dead.
Through video practice, it becomes possible to capture time and space constellations, which allows site-specific research to unfold in audio-visual cartography beyond linear narratives and language.

[16] To analyse the affective and micropolitical dimensions vis-à-vis subject formation/modes of subjectivity and desire, I follow the psychoanalyst Suely Rolnik (2019). The deviated subject's split (re-active mode) becomes stranded, blocked, split, generic and colonial. Whereas an active flow induces the processual subject, it is a constant work in progress – it is auto-poetic, singular and moved by drive. Nevertheless, Rolnik points out that active and reactive forces of desire oscillate and enmesh with each other constantly: they are not permanent or fixed in one mode, and the battle against re-active forces within 'us' is a constant struggle without guarantees.

Perception and memory function non-linearly (Lazzarato, 1998). Video as a time-based medium generates the potential activation and production of rebellious mourning, which develops 'interassemblages' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) between these two cases regarding perception, temporality, and space.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One, "The House of Life", on the former Jewish cemetery, builds on my previous works, *Memory Extended* (2011) and my first mid-length film, *Tsakalos Blues* (2014). While studying film (2006-2012), I began to travel to Greece through involvement with my family history. Through the memories of my father, I retraced their routes, places, and friendships in the city. In the 1960s, my grandfather sent his sons to a Hotel in Thessaloniki where the Jewish Community hosted survivors who had lost everything. For months, my father and uncle had to hide from the German youth welfare office, which wanted to lock them up in a youth detention centre for neglecting compulsory education. While recording interviews with my father's playmates at the time and members of the Jewish community, I used a Super 8 camera to film an imaginary diary of my father's turbulent youth hiding from German authorities at the Hotel Bristol in the former red-light district of the harbour workers' quarter called Ladadika and Vardaris.[17] Retracing the gaps of erased Jewish history in the city inevitably led to the vanished cemetery on top of which Aristotle University was built.

Beginning with a historical prelude to the former Jewish cemetery, I evaluated significant events for the Jewish community that concern shifts in racial politics towards neglect of minority rights and antisemitism within the process of Hellenisation up until the Holocaust and its aftermath in Thessaloniki. Along these lines, I will touch briefly on its historical legacies of soft power and further German–Greek entanglements. One example is the prevention of the conviction of German war criminals in Greece in exchange for economic investment.

The former Jewish cemetery, an important symbol of the city's centuries-old Jewish presence, is now northern Greece's largest higher education campus, the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. This paradigmatic site – a landscape firmly covered in concrete – lays bare the multiple layers of local violent histories, not simply underneath in its soil but with its very establishment. The old Jewish cemetery's legacies are materialised in tombstones now spread throughout the cityscape. The unknown travel stories of these stones continue to be blurred and uncanny in present times. They possibly generate a scattered archive against the grain, one that indicates grey zones of remembering and forgetting.

[17] The materiality of the Super 8 moving images was an attempt to re-imagine what could have been recorded then because these first hand-held cameras were mainly reserved for bourgeois families, as was the case, for example, with the numerous Nazi families that documented their everyday life during the war.

Today, the city and the peripheries of northern Greece (Halkidiki) are paved with Jewish tombstones that were used as building materials for several institutions: churches, hotels and private houses. However, the successive destruction of the old Jewish cemetery points back to the Ottoman period. It remains continuous until it marks 'the harbinger' of the Holocaust in Greece, as the survivor Yomtov Yacoel pointed out a few months after the destruction (Lagos, 2008). The tombstone can be understood as the first monument, standing in contrast to the illusion of common memory performed by national monuments (Young, 1993). I propose to rethink these dispersed and fragmented tombstones as 'monuments of shame' (Manea, 2009); that is, to acknowledge the effects of national pasts on singular stories and disrupted collective memories.

In Thessaloniki, the question of collaboration concerning the main expropriation of the cemetery and the many tombstones by local authorities is not publicly discussed (Saltiel, 2014). The archaeological institute has not given back tombstones to the Jewish community, and bones discovered during the construction of the metro close to the university site remain a taboo topic. The video *Precarious Twilight Zones* (2021) is the practice-based component of my first case study on the former Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki.

Chapter Two: "The Island of Crossings" My inquiry concerns the struggle for burial grounds that started during the 'summer of migration' in 2015; since then, the Island has changed into a laboratory of manifold 'states of exception' concerning border violence. The fusion of state-funded bodies with subsidised enterprises that gain surplus value exemplifies the demarcated borders between the internal and external functions of the political realm. Expanding security technologies – such as the investment in surveillance and authentication techniques (e.g. Eurodac) at border sites and inside detention camps – exemplify the development of profitable warfare against migration (Emmanouilidou and Fallon, 2021). An important element of the transition from feudalism to capitalism in the globalised era of warfare is the use of new technologies that produce different velocities and speeds (Bauman, 2001; Virilio, 2006; 2012).

On the outskirts of European territory, 'necropolitics' (Mbembe, 2003; 2019) is exercised at its external borders, ignorance and neglect as technocratic and political tools generate the distinction between whose lives matter – the ones to be accounted for, remembered and mourned for – and who's become contrariwise 'ungrievable' (Butler, 2009).

The inevitable differentiation between porous spatial dimensions concerning the exercise of power is key to understanding current border regimes. Mezzadra (2021), for example, uses the image of liquid borders, entailing even the elusiveness of the latter. Nevertheless, reference to Levi's writings on the gray zone reveals important facets of micropolitics that complicate clear divisions of power.

Thus, the question of the figure of ‘the implicated subject’ (Rothberg, 2019) beyond a clear-cut division between the perpetrator and the victim is discussed alongside the conducted interviews on the Island.

I moved to Lesvos twice and elaborated on the transit migrant cemetery in the village of Kato Tritos. How do we mourn and care for dead bodies about whom nobody seems to care? What social and affective impact does the disturbance of the bones and the denial of protection in the event of death for a devalued and delegitimised population have on local actors and future generations? What role do the legacies of cross-generational persecution play in the collective memory of the Island’s majority population? And has the right-wing agitation by politicians and media accelerated projections of hostility towards ‘the Muslim’ as the old rival?

The ‘foreign’ and ‘orientalised’ dead are not granted permanent residency or citizenship tied to one place. Whose death is acknowledged– and who is considered as a threat against the local dead? Consequently, they don’t pay for their stay in the village and squat in an olive grove. The remains of the dead become carriers of ‘bad debt’ (Harney and Moten, 2010) that escape the grip of the credit (a-social) and debt (social) logic of neo-liberal governmentality. ‘Bad debt’ instead becomes a synonym for broken relations due to colonial amnesia and reminders of neglected care relations (Mbembe, 2010).

Do the dead have the right to stay, and why is the cemetery still not legalised today? What multi-layered blockages are produced when a place is not reserved for the recognition of the dead and when their bodies become anonymous or are lost in the act of disappearing? On the one hand, it is about the disappearance after a funeral, when there is no previous identification, i.e., being buried as 'unknown'; on the other hand, it is about the disappearance of inscriptions on cheaply printed gravestones. Moreover, there is no cartography of the cemetery in Kato Tritos, which means that after a few years, the traces of the graves themselves are lost. People who come back to find their loved ones are faced with the impossibility of finding a grave's exact location. Consequently, will the living remain sleepless together with the dead?

My third Chapter, “Relational Breakdowns,” deals with animated wounds and trauma on three different levels, starting from the passing temporalities through which racial categories have shifted in Europe. I discuss the geopolitical and spatial dimensions of the instrumentalisation of power concerning race and regulating the dead by the living. I elaborate on how the figure of the victim developed into moral acceptance through the clinical category of trauma and became a floating signifier. In relation to that, I point out the dangers of distortion and appropriation of victim categories within official historiography and ideological abuse by right-wing forces. I address the importance of

memory activism from below (generative and lively) as a social and inventive collective care practice instead of commodified memory (expressive and symbolic).

'Ungrievability' creates a proliferation of unprocessed trauma and atmospheres characterised by silence and collective paralysis (Jelin, 1994). The case of 'ambiguous loss' – a body cannot be found or traced – points to the precarious condition of death for both those who pass and those who remain. How animated wounds are produced? When such a loss occurs, 'ambiguous loss' (Boss, 1999) occurs when the phenomenon remains unresolved and unclear—without closure. A lost loved one can be "absent and present simultaneously".[18] A missing body makes it extremely difficult to mourn the lost – if not altogether impossible. The impact of reactive forces (blockages, waiting times, capture) on people who are on the move, including death along migration routes, implies and amplifies the 'unattended grief' and 'ambiguous loss' felt on a transnational scale.

Mourning has a social function, being attached to an identity (e.g., a nation) and shaped by modes of thinking, education, and sociality (Assmann, 1999). It is also characterised by the acknowledgement of loss as an ethical responsibility. The grieving process helps people deal with painful events such as shock and loss. Rebellious mourning as part of memory activism implies reproductive forms of inventing rituals and addressing 'implicatedness' and responsibility as a call for social justice. Memory activism can be part of diverse movements that counter forces of de-individualisation or simple (self-) victimisation. The politicised and collective work of mourning becomes a transformative micropolitical tool that exists globally and denounces multiple patterns of violence at the macropolitical level.

Racialised matter of the legacies of the dead penetrate circularly through the landscapes and remain 'uncivilised' (Goldberg, 2009). They are carriers of traumatic animated wounds and reminders of racial injustice, mirroring the screened-out loss in official historical narratives. Consequently, these cultural material reminiscences became agents inhabiting 'singular' and 'auto-temporal memories' (Parr, 2008), escaping the apparatuses of archaeology while becoming nomadic agents that ambiguously permeate the places on an affective and social level.

[18] 'Boss Interview Personal Experience with AL', Available at: https://www.ambiguousloss.com/ (Accessed: 12 April 2024).

1. The House of Life

El muerto no save nada,
todo es para el ojo del bivo.

The dead knows nothing;
everything is in the eye of the living.
Judeo-Spanish saying

This chapter tackles changing and decisive events for Jewish life in Thessaloniki through the tensions of racial violence, new historical research, and neglected memory, with the results reflected in my artistic practice. It combines interview excerpts with recorded and archived visual material from many years of research. It traces fragmented micro-stories from my family history, in which articulating hybridity and dealing with class played an unavoidable role. Starting from the former Jewish cemetery and along the descriptions of six topographies in *Precarious Twilight Zones*, the multidirectional temporalities and analogical connections are crystallised based on the collected materials and lines of connection from violent histories to the present day.

The first circle begins in the aftermath of 1492, with the expulsion of Muslims and Jews from Spain. Back then, the Ottomans welcomed them to their territories; Thessaloniki became the so-called 'Jerusalem of the Balkans.' The former old Jewish cemetery was called 'Beth Ahaim' or 'Bedahey' (in popular Judeo-Spanish: 'The House of Life') (Naar, 2016, p. 242). It was a place of social encounter in mourning ceremonies and rituals called 'ziyaras.' But also, it was informally a space of meetings held in secret, of hidden economies and affective encounters – away from the gaze of others.

The making of modernity in Southeast Europe is closely entangled with the interests of European imperial powers and their desire to influence domestic policy in the Balkan countries with their shift from being constitutive parts of the Ottoman Empire to independent nation-states. Bordering plans between Balkan states were already drafted at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 (Mazower, 2002). After World War I and the two Balkan wars, Germany's interests manifested per expansionist and imperialist aspirations via processes of soft power, as outlined by Stephen G. Gross in his book *Export Empire* (2015).

Further, as Terkessidis points out, the European imperial powers were competing with one another: since France and England were traditional allies of Greece, Germany was interested in pushing back against them by trying to gain economic control over this region. Crucial examples are the 'Orient Tobacco' deal with Greece and 'Clearing Agreement' with the Balkan states (Terkessidis, 2019, pp.

156-159). Terms such as ‘semi-colonial’ or ‘crypto-colonial’ hint at making economic dependencies an important domination strategy (Mazower, 2002; Herzfeld, 2002; Terkessidis, 2019). The plan was not to create a straightforward colonial project in Southeast Europe but rather proto-dependent states – meaning an economic, moral, and cultural soft conquest embedded in a ‘Middle Europe’ (Gross, 2015).

The complex, violent history in the northern part of the country is intertwined with shifts in minority politics related to religion and ethnicity and new national subjects of Hellenisation, all in the same vein. Simultaneously, Western powers such as the British, French and German Empires played a decisive role in Greek politics. These legacies stand out on closer inspection in the cityscape – or blurring them in a different composition of materials, over-writings and wrappings. The cemeteries of Ottoman Thessaloniki were equated with the common property of the city’s inhabitants and, at the same time, bound to the various co-existing religious communities. After Greek national statehood was achieved, a central feature of urban planning was moving the cemeteries to the city’s periphery and implementing a modern French-style colonial urban structure that would eliminate foremost the ‘oriental’ elements. My writings in this chapter combine historical research with research interviews, plus the description of my accompanying video essay in a non-linear manner.

1.1 Methodology

My audio-visual research project on the Jewish history of Thessaloniki builds on my interviews and film works *Memory Extended*, 2011 and *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014, of the last decade. Over this period, I have filmed several periods in Greece and collected a broad spectrum of interviews derived from my interest in my family history. As part of my dissertation, the practice-based video essay *Precarious Twilight Zones* in 2021 marks a change in my method. It is experimental and performative and does not include spoken language other than excerpts of student protests. The piece was created on the sound level with instrumental sequences and live recordings by musician Panos Papazoglou.

The erasure of the former old Jewish cemetery became synonymous with the erasure of all possible traces of Thessaloniki's Jewish social history, of the missing dead of those who were deported to concentration camps, and thus of racist violence. During years of research in archives and published testimonies, I haven’t found any traces of family members who were persecuted in Greece or deported to Auschwitz, except my grandfather, through the post-war papers and his brother's birth certificate in Thessaloniki, as well as a picture from our family photos of one of two great-aunts who left Greece for Haifa in the 1920s. At the same time, due to the lost archives and the complex reconstruction of the city's Jewish history, the cemetery could have been a place for a possible retracing of the legacies in the sense of an archive of former life.

Precarious Twilight Zones combines six sites that link the complex layers of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the modern history of Greece. The film tells the story of an absence; the history of Jewish Thessaloniki remains inscribed in the memories of the living and the legacy of violated tombstones. The camera follows a young protagonist, her dream-like path through the city rhythmed by the sunrises and sunsets. A mnemonic topography of violated surfaces emerges by referencing different temporalities in Greek history.

The entire video is shot during twilight in long durational scenes accompanied by sampled soundscapes and without any dialogue. The performer wanders through the cityscape almost exclusively in real-time. In this case, the performer's body movement makes the mapping. The re-mapping, meanwhile, is derived from my pathways in research conversations and my subjective reference to Thessaloniki. It does not follow the idea of a tracing tool or map for 'opening up' a territory but relies on us becoming aware of the voids in its expression by walking through the places in question.

Through film practice, it becomes possible to generate affective connections that take over the place of language to form relationalities between body, stone (silent matter) and environment. The body itself becomes a medium that guides us through the chosen sites. To omit spoken language in this piece is an attempt to work out a plane of affect: body, contested place and physical matter. In this sense, the attempt was made to engage in mapping as an embodied practice (mapping with the body in movement) in nearly real-time film recording.

On another level, I inscribe (visual and textual) archival material into the scenes, which further brings out a micro and macro-historical component in the constellation. The layers of the documents and reproduced photographs leave the place of sorting or classification within a classical historicising archive. They merge into a new constellation in the public space and the street. Where past traces are blurred and overwritten, possible instances of non-chronological feedback and resonance are crafted.

As the performer passes by the different places, she is not graspable as a classical actress who plays her role per a specific character or task. Instead, her performance consists mainly of her movements and gestures. Her embodiment functions ambiguously. Firstly, detached from the environment, displaced and, at the same time, affected by and in touch with the surroundings. The idea of her character functions as a hyperrealist figure partially based on Chantal Ackerman's staging of her alter ego in the film *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna* (1978). Akerman's hyperrealist approach refers to the anti-naturalist cinema of Robert Bresson and Carl Theodor Dreyer. 'Hyperrealism' is understood as a cinematic translation of the effect of distance that results when a picture or sculpture

reproduces a subject that is already an image therefore, the viewer is constantly reminded of the physical, material presence of cinema, the performer, and the spectator (Margulies, 1996, pp. 42-48).

Akerman's film work has marked an essential position in experimental and feminist cinema since the 1970s. After her first term at the film school in Brussels, she decided to leave and made her first short film *Saute ma ville* (1968). Later she moved to New York, where she was influenced by avant-garde and experimental filmmakers like Jean-Luc Godard, John Jonas, Andy Warhol, Stan Brakhage and Yvonne Rainer. *Les Rendez-vous d'Anna* follows the travels of the filmmaker Anna to Germany to present her latest film. Her distance from the places she is crossing, her weird love affairs and her nomadic lifestyle are the objectives of this fictional self-portrait.

> "Her meetings with Anna [Les Rendez-vous d'Anna] follows Deleuze and Guattari in that she posits Anna's nomadism and celibacy as a form of freedom from both social and aesthetic norms, as a rejection of a single culture. [...] Since as a nomad she is not an owner, and celibate, she can either be related to another or alone. Being alone, outside any system, belonging already to another world. A way of being ahead of her time that prepares our future, a sort of mutant" (Margulies, 1996, p.16).

In Akerman's films, nomadism is a repeated objective, like in *D'Est* (1993), where she goes 'back' to Eastern Europe – the region where her parents lived until WWII. In an interview, Akerman talks about having to be an adult child due to the traumas of her family that she incorporated. Her Jewish Orthodox parents came from a small town in Poland, survived the concentration camps and emigrated to Brussels. She claims: "I don't feel that I belong at all. Sometimes, it's hard because belonging can give you a kind of peacefulness, but I don't. I'm like an outcast."[19]

The continued experience she carries out through her story is not seen as an affirmation of Jewish identity within her films. "Akerman's oeuvre is marked by a set of tropes— rootlessness, obsessiveness, the quotidian, the body, repetition— all of which appear in *D'Est* (Lebow, 2008, p. 3). Akerman is talking from her perspective, which can be seen as a position of dis-identity that breaks with normative autobiographical categories. The long takes and sequences in Akerman's film produce an interplay between the construction of an effect of reality and the artificiality per the materiality of the medium as such. Or, in the words of Jaques Derrida, "cinema is the art of allowing ghosts to come back."[20]

Precarious Twilight Zones builds on the idea of an evoked unfamiliarity that produces difficulty in identifying easily with something or someone. The performer directs the viewer's attention through

[19] Celluloid Film Magazine (2022), 'A Conversation with Chantal Akerman at the Venice Film Festival 2011, ' is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GUStWsegZ0k (Accessed 22 August 2022).
[20] McMullen K. (1983) Ghost Dance. Available at: https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xn0c8b (Accessed 28 August 2022).

her gazes and body movements while crossing places, but she moves from a sense of displacement and ambiguity. Her interactions with discoveries such as archival images reproduced photographs, maps, and sometimes the groups of people she encounters along her routes are the only gestures of acting. In this sense, she does not offer much of a field of projection (or re-identification) for the audience – neither, for example, as a Jew nor as a victim, and probably not even as a (human) being.

Sunsets or sunrises mark the transitions between scenes. They refer to transient material within circular time. Located within these twilight zones is the so-called blue hour. With each scene shot at sunset or sunrise, another repetition—albeit with its unique difference, too—feeds the circle. For example, the video starts (intro) and ends (outro) in the same location but shot from different angles, namely, near the statue of Elfetherios Venizelous (first prime minister of Greece).

1. *Souvenir*. Source: Courtesy Archive Thessaloniki History Centre.

2. *Souvenir*. The first building on the left is the philosophy faculty of Aristotle University Thessaloniki.
Source: Courtesy Archive of Thessaloniki History Centre.

3. *Souvenir*. Source: Courtesy Archive Thessaloniki History Centre.

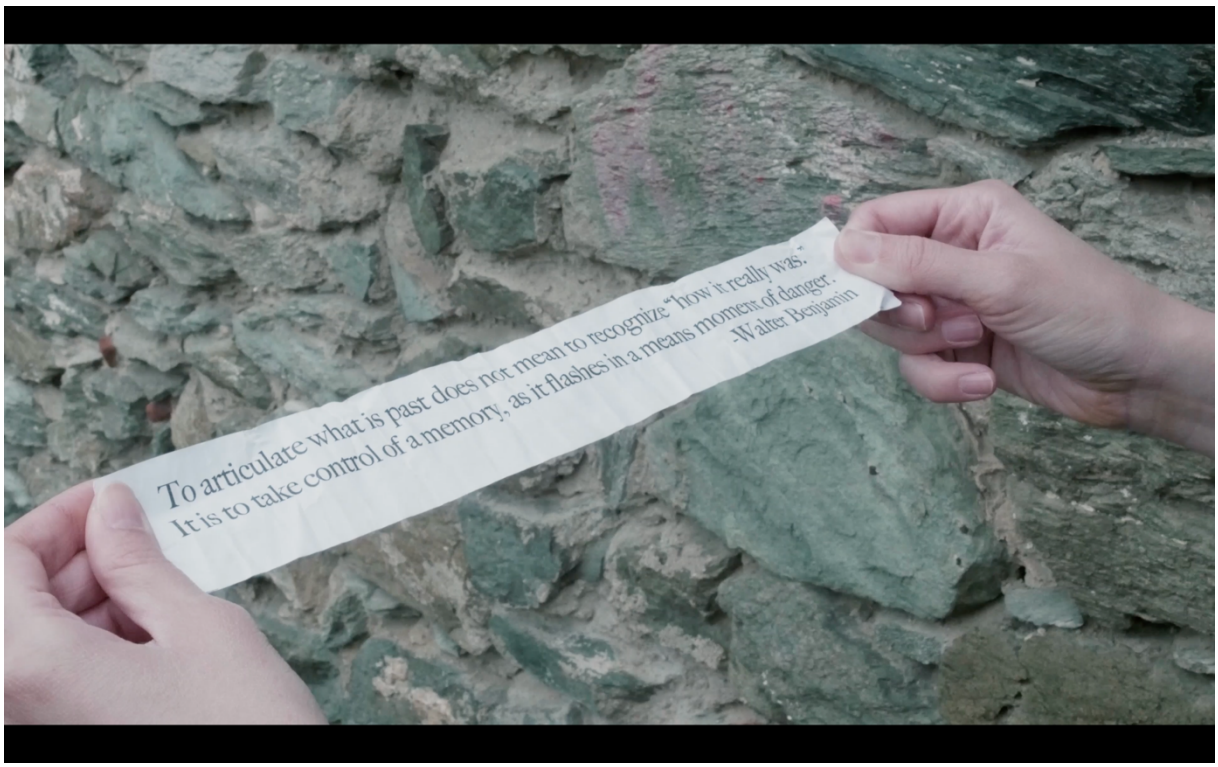
4. *Souvenir*. Muslim cemetery was mistaken for the Jewish cemetery by the Allied forces. Today, the Thessaloniki International Fair is on the top of the former burial ground. Source: Courtesy Archive of Thessaloniki History Centre.

1.2. Assembled Materiality

Besides the conducted interviews, the assembled archival images and maps function as historical snapshots and references that are activated and inscribed into the present visual condition of the fragmented material culture found in the city. The printed materials deployed in the public space consist of quotes by writers who accompanied my film-making practice, such as *The Writing of the Disaster* (1995) by Blanchot, *The Fall of Sleep* (2009) by Nancy, "Stones (papers, humans)" (2010) on the Civil war by the anthropologist Neni Panourgiá, excerpts from writings on racism by Ruth-Wilson Gilmore and excerpts of the publication *Synagonistis* by the historian Iason Chandrinos on Jewish partisans in the National Resistance Movement.

Souvenirs from Salonica are photographs turned into postcards by the Allied forces stationed in the city during the first and second Balkan Wars. These images only exist in the northern region of Greece. They imply colonial views and gaze onto and over the city and its inhabitants. One of my most astonishing findings in the Thessaloniki History Centre was a *Souvenir* that mistook the former Muslim cemetery for the Jewish one. These photographs are often also impressions, shot by the soldiers during their everyday life in the city. In the former harbour and proletarian Jewish district Ladadika and Vardaris (during the German occupation, it was turned into the Baron Hirsch Ghetto), where my family used to live, I found postcards of women who were working as prostitutes in small brothels in the 1920s.

The printed and reproduced materials function as chains of association or multilayered text, image and surface compositions. Their arrangements do not follow a linear storyline. These live montages – or on-the-spot assemblages of materials in the public space – lay bare the possibilities of aligning layers of contextualisation from various angles, time frames and modes of thought. On the visual level, 'multidirectionality' is produced by combining these materialities, which refer to the different temporalities of historical events in northern Greece – drawing subtle analogies to the current border regimes. They indicate possible analogies to the construction of the nation-state, the creation of minorities and the atrocities committed during the Civil war and WWII – and continuing through today's student and migrant struggles. While the performer passes by monuments and memorial sites, these only become graspable from a distance. They are truncated within the scenes instead of highlighted as a critique of the official historical narratives they help reproduce.



5. Former prison wall of Heptapyrgion or Jedi Kule (Fortress of Seven Towers). Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

1.3. Scene 1: Insomnia

Firstly, the video begins at the Heptapyrgion (Jedi Kule or *Φυλακές Επταπυργίου*) – also known as the 'Fortress of Seven Towers' – and marks the old city walls of the Byzantine and Ottoman eras, where the seat of the garrison commander was stationed. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Fortress was converted into a prison and used as such until 1989. Together with Ano Poli (the old town), this site forms the city's historical core. The performer opens her eyes as if she had never slept, starting to wander around the old city walls. At the prison she encounters hidden messages and pulls them out of the old wall. The slips of paper are metaphors: within almost every historical resistance movement, small messages were exchanged as a crucial means by which participants could organise, conspire and, indeed, survive.

The video's first scene marks certain key events in history, such as a map of the diasporic movements from Spain in 1492, the Congress of Berlin in 1874 and the commissioning of the modernisation of urban Thessaloniki by the admirals of the Orient Army – including by Venizelous and the colonial architects and urban planners, too. In-between: a portrait, as a gesture that captures a fragment of the microhistory of one of my ancestors, operating as the legacy of being a produced minority. This is an image of my great uncle (also called like my father), one of many family members who disappeared without a trace. He was most likely deported to Auschwitz.

6. Former prison, 1951, Heptapyrgion. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
Source: Photothèque CICR. Courtesy of ICRC Audiovisual archives.

7. The Matrix of the Urban Modernisation of Thessaloniki. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

2. **From the House of Life to the House of the Intellect**

From the late 19th century onwards, the Ottoman administration tried to resettle the old Jewish cemetery and expand the city towards the southeast. The Jewish community was forced to leave a part of the cemetery to the Ottoman authorities for the sake of the urban construction of Hamidiye Boulevard and the Ottoman Military School, which now houses the Faculty of Philosophy of Aristotle University. But, contradictorily, according to the Ottoman Land Code the land of the former Jewish cemetery was what the Ottomans called a 'metruke' – "a kind of ownership of land that belonged to nobody except the totality of the population of the city and was devoted to a certain task" (Hekimoglou, 2016). In this case, a burial ground for a religious community.

In 2016, I interviewed Evangelos Hekimoglou, the leading curator of the Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki (2010-2022) and an expert on the economic history of the Ottoman era and modern Greece.

> "The land law was reformed in 1858 and implemented in the land property conventions of the Greek nation state (1913). The Ottoman Land Code recognised that there was a kind of ownership where land belonged to nobody except to the totality of the population of the city and was devoted to a certain task. […] I mean, to whom this land belongs, it belongs to all the citizens together. It cannot be sold, it cannot be bought, it cannot be split, it is very clear. That was what the Ottomans named a 'metruke', and the cemetery was such: the possession that belongs to nobody, administered by a certain group specified in Ottoman law – that is, the community. Every community had a cemetery, the cemetery was 'metruke land' and operated as a 'vakuf' of the community. That all the rights about land and housing coming from Ottoman law will be valid is documented or not. So this is very important, because there would be no title, no paper for metruke lands, because they stood on habit – so the court had to deliberate. Was the use of the land a cemetery for centuries – yes it was, so it is metruke land. Greece had to act according to the convention of 1913. But it did not. Three years after the convention, the eastern Muslim cemetery was totally destroyed."[21]

At that time, the Jewish community constituted most of the city's inhabitants, followed by Muslims and Orthodox with many Balkan nationalities. "While the Jewish cemetery sustained damage during the late Ottoman era, the prospect of it is complete expropriation emerged only after Thessaloniki (called in Judeo-Spanish 'Salonik', 'Saloniki', 'Salonika' or 'Salonica') came under Greek rule (1912)" (Naar, 2016, p. 241). The Great Fire in 1917 destroyed large parts of the city and left more than 50,000 (out of 75,000) Jews homeless. With the Hellenisation of the city, the Great Fire and the Asia Minor Catastrophe (also known as 'the exchange of population'), the deprivation, displacement and expulsion of Jewish and Muslim community rights, of their sacred places and of their dead were gradually implemented. After the Great Fire in 1917, the historic city centre was to be connected to new residential areas and expanded beyond the former medieval city walls. The Jewish cemetery "previously on the eastern outskirts of the centre soon became the new centre of what was supposed to be modern Greek Thessaloniki" (ibid., p. 241).

[21] Interview with Evangelos Hekimoglou, Curator of the Jewish Museum, Thessaloniki (2010-2022), 2016, from my video archive.

Further, I conducted a research Interview with Alexandra Yerolympos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Architecture and Urban Design, Emeritus):

> "In any case they wanted to modernise the city, even if there wasn't any fire. But again we have to be careful about the 'Weltanschauung', the general sprit, which was homogenisation and modernisation. 'We are all citizens of the world, we don't have to be different among ourselves.' Differences were interiorised, if I may use the word. Outside everybody aspired to be somebody else. The fact that planners were invited from Western Europe to modernise means that the Greeks wanted to show that they are part of the European family, like everybody in the Balkans. They invited mostly foreign planners and architects to reorganise their cities. Except from the Serbs, the Serbs train their own people. […] I mean, even the Ottoman Empire wanted to 'de-Ottomanise', because they wanted to show that they 'follow history.' […] Those cities have not known the Renaissance and the Post-Renaissance areas, because they were under the Ottomans. So these four centuries are lacking in the history of the Balkan cities. Suddenly, in the 1900s you have a city where the widest streets are eight metres and most of the others are three metres and private property is irregular. It's impossible to organise a system of water distribution, the cars started coming and they can't circulate in the city. So the city needs desperately modernisation. And how is it going to be achieved? The fire was one answer. An 'opportunity.'"[22]

In her writings, Yerolympos concludes that urban planning played a crucial role in the creation of national identity in the East and West Balkans (1820–1920). The making of modernity "was built on the ruins of historical tradition" to "efface all traces of the past which had lasted five centuries"—creating a national identity meant to "separate people's common traditions who had lived next to each other for centuries" (Yerolympos, 1993, p. 253).

Neoclassical/colonial modes of city planning were implemented to affirm national identity and symbolise affiliation to Western Europe and Orthodox Christianity as the main religion. The new urban development plan for Thessaloniki, requested by Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, was created after the Great Fire by Ernest Hébrard in 1917–1919. It meant "to redesign the city [in conceiving] of it as a 'blank slate'" (Marzower, 2004, p. 324).

Hébrard was also director of the Archaeological Service of the Orient Army and later head of the Indochina Architecture and Town Planning Service (Hanoi, Vietnam). The city plan for Salonika was developed in collaboration with two Greek architects, Aristotelis Zachos and Konstantinos Kitsikis, together with the British and French designers Thomas Hayton Mawson and Joseph Pleyber. The French colonial architect of modern Thessaloniki, Hébrard, envisioned along with his peers the erasure of all the cemeteries in the city's new centre; nevertheless, the Orthodox Christian one remained untouched. Leon Saltiel (2020; 2014, p. 2) describes the new urban plan as beginning the struggle for the ancient burial ground.

In other words, during the interwar period, institutional state racism and antisemitism shifted and amplified against the Jewish and Muslim communities to establish the new Greek identity (together

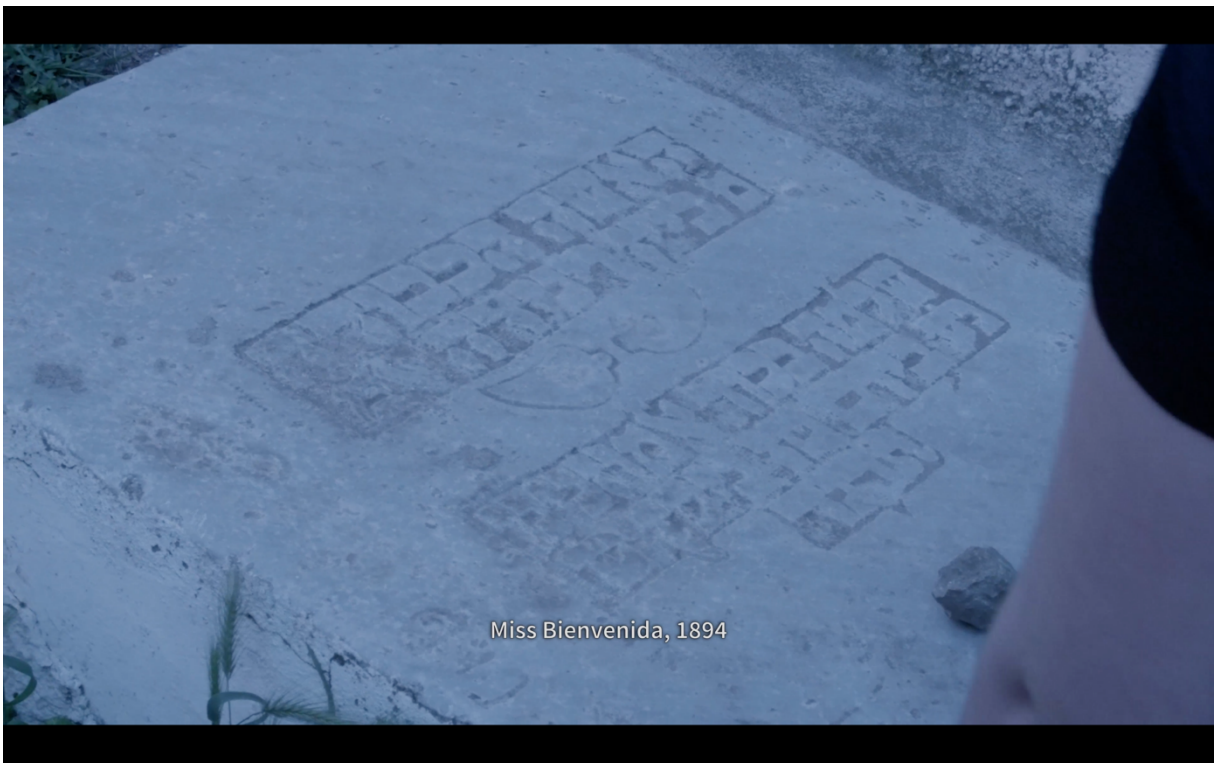
[22] Interview with Alexandra Yerolympos and Athina Vitopoulou in Thessaloniki, 2016, from my video archive.

with Orthodoxy as the dominant religion). The Jewish community soon became stylised as 'foreigners' and traitors to the nation, needing to be assimilated into Greek culture. Rena Molho points to the political shifts by the incumbent Liberal Party headed by Venizelos in relation to the sustention of "democratic principles, especially concerning the Jews, the only minority without a state backing it" (Molho, 2015, p. 218). This process was closely aligned with the expropriation of landownership in the areas devastated by fire, mostly belonging to members of the Jewish community. The Venizelos government instead introduced non-guaranteed long-term bonds for the owners, initiating a process of slow deprivation for many families. The result was state expropriation and public land auctions, causing the disappearance of the city's middle class and creating a huge gap between the upper and lower ones. Successively, the government deprived the Jewish community bit by bit of their citizen rights. However, Greece signed the Treaty of Sèvres in 1924, which should have guaranteed the religious freedom of minorities. Among the measures taken were the implementation of segregated elections and the introduction of Sunday as a mandatory day of rest. Thessaloniki's monuments were discussed from the following angles during the interwar period, as Yerolympos describes:

> "There were two positions towards monuments, the old ones considered as pieces of art. Extremely expressive art of a certain period (Roman and Byzantine). Until the interwar period, only those monuments were respected and maintained. For instance, the big Byzantine church and the smaller ones that belonged to monasteries. In Byzantine times, central Salonika was full of monasteries – it was a very religious state. Each monastery had a small church called the 'Catolikon.' So the Catolikon still survived, not the monastery, because when the Turks took Salonika, they destroyed all the monasteries except the one up in Ano Poli. The others were demolished, and Ottoman monuments. It's the same story always. To such a degree that archaeologists could not understand in the beginning if those were Byzantine monuments or Ottoman ones because they had used the same materials. Then they found out that they were Ottoman, built from the demolished Byzantine ones.
>
> […] Hébrard tried to convince the people of Salonika that some Ottoman monuments were very good pieces of art and they had to be preserved. He convinced them (the Greeks) by doing what? By organising the grid of the streets, so the new streets would not touch them.
> […] But there was the Caravan Serai, only in one night the people went and demolished it. In 1924, when it was considered as a preserved monument, the Caravan Serai! This is a whole story. It was not a religious monument, it was a public monument. And the non-religious Ottoman monuments belonged to people who were either Muslim, and when they left, they sold them to Greeks, or they were Greeks from the beginning. So as it was private, in one night they demolished it."

It is questionable whether a public monument could have belonged to a specific owner or if simply the Greek state became the latter following reform – which might be most likely here. The impetus for the Hellenisation of the city was given in 1923 by the arrival of more than 100,000 Greek Orthodox 'refugees' from Asia Minor and the departure of 30,000 Muslims in the 'population exchange' agreed upon between Greece and Turkey in the Lausanne Treaty (Molho, 2015). From that year on, Greek Orthodox people (including those arriving from Asia Minor) became the city's majority population. The Asia Minor Catastrophe is highly underestimated in its significance because it marks the first

(forced) mass migration movement in modern European history (Mazower, 2002, p.141). Greek 'refugees' survived long-distance death marches from what is now Turkish territory and arrived exhausted in the young nation-state; most of them had lost loved ones and had been humiliated and beaten on their way. This event caused a housing crisis in the city and marks a collective trauma in Greek society until this day. Two years after they arrived in 1925, Aristotle University's 'The House of the Intellect' (*Pnevmatiki Estia*) was founded on the grounds of the 350,000 square metre Jewish cemetery with the motto: 'Sacrifice to the Muses and the Graces' dedicated to Saint Demetrius. Back then, Thessaloniki was called 'the city of refugees' and the cemetery became an important cross route to the centre for many newcomers who settled around the area and lived in very poor conditions. Around 7,000 m^2 were expropriated in 1929 to construct housing projects for refugees (Saltiel, 2020, p. 45).



8. The entire surface of a tombstone is a staircase of a private house entrance. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

9. Ano Poli, old town of Thessaloniki. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

2.1. Scene 3: “Immigrants welcome, tourists go home!”

Graffiti in Ano Poli, 2021

From the district of Ano Poli, one has a panoramic view of the concrete desert of the city to the harbour. The upper or old town is the city's most traditional and foundational part. It is situated on a mountain slope a few streets above the modern centre. The neighbourhood stretches to the old Byzantine city walls and the former prison (Heptapyrgion, Jedi Kule). Until today, it has the characteristics of a big village – with tiny paved streets, family houses with gardens and balconies, and a handful of shops and bars around public places. Ano Poli is a reminder of Thessaloniki in Ottoman times, when it was called ‘a city between walls.’ Today, winding paths and alleyways are inhabited by packs of feral cats in the many abandoned ruins. In between, houses like mosaics, old little monasteries and dried-up Ottoman wells were renovated. Illegally assembled housing structures with corrugated iron roofs are reminiscent of the time after the Asia Minor Catastrophe and the accompanying poverty. During the period when Thessaloniki was called ‘the city of refugees’, many people found themselves stranded in the district of Kalamaria, slowly moving towards the old centre. They lived in huts, tents or houses occupied following the Muslim communities being expelled. In Ano Poli, self-built staircases made of dismembered Jewish or Muslim gravestones appear in gardens and on terraces.

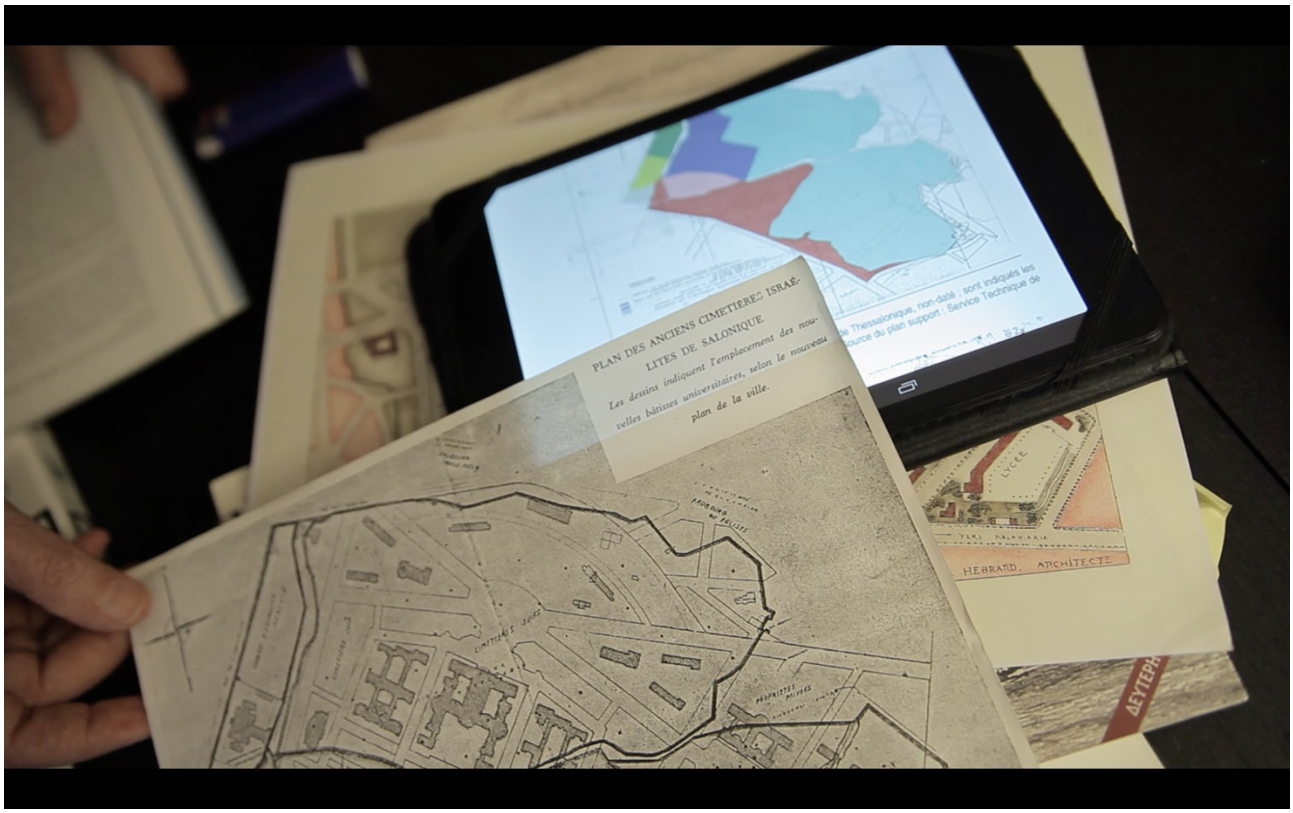
As the most picturesque part of the city, it has also paved the way for the entry of Airbnb and the tourism business in the wake of the austerity crisis. This has gone hand in hand with gentrification and evictions and the increasing deprivation found in alternative social centres and community meeting places. Not only have rent prices risen immeasurably for students, but Greece’s minimum wage is one of the lowest in Europe, and youth unemployment stands at about 30 per cent. Within this setting of socio-political despair, the neighbourhood structure makes precisely the (post-) austerity world visible – together with the consequences of neoliberal (slow) dispossession. Precarity in everyday life, the difficulty of finding affordable housing, and rising living costs simultaneously shape an environment of anachronistic surfaces within the neighbourhood. The oldest houses of Ano Poli are abandoned and left to their own decay while new investors sneak in.

10. Graffiti in Ano Poli, the old town of Thessaloniki. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

In the video, the performer places some posters near graffiti on the walls and finds herself on the stairs with scattered tombstones and books that refer to my readings. Along her route, she encounters an entire tombstone used as the main entrance to a private house near the old city walls.[23] The montage switches to built-in Jewish tombstones in the Orthodox Church of the Professors Village Vorvourou of the Aristotle University in Halkidiki. A photo series begins in which university students can be seen imitating the play Hamlet, with skulls and bones from the site of the former Jewish cemetery. Another photo shows a German soldier looking fascinated at stolen gravestones with ancient inscriptions that have seemingly been used to construct a swimming pool. The sequence ends with a *Souvenir* from Thessaloniki, showing some men resting on a gravestone in the intact cemetery as the image merges (superimposed) into another sunset.

[23] Inscriptions of the tombstones: Songs of Songs 41 / Your eyes are like doves / Misses Bienvenida, dated 1894, translated by Jacky Benmayor.

11. Interviews with Iosif Vaena (tombstones in the cityscape) and Alexandra Yerolympos and Athina Vitopoulou (maps of Jewish cemetery before WWII). Video stills from *Outtakes 1*, produced in the realm of the exhibition: *we can never fly first class*, Munich City Museum, Gallery Einwand, 2023.



2.2. The struggle of the Jewish community

Aware of the destruction of the Jewish cemetery in Izmir under Greek occupation (1919-1922) that would become the campus of Ionian University, tombstones were again used as construction materials, and local rabbis arranged the transfer of the remains of the dead in 1921: "The Communal Council of Jewish Communities sent an official protest memorandum to Minister Venizelos in 1929 to appeal the status of the Jews of Greece as a religious minority recognised and protected by the state and by the League of Nations" (Naar, 2016, p. 249). The letter cites the historical and religious significance of the old Jewish cemetery of Thessaloniki, referring to other similar cases in Vienna, Bordeaux and Bayonne where proposals on the expropriation of Jewish cemeteries for 'public benefit' would be suspended.

Yerolympos offers in the interview a somewhat condensed narrative:

> "The fact is that Greece was founded during an economic crisis in 1929 and they didn't care to organise the land of the university [after the first building was established, the Faculty of Philosophy]. And then the war comes, and of course the Germans come here. There are Greek collaborators, and it seems that it was they who asked the Germans to destroy the cemetery. This is what happens. So if one want to judge that, you can. I don't want to believe that all people in Salonika were outside hoping that the Germans would destroy the cemetery."

Devin E. Naar describes in detail the variety of community attempts on various (public) levels to protect the burial ground over two decades and the importance of the joint commissions to document the graves during the interwar period (ibid., pp. 239-276). He researched and assembled the many arguments to save the burial ground and the interventions in the Greek nationalistic rhetoric. Among them were statements published by the chief rabbinate in the Judeo-Spanish press highlighting the cemetery's importance as a historical monument, a temple, and a holy site. For the Jewish community, the cemetery was not only a place for the dead. It was also a site of spiritual encounter between the dead and the living called, as noted, 'Beth Ahaim' (in Judeo-Spanish, Bedahey or 'House of Life'). The frequent rituals there, mainly carried out by women, were called, as mentioned earlier, 'ziyaras' or the 'ziyara grande' – meaning 'pilgrimage' in Turkish and Arabic. The underlying fight for the cemetery was indeed a legitimate fear of persistent anti-Jewish acts within the climate of structural ostracism, tied together with the preservation of cultural artefacts and social practice – as a place of mourning.

For the sake of Hellenisation, Molho argues that the Liberal Party together with the newspaper *Makedonia* carried out a ten-year, racist anti-Jewish campaign, with it setting the grounds for the resurgence of popular antisemitism.

> "In 1920 the Liberal Party, in fear of losing the election due to being blackballed by Jewish voters, enacted a law 'setting up four separate and segregated voting centres for Jews, ostensibly for their 'protection.' In 1928, the Communal Council once again led an intense campaign to end

> ‘segregation and discrimination’ and demanded the repeal of the electoral law, but a few months later the segregated electoral college was re-instituted” (Molho, 2015, p. 217).

This included accusations by Venizelos of Jews being ‘foreigners and strangers to Greek civilisation’ – with this leading to violent attacks on Jewish neighbourhoods from 1921, and ultimately to the Campbell Pogrom of 29 June 1931. On this day, a fire was started by 600 members of the fascist political party The National Union of Greece (Ethniki Enosis Ellados) in the Jewish working-class neighbourhood of Campbell. After these attacks, 50 tombs were destroyed by football hooligans following a game (Saltiel, 2020, p. 46). Previously, in January 1930, 70 graves had been destroyed in protest at a new regulation proposed by the community to close the cemetery gates from 9 p.m., while a couple months later, in August 1930, “the government adopted a decree, to modify the city plan adjacent to the cemetery ‘for the foundation of a University Centre’” (ibid., p. 45).[24] Due to this hostile socio-political environment, more than 10,000 Jews emigrated from the city between 1932 and 1934 (Molho, 2015).

A decisive date concerning the cemetery land was 28 July 1936, just months after controversial elections and before the final coup (on 4 August) carried out by Ioannis Metaxas. On this day of Tisha B’av (commemoration of the destruction of the temples in Jerusalem), a public discussion took place in Athens that gathered several political and economic influential figures together (such as Georgios Louis, the president of the Industrialists Association of Macedonia and Thrace, and the dean of Aristotle University, Tryfon Karadasis) to formally oppose the objections to the expropriation of the burial ground by the Jewish community. At the meeting, Dean Karadasis argued that “we cannot sacrifice the future for the past and stop the progress of life because of the dead”. This meeting can be seen as an organised public coup against the Jewish community since “virtually every association in the city followed up with letters to Prime Minister Metaxas and all relevant ministers to request the appropriation of the cemetery” (Saltiel, 2020, pp. 46-47). In 1937, a law paved the way for transferring parts of the land to the university (30,000 m^2), while a certain area should be designated a park, and existing tombs should remain untouched. In exchange, new locations for two plots had to be found. Saltiel mentions that this law was a temporary compromise and was never fully implemented, as the university successfully requested and received further land gradually. The law was later violated with the illegal building of the student union house and the planting of trees by Greek Boy Scouts (National Youth Movement) in 1939.

Iosif Vaena, a pharmacist and member of the Jewish community I have interviewed a couple of times in the last ten years, states in relation to the destroyed cemetery and dispersed tombstones how it is not only them being the ‘fruits of crimes’ that makes them an integral part of the Holocaust. Further:

[24] Saltiel (2020) also relates the request by a professor (Periklis Vizoukidis) one year earlier to accelerate the expropriation. While the general governor of Macedonia, Stylanos Gonatas, reported to the Office of the Prime Minister that he was afraid of “the wrath of Jewish masses” after a meeting with the Jewish community and a Jewish senator (member of parliament), he did not hide sympathies for the university’s request.

> “When we visit Auschwitz, it’s not that the wood or the trucks are holy – they have something like a holy element in their molecules – it’s the thing that they stand on. The fact that they are material witnesses to the words and the stories we have heard. This is also the same here [points to a displaced tombstone]. Plus, in many cases, it’s the only thing that remains of families who spent centuries and centuries living here, suddenly disappearing into nothing, or into ashes, I should say.”[25]

The former cemetery should indeed be described as a destroyed and dispersed archive and monument to the city's microhistories and collective memory since the inscriptions on these tombstones often tell stories about individuals' lives over five centuries. The main problem is that, in most cases, the inscriptions on the stones are chopped apart and thus fragmented, making them barely decipherable.

[25] Interview with Iosif Vaena in Thessalonik, 2016. From my video archive.

12. Scattered and hidden Agios Pavlos Cemetery in Thessaloniki, with one cared-for Partisan grave. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

2.3. Scene 2: Night without Moon

"To deprive someone of a grave, to deprive someone of a tomb and of recognition of the body—even a symbolic, analogical, or hypothetical one—to deprive someone of a place reserved for nowhere, to take away even the possibility of a vestige of a passerby's step [pas], we know that is depriving both the dead and the mourners of sleep."
Jean-Luc Nancy[26]

The rebetiko song *Night without a Moon* was written by Apostolos Kaldaras in 1947 and deals with the Civil war in 1944 after the Germans left and the British initiated the Cold War in Greece together with the royalist army that became the Junta. Both aimed to hunt and persecute the communist left, the Greek National Resistance fighters. Rebetiko emerged in the 19th century in the urban sub-proletarian and working-class districts of the ports in Smyrna, Istanbul, Piraeus and Thessaloniki, being referred to as 'Greek Blues.' Many rebetiko songs questioned bourgeois social norms and ideas of labour in general. Heptapyrgion prison gave cause to this particular song. It originated in the Athenian neighbourhood Pláka (under Ottoman rule, it was the Turkish quarter of Athens). *Night without a Moon* was later covered by Stella Haskil, a Jewish singer from Thessaloniki who had escaped German persecution by fleeing to Athens after her family's possessions had been

[26] Nancy, J.L. (2009) *Fall of Sleep.* New York: Fordham University Press, p. 44.

expropriated.[27] For the song's release on vinyl, Kaldaras self-censored the lyrics given that they would not pass censorship otherwise; but in 1949, *Night without a Moon* was banned along with other 'dangerous' songs.

Night without a moon,
the darkness is deep and yet a lad he can't sleep.
What is he waiting for, all night until morning, at the narrow window
lit by a candle? Door opens, door closes with a heavy sigh
I wish I could guess what is eating his heart

The original lyrics were:

Door opens door closes, but the key is double
What has he done that they throw the lad into prison?

While the camera sweeps over the grave of the 23-year-old partisan Koula Eleftheriou, who was imprisoned and executed at Jedi Kule prison in 1947, the song transforms from being an abstraction of Haskil's echoed voice to a short excerpt of the concrete original version (1947) – playing until the sun sets behind the city harbour. The grave of the young partisan is the only one maintained at the Agios Pavlos Cemetery – a neglected, scattered, hidden Christian graveyard, close to Heptapyrgion. It was a burial ground for the poor and the unknown. In the former prison and at the site of the cemetery, supposedly, it was not only the Germans in WWII who used to carry out mass executions – this also occurred during the Civil War, another of the city's side-lined and under-researched violent stories.

By the end of this scene, the performer encounters two Barbudi players occupied with the game as they sit on the ruins of a broken gravestone. Barbudi or Barbooth (also called Barbotte) is a dice game of Middle Eastern origin used for gambling: it is chiefly played by those of Greek or Jewish ancestry. Nowadays, the banned game has simple rules: a bet on a stake for each round. My grandfather and other Holocaust survivors around him also played it. In my video, the game represents unpredictability: the speed of change and how fate or a decision in life can turn quickly according to the logic of winning or losing, surviving or dying. The performer wins the bet and continues to the old town (Scene 3).

[27] Deuterios, S. (2022) 'Stella Haskil: The short life of a great voice who passed into eternity today in 1954. When fate commands…', *pontos news*, Available in Greek at: https://www.pontosnews.gr/677901/san-simera-ston-ponto-kai-allou/stella-chaskil-i-syntomi-zoi-mias-megalis-fonis-poy-san/ (Accessed: 12 April 2024).

13. Exhibition views from the *Transgressions of the Real*, in the frame of Büchsenhausen Fellowship Program for Art and Theory, Kunstpavillon Innsbruck 2021.

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14. Desecrated graves at the Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki (1942-1943).
Source: Photothèque CICR. Courtesy of ICRC Audiovisual archives.

3. **World War II, Collaboration, Implicated Subjects and the Destruction**

"The disaster takes care of everything."

Maurice Blanchot[28]

During WWII, Greece was first occupied by the European Axis powers (Germany, Italy and Bulgaria). Hitler, Mussolini, Boris III of Bulgaria, and his prime minister signed the 'Tripartite Pact' for further collaboration. The Germans executed with the Axis a 'Blitzkrieg' through Yugoslavia in 1941, and subsequently, Greece was divided into roughly three zones up until 1943. When the Germans arrived in Greece, they came there following an eerily cruel battle against civilians and partisan groups throughout Yugoslavia. Approximately speaking, Thessaloniki, Athens, as well as most of Crete, Lesvos, and Chios, were set under German, the north-east of the country under Bulgarian and central Greece, and the Peloponnesus under Italian rule.

[28] Blanchot, M. (1995) *The Writing of the Disaster*. Trans. Ann Smock Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, p. 3.

In an interview with Polymeris Voglis (Professor of History and Modern Greek Studies, University of Thessaly), we discussed German economic policies, Greek collaboration and the National Resistance Movement under occupation.[29]

> "The economic policies of the Germans during the occupation were distractive. In the beginning, it was hunger – that cost the lives of thousands of people. In the winter of 1941 and 1942, starvation […] mass death from starvation. And then the country was ruined by operations from the Nazis, reprisals, looting villages and executing mostly civilians.
>
> So you had two sets of policies: one was 'purely' economical, although it's very difficult to isolate the economic from the political. But within the occupation you had the policy of neglect of the Greek population because there was a food shortage from the beginning of the occupation. […] And then there was the general policy of the Nazis in occupied Greece, which was expropriation.
>
> Several mines in northern Greece that had raw materials like magnesium, nickel, and chromium were very important for the German war effort. This policy of expropriation impoverished the country and also created a situation of economic disorganisation. The country was divided by three occupying powers: Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. There were borders, so it was not allowed to transport goods from one zone to the other. This created an economic breakdown; on top of that, there were huge occupation costs. This means that the Greek puppet government had to pay for the expenses of the Wehrmacht in Greece. They shared large sums of money with the occupiers, and of course, the Greek government didn't have the money, so they were printing it. […] So, inflation, in the end, was tremendous because it's like, for a million, you only get an egg. They would carry (tons of) paper money around."

Between 1943 and 1944, the Germans took over the whole country. But already in the first two years of the occupation, in winter 1941/42, some 500,000 to 600,000 people would die of famine in Greece due to the food embargo and misdistribution and theft of food by the occupying forces for their troops stationed in the country. More than one million Greek people died during the occupation; meanwhile, most of them died from hunger or from being deported to concentration camps, condemned to forced labour, executed in prison as alleged communists or killed on the pretence of having collaborated with the partisans. In their paranoia of seeing 'bandits' (partisans) everywhere, a large number of villages were set on fire during the last month of the occupation, in April 1944. A smaller number of people were enlisted as 'Fremdarbeiter' in the German Reich and Austria, mainly from the Bulgarian occupied zone."

Voglis further states on the question of collaboration:

> "There were different forms of collaboration. There was political collaboration and economic collaboration; (for example) many industrialists profited from the war and from the Wehrmacht. Plus, armed collaboration. As historians, we know much about political, economic and ideological collaboration. By ideological, I mean people who somehow became part of the propaganda mechanism of the Nazis by writing articles in newspapers and broadcasting propaganda against the Allies.
> Armed collaboration appeared in the second phase of the collaboration, in 1943 and 1944. The Greek puppet government initiated it, but the Nazis were very hesitant in the beginning to allow

[29] Interview with Polymeris Voglis, Professor of History and Modern Greek Studies, University of Thessaly in Athens, 2016. From my video archive.

the formation of Greek army units. They changed their mind after the capitulation of Italy [because] they needed more armed forces in Greece. After September of 1943, there was a wave of mass armed collaboration with the Nazis. […] The Germans allowed the collaboration of armed Greek units in order, as they say in their documents, 'to save precious German blood.' It was obvious – they wanted to transform the resistance into a civil war so that the resistance would not only fight against the Germans but also against Greeks. Greek collaborators. The objective was pretty clear for the Germans to divert the attention of the resistance towards the Greek collaborators.

In 1943/1944 there were very bloody clashes between the National Liberation Front fighting in tandem with the Greek Peoples Liberation Army (*EAM/ELAS*) and collaborators. There were very bloody fights, especially towards the end of the occupation. The collaborators joined the German troops in their campaign against the guerrillas, the leftist guerrillas in the mountains, and also supported and participated in German reprisals in villages and cities like Athens. In many villages, you know, they perpetrated serious crimes. Also, they were very active in Athens, especially in the summer of 1944. […] They isolated whole neighbourhoods, carrying out searches and arresting suspected National Liberation Front members, then taking them hostage or just executing them. This was a bloody war in Athens in the summer of 1944, especially in the poorer neighbourhoods – they supported most of the resistance and were also the refugee neighbourhoods. Asia Minor refugees. In the city's eastern part, the most famous is Kesariani during the occupation."

Me: "And from which political agenda, as you said before, did the collaborators come, from which political waves did they appear – also in terms of the antisemitism that is especially visible, like in Thessaloniki?"

V: "Antisemitism was visible, because some of them had a career, let's say, […] a career in antisemitism before the war."

Me: "What does this mean?"

V: "That means that this a discussion about antisemitism before the war. There is no organised antisemitism in the sense of a political party that advocated it, or at least the militant antisemitism seen in other European countries like Germany. […] The most famous political organisation was called 3 Epsilon [National Union Greece, mainly formed by Greek Asia Minor refugees], which carried out the pogrom in Salonika's Jewish neighbourhood in 1931. But this is something that stands out. There was no antisemitic campaign – violent campaign at least – against the Jews. On the other hand, there was antisemitic rhetoric and propaganda, especially about Salonika: 'The Jewish Salonika.' […] 3 Epsilon's political success was minor; in terms of elections, it was nothing. That's why I say there was no political antisemitism before the occupation. […] During the occupation, all these people found their role and purpose in life. So, it became more alive and active."

In 1941, for the Jewish community in Salonika, certain things were slowly being realised:

"I will try to concentrate as much as possible on my memories. But before I begin, I would like to say a few words about living conditions in Thessaloniki before deportation. On 9 April 1941, when the German army occupied our country, we were far from imagining the infernal programme that had already been prepared for us. For one whole year, they worked on putting our minds at ease, and all of a sudden, on their order, the press started writing evil articles, spitting the most pernicious venom about us. They were eager to make us feel their oppressive power. That's when they started 'taking care of us' with an increasing frenzy" (Pinhas, The Jewish Museum of Greece, eds, 2014, p. 43).

The date 2 July 1942 ('The Black Sabbath') marked the beginning of the harsh persecution of the Jewish population in Thessaloniki. Around 8,500 men had to gather at Liberty Square and were

forced to do gymnastics under the hot sun. This event, for the sake of public humiliation, deterrence and amusement for the SS, remains unforgettable in the collective memory of Jewish families of the city. This event would become crucially linked to the cemetery issue some months later. Jewish men were registered and sent to forced labour on the peripheries of Greece. They had to perform heavy construction work on sites of German infrastructure projects, including building roads, mines and railways. With little in the way of food supplies and poor living conditions, and under the violent treatment of Organisation Todt, people fell ill and started dying. Very few of them managed to escape into the mountains to join the partisan groups (The National Liberation Front and The Greek People's Liberation Army, or *EAM–ELAS* resistance movement) or flee to the Italian occupation zone.

On the command of Adolf Eichmann, Alois Brunner and Dieter Wisliceny (both SS Hauptsturmführer) were sent to Thessaloniki to implement the Nuremberg Laws and to establish four ghettos in the city as well as organise the deportation of Jews together with Dr Maximilian Merten (Wehrmachtsbefehlshaber Saloniki-Ägäis in Thessaloniki) and the Greek puppet government. It became obligatory to wear the yellow Star of David. Accompanying these measures, the well-known procedures followed: expropriation of people's houses, belongings, shops, artefacts, libraries and so forth. Special identity cards in Greek and German were introduced. During this period, student strikes against the occupation took place in Thessaloniki, but none of their claims mentioned the rejection of the ghettoisation and deportation of their fellow Jewish citizens.

15. Desecrated graves at the Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki (1942-1943).
Source: Photothèque CICR. Courtesy of ICRC Audiovisual archives.

The Jewish community tried to negotiate with the Germans to relieve the men from forced labour and bring them back to Thessaloniki. Merten demanded a large sum of money from the Jewish community and the handing over of the site of the Jewish cemetery in exchange for recalling 3500 men out of forced labour. Following a proposal put forward by the Macedonian general governor appointed by the Germans, Vassilios Simonidis, the Jewish community was to 'relocate' the graves within ten days. A macabre provocation since the Jewish religion does not allow excavation – nor did an alternative, sufficiently large plot exist to potentially resettle 300,000 massive gravestones (including the remains of the dead).

> "We had not yet understood what the German occupation was all about. They were not hurting the Jews yet. Until the day Germans decided to gather all Jews of Thessaloniki at Eleftherias Square. And almost all Jews went there. I went, too. But when I saw the torturing under the sun, I said to myself that I wasn't going to stay any longer. At a moment that neither the Germans nor the Greek policemen were watching me, I stepped out of the line and ran towards a small alley and disappeared. As I learned later on, many were set free that day, but they were called back again and were sent to forced labour camps.
>
> Meanwhile, my brother Jacque went to the cemetery and unburied all our ancestors. The Germans had ordered the destruction of the Jewish cemetery of Thessaloniki. The graves were destroyed. We didn't want to leave our ancestors' bones out there. So, my brother went to the cemetery and unburied all of them one by one. Each one was placed in a pouch with their name tags on it. We kept them in our factory."[30]

[30] Centropa Archive (2007) Maurice Leon. Available at: https://www.centropa.org/cs/node/78797 (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

The ultimate destruction of the cemetery, including the fragmentation and theft of the tombstones, was finally carried out by the end of 1942. This act of destruction was a collaborative crime between the Greek elites, the country's puppet government and the German occupiers.[31] Contemporary scholars in Jewish historical studies approach the topic of collaborators and profiteers from WWII nowadays from several angles (Saltiel, 2020; Naar, 2016; Antoniou and Moses, eds, 2018).

On 6 December 1942, hundreds of workers destroyed the cemetery. The gravestones were split into fragments or 'released' as building materials and used for public and private institutions.

> "Jewish tombstones were stacked upon mason's yards and, with the permission of the director of antiquities of Macedonia and as overseen by the metropolitan bishop and the municipality, used to pave roads, line latrines and extend the sea wall; to construct pathways, patios and walls in private and public spaces throughout the city, in suburbs such as Panorama and Ampelokipi, and more than 60 kilometres away in beach towns in Halkidiki, decorated playgrounds, bars and restaurants in hotels; to build a swimming pool – with Hebrew letters (inscriptions visible); to repair the St. Demetrius Church and other buildings damaged during the war" (Naar, 2016, pp. 275-276).

A whole micro and macro economy around bricks and valuable marble began to flourish, one that remains blurred to day by the implicated institutions, individuals, and vendors.

On 15 March 1943, the first train for Auschwitz left the city with approximately 2,800 people on board. By the end of May, a train would depart every two to three days. On 19 October, the last train departed with the 1,900 men who had survived the forced labour; the chief rabbi of Thessaloniki, Zwi Koretz (1933-1945; since 1942, president of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki), was sent together with his family to Bergen-Belsen. He died three months after the liberation. More than 56,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz; less than 3,000 survived.

3.1. Fragmented archives

My grandfather Samuel Haskiel, after having been sent to forced work for more than one year in Gidas, lived in the Ghetto for one month from February 1943 until he was arrested and deported in March 1943. During research in the international centre on Nazi Persecution, the Arlosen Archives conserved documents on over seventeen million victims from this era belong to UNESCO's Memory of the World. The archivists sent me a detailed list of his prosecution, concentration camp odyssey and forced labour in Greece, Poland, and Germany. I could not find any information about his parents, sisters, or brothers during years of research in various archives. In Thessaloniki, my first interviews with Erika Perahia (part of my video *Memory Extended*, 2011) from the Jewish Museum revealed the history of the stolen and dispersed archives of the Jewish community. The archivist

[31] The prominent figures were Simonidis and Merten.

Aliki Arouh described the following in a document she personally sent me about the archive of the community:

> "During the 70 years that passed since the Holocaust, the community tried, with all the means and the power it had, to track down and repossess all the archives and religious books and artefacts it owned before the war whenever that was possible.
>
> After the occupation of Germany by the Allied Armies, the American Army found part of the Jewish Greek Archives in Frankfurt. The archives were sent to the Central Jewish Board of Athens in 1948.
>
> At the beginning of the 1950s, the Russian Army found the archives of Vilna and other Baltic countries, which were sent to the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in NY. In the next years, it was that, strangely enough, the archive included part of the pre-war documents of the JCT [Jewish Community of Thessaloniki].
>
> During the last decades, it is widely known that a big part of the pre-war archive of the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki is in Moscow, and it is subject to diplomatic discussions between Russia and Greece."

The part of the archive in Russia has been handed back to the Jewish Community of Thessaloniki. Through the stories of the fragmented archives, the search for traces of the erased cemetery developed to express the difficulties in tracing Jewish history and its persecution. The cemetery became synonymous for me as a destroyed archive of a former traceable life. The complete erasure of the evidence that people had existed, as was the case with many killed by the Germans and its collaborators. Tracing the gaps, I tackled the many unknown and unspoken issues with my father in the film *Tsakalos Blues* (2014), which I shot with him for over seven years.

In my exhibition, *we can never fly first class* at the Gallery Einwand in the Munich City Museum in 2023, I assembled and framed a hundred family photos and documents together with Installations of *Outtakes 1-3* from my video archive on my long-term research on my family story and Jewish history of Thessaloniki, including the video essays including the film *Tsakalos Blues* and *Precarious Twilight Zones*.

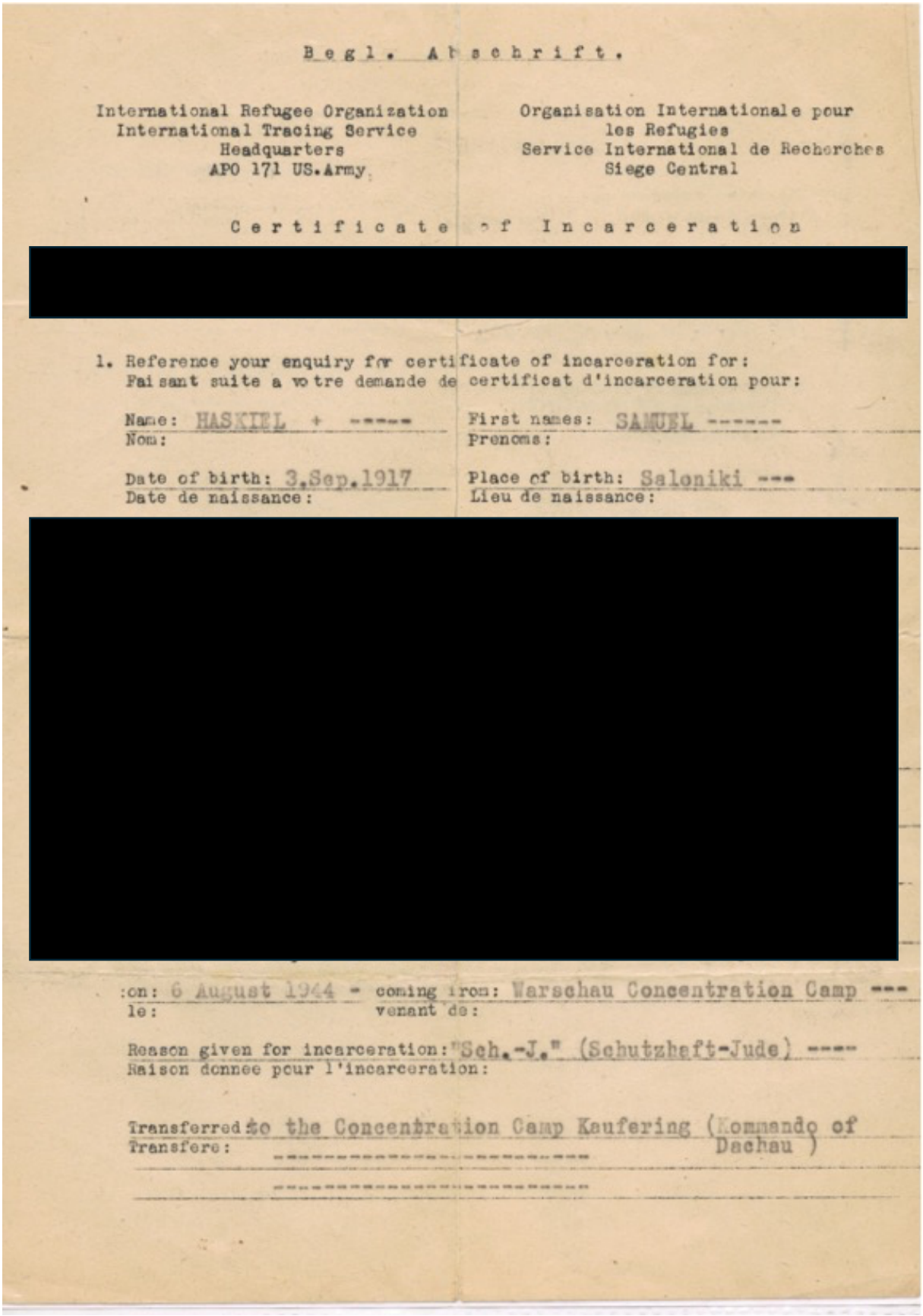
My family's unheard-of, barely spoken, yet still pronounceable experience. In *Tsakalos Blues,* I documented conversations with my father for several years. He was born and raised in post-war Munich as a so-called 'homeless foreigner'[32] as the son of a mother from a Bavarian working-class family and a Greek Sephardic father. 'Tsakalos' is a humorous and affectionate description by the Parente Brothers of my grandfather Samuel Haskiel from Thessaloniki, who was the only one of his family to survive the Holocaust.

[32] 'Homeless foreigner' is a citizenship status for foreign nationals or stateless persons introduced in 1951 and still valid in Germany today. After the Second World War, this status applied to refugees, displaced persons, and former forced labourers who were in West Germany as 'displaced persons.' This status is inherited and only expires when another citizenship is acquired.
The military dictatorship in Greece had revoked his Greek citizenship; Samuel Haskiel could not and would not accept German citizenship. In his refusal to become the subject of a state, my grandfather remained a 'homeless foreigner' his entire life.

‘Tsakalos’ refers to the figure of ‘Rebetes’ (musicians) inhabiting certain ethics of the poor, the rebellious questioning of bourgeois social norms, and ideas of refusal to work in Rebetiko lyrics. The Germans initially deported 1943 my grandfather and his family to Auschwitz; after the suppression of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto, he was forced to work as a forced labourer, clearing up the rubble and remains of violence unleashed by the Germans. Finally, in 1945, Samuel was sent on a death march in Poland, deported to Germany, and finally liberated from the concentration camp in Dachau by the US army. He spent his first post-war years in the displaced persons camp in Feldafing near Munich. His memories and traumas were transmitted subtly and through the resonance of certain words and, above all, non-verbally through strategies of survival and disidentification.

Together with his wife Anna, Samuel ran three legendary music bars and restaurants in Haidhausen until the 1970s— ‘Bei Samis’, ‘Ramona’[33] and ‘Thessaloniki’—which had already developed into migrant meeting places in the 1960s. The pictures from the family album show forgotten moments of Munich in which workers, migrants, and Jews celebrated together with US soldiers, laughed, and were simply happy to have remained alive.

[33] ‘Ramona’ is no longer frequently used to name a sub-district of Vadaris (Rezi Vadar) in the northern part. During my first visit to Thessaloniki with Vaena, I traced the area through street interviews in the neighbourhood. There was also a bar called Ramona, which was named after the area before the German occupation of the district.



Begl. Abschrift.

International Refugee Organization
International Tracing Service
Headquarters
APO 171 US.Army

Organisation Internationale pour
les Refugies
Service International de Recherches
Siege Central

Certificate of Incarceration

[redacted]

1. Reference your enquiry for certificate of incarceration for:
Faisant suite a votre demande de certificat d'incarceration pour:

Name: HASKIEL + -----
Nom:

First names: SAMUEL ------
Prenoms:

Date of birth: 3.Sep.1917
Date de naissance:

Place of birth: Saloniki ---
Lieu de naissance:

[redacted]

:on: 6 August 1944 - coming from: Warschau Concentration Camp ---
le: venant de:

Reason given for incarceration: "Sch.-J." (Schutzhaft-Jude) ----
Raison donnee pour l'incarceration:

Transferred to the Concentration Camp Kaufering (Kommando of Dachau)
Transfere: ----------

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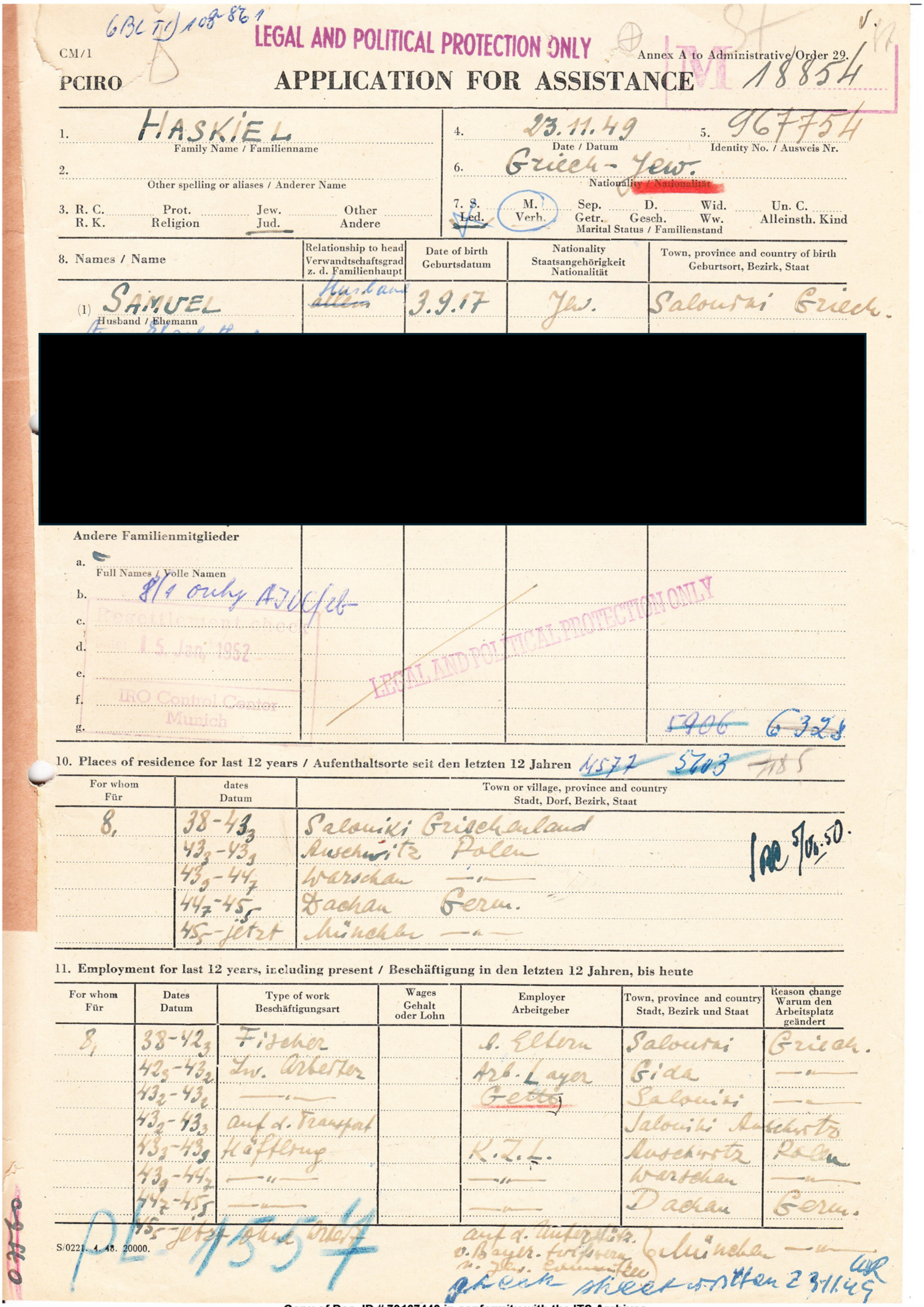
16. Certificate of Incarnation, International Refugee Organisation (IRO), U.S Army. Source: My family archive.



6BL T(I) 108-861

LEGAL AND POLITICAL PROTECTION ONLY

CM/1 Annex A to Administrative Order 29.

PCIRO **APPLICATION FOR ASSISTANCE** M 18854

1. HASKIEL Family Name / Familienname
4. 23.11.49 Date / Datum
5. 967754 Identity No. / Ausweis Nr.
2. Other spelling or aliases / Anderer Name
6. Griech- Jew. Nationality / Nationalität
3. R. C. / R. K. Prot. / Religion Jew. / Jud. Other / Andere
7. S. / Led. M. / Verh. Sep. / Getr. D. / Gesch. Wid. / Ww. Un. C. / Alleinsth. Kind Marital Status / Familienstand

8. Names / Name	Relationship to head / Verwandtschaftsgrad z. d. Familienhaupt	Date of birth / Geburtsdatum	Nationality / Staatsangehörigkeit / Nationalität	Town, province and country of birth / Geburtsort, Bezirk, Staat
(1) SAMUEL Husband / Ehemann	Husband (allein)	3.9.17	Jew.	Salonici Griech.

[redacted]

Andere Familienmitglieder

a. Full Names / Volle Namen
b. 8/1 only AJDC/eb-
c.
d.
e.
f.
g. 5906 6323

Regettlement check 15. Jan. 1952 IRO Control Center Munich

LEGAL AND POLITICAL PROTECTION ONLY

10. Places of residence for last 12 years / Aufenthaltsorte seit den letzten 12 Jahren 4577 5703 485

For whom / Für	dates / Datum	Town or village, province and country / Stadt, Dorf, Bezirk, Staat
8.	38-43₃	Saloniki Grischenland
	43₃-43₃	Auschwitz Polen
	43₉-44₇	Warschau — " —
	44₇-45₅	Dachau Germ.
	45₅-jetzt	München — " —

IRO 5/I.50.

11. Employment for last 12 years, including present / Beschäftigung in den letzten 12 Jahren, bis heute

For whom / Für	Dates / Datum	Type of work / Beschäftigungsart	Wages / Gehalt oder Lohn	Employer / Arbeitgeber	Town, province and country / Stadt, Bezirk und Staat	Reason change / Warum den Arbeitsplatz geändert
8.	38-42₃	Fischer		d. Eltern	Salonici	Griech.
	42₃-43₂	Zw. Arbeiter		Arb. Lager	Gida	— " —
	43₂-43₂	— " —		Getto	Saloniki	— " —
	43₂-43₃	auf d. Transport			Saloniki Auschwitz	
	43₃-43₉	Häftling		K.Z.L.	Auschwitz	Polen
	43₉-44₇	— " —		— " —	Warschau	— " —
	44₇-45₅	— " —		— " —	Dachau	Germ.
	45₅-jetzt	ohne Arbeit		auf d. Unterstütz. d. Bayer. Fürsorge u. Jew. Committee	München	— " —

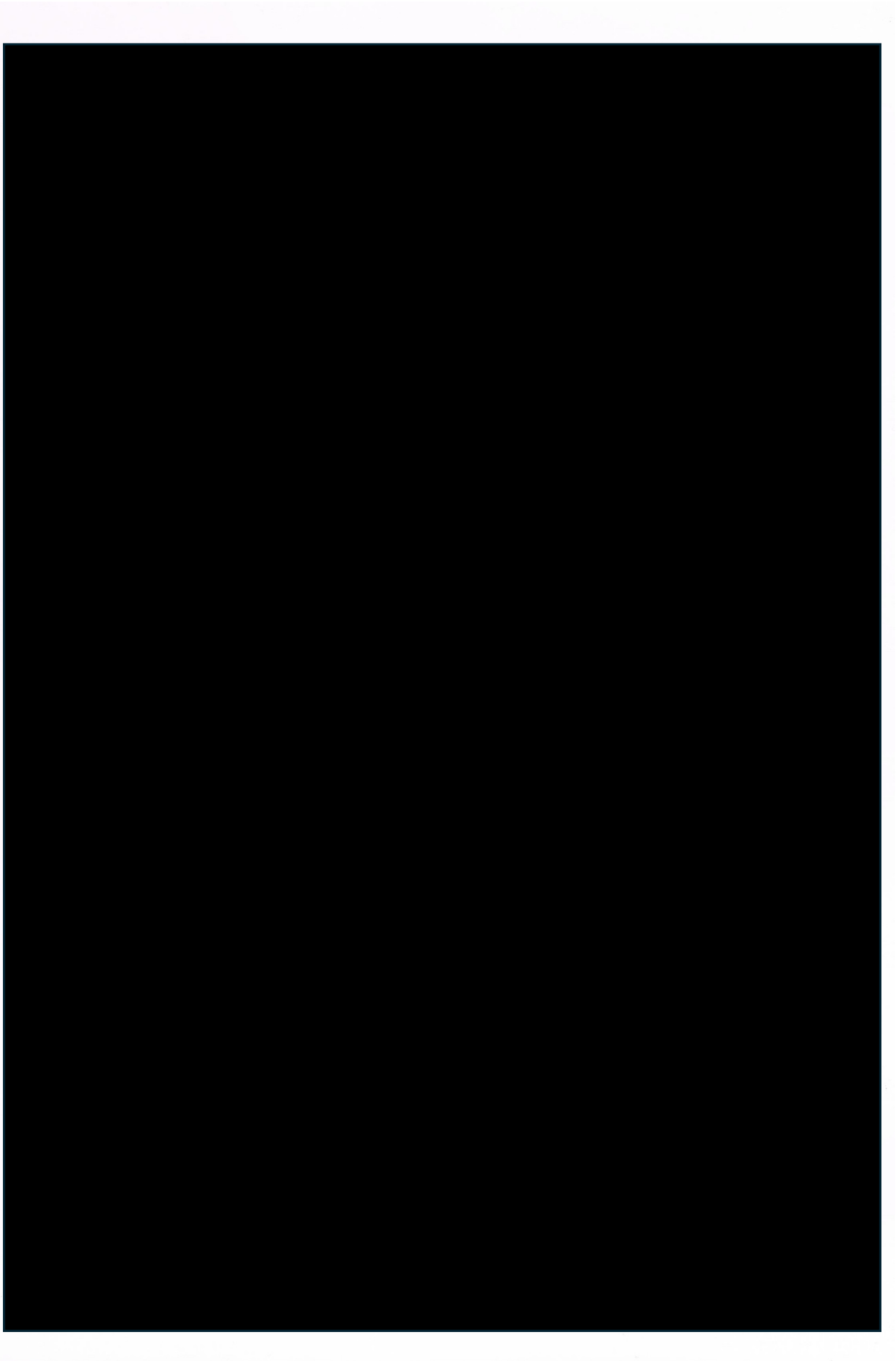
PL-1554

S/0221. 4. 48. 20000.

check sheet written 23/11.49

Copy of Doc. ID # 79167449 in conformity with the ITS Archives

17. Immigration application form to the USA. Source: Courtesy Arolsen Archives (ITS).



18. Post-war Member ID of Jewish Community Munich, and an identity card ‘recognition as a persecuted person’ by the state compensation office in Bavaria in the 1950s. Source: My family archive.

3.2. Pame Platia (Let's go to the square): Green Space, Memory, Freedom

Today, Platia Elefterias Square, where the first round-up of Jewish men happened, remains a controversial site for the struggle of commemoration. In the wake of the student movement, a group formed to call on local politicians to act and turn the square into a memorial park.[34]

> "On the 11th of July 1942, the Nazis concentrated 9000 Jews from Thessaloniki on Platia Eleftherias. Our fellow citizens were subjected to humiliation and torture. Some are whipped, others faint, and some tragically die. This was the Black Saturday of our city. By 1950, Platia Eleftherias had become a car park, and the dramatic historical events that took place there only eight years ago seem to be forgotten.
>
> In 2012, there was an attempt to transform Plateia Eleftherias from a car park into a green park of memory and remembrance. The project moved forward in 2019. The Municipality signed a contract with a construction company, the European Investment Bank, and the Green Fund for the project. The funding from the institution is still available today. In the meantime, construction hoarding had been erected around the square, and the asphalt was removed, but then the project stopped. The construction company declared bankruptcy, and the new Zervas municipality stopped the park construction. Without adequate planning, they announced that an underground car park would be built instead of the park. In 2021, the Zervas municipality removed the hoarding, and the square became a car park again. […]
>
> Many years later, we're still up against a vicious circle. What does building an underground car park on the seafront of Thessaloniki mean? […] The fundamental problematic aspects are, firstly, the existence of underground remains of the Byzantine walls - a UNESCO monument that can lead to potential destruction, delays to the projects, and constitutes one more strike to the cultural heritage of Thessaloniki. Secondly, the high sea levels raise the construction costs, and thirdly, there is uncertainty about securing new and larger funding."

[34] Excerpt of speech by a student initiative, 2022, from my video archive in *Outtakes 1-3* produced for the exhibition *we can never fly first class*, Gallery Einwand, Munich City Museum, 2023.

19. Student Protest for a Memory Park at Eleftherias Square and Poster of March of Remembrance and March of the Living Thessaloniki, Video stills from *Outtakes 1*, produced in the realm of the exhibition; we *can never fly first class*, Munich City Museum, Gallery Einwand, 2023.

20. Vardaris District. Video stills from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

21. *Souvenir*, Superimposition. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.
Source: Courtesy Archive of Thessaloniki History Centre.

3.3. Scene 4: Vardaris, the heart of Bara!

"This is the heart of Bara. The heart! The seediest things happened here! You had to know someone to get in here. You had to be familiar with someone, or you couldn't move freely here. Otherwise, they would have carried you out of here dead!"

Solomon Parente[35]

Vardaris is a sub-proletarian district partly reconstructed with social housing after the Great Fire of 1917. My family used to live there; their neighbours were the Parente Family until they were deported together. During the occupation, the Baron Hirsch Ghetto was created, and the district became the main one of three ghettos established in Thessaloniki because it is close to the freight station. The Germans gathered Jews from all over Greece in Thessaloniki. Houses were expropriated and distributed to mainly former 'refugees' from the exchange of population (Asia Minor Catastrophe).[36]

[35] Excerpt from my video essay *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.
[36] See recent research studies on Jewish assets in Thessaloniki: 'Post-war transformation of Thessaloniki and the fate of the Jewish assets', Available at: http://thessaloniki-jewishassets.gr/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

In an interview (2011) with Marcos Parente – Solomon's brother (both childhood friends of my father), a tyre dealer working in his old house in the same street my family used to live in – we spoke about post-WWII times in Vardaris. That is when his father came back from the concentration camps:

> Me: "Solomon told me that the street would be widened, and your family house would be expropriated."
>
> "Right, the street is going to be widened. The only thing that remains of Rezi Vardar – that's what the neighbourhood used to be called – is this house as a memory of that time. My father loved this house. He wouldn't have swapped it for a castle. I grew up here, 58 years! […] My whole life is here. It pains me, but we can't do anything about it.
>
> He returned in May 1945. Other people had moved inside his house, including some refugees. In the course of the population exchange. He turned up wearing a soldier's uniform, because they had also supplied them with uniforms there. So the people kicked him out down the stairs, he went flying all the way down. Meanwhile he had no documents, nor anything else. How should he get papers, anyway? There was an entry in the cadastral register, so he went to the chief of police, a certain Moushountis who was notorious in Thessaloniki, and told him: 'I just returned from forced labour and found my house occupied.' Moushountis, who was a good guy, went and told the people this house belongs to the gentleman here. They all lived in the house together for six months. Until they left."

The house was demolished in 2015, even though the street was not widened. Ultimately, the argument made by the city council was to demand unconditional demolition from the courts. Today, the wasteland left behind is simply a parking lot on sandy ground. The main businesses in the area are car parts dealers and repair workshops. New fancy hotels are being built between extremely impoverished parts of the neighbourhood, tourists are accommodated, while the old houses are left run down. Despite its rich history, the neighbourhood's condition remains extraordinarily sad. The house was a significant place in social and historical terms, a micro-history of a working-class Jewish family in Thessaloniki. The following generation of children continued the friendship of the survivors, that is, my father's generation with the Parente brothers as young playmates in Thessaloniki. I have travelled along their stories, which were the starting point of my 2010 journey through Jewish Thessaloniki. This gave me an insight into the sub-proletarian history that was also the background of my grandfather's family. The extended interviews are based on documentary film and oral history practice and form the basis of my artistic work and methodology in most cases of my previous video essays.

22. Solomon Parente on the left with my grandfather and my father on the right in the 1960s in front of the tailor shop and family house in Vardaris. Video still from *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.

23. Markos Parente in front of his tailor shop and family house in Vardaris, 2011. Video still from *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.

24. Last Jewish family house in the Vardaris district of the Parente's, 2011. Video still from *Tsakalos Blues*, 2014.

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25. Vardaris, house demolition 2015 to broaden the street for a parking lot. Video stills from *Outtakes 2*, produced in the realm of the exhibition; *we can never fly first class*, Munich City Museum, Gallery Einwand, 2023.

26. Walk through Vardaris to the parking lot where the house was demolished. Video still from *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

In *Precarious Twilight Zones*, the performer enters Rezi Vardar with the gesture of a barter deal. She circles the streets with the piece of jewellery, a hamsa pendant. *Souvenirs* from the district are overexposed during her fast-paced walk. The brothels, the Jewish pawnbrokers and the Allied forces gathering in the neighbourhood before the Great Fire appear like flashbacks on her way through. She activates and marks her surroundings with stickers printed with Spinozian notions. The gesture of fast action relates to the affect towards the district, which is the main idea of this scene. She walks alongside the former tobacco factory building, in which Jewish women led the most significant strikes of the 19th century seen in the city. Shots of Super 8 material from my family album appear like 'found footage' inserts. At the same time, she passes the street where my family used to live, the parking lot, until she reaches the corner where the ghetto begins (superimposition of an image from the entrance of the audio-visual archive of the International Red Cross). A hard video edit transports the viewer to a scene where the riot police chase students on Aristotle University's campus.

27. Mourning ceremony on the site of the faculty of philosophy. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

28. Max Merten on trial in 1959. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

29. Student protest on Eganatia Street at the centre of Thessaloniki. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021. The video footage was kindly contributed by the journalists Litsardakis and Avramidis.

30. The Burial of the photograph of my grand uncle behind the monument of the cemetery on the Aristotle University campus. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021.

31. Police evict the student protest on the Aristotle University campus. Video still, *Precarious Twilight Zones*, 2021. Journalist Litsardakis kindly contributed the footage.

3.4. Scene 5: “This is my university! Where am I?”

“Mourners, when they cover themselves in dirt or ashes, or engage in other practices of the negation of the self, which seem surprisingly similar across cultures, […].
The dead themselves have become spirits; they are ethereal beings or bodiless abstractions, or perhaps they are embodied in permanent monuments like tombs or beautiful heirlooms, or buildings left in their memory –”

David Graeber[37]

An excerpt of documentary footage shows the police chasing students off the university campus they held occupied for the previous months in 2020 and 2021. The student movement’s protest was the most consistent during the Covid-19 pandemic in Greece. In Thessaloniki, demonstrations were held every Thursday. Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis introduced a higher-education reform that allows police to enter university campuses. The student movement was one of the most critical milestones in ending the Greek Junta’s rule (from 1967 to 1974). Since 1974, police forces have been banned from entering the country’s university campuses; in recent decades, they have been an essential source of protection from police violence for protestors all over Greece.

[37] Graeber, D. (2006) ‘Turning Modes of Production Inside Out: Or, Why Capitalism is a Transformation of Slavery’, *Critique of Anthropology,* 26 (1), p. 75, Available at: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0308275X06061484

In February 2021, the Greek minister of education and religious affairs, Niki Kerameos, introduced the 4777/2021 bill in parliament, commonly known as the ‘Kerameos bill.’ Among other reforms, the bill proposes a minimum admission base, removing long-term students, and establishing a campus police force. It abolished university immunity for the first time since the restoration of democracy in 1974.

The mourning demonstration begins. Using an unknown code, the performer manages to enter the campus, and the protesting students closely follow her with a banner that reads in Ladino, “The dead know nothing; everything is in the eye of the living.” The demonstration starts at the entrance to the university’s oldest building, the Faculty of Philosophy. The well-known street dogs that walk alongside at every demonstration join the scene voluntarily. Between the walking group, images appear from the audio-visual archive of the International Red Cross that document the destruction of the old cemetery in a close-up of bones and scatted tombstones.

A ceremony is held in the central spot of the campus. The image of Max Merten is burned with the help of a five euro note, the amount of ‘reparation’ payments he received for every day in prison in Greece after his release and return to Germany. This is followed by a scene of silent 16mm film clips from the trial in the 1950s; subsequently, the corrupt Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis is shown, who was involved in negotiating Merten’s release with the German Foreign Office. Karamanlis also introduced the law in the constitution that no German war criminals could be charged in Greece in the future.

The photo of my great uncle is buried in a ceremony (at the site of a tree most likely illegally planted by Greek Boy Scouts) at the end of the video, taking place on the Aristotle University campus behind the monument to the former Jewish cemetery erected in 2014. The act signifies the possible commencement of closure regarding a missing loved one, circling like a ghost in the stories of my father since their parents gave him the same name. It is known that families whose relatives died far away (or on migration routes and in wars) often only received some belongings and used images of the lost to hold a ceremony facilitating the process of grieving and mourning.

32. Thessaloniki after the Liberation. Photograph taken by *ELAS*. Source: Courtesy of The Museum of Photography (PHMK).

4. **Preludes to the Cold War**

"We feel the pain of the downtrodden race just like ours. Every Greek should protest against the suffering of the Jews because it's part of the suffering that the occupier has heaped on all the people who dwell on Greek soil. It is a part of the fascist brutality that strikes one or the other or all of us together."

National Solidarity (*EAM*) Proclamation, Athens, April 1943[38]

The KKE (Greek Communist Party) founded the resistance movement *EAM-ELAS*, which incorporated several other leftist and republican groups by calling for action against the Axis powers. In 1943, there were about 20,000 partisans involved in the armed struggle against the Occupation; by 1944, only around 5000 were left.[39] The *EAM* became a unique left mass movement in Greece's history. One of the central partisan figures was Aris Velouchiotis, alias Athanasios Klaras, a bourgeois communist labelled a criminal by the Metaxas dictatorship. The participation of Jewish fighters would be a forgotten page in history books for years to come only with the work of historian Jason Chandrinos and the subsequent exhibition *Synagonistis ('comrade in arms'): Greek Jews in*

[38] Chandrinos, J. and the Jewish Museum (2013) 'Roll of Honour: Those who never wore the Yellow Star', *Synagonistis. Greek Jews in the National Resistance.* Athens: Jewish Museum of Greece, p. 5.
[39] The role of Winston Churchill, the entanglement with the British Army and the Greek republican troops would open another significant chapter.

the National Resistance organised by the Jewish Museum of Greece (2013) would these events became visible to the public eye at last.

> "Thessaloniki, Saturday, 20 March 1943, 11 am.: A group of five young Jewish men leave the ghetto, hurriedly board a tram at the 17th stop, Pyli Vardariou, located at the junction of Egnatia and Langada streets. With quick steps, they move towards the western exit of the city. Looking around carefully, they rip the yellow star from their chests and go towards the first German blockade and from there into the unknown. They avoid looking back at their hometown, a city where the most unspeakable tragedy has already been put on the rails. That same night, they sleep in a ditch outside the city, but with their ears on the ground in order to hear the German patrols and hark the call of salvation [...]. The next day with the help of the resistance liaisons they reach the hospitable villages of Mt Vermio. Soon others will follow. [...] The will become partisans in the Greek language: andartes" (Chandrinos, J. and the Jewish Museum, 2013, front page).

In relation to the exhibition about the *Synagonistis*, I asked Voglis in the interview:

> Me: "As I understood from the film in the exhibition about the *Synagonistis*, within *EAM/ELAS*, were there no problems with antisemitism?"
>
> Voglis: "Yes, on the contrary. The leftist resistance was involved more or less in rescuing Jews, but again you have to find the network. But this is a bit complicated because it's about the question of why so many Greek Jews were exterminated. And what is the responsibility of the Greek authorities, Greek society and the Greek resistance? In the exhibition about *Synagonistis*, there were some testimonies from survivors who, under the communist collaborators in this area of Thessaly, were involved in the arrest of Jews, but that was one testimony. There is no research being done. […] When the Jews from Salonika were deported to Auschwitz, we know that those at the top of the list who got the right to 'protect' Jewish property were the collaborators; they took the best places, the best shops with the most expensive merchandise."

According to Chandrinos, only around 400 Jews from Thessaloniki managed to make their way to the partisan-held territories and join in the resistance of *EAM-ELAS* (ibid., p. 9). Many more Jewish women and men from around the country fought in the mountains, as well as organised 'Secret Rescue Committees' and Jewish battalions. In consequence, many survived the war.

One event was striking in their actions. When, in September 1943, the Germans took over the Italian occupation zone, the erstwhile protection of the Jews was gone, and Eichmann, together with Wisliceny, continued to schedule and prepare further deportations. They blackmailed the chief rabbi of Athens, Elias Barzilai, to hand over a list of community members. Then, on the weekend of 23–25 September 1943, Kostas Vidalis (*EAM–ELAS*) and Jewish fighters like Manolis Arouch managed to smuggle the chief rabbi, together with his wife and daughter, into the mountains of central Greece. After his disappearance, many Jewish people from Athens either escaped or prepared their plans to hide; the Germans never received a list of community members in the end. These actions saved the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of Athenian Jews, including the rabbi and his family (Mazower, 1993).

In the Italian zone, Jewish people were not persecuted or handed over to the Germans. On the contrary, for example, the Italian consul Guelfo Zamboni was active in arranging escape routes for Jewish people towards the south. Italian military officials refused to collaborate with the Germans in their realising of 'The Final Solution.' In general, the Italian zone was an important territory via which to be able to escape and in which to obtain false, life-saving identities, to be lucky enough to be hidden by a family or where one could join the resistance in the mountains.

Back in Thessaloniki, one month later, in October 1943, the grounds of the cemetery were formally registered as a public domain, and the land came into the possession of the Greek state. However, the destruction was incomplete and continued after the war ended. As a result, the cemetery would become a vast quarry. The Germans, the church, the municipality, public associations and theatres used the marble stones and the bricks as building materials. The liberation of Thessaloniki by *EAM–ELAS* took place on 30 October 1944, and finally, the whole of Greece's territory was taken back on 9 May 1945. Then, the Cold war began. Thereafter, Konrad Adenauer (Chancellor of Germany) pressured Konstantinos Karamanlis (Prime Minister of Greece) to close the case and asked for the extradition of Merten in exchange for further economic agreements being concluded between Germany and Greece. Thus, Karamanlis implemented a law preventing any possibility of the legal prosecution of the German perpetrators in the future in return for the prospect of faster accession to the European Economic Community.

The resistance fighter Manolis Glezos, who, as a young student in 1941, had torn down the swastika flag hanging from the Acropolis, was incarcerated in the same prison as Merten in Athens. Glezos witnessed and remembers the night of the latter's release. After some months of imprisonment, Merten was freed as a result of the German–Greek agreements and received reparations from the German state of five Deutschmarks for every day spent in jail, the same amount that was given as compensation to some Holocaust survivors. Merten was informally called 'the Eichmann of Thessaloniki' yet continued to live in Berlin until his eventual death in 1971. Wisliceny was indicted at the Nuremberg trials and executed in 1948 in Bratislava. Brunner successfully escaped Germany while he was working for the Gehlen Organization (United States intelligence agency) with a false identity card and was granted asylum in Syria. He was condemned to death in absentia for crimes against humanity in France in 1954. The Simon Wiesenthal Center reported his death in Damascus in 2010.

5. **Double standards of reparations**

David Saltiel, the current president of the Jewish community, has said that he will not give up his people's demands and will continue to prove events judicially. With one exception, in the 1960s, Germany still refuses to honour reparations. Back then, it paid 115 million Deutschmarks only to Greek citizens who were persecuted for political, religious or racist reasons during WWII.

One of the German government's main arguments is that Greece gave up its rights with the 'Two plus Four Agreement' of 1990 on the reunification of East and West Germany. In fact, with the 'London Agreement on German External Debts' from 1953, the Federal Republic of Germany saw its war debts reduced by 50 percent to about 15 billion Deutschmarks, stretched out over three years. The London Agreement included the stipulation that debts had to be paid even after the reunification of Germany should a 'Peace Contract' be signed. With tricks, however, in formulating the reunification agreement – namely, a two plus four treaty instead of a peace contract per se – the Germans (Hans-Dietrich Genscher played a crucial role herein) could renegade on their war debts. The strategy adopted was not to recognise individual claims by survivors from Greek villages to avoid further claims from, for example, Italy, Yugoslavia, Belarus and Ukraine. Brutal massacres of civilians happened in all these places, masked as part of the fight against partisans – and that is not even to mention the unacknowledged claims of the Roma and Sinti communities.

Even though various historians found evidence of this deliberate manoeuvre by the German government, successive ones seem to have succeeded in continuing to refuse to accept their responsibilities. In 2014, for the first time, a German official, Joachim Gauck (former president of Germany), visited Greece to apologise for the massacres. The 'German–Greek Future Fund'[40] was established in the same year to help 'reconcile and rehabilitate' past atrocities and robberies by Germany. Through the selection of research projects for funding, Germany influences how the historical reappraisal is framed aesthetically and politically.[41]

A detailed chronicle about the devastating mass murder, economic damage, theft of resources and food, as well as expropriation of goods, small industries and ancient Greek artefacts can be found in *Schwarzbuch der Besatzung* (*The Black Book of Occupation*) of the National Committee for Reparation Claims from Greece to Germany, published in 2012.[42]

[40] German Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2024) Available at: https://griechenland.diplo.de/gr-de/themen/deutschland-und-griechenland/zukunftsfonds (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
[41] In July 2022, German foreign minister Anna Lena Baerbock visited Athens. In an interview with the newspaper TAN NEA, she emphasised that this chapter was closed in response to the question about reparations, which was unresolved for Greece in contrast to Germany.
[42] The first attempt by the Greek state to claim reparations was at "The Paris Conference on Reparations" in 1945.
Radiopoulos, A. (2022) *Die griechischen Reparationsforderungen gegenüber Deutschland. Archivdokumente des griechischen Außenministeriums*. Berlin: Metropol Verlag.

33. Exhibition view, *we can never fly first class*, Gallery Einwand, Munich City Museum, 2023.


Back then it was called Hotel Bristol,
we didn't have to pay anything because


As a stateless person, you can avoid or oppose the state,
but you can no longer ally with it.
D.E. Sattler - 36th thesis on statelessness-

34. My grandfather, during post-war times. exhibition view: *we can never fly first class*, Gallery Einwand, Munich City Museum, 2023.

5.1. Legacies

> "The Asra Kadisha (Committee for the Preservation of Gravesites), the leadership of the Jewish community of Greece as well as other Jewish organizations dedicated to the preservation of cemeteries abroad have all strongly protested the desecration of the Jewish cemetery as a violation of their religious beliefs. All of these organizations have stated that construction is taking place inside the boundaries of the Jewish cemetery [...]. All construction work of a new Metro station and a campus building should be halted immediately" (Rubel, 2008, p. 2).

In 2008, "A Report on Preventing any Further Desecration of the Jewish Cemetery of Thessaloniki, Greece. Findings, Concerns and Recommendations" by Rabbi David Rubel from New York – compiled within the framework of the central Rabbinical Conference (Asra Kadisha Conference for the Protection of Jewish Cemeteries) – was released. It assembled facts about the desertification of the Jewish Cemetery under the authority of the City of Thessaloniki and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Further, the report advocates against the digging in relation to the construction of a subway station near the university's campus. During a visit in 2007 by a commission of the central Rabbinical Congress and members of Magen David Yeshivah School, New York, photographs showed evidence that digging was taking place within the boundaries of the Jewish cemetery; skeletons and bones were clearly visible. Rubel states:

> "Until an authoritative and unbiased map is finally produced of the Jewish cemetery of Thessaloniki, all construction in contested areas should stop immediately. Just from the research that we have conducted on the cemetery, it is abundantly clear that there is compelling evidence that significantly differs from the United States Consulate General Office in Thessaloniki (which is based on mapping from the Survey Office of Thessaloniki in 1936 and cannot be judged an objective party). Presently, there is no objective basis to disprove that the digging is taking place inside the boundaries of the Jewish cemetery" (ibid., p. 2).

There is no consensus regarding authoritative maps about the boundaries of the cemetery, and it is mentioned that even the main street beside (Egnatia Odos) the university's campus belonged to the cemetery's site. In 2005, a map was produced by a Thessaloniki court-appointed surveyor stating that there is no construction within the site's boundaries: "The issue did not warrant any further attention by the U.S. Department of State General's Office of the Consulate" (ibid., p. 3). The States General's office in Thessaloniki (Consulate General of the United States in Thessaloniki) was included in these concerns on behalf of several organisations and sponsors seeking to compile a report with Asra Kadisha. In the following, Rubel outlines materials and arguments on why the map created in 1936 is not accurate. The university was created in 1925, and as mentioned above, gradual expropriation happened also in the 1930s.

> "In the fall of 1936, the Jewish community of Thessaloniki published an official protest against the planned expropriation of the Jewish cemetery, including an assertion that the actual boundaries of the cemetery are 550,000 square metres" (ibid., p. 4).

Rubel further argues that the cemetery issue meets all criteria to fall under the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad mandate and urges the U.S. State Department to pressure the Greek government to sign a treaty with the commission. In the following, he gives an example of a 'good' policy in the US:

> "The sensitivity, respect and honesty that a government shows to its own history reveals much about its citizens and its government. We can only keep thinking about the African Burial Ground National Monument in lower Manhattan on Duane Street (which is maintained by the National Park Service). The national memorial honours the estimated 15,000 Africans (both free persons and slaves) who were buried at the approximately seven-acre site in the 17th and 18th centuries. Also, the history of the burial ground is one more powerful example of the pervasive racism that existed in colonial New York. However, when construction in 1991 necessitated excavation and the remains were first identified, it was immediately halted. It is now a national park with a large memorial soon to be constructed" (ibid., p. 7).

With this multidirectional move, Rubel illuminates two revealed blind spots. Firstly, it serves to suggest an image of the US government dealing respectfully with their history of slavery in maintaining a burial ground century afterwards without even a critique of a certainly belated 'act of discernment.' Secondly, in his example, it seems that the history of racism ended after the times of colonial New York. Nevertheless, the comparison with the African Burial Ground memorial generates a connection between slavery and the Holocaust.

In the next section of the report, he points to the neglect of responsibility by Greek authorities and the university's role in hiding its past. He highlights again: "We have the highest moral obligation to do all in our power to preserve what remains and prevent any further desecration of the dead" (ibid., p. 9). And while in 1997, Thessaloniki was awarded the European Capital of Culture by the European Union; UNESCO even established a Chair at Aristotle University on "Education in Human Rights and Peace." Finally, Rubel points out that Greece violates the 1972 UNESCO Convention concerning protecting global cultural heritage and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2005/40. In quoting the latter, Rubel urges the US: "To exert the utmost efforts, in accordance with their national legislation and in conformity with international human rights law, to ensure that religious places, sites, shrines and religious expressions are fully respected and protected and to take additional measures in cases where they are vulnerable to desecration or destruction" (ibid., p. 10).

Could it mean that, in this case, there is no differentiation between (legacies of) genocide and crimes against humanity when it comes to cultural heritage nowadays? At the end of the report, Rubel notes: "Also, there is absolutely no mentioning of the digging up of skeletons after the war. In the university-building years of 1950 to 1980, an entire campus of buildings was constructed on top of the cemetery. With each land excavation needed to build, caskets and skeletons had to be disturbed" (ibid., p. 13). It was only in 2014 that a memorial dedicated to the memory of the old Jewish cemetery would be situated on a peripheral spot-on Aristotle University's campus. Some fragments with centuries-old inscriptions found their way to the new Jewish cemetery – created after WWII's end in the city's

Stavroupolis neighbourhood – and to the Jewish Museum. The role that the university and other official institutions played during WWII and its aftermath has not been formally challenged until today (Naar, 2016; Saltiel, 2020). Instead, the working of these histories could be described as their structural and social implications have continued to be deliberately side-lined within a growing official memory culture. The question remains: What exactly is in the basement at Heptapyrgion, and another archaeological storage site in the eastern part of the city? What value is given by the state and the country's Archaeological Service to Jewish cultural materials, and are any other efforts being made to record findings?

5.2. Scene 6: The End

"Grief is a path to understanding entangled shared living and dying;
human beings must grieve with, because we are in and of this fabric of undoing.
Without sustained remembrance, we cannot learn to live with ghosts and so cannot think.
Like the crows and with the crows, living and dead
'we are at stake in each other's company.'"

Donna J. Haraway[43]

Each sunset, crow packs return to their trees and nest on a small corner of the upper side of the square. The beginning and the end are both in the exact location, shot in different spots around the monument of Venizelos on the northern side of Aristotelous Square. It is the central square of the city, one that was modernised according to a neo-classical (central perspective) model by the French architect, urban planner and archaeologist Hébrard. Today, it functions as a lively public meeting point. In analogy to the slogan "They tried to bury us but didn't know we were seeds"[44], the performer throws a handful of seeds into the air and opens her eyes as if she never slept.
THE END

This chapter of the dissertation tackled Jewish memory deriving from the gaps in my family story concerning turning points for the community, the missing pieces of archives and the destroyed five-hundred-year-old Jewish cemetery. The mapping of six topographies in *Precarious Twilight Zones* with arrangements of cross-referencing through research materiality marks an actualisation and attempt to re-call different temporalities concerning Greek history and the present.

This work is spun along the gaps and the traces of these gaps between violent histories and their subjective and material testimonies as an attempt to generate memory activism as an artistic practice from below.

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[43] Haraway, Donna J. (2016) *Staying with the Trouble*. Durham: Duke University Press, p. 39.
Haraway is following Van Dooren: *Keeping Faith with Death" and Flight Ways* and *The Body we Care Fo*r by Viciane Despret.
[44] The slogan was readapted for different social and migrant struggles around the world; it derives from the gay poet and Rebetiko scholar Dinos Christianopoulos, born in 1931 in Thessaloniki. He died in August of 2020.

How do the tendencies revealed by this multidirectional approach to memory activism map onto the erasure of other traces in contemporary Greece, namely that of deceased migrants at the current frontier of the European border regime? In the next chapter, I connect this neglected area in migration and memory studies to practices that emerged in relation to the Jewish experience. As in this chapter, I probe how the violation of the racialised dead is made possible with manifold processes of politically supported irresponsibility. From the activists who first fought for dignified burial sites and spaces of mourning to local actors and MPs, I explore how loss and 'ungrievability' (Butler, 2009) affect the social fabric and how working through 'bad debt' (Harney and Moten, 2010) and historical amnesia is inscribed in the labour of memory and care.

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35. Lesvos, Mytilene, 2016. Source: My archive.

Island of Crossings

The Island of Lesvos, located in the northeastern Aegean Sea, lies near the Turkish coast (Gulf of Edremit). Already since the Asia Minor Catastrophe (1921- 1922) and in the 1990s, the island became a route for a multiplicity of migrants on the move from Asian and African destinations, as well in the recent ten years from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, particularly since the war began in 2011.

The Aegean islands, including Chios, Leros, Kos and Samos became, in the past ten years, more intense buffer zones for the European mainland and as other regions like Evros (Northern Greece), Melilla (Spain), Lampedusa (Italy) operational laboratories for border securitisation imposed by EU agencies and its member states. After March 2016, it became nearly impossible to reach the mainland since Frontex and NATO initiated operations in the aftermath of the EU-Turkey Deal and the implementation of the 'Hotspot-Approach' at nine locations in Italy and Greece in 2015. In the Agreement, Turkey was to receive 6 billion Euros from the EU to support more than three million Syrian refugees while committing itself to prevent migration routes from Turkey to Greece and to accept deportations from Greece back to Turkey, as the EU was considering it a safe country. At the same time, closed detention centres were introduced throughout Greece; movement was severely

restricted.[45] Prime Minister Erdogan claims the Aegean islands, including Cyprus, while violating the maritime borders. Turkeys and Greek border patrols have been involved in land and sea pushbacks. The pauperised citizens of Lesvos are constantly confronted with the island as a contested space of geo-political interests between the European Union, NATO, and Turkey and in the making of a gradually equipped militarised border zone.

Navigating through Research Interviews

This chapter builds on the interviews I conducted during two research periods on the island in 2021 and 2022. In September 2021, I moved for one year to Thessaloniki to situate myself, where everything began- at the first location of my research to grasp the current situation in Greece within everyday life. However, I have been cultivating friendships for many years. During that time, I visited Lesvos twice for over a month to establish trusted networks. The conducted research interviews form time scopes, which highlight the perplexity, blockages, and stagnation in dealing with the 'unknown class' who have died during arrival, detention, and transit on the island. The interviews show manifold frustration, despair, and irony about the situation. The conversations are the repercussion of years of unresolved struggles concerning the misleadingly so-called 'refugee crisis', followed by 'border spectacles' together with inhuman post-austerity conditions. Further, the interviews reflect the legacies of the opaque and ill-defined European and National border policy at the expense of migrants and local populations.

When I returned to the island after six years, I was told from the beginning not to photograph in public openly nor to mention that I was researching a topic concerning the situation of transmigrants. Since I travelled by myself, I have been moving carefully because the criminalisation of journalists, volunteers, and actors working in solidarity movements has reached a high level in recent years. I was introduced to local actors involved or part of local solidarity movements from an institutional and self-organised side.

Overall, tiredness and disillusionment with the island's political climate and precarious life pervaded the undertone of many conversations. During that period, I had the chance to meet a range of people from different parts of the island who had experienced the situation over a long time in various positions, such as university students and professors, scholars, activists, journalists, and business owners. The atmosphere differed from the locality, i.e., villages,

[45] After visiting the open camp at *Ellenikon*, I arrived one day after the first partial eviction at the port of Piraeus in Athens. I remember how people desperately reported that the vehicles were towing away their tents with all their documents and belongings.
Smiths, H. (2016) 'Athens under pressure: city races to clear port's refugee camp before tourists arrive', *The Guardian*, 26 April, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2016/apr/26/athens-under-pressure-city-port-refugee-camp-tourists (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

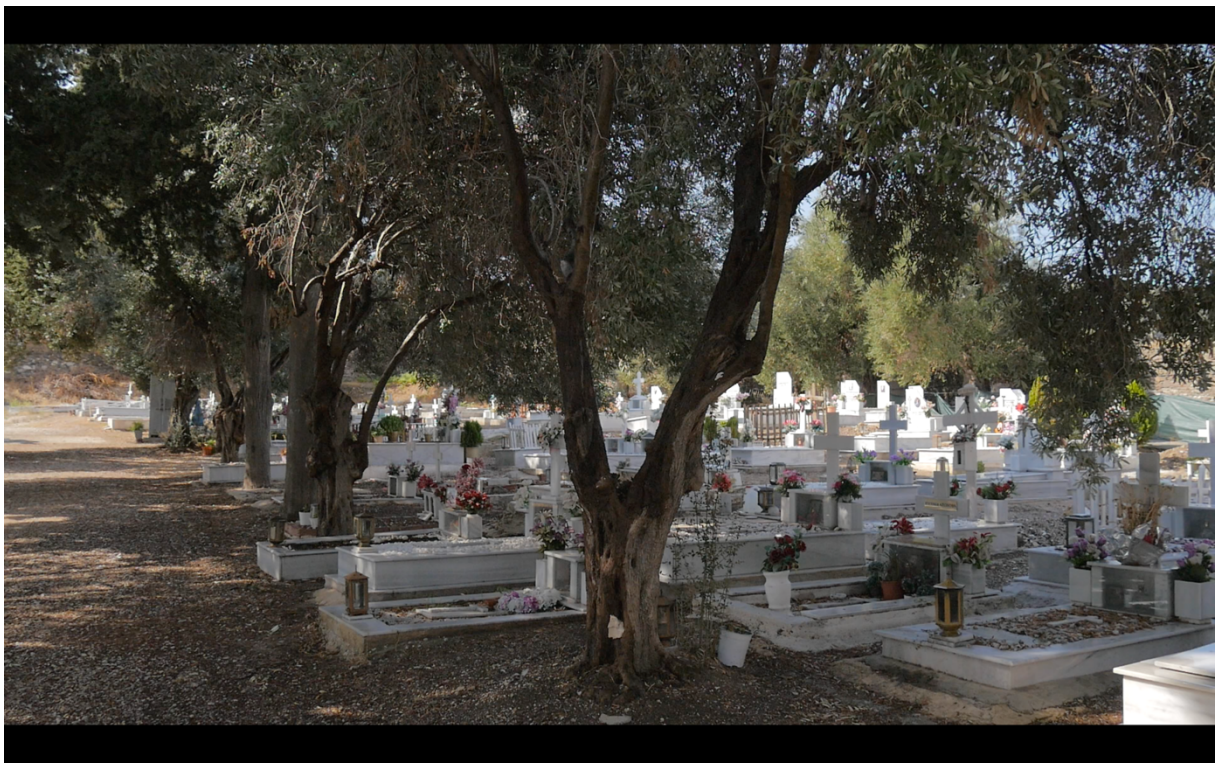
according to ‘touristification’ and wealth.[46] It seemed like a segregated place; at one end, Scandinavian tourists drank for hundreds of euros daily, and Greeks from South Africa converted their inheritance into Airbnb. At the same time, seasonal workers toiled seven days a week. It takes only a two-hour bus ride to the following highly frequented tourist destination on the western side of the island, Plomari, where, during my stay in July 2022, bodies were found on the coast of this site of the island.

On the other side, a modern panopticon (after the camp role model at the Island Samos), the new detention camp Vastria, is being built in the oldest forest on the island. The simultaneity of the microcosms forms close geographical relations over short distances. My travel movements between Thessaloniki and Lesvos are mirrored in some sections. The video and audio recordings conducted during field research are the basis for a future film project that will be realised beyond this thesis.

Nevertheless, the interviews and encounters during my research in Greece form the base of this chapter. The writing method is based on attempting a "dense description” (Geertz, 1983) through the interviewees' narratives, including descriptions of cultural and social circumstances during my two research periods. I contextualise theoretical approaches in relation to my reflections. Some sections of interviews are not linguistically edited but remain in the spoken language, which, of course, contains errors in English.

Unlike the first chapter, which I wrote based on my video works, this chapter is built in resonance with the different voices I encountered. The documented material I have collected and my reflections in the form of diary entries form the basis of my archive, the activation of which I understand in this chapter as a non-linear process of montage through writing. My voice (in italics) reflected on different moments during fieldwork in Lesvos and my association that has emerged through the confrontation of the almost erased traces of Jewish Thessaloniki and vice versa. To think with the theoretical concept of multidirectionality, I applied it to test concrete tools of ‘com-possibility’ (Chapter 3) by combining methods of art, activism and academic research, which means interacting with different lived realities by making oneself vulnerable within connections and questions of positionality and lived experience. This chapter could not have been realised without the generosity, cooperation, and openness of those intervening in everyday violence and those working on the ground for decades under extreme conditions to organise solidarity structures consistently.

[46] My first visit to Lesvos was in 2016. This year, we passed through different places along migration routes through Greece. At *Pikpa*, a self-organised camp for vulnerable people initiated amongst others by the human rights activist E.L., I was shown one of the first news articles about the burials on the contested plot of the Kato Tritos cemetery.



36. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.

Counting

"… *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins.
And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious."

Walter Benjamin, *On the Concept of History*, 1940[47]

One of the three, as they say, resting places for the dead in Mytilene is the Agios Panteleimonas (Saint Panteleimon) Cemetery, which lies on the dead-end street of the same name, far above the harbour to the west at the end of a steep hill not far from a football pitch. Opposite the cemetery's main entrance is a small flower shop with various signs, and a Greek flag at the entrance gate goes unnoticed. Outside the busy city, one can look out into the distance, either towards the fields and mountains or back towards the glistening sea and follow the shimmering dampness that settles on the city.

The small, shady streets with the narrow buildings above them remind me of the old town centre of Thessaloniki, Ano Poli. Muslim and Jewish gravestones are used as steps and paths in small front gardens and built into the facades of state buildings as decoration, while old monasteries are cherished and cared for. The old town feels like a village; people are constantly under social control.

Benjamin, W. (2003) *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, 1938-1940,* Vol. 4. Edited by *Howard* E. and Jennings M. W. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

People generally walk either up or down under the watchful eye of their neighbours, including several dog and cat eyes.

I met P. a few years ago, she teaches in Mytilene at the Aegean University's Department of Social Anthropology and History. P. introduced me to Mr. M. from the municipality of Mytilene. When we first met, they drew my attention to the 'unknown' graves in one of the three town cemeteries. Therefore, my first visit with Mr. M., the local MP, was not at the village Kato Tritos, where the so-called 'refugee cemetery' lies, but to the abandoned part on the outskirts of the Agios Panteleimonas cemetery. I did not get permission to film until the next day from the church administration, so I could only make sound recordings that day. First, we headed towards the small chapel to see the priest to announce our visit. A friendly greeting was exchanged with the priest in the dark chapel, who gave his consent, after which T. (the caretaker) led us on the way out, past family graves built horizontally on both sides, with various monumental graves with figurative decorations and crosses made of marble, to the back of the simple square-framed graves. They were framed with red bricks and held together with a concrete coating. Coarse pebbles are scattered in between.

It was a fortune. At another time in another place, after the destruction of the cemetery, the many bricks of the Jewish graves in Thessaloniki were very popular. They were traded as valuable building materials, secretly taken away to build private houses and distributed to city institutions and churches. A whole brick trading economy arose, while the valuable marble required even more logistical 'trafficking.' Iosif Vaena., the pharmacist, told me that many pieces had been cut up to make them easier to transport and install in public spaces and buildings. He insisted that "we are not talking about recycling material." Hekimoglou, the former chief curator of the Jewish Museum Thessaloniki, pointed to the forgotten brick economy that evolved around the former Jewish cemetery. Due to research conducted in the municipality archive, valuable marble from Jewish tombstones couldn't be moved in some instances because it was too expensive to carry them from the city to another village for construction, as the bricks were in great demand.

> "You can find a lot of tailing and writing about marbles but nothing about the bricks, which were more valuable at that time. Two bricks equalled one paid day for a worker. In 1942-1943, the time of the cemetery's destruction, every good tomb had 120 bricks. So, it was a 'fortune.'"[48]

In Thessaloniki, the bricks and marble used throughout the cityscape became a daily suspicious mystery for me. Triggered by the conversations with Alexandra Yerolympos, her descriptions of mosques turned into Orthodox churches. One sees in Thessaloniki hammams turned into cafes or flower shops and the remains of minarets in churches and mosques turned into porn cinemas. The city's materiality consists of chaotic layers of millennia and centuries-old stones built in different materials and marble. Later, the concrete of post-WWII and the junta brutalised the urban structure.

[48] Interview with Evangelos Hekimoglou, Curator of the Jewish Museum, Thessaloniki (2010-2022), 2016, from my video archive.

Similar to the tombs, the material layers in the cityscape indicate different periods and eras of the site and their construction, inscriptions, and preciousness of the stones. Today's bricks, like the ones of the Jewish tombs, no longer have the same value as in the 1940s. In Lesvos, the cemented bricks are the cheapest and quickest way to build a rectangle. In this sense, it's worth nothing. It is not a fortune. In Thessaloniki, almost all Jewish and Muslim burial sites, regardless of class, were obliterated. The allied armies, such as the British Colonial Army (The British Salonika force and the Army of the Black Sea), installed segregated burial grounds for those who were not Christians. But the so-called Indian cemetery in Thessaloniki, which was initiated during WWI, consists of urns and graves from (1916-1920) with Hindus, Moslems, Shiks, and a Minority of Christians, including a memorial for those who were buried nameless. The Orthodox cemeteries in Thessaloniki were left intact except for those of the nameless poor and persecuted, such as the overgrown and almost impossible-to-find Agios Pavlos Cemetery. In Mytilene, the nameless and poor became part of the cemetery because some struggled for it.

While walking through the cemetery in Mytilene, we saw smaller marble-made orthodox graves with flowers and photos, and freshly dug holes either for future burials or graves were excavated, and the bones were removed to a communal bone burial ground. The dead mainly became a nameless class in the back of the cemetery. Betitled as *Unknown*. A backwards enumeration of years begins with the reiteration of the numbers on the plaques. There are a maximum of three lines of information below each other on the mostly slanted marble panels on these abandoned graves. As we reached the site, Mr. M. started counting:

> **"**15, 15, 15... here 15 here, 2014, 2013, unknown, there are some names here: Mohmad J., here in English. […] 2008, unknown, unknown number 20; 2013, number 10, all these people are... are unknown buried here. This is the place where the municipality buried refugees, the dead refugees from the boats, found dead on the coast of Lesvos, and when this was filled, they opened a new cemetery in Kato Tritos."

They don't pay!

We walked by, and he pointed to the plaques lying on the graves inside the brick frames. Sometimes, they are printed, while others are handwritten. They are in different sizes and probably cut from giant marble slabs. The oldest year of a grave we found is dated 2007. In consultation with the mayor, the city administration is obliged to take care of the burials. The organisation involves different actors: the coastguards, the forensic doctor at the hospital in Mytilene, the undertaker for the transport, a stonemason for the plaques, the municipality, the affiliated priest and the cemetery staff. The Agios Panteleimonas cemetery can be described as a grey area, past the official regulations of the Greek law, that all cemeteries should be subordinate administratively to the municipality.

In this case, the orthodox cemetery with the Christian board is an extra-legal exception. This does not mean this is not a practice in other places in Greece, as the influence of the Orthodox church is

a crucial element of society, and the blurred separation between church and state is the rule rather than an exception. The church can decide to put the so-called refugee graves away anytime, according to Mr M.: “The municipality cannot do anything about this. Only the priest.” I asked him if this was Greek law, and he answered:

> M: “No, It’s tradition. The Greek law says only the municipalities have cemeteries in Greece, no other, but the tradition says; we have this cemetery for 50 years and we go on having it.
>
> Y: So, you don't know if these graves can stay here?
>
> M: “No, no, it's not a clear agreement. [Between the municipality and the church] […] It’s a special issue that belongs to the church. This is not legal; it's illegal by the law, but because the municipality doesn't want to crush the church and the bishop, they leave them.”

They leave them”, i.e., the Orthodox priest and the administration of the local church have not yet ordered the bones to be dug up and moved to a communal bone grave together with other bones. But who could verify this? I rely on the statements in the interviews. According to Christian Orthodox tradition, this can happen after three years of the initial burial of bodies. Mainly, however, the relocation of the bones occurs due to the economic situation of the families, who cannot afford the payment for a relative's grave. The unknown graves are assumed to be all people of the Muslim faith, whether true or not. And no one pays the church for their stay at the cemetery.

37. The ICRC worked together with local authorities to tend to 85 graves of unidentified deceased migrants. Lesvos, Mytilene, Aghios Panteleimonas cemetery. Source: Photothèque CICR. Source: Courtesy of ICRC Audiovisual archives.

38. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.

Mr. M. laughed and said: “No, they don't pay. Who will pay?” If someone would pay for them, would that buy them a right for them to stay? Could they be ‘evicted’ anytime? Or, to put it differently: Did the dead become already indebted to the Greek Orthodox church? In a kind of dead-end post-mortem precarious one-sided creditor-debt relationship, or instead in a condition of ‘bad debt’? Did they become illegalised squatters after three years?

The domino effect of the so-called 2008 global financial crisis in Greece led to the indebtedness of many individual households of Greek citizens having to sell their property to pay for living expenses and health care. The ‘depression’ of financial capital and harsh austerity measures led to an increase in individual and collective despair and waves of suicide. One of the most memorable incidents that entered the collective memory was the suicide of Dimitris Christoulas, who took his own life as a protest in front of parliament in 2012. The 77-year-old pensioner was extremely impoverished due to the Austerity cuts. At his mourning ceremony, slogans against the measures from the European Central Bank and the Greek government were shouted, and people gathered at Syntagma Square. One protester there told the BBC: "Greek people today say that this was not a suicide. It was a murder."[49] The shift of debt policies into the population drifted into individualised and familiarised debt and living from credit.

Today’s ‘societies of control’ (Deleuze, 1992) function primarily through debt and credit (Lazzarato, 2012). Fred Moten and Stephano Harney (2010) have theorised that this neoliberal capital realm arises from the crisis of credit accumulation of ‘bad debt.’

> “Credit is a means of privatization and debt a means of socialization. So long as debt and credit are paired in the monogamous violence of the home, the pension, the government, or the university, debt can only feed credit, debt can only desire credit. And credit can only expand by means of debt. But debt is social and credit is asocial. Debt is mutual. Credit runs only one way. Debt runs in every direction, scattering, escaping, seeking refuge” (Harney and Moten, 2010, p. 1).

The Greek state became hostile towards its (credible) Greek citizens. Newcomers are publicly portrayed as stylised intruders and threats to national and European ‘security’, considered as a risk to public health, dead or alive. For Harney and Moten, carriers of ‘bad debt’ include foremost those generations of post-slavery, subjugated by former imperial aspirations, including the decomposition of non-western societies. In their essay, following the black radical tradition of ‘autonomia’, they reflect on the relationship between the global north and global south concerning restorative justice:

> “Debt cannot be forgiven, it can only be forgotten and remembered. To forgive debt is to restore credit. It is restorative justice. Debt can be abandoned for bad debt, it can be forgotten, but it

[49] Dimitris Christoulas was a 77-year-old former chemist and father who was impoverished due to the Austerity cuts in pensions and could not afford to buy his medicine anymore. He shot himself some weeks before the elections on 4th April 2012, in front of the Greek Parliament in Athens. ‘Greeks mourn man who shot himself outside parliament’, 2012, *BBC News*, 7 April, Available at at:https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-17648466 (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

> cannot be forgiven. Only creditors can forgive, and only debtors, bad debtors, can offer justice. Creditors forgive debt by offering credit, by offering more from the very source of the pain of debt, a pain for which there is only one source of justice: bad debt, forgetting, remembering again, remembering it cannot be paid, cannot be credited, stamped “received.” […] The black radical tradition is debt work. It works in the bad debt of those in bad debt. It works intimately and at a distance until autonomia, for instance, remembers, and then forgets. The black radical tradition is debt unconsolidated” (Harney and Moten, 2010, p. 2).

In this sense, many transit migrants come as historical bearers of the former colonial empires that Europe must confront again with 'bad debt.’ Instead of recognising migration as part of the possibility for restorative justice, ‘bad debt’ must be regulated and externalised. Carriers of 'bad debt' must be abandoned, forgotten, and remembered from the neoliberal scope, which includes their traces of former existence that do not seem to contribute to any valuable (cultural, religious, or symbolic) use for contemporary European societies.

The unknown disappears into the unknown without a trace. A reminder and resonance of genocidal practice of the fabrication of unattended loss. A repercussion of a repetition of human-made disasters. The erasure would be perfect (ed). A trace or a photo of clothes might be found elsewhere in an unknown archive by the coast guards with a referral number that could lead to a related DNA or even an ossuary. Or the fragmentation of the reminiscences of the dead that are forced to disappear yet into another dimension of displacement.

Mr M. assumes these graves can disappear gradually: “In my opinion, year by year, there will be less and less and less.” This statement sounds like a ‘natural’ consequence to me. Who would even notice? The tombs are designed to be abandoned, while contrary to the rest of the tombs in the cemetery (except for the ones of Jehovah's Witnesses), they are abandoned daily, and in the very end, the bones could end up in an unknown place. A post-mortem abandonment, or a becoming of collectively unknown. Nameless once again and forever. “We don’t know who they are.”, stated the cemetery caretaker. This orthodox practice of bone storage (ossuary) doesn’t cause any religious, ethical, or moral ambivalence among locals.

39. Lesvos, Mytilene, 2022 and 2021. Source: My archive.

On the contrary, it is an accepted religion-based practice seen as a common custom and a tradition. It seems a logical consequence to make room for more deaths to come three to five years after the burial ceremonies. Otherwise, one must be able to pay for a grave. Despite the awareness of the caretaker of the site, the church, and the municipality about the different religious traditions, i.e., that exhumations are not allowed as in the Muslim and Jewish faiths, in the worst case, they are subjected to this Orthodox practice. The possible exhumation of the bones within a collective ossuary elsewhere would make it impossible, in case of doubt, to get a last chance as family members to have a DNA match done post-mortem.[50] The visual reminiscences that mark the graves would also disappear.

One of my central questions became how Mr. M. viewed the permanence of the graves and who is accountable for that. It was obvious to him: “You see the situation here. You see the Christian graves, and you see the Muslim graves; it’s a great difference. A great difference!” The very condition of the graves themselves expressed a materiality of gradual disappearance due to active carelessness. Most of the graves have very different plaques. Some have been renewed, and others have slowly lost all recognition. Often, there was a number after the first line, ‘unknown’, and further, the date of death, followed by a reference number in the other two lines. In one tomb were stone tablets lettered and handwritten in Arabic, barely legible without any other references. Behind it, the dried grass turned into spiky straws. Surrounding were small slabs of marble in various sizes. Sometimes, they lay in heaps with some brushwood in broken pieces, between stones and earth. The site is situated at a peripheral corner of the cemetery. Opposite a pile of rubbish was a building site meant to become a small new chapel. Although the International Red Cross 2018 restricted individual graves with the 85 frames of bricks installed, they must have forgotten that the plaques are movable and, therefore, interchangeable, replaceable, or dumped.

The small plaques can be circulated, but they have no material value like the marble stones of the ancient Jewish tombstones with centuries-old inscriptions. These have been cut up, stolen and re-utilised with the help of local authorities. They were subjected to forced displacement and dispersion, which rendered them ‘minor’ in terms of their social and religious value and cultural resonance - and destroyed the evidence of the former vibrant life and memory of the largest pluralistic Sephardic community in Europe. The tombstones of the five-hundred-year-old burial places are not very interesting to contemporary archaeologists. The demolition of the old Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki in the 1940ies was a project of industrialists and collaborators, royalists together with the German occupying forces. Those saw the destruction as progress toward the city's ongoing national modernisation as a desired process towards westernisation.

[50] DNA reminisces are possible to trace back over many decades, as stated by Eurofins, a Forensic Institute, Available at: https://www.eurofins.de/forensik/unsere-expertise/knochen/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

The Jewish gravestones were embedded in many places as decorative elements or to enhance the material value of private and public buildings, as they were mostly made of valuable marble. In other places, they were paving stones for the Thessaloniki seafront promenade, so the inscriptions were invisible. Unlike the graves on Lesvos, which are left to themselves and the weathering, it takes some initiative to ensure that each plaque is made and remains in place, as they are small, movable and not fixed. In both cases, erasing almost all traces of the dead means the creation of ‘ungrievability’ by various chains of complicity, neglect and compliance with foreign policies or occupiers that differ historically from those of today. The treatment of the Jewish and Migrant dead within Greek history thus forms a space of reference and productive resonances for thinking about analogies and dissonances in producing invisibilities of those who are not or were not suitable for the surplus value and recognition of being part crypto-colonial and neoliberal memory culture.

Hamilakis sees the crypto-colonial history of Greece's emergence, as mentioned in the first chapter, as an ‘ongoing dynamic of crypto-colonisation and being crypto-colonised’, self-accompanied by processes of normalisation that go hand in hand with nationalisation. The anthropologist Michael Herzfeld described the buffer zone concept in connection with the crypto-colonial condition. Buffer zones are constituted "between the colonised lands and those as yet untamed, were compelled to acquire political dependence at the expense of massive economic dependence", resulting in a vigorous national culture "to suit the foreign models" (Herzfeld, 2002, quoted in Hamilakis and Greenberg, 2022, p. 43). Following Hamilakis, Greece is a buffer zone for the Christian ‘civilised' West, predating the war of independence that began in 1821. The Greeks were assigned an intermediate role between the empires, as “neither oriental slaves nor western citizens” but as subjects akin to colonised people in need of supervision, according to the writings of Romantic Philhellenes at the turn of the 19th century (ibid., 44).

Today, a picture of a vertical silhouette from the former Jewish cemetery would show the indebted students and lecturers at the indebted university campus in Thessaloniki built on top of it sitting on thousands of skeletons of ‘bad debt’ due to cultural material dispossession of Jews, which became stylised ‘foreigners’ and ‘pro-ottoman traitors’ during the process of nationalisation. A visualisation of a vertical section through the campus could illustrate the indebted students sitting on racial purification, (self-) modernisation and destruction. During the Ottoman period, the cities, including the cemeteries, were not laid out according to modern, centralised principles. A central perspective was introduced to rearrange the city with the renewal of urban planning after the Great Fire of 1917. Beneath the university, the dispersed remnants of the burial site have created a different temporality that has spanned several centuries. A non-occidental landscape continues under the University buildings, while the central perspective of the campus is concreted over the soil with asphalt slabs.

The deliberate pauperisation of large parts of society impacts the possibility of dealing with social history. In the case of the Jewish heritage, it means a lack of school education and restorative justice by Greece (accountability for collaboration) and Germany, which in recent years gradually became more focused due to the launch of funds for historical research (Zukunftsfonds) from Germany to avoid reparation claims from Southeast European countries.

Today, the dependence through debt and neoliberal abandonment as an axis between the European Central Bank (ECB) and Southeast Europe is further externalised in a racial logic by political bodies, subsidised and used by the European Union as a buffer zone for aggressive anti-migration measures. Within these formations of specific economic dependencies and complex historical layers of a pending country, the fabrication of official remembrance is also linked to central European Trends and financial dependencies. The condition of ‘memory work from below’ (from the margins of Europe) must first be understood as precarious. In contrast, through official acknowledgement of the objective of funded institutions. The culture of memory between Greece, Germany, and other European Countries is promoted by applying specific parameters that determine the criteria for promotion and the appropriate narrative that suits a surplus value for central European and Germany’s official remembrance and its image for an exemplary reappraisal of history concerning the holocaust.

A central element of the memorialisation of the Holocaust is the many levels on which human dignity can be violated, which is one of the important lessons that Holocaust research has taught us. The assertion that ‘human dignity is inviolable’, which is enshrined in the German constitution due to the Holocaust after WWII, does not seem to apply to the migration policies. The circumstances are not seen nor legally condemned as ‘crimes against humanity’ on a grand scale. They are, therefore, treated and perpetuated with populist justifications by the bureaucratic shifting back and forth between member states of responsibility regarding human rights violations. The dehumanisation is expressed in a particular way in the treatment of the dead, not in the way of fabricating death and naming them as 'figures' according to the Nazi model, but in acts of neglect and ‘letting them die’ as an instrument of deterrence.

Psychoanalysts Margarete and Alexander Mitscherlich reflected on the repression of complicity and shared responsibility in German families for the Nazi regime in their 1967 book *The Inability to Mourn* (Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern). This inability to mourn, which psychologists observed as arising from their clinical practice, was seen as a symptom of repression of complicity in the narratives of perpetrators becoming heroes and resisters or turning themselves into victims. This analysis of so-called perpetrator families was provocative and sensational for German society at the time. The criminalisation of transit migration is an everyday practice of violating human dignity, which goes

hand in hand with ‘the weaponisation of victimhood’ (Chouliaraki 2024), namely the distorted created narrative of Europe becoming a victim that is suffering from uncontrolled and mass migration.

The neglected graves of transit migrants have so far been challenging to standardise into an official culture of remembrance because this might entail at least a political recognition of co-responsibility, perpetration and the ability to mourn by the policymakers. The unknown graves in Lesvos cannot be (post-) modernised or materially exploited, except symbolically. They are affected by the ongoing post-austerity in one way or another, just like the local society is, but differently. The inexploitability consists in the fact that as unknown dead, they can neither pay for their grave nor, if they are Muslim or Jewish, should they not leave the earth in which they were buried, which a Christian priest would have to respect. In this sense, ‘working through bad debt’, according to Harney and Moten, might speculatively concern coincidentally claiming land since states are obligated to bury every dead on their national territory. The orthodox Panteleimonas cemetery became gradually multi-religious. The materiality of graves from the dead in ‘bad debt’ is inscribed into the cauldron of the shared soil. In a molecular sense, the externalisation of the dead, in most cases, has failed. The living and the dead will not stop crossing through the sea and soil of European territory.

40. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2013. Source: Courtesy of Photo archive by M.S.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Why would they care?

The municipality, together with actors from the Solidarity Movements and, at times, operational NGOs, negotiated burial possibilities with the priest of the cemetery, who is accepted in his function as the Christian patriarch of the place because of the traditional influence and power of the church in Greece. This entanglement between state and church is not to be questioned enough for fear of political consequences such as vote losses and other (economic and moral) reasons for decades. Furthermore, the priest and the church have free handling concerning the graves; if no one interferes, demands, or asks, according to Mr M., actors of the local municipality could intervene if they were willing to care. "It's not the law, i.e., the cemetery as a grey area under Orthodox rule- but there is a law- which obliges the municipality to bury all dead, no matter what religion or nationality they belonged to, but you know there is no political willingness to do that." And because nobody seems to care, and there is no clear policy. No one is held accountable if graves disappear. A situation in which the multiple non-actions built overlapping layers, which (re-) produce exclusionary mechanisms, in other words, reinforce racist and classist stratification upon the dead and thereby affect relatives of the deceased around the world.

"They don't care about the living people here in Kara Tepe (Detention Camp); why would they care about the dead?" became a key sentence. For Mr. M., the local MP, this situation has no consequences for any public entity or state institution. The European Union shifted their agenda to the outskirts of its borders to Lesvos, which therefore must not deal with the consequences, i.e., 'problems' on the one hand. On the other hand, "no one cares" about it, nor does the church, parts of the local population, or political bodies.

Mr T., the cemetery caretaker, cleans the gardens and arranges the plots. Commonly known is that family members in Greece give donations to the caretaker or elderly local woman for extra care of individual graves. My preliminary considerations for the interview with the caretaker were to explore the different ways of dealing with the graves compared to the Christian tradition.

> T: "I don't know if they will be dug out or not. Firstly, these people are Muslims; we don't know their religion; what happens in this case? The graves are of people who drowned years ago. We still haven't received any order to dig them out like the Christians. There are people buried in 2007 and 2008. We still don't know what is going to happen with them."

Unlike the interview with Mr. M., the situation described here is that their hands are tied because the dead are Muslim, and they cannot apply Christian traditions to these graves. Nevertheless, this also seems to be a vague statement since he added: "I don't know if they will be dug out or not." In his view, the Orthodox priest has no 'executive power' over the graves since he belongs to another religious community. "All this must be done with papers." According to him, this refers to bureaucratic processes for which the priest is not responsible.

Ch. (translator): “So, the exhumation after the three years didn’t happen because these people are Muslims?”

T.: “Yes, exactly. We cannot do anything if they don’t bring us papers from the ministries. All this must be done with papers, which permit us to do so, do you understand?”

In his view, the graves could only be exhumed with the permission of a state authority; thus, not even the priest or the church could decide about it. Now, it is ‘testimony against testimony’ or two different statements contradicting each other. The member of the city administration said they have no decision-making power, and the cemetery employee said they have no decision-making power. To find out the exact agreements, if they are in writing, one would have to go back to the archives of the church and the city administration. For family members, as will be described later, exhumation would only be possible with a court order, the possibility of removing the bones, for example, to be able to return them to their countries of origin.

In between the sites of the unknown graves, new graves were built, which were indicated with big marvel crosses. In this case, he and the church's office must be accountable for the map that shows the graves on the whole cemetery, according to what falls under his remit.[51] The overall neglect and abandonment of the individual graves do not seem to bother the official actors either. It is like a postponement of the problem that could magically solve itself. Accountability, therefore, should belong to each of these different institutional bodies, including the employees: the caretaker, the church, the priest and beyond the municipality. Furthermore, one could also ask how the other ‘passersby’ relates to this situation. Would they reach the very last corner of the cemetery?

On the sides, some leaves were piled up with broken plaques on which the dates of the dead were still handwritten, as in the photos of the burials from the activist M. S., who had been part of the struggle for dignified burials from the start. I filmed them while trying to make sense of the fragmented pieces. I took a fragment of a broken plaque from one of the trash piles. How could they break at all? Or were they intentionally broken? Three numbers were left: 013 from the Year 2013.

[51] The interview took place in the summer of 2022 with the church's permission. I began each interview with a small introduction relating to Jewish history in Greece and the question of what happens when almost all traces of the dead are erased.

41. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.

42. Fading plaque of unidentified person. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.

43. ‘Unknown’ contains no further information about the unidentified person. Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive.

44. ‘Unknown’ with date of death and reference number. Video still, Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Video still. Source: My archive

45. Handwritten in Arabic, the plaques are fading and do not include the date of death. Video Still, Agios Panteleimonas cemetery, Mytilene, 2021. Source: My archive.

I decided to see them.

And no one seemed to care for decades. At another time, in another place, the many reminiscences of fragmented and scattered tombstones of the former Old Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki are spread throughout the cityscape. When I told Vaena, who grew up in Thessaloniki, that in my view, what he does is indeed hunt the stones, he answered:

> "No, I decided to see them because they were not hidden anywhere. Of course, they were not easily understood as tombstones, but tombstones are everywhere there. Simply, people decide not to see them."

He decided to see the tombstones allowing the affect they can cause on him. And it did cause him to collect them with his tiny car if he could carry them back to the current Jewish cemetery. I will not forget the day when he showed me how he had just finished moving the large pieces of marble from two former gravestones to the back seat of the car. Since that day, I decided to see them too. In his words, these are the 'fruits of a crime.'

Not seeing, forgetting, or blocking out the unknown graves comes after one has seen them, and this could mean choosing not to be affected by them as a conscious act.[52] A choice comes only after

[52] In the Film Shoah by Claude Lanzmann (1985), Motke & Itzhak survivors of Vilna (Lithuania) report on the opening of mass graves as forced labour. The Germans forbade the use of the words corpse or victim. They had to refer to the dead as 'Figuren' (figures), i.e., puppets or dolls. The imposed language intended to reinforce the dehumanisation of the dead.
Lanzmann, C. (1985) Shoah 1985, Part 1. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNcvwHgyXcg (Accessed: 25 March 2024).

being aware of something because one might not be aware of something. To decide, to make a choice, to choose between… is to have a choice- to take a decision. It implies being able to determine and make a choice. It indicates subtle nuances of privilege to decide to see, ignore, or forget, the privilege to deny or 'don't care.'

There is a city map in the permanent exhibition of the NS Documentation Centre in Munich (former Brown House) in the district of the Nazi headquarters. On the map, all the forced labour companies are marked; there are no streets where forced labourers are not exploited. Anyone must have known about it or seen the forced workers entering and leaving the places. A 'bystander' becomes an apathetic indirect participant in a crime and decides to deny his role of co-responsibility. "Those who remain silent agree" (Wer schweigt stimmt zu), a notorious anti-fascist slogan which originates from the collective responsibility in not acting or in performing passivity as a conscious decision was discussed in the aftermath of WWII in the case of the German atrocities.

The figure of the 'passive bystander' along with the dualist categories of victim and perpetrator has been critically challenged by Michael Rothberg's account on 'implicatedness.' He considered different forms of guilt and (collective) responsibility, drawing on the post-WWII writings between Karl Jaspers and Hannah Arendt. The figure of the implicated subject is an attempt to develop a category for analysis that challenges 'the victim-perpetrator imaginary' and that of the 'passive bystander' that derives foremost out of holocaust studies with entrenched classifications. This does not mean abolishing victim and perpetrator categories per se; on the contrary, implicated subjects help to prolong injustices: "indirect or belated actions and inactions help to produce victims and perpetrators" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 207).

> "Implicated subjects may of course experience degrees of coercion, the realm of implication is above all a realm of conscious and unconscious consent, a place where privileges are enjoyed, and historical legacies shunted aside whether trough deliberate denial or trough what Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick calls 'the privilege of unknowing'" (ibid., pp. 41-42).

To theorise political responsibility in the collective and political sense (and the ambiguous moral sense, according to Levi), it is not a matter of fixing the category, for example, of 'the bystander', but expanding it in complex ways. As Rothberg writes, with Primo Levi's text *The Gray Zone* in mind, people can be 'complexly implicated' because they can "occupy multiple positions at the same time (as victims, perpetrators, and collaborators, for instance)" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 40). Beyond fixed categories, Rothberg is interested in the continuum between victims and perpetrators and those outside, i.e., who can't be assigned to these two categories. However, for him, the mapping of 'implicatedness' reaches limits within a "highly concentrated space of duress" (ibid., pp. 40-41). The overlap between spaces of encloser, for example, concentration camps, ghettos, and prisons, as well as spaces where configurations of power work in fluid ways, was called by Deleuze 'societies of control.'

> "Perhaps it is money that expresses the distinction between the two societies best since discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold in as numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies. The old monetary mole is the animal of the spaces of enclosure, but the serpent is that of the societies of control. We have passed from one animal to the other, from the mole to the serpent, in the system under which we live, but also in our manner of living and in our relations with others. The disciplinary man was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere *surfing* has already replaced the older *sports*" (Deleuze, 1992, pp. 5-6).

A turn from sovereignty to disciplinary societies (Foucault) took place in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries until their peak in the twentieth century. According to Deleuze, the transition to societies of control evolved as "a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted, and which accelerated after World War II: a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be" (ibid., p. 3). This involved a shift in governmentality from 'molds', the power structure of spaces of enclosure, to 'free-floating' control that Deleuze has called 'modulations.' The specificity of the context in which power structures are reshaped is decisive, yet they can function side by side or entangled within each other. For Deleuze, it is the transformation from 'the mole to the serpent' including 'socio-technological' developments of control such as trackable devices (electronic collar and electronic cards) which have become normalised today thirty years after his text was written: "It may be that older methods, borrowed from the former societies of sovereignty, will return to the fore, but with the necessary modifications", while he points out that: "Man is no longer man enclosed, but man in debt" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 6-7).

Considering today's globalised shifts of power formation, Rothberg highlights the nuances of different layers of subjects' inhabitation of power, which can differ depending on specific constellations of oppression and overlapping power structures. For him, "Systems of what Deleuze calls control produce implicated subjects in a more subtle and more far-reaching way than do disciplinary systems" (Rothberg, 2019, p. 41). The question of 'implicatedness' creates the possibility to question anew the contemporary and historical means of indirect participation in injustices, without direct involvement but still benefiting from or contributing to harm while belonging to it. Those who come from or control the regimes are excluded from the figure of thought.

'Implicatedness' implies two dimensions of time, synchronic and diachronic, which refers to both the past and the present, between being completely absent and present. Following Berber Bevernage's account of 'the irrevocable' (coined by Vladimir Jankélévitch), Rothberg means that violent histories remain unresolved and haunting the present (Rothberg, 2019, pp. 1-9). Bevernage deciphers how concepts of time constitute constructions of historicity (by the example of Truth Commissions on claims for transnational justice vis-à-vis positions of nation-states) and claims:

> "For declaring the past dead, and in differentiating it from the present, historical discourses actively exorcize that past and its ghosts" (Bevernage, 2010, p. 124).

Complex thinking of overlapping temporalities challenges a modern conception of time and historicity with a clear division of past, present and future (linear, progressive and chronological), as they are neither mere continuities nor consisting of sharp ruptures.[53] In approaching loss concerning the temporality of overwritten places for Butler, the continuously animated absence of the past is inscribed in the presence and "makes itself known precisely in and through the survival of anachronism itself" (Butler in Eng and Kazanjian, 2003, p. 468).

To map out complexities, Rothberg further draws on theories articulated by intersectional and abolitionist feminism (Combahee River Collective, 2017; Puar, 2007 in Rothberg, 2019) by using different examples to discuss complex structures of racial hierarchies to varying histories of violence (drawing on slavery's impact on today's structural racism in the US, legacies of the Holocaust and South African apartheid, and decolonial liberation struggles). In search of complex social categories, he addresses 'political solidarity' and 'long-distance solidarity' beyond the discourse of identification and sameness. The intersections of common problems of responsibility and (in-) justice draw on relations between heterogeneous cases (Rothberg, 2019, p. 11).

Instead of exploring the multiple levels of discrimination, the analytical figure of the 'implicated subject' rotates around nuances and accumulation of implicit privileges that are not necessarily given in every context; they differ from one context to another. Nevertheless, multifaceted privileges are factors that enable unjust power structures and thus gradually become efficient and sustained. The simultaneity of the two-fold inhabitation of the figure as conscious and unconsciously implicated is found repeatedly throughout the writings.

However, the question arises: to what extent could one attest to the unconscious or repression of something and from which position? What would be the unconscious implication? Acting out on fear-based projections, rejecting the cemetery as is the case of the villagers of Kato Tritos, because it is not so much about the peace of the dead as about the peace of the village? The dead do not produce any surplus value either because, after burial, they fall out of any profit-generating economic chain, except for their symbolic connotations that could become exploitable for political means in the future, for example, memorialisation. Further, are unconscious actions regarded with milder circumstances because they are not intended deliberately? No, otherwise, no one would be responsible with the excuse of some speculative and singled-out unconscious acts, which must be analysed within a social milieu of what kind of desires it produces.

> "…the unconscious itself is no more structural than personal, it does not symbolize any more than it imagines or represents; it engineers, it is machinic. Neither imaginary nor symbolic, it is the Real in itself, the "impossible real" and its production" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p. 53).

[53] For the ancient Greeks, there was not only Chronos (Χρόνος), the embodied God of time, but also Aion (Αἰών), who symbolised the immanent, infinite cyclic time.

In other words, the unconscious is a generative force of desire for the better (deviation from the norm) or worse (fascistic) or, in the view of French psychoanalyst and political philosopher Félix Guattari, of the 'machinic.'

Levi wrote in his essay *The Gray Zone* that he understands nothing about the unconscious and 'the hidden depths', as he calls it. Further, he is not interested in whether there is a murderer inside him because he knows that he is an innocent victim (Levi, 2021, pp. 46-47). But beyond the unthinkable conditions of his experience in Auschwitz, one could also ask whether it entails less individual responsibility to act unconsciously. Or, instead, is a process of becoming conscious also a process of becoming responsible?

For Hannah Arendt, it was clear that if everyone is guilty, no one is responsible. She did not believe that everyone has a dormant 'Eichmann' in possession of oneself and agreed with her long-time friend, the philosopher and poet Günther Anders (originally Stern), who argued that it was the technocratic 'Eichmann world' created by the Nazi regime that brought forth the phenomenon of *The Banality of Evil* (the title of Arendt's s book about Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961 (Anders, 1964). The negotiation of Arendt's question of whether there is such a phenomenon as two forms of political and moral (collective) responsibility is more complicated and exceeds the scope of my writings. Arendt's (1987) notion of responsibility, according to Rothberg, remains focused on the individual, as he introduces the writings on *Responsibility for Justice* by the political theorist Iris Marion Young (2011), which engaged in revising Arendt's thought and argued for a structural 'social connection model' of responsibility. The critical inquiry of Young pointed to the importance of distinguishing between the metaphysical notion of guilt (one of his four notions on guilt, Jaspers, initially written in 1949) (Jaspers, 2009) and collective responsibility (as mere membership of a group or state that connects oneself to injustice) models on liability.

For example, in the case of historical injustice, such as the legacies of colonialism, the direct liability model does not function because perpetrators are no longer alive and thus cannot be declared guilty (individually). For Young, the participation and complex interaction within, for example, institutional structures that might contribute to harm exceed the scope of simply being a member of a polity of injustice. Furthermore, guilt entails a temporality that points back to crimes in the past. In contrast, responsibility involves a temporality of the here and now committed "to transforming structural injustices in future-oriented actions" (Young 2011, quoted in Rothberg, p. 50). The shift from (individual and juridical) guilt to a societal (shared) responsibility that tackles the structural prolongation of injustices in institutions includes accounts of memory that embrace "reconstruction of its historical imaginary", which highlights the means of living within a globalised world (Young, 2011, quoted in Rothberg, p. 52).

To explore the question of subjectivity, which Rothberg feels is not considered enough in Young's account, he draws on the philosopher Simona Forti, who pointed to a subject position that evokes 'involuntary support of domination' functions like a "transmission belt" (Forti, 2017, quoted in Rothberg, p. 54). Forti draws her analysis on subjectivity draws from Nietzsche's genealogy of morals and Foucault's notion of biopower, 'on the maximisation of the value of life as optimisation for its production capacity.' Forti states that passivity to authority and obedience occurs 'when both political and moral is abandoned.' In this interplay, the operative mechanism of the "transmission belt" takes effect for Forti (ibid., p. 55). Therefore, the ambiguity of the roles of prisoners (especially the Kapo) in concentration camps described by Primo Levi becomes productive and central to the figure of the 'implicated subject' (ibid., pp. 54-55).

In a different tone, the French psychoanalyst and philosopher Félix Guattari was concerned with the production of subjectivity in 'societies of control.' Subjugation functions for him via a logic of capital and its semiotisation of exchange value in a fluid account, penetrating the spheres of sociality and divergent desires. The "transmission belt" of control for Guattari thus appears within junctures (between values from 'without' and 'within') enmeshed in a network of apparatuses that function as translatability i.e. "semiotic-condensators", that are neighbouring or directly subordinate to state authority. Félix Guattari wrote in the 1980s that for him, subjectivity is increasingly nationalised, and yet sovereign elements are included in the processes of subjectivisation that function foremost through institutional processes:

> "Ultimately, the subjects of capitalism–like the subjects of the king–only assume the portion of their existence that is accountable in terms of general equivalency […] The capitalist order claims that individuals should only live for an exchange system, a general translatability of all values so that their slightest desire is felt to be a-social, dangerous and guilty. Such an operation of subjugation, meant to cover the whole social field, while 'targeting' accurately its minutest disparities, cannot be satisfied with exterior social control. The general market of values deployed by capital will at once proceed from within and from without. It will only be concerned with economically identified values, but also mental and affective values. It will be up to a multicentred network of collective equipments, State, para-State and media apparatuses to make the junction between this 'without' and this 'within.' The general translatability of the local modes of semiotization of power does not only obey central commands, but "semiotic-condensators" which are adjacent to State power, or directly indentured to it. One essential function is to make sure that each individual assumes mechanisms of control, repression, and modelization of the dominant order. (Such is the role parallel to the administration, police, justice, IRS, stock-exchange, the military, etc., of schools, social services, unions, sport, media, etc.)" (Guattari, 1979 in Lotringer, S., ed, 2009, p. 257).

Thus, the capitalisation of control from 'without' and 'within', including the subjugation of affects of the individual and collective, cannot be treated in isolation from a theory of implication without the role of institutions that are implicated through the translation and transmission of economic and symbolic values. This raises the overarching question of subject formation between exchange value and desire as becoming a 'Beneficiary' and 'Accomplice' for the order of capital itself, where moral

logic seems only applicable to use value as an introject of an a-social, dangerous, or guilty conscience to suppress deviated and block escape routes from (normative) desires.

A deviation from the norm thus might arise from the conscious refusal of introjects and from a desire that evokes appropriation by normative values to secure being morally blessed instead of repelled in the sphere of (social and cultural) capital. This could imply even (collective and singular) micro moves that evoke forms of 'dis-regulation' (such as re-communalising individualised debt) concerning the crux of the meaning of economic neoliberalism that is pushed to regulate the intimate and private sphere (Mitropoulos, 2020).[54] In other words, dignified life means to de-individualise common problems (Garcés, 2013). In 'societies of control', processes of subjectivisation as self-regulation prevail, which stratify and introject their norms of (individual and collective) emotional worlds, including concerning an institutional realm that contributes to maintaining power structures if not otherwise composed and organised. The translation of (liberal) economic values as a form of regulation that functions from 'within' can be described as self-regulatory practices in the so-called private sphere concerning those introjects Guattari pointed to. From the indebted state to the indebted household is the pervasive reality in Greek society, now described as post-austerity. The effects of the 'debt crisis' in Greece have led to the reduction and massive sell-off of public property belonging to local municipalities, making it difficult for the authorities to open land for new cemeteries. The church, on the other hand, traditionally owns an above-average amount of land and property.

However, for global justice movements and possible long and short-distance solidarities, breaking dominant binary clear-cut categories of fixed identities and their reproductive functions is essential. Therefore, acts of complicity, implication, or indifference should be addressed within the scope of stratification of (immaterial) capital of indebtedness and its effects on subjectivity, such as hyper-individuality, depression, and anxiety. To develop new tools of remembrance (and forgetting) which embrace multi-layered temporal and spatial dimensions of injustice in their complexity must include awareness of neoliberal capital and its forms of subjectivation and capture of (material and immaterial) value. For this reason, 'memory work from below' is understood as an (aesthetic and content-related) struggle against dominant narratives that could resist capitalising and instrumentalising for political reasons (s). This includes critically examining memorialisation as 'capturing' of traumatic events to produce cultural capital, which could easily slip into schematic representational and symbolic apparatuses without generating true accountability.

For Rothberg, the political limits are particularly evident in cultures of remembrance, restorative justice, and the human rights framework. 'Implicatedness' depends on investment questions, relationality and (political) positionality. Therefore, positioning or 'how to look' at something plays a

[54] Mitropoulos (2020, p. 112) recounts the Smithian logic of economic liberalism by tracing the reinforcement of global autocratic measures and mismanagement during the pandemic.

crucial role. Thus, the decision to see the fragmented Jewish tombstones in Thessaloniki or the plaques of the ‘ungrievable class’ in Lesvos implies how one looks at it. Namely from the possibility of becoming affected by it. This concerns how resonance spaces relate between world(s), from which ‘situatednesses’ can emerge, be scrutinised and changed. The apparent shift in why certain living and dead people are negotiated under a category of ‘less than human’, which aims to strip them of their dignity, cannot be subsumed as unconscious individual or collective (non-) action. Therefore, an analysis of irresponsibility and ‘implicatedness’ must be negotiated structurally, (trans-) historically, locally and socially. Taking responsibility or becoming responsible, in the case of Lesvos, refers to a chain of conscious non-actions caused and encouraged by the amnesia of crypto-colonial and racist legacies reflected in the current 'bad practices' of mismanagement and the lack of clear political action and global social outrage. Therefore, several vague concessions by European and Greek policymakers to basic humanitarian standards led to arguments for 'spaces of enclosure' and fast deportation measures, the further externalisation of border measures in conjunction with a laboratory of 'letting die', which formed a chain of stalemate situations and neglect of the dead, which thus appears to be politically desired.

46. Container to wash the dead. Kato Tritos cemetery, 2022. Video still. Source: My video archive.

The cemetery

The field where the so-called 'refugee cemetery' was built is the result of the deadly shipwreck in Molivos on 28 October 2015, in which 43 people died.[55] Urgently, the question arose: where to bury the dead? Transmigrants themselves, together with civil actors from solidarity movements and the municipality of Mytilene, had to find a quick solution since the bodies were stuck in the local hospital that ran out of capacity. E.L., the community organiser and funder of the *Village of Altogether* and *PIKPA* Camp, was one of the actors, along with M.S. and other NGOs, who organised the burials of some of the families.[56]

Amid violent events- the need to care for the dead bodies unfolded as a desire to create ethical relations between the living and the dead and, at the same time, agency with affected families. The collective self-organised burials initiated by migrants among other civil actors introduced at first a flight line, an intervention of possible 'grievability.' This started in 2007 in the case of Panteleimonas Cemetery and later during the peak of the so-called refugee crisis at a field of an olive grove in the village of Kato Tritos.

[55] Forensic Architecture (2020) 'Shipwreck at the Threshold of Europe', 19 February, Available at: https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/shipwreck-at-the-threshold-of-europe (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
[56] Cartensen, J. (2015) 'The Cemeteries on Lesbos are Full. But Refugee Families Still Need to Bury their Dead.', *Pulitzer Center*, 3 November, Available at: https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/cemeteries-lesbos-are-full-refugee-families-still-need-bury-their-dead (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

Mr. M. has been a left-wing deputy in the city administration for years. The city administration structure is divided between two island areas. The newly built detention centre at the top of a Northern Mountain in Vastria is built right in the middle, between the two administrative regions. The MP is in contact with M.D., who has agreed with the city council to accept the caretaker role of the cemetery. Whether there is an official employment contract for his task of washing and burying the dead is uncertain.

In October 2021, we arranged a trip to the cemetery with the MP (Mr M.), the caretaker M.D. and M.S. from the group of activists who had organised the first funerals there and helped to fight for the place. We met at Sappho Square to pick up M.D. from Mavrovouni Camp, where he works as a translator, and drove to Kato Tritos. M.S. and M.D. knew each other before disputes about the ethics of accepting donations for the burials in the cemetery in 2016 arose. This conflict led to the withdrawal of local activists and solidarity groups that initiated the struggle for the burial ground. At the same time, the city administration chose M.D. as the only person responsible. After a 15-minute car ride from the highly surveilled detention camp, we arrived. M.D. opened the rusty padlock of the fence. M.S. and I went off with the camera and the sound recorder. The other two stayed just beyond the entrance.

M.S.: “It looks a bit more organized, nicer, and stable, too. But the other ones are in there, from 2015 to 2016 and then after that. It is not stable. We saw that, too, when we came back then, and it was raining; the graves were kind of... not even... distinguishable... between two or three graves... who was lying where... It was difficult, M.D. can say it. At the beginning of winter there, we had no warm water and not even enough water.”

Y. “Not enough water? No?”

M.S.: “No, in winter, you cannot wash; it's too cold. You cannot wash the dead bodies with cold water. It was difficult. I don't know. Is there any facility, M.D?”
M.D.: (nods)

A hose runs to a small white cottage on the side of the field, where bodies are washed.

M.S.: “Who said the last funeral took place two months ago?”

Y: “Two months?”

M.S.: “Yes, do you see this here?”

Y: “Yes.”

M.S.: “Exactly like that. So there's a grave here, too, but who's under this plot, and when did the funeral take place? There's no sign of anything.”

It was windy. The grass has grown tall and dried up. It was difficult to see where there was a grave and where to walk. It was difficult to see and focus through the camera lens. M.S. held the sound recorder. We tried to find the very first grave in the field, that of a child who died in camp Kara Tepe.

The small marble slabs were in the ground among the overgrown grass, most of which are impossible to read. They are faded, and sometimes, single numbers or letters are still visible— a year, a reference number, an age. We walked.

M.S.: “Do people have to be happy with being buried here? No, it must be taken care of. It just can't be that undignified life and then undignified burial and grave.”

Y: “Where did you start?”

M.S.: “Here, I don't know who, it was a small child... who died of cold, it was freezing in Kara Tepe, in 2015.”

Y: “It says three years old.”

M.S.: “And the mother was also there. You see, there is still... so when it rains... […] It was cold, it got sick, and then it was brought to Athens to the hospital and died there. I don't know where the child is now, but it has changed significantly. Is there really such a clear line? Okay, here we have buried 20 people and there are 20 more, so you really don’t know if you can walk between the graves. You see, there is nothing here. Everything is gone.”

47. My first visit with M.S., Kato Tritos cemetery, 2021. Video stills. Source: My video archive.

Is the cemetery not legal because there is no map? It is claimed that there is a map, or the legalisation process is blocked because of the alleged proximity to the village's groundwater. However, is the Orthodox cemetery closer to the town?

The primary responsibility points to the failure of the city authorities because no one seems to have thought that a cemetery also means the work of continuous documentation and separation of the graves. The place should have been taken more seriously, and it was the responsibility that came with decent cemetery maintenance.[57] The responsibility was transferred to M.D., a man from Egypt. There is an unofficial agreement between the municipality and him. According to Mr. M., the MP: “M.D. covers a need, now.” However, one must remember that the cemetery was initiated in 2015. ‘Now’ was initiated seven years ago.

I have met M.D. twice; he is the only one with the cemetery key today. He performs burials according to Muslim customs, and he is the only one who can guess from his memory who is buried where. He told me that he does not accept money, as it is customary in Muslim tradition, and all people are buried with their heads towards Mecca.[58] Now, the men who cover a need have the only possible capacity to achieve re-traceability of most of these graves. M.D. himself becomes a medium of a non-existing physical map with all the gaps in remembering. There are no official opening times to visit the cemetery. Its location and inaccessibility are abandoned from public space and life. During my research, it was claimed that there are DNA samples from all the deceased, but who could prove the opposite? And even if relatives had achieved a DNA match, it becomes more and more difficult to find their graves over the years, if not impossible. Since ‘a post-mortem disappearance’ due to human neglect and natural vegetation takes place on the site.

Furthermore, there needs to be evidence for an existing cemetery map, which is one of the central problems. The legal status of the cemetery in Kato Tritos is linked to the fact that the municipality would be responsible for the permits and the maintenance of the facility, which would involve extra costs. Would this even legally work without a map? And why is no mapping being commissioned? In October 2023, a six-month interim utilisation of the cemetery was given to an NGO (related to the German left party, Die Linke) with what they called *a Memorial to Humanity* project.

Abandonment

The commission's decision to legalise the site is blocked due to a lack of consent among its members. An internal institutional block that upholds the legal limbo. Thus, the case is frozen and

[57] In an informal meeting with a long-time sea rescuer, I was told that she had assisted a family looking for their child's grave just a few weeks before my arrival. She told me that they could not find the grave at first, but after a long search together with M.D., they finally discovered it. If there had been a map of the graves, it probably wouldn't have taken so long to find it.

[58] There are no audio or video recordings of our meetings as M.D. did not consent. I could only take notes during our conversations.

abandoned instead of considered a pressing issue. The term abandonment returns as a vicious cycle in our conversation. Abandonment can be traced back to feudal times of 13th-century Old French to "abandonner" with the meaning "to surrender, release, allow" and reflexively "to devote oneself to" and to the adverbial phrase "à bandon" at will, at discretion". "À" derives from the Latin "ad" and "bandond" (power, jurisdiction) comes from "bannum" (proclamation). The feudal (juridical) element is thus found in the transmissibility of the logic of power and subjugation in giving up (alleged) rights over someone or something. With the change of its meaning over the centuries to modernity, the term signifies leaving someone or something in need (renunciation or desertion), which is under (unrestrained) control. This means, on the one hand, giving up control and power and, on the other hand, releasing something or, instead, leaving it to oneself or handing it over/submitting it to someone else's control.[59]

My father's stateless passport until the 1990s gave him the status of 'Homeless Foreigner' under the 1951 Geneva Conventions. If he had left Germany for over three months, this status would have expired, and another country, the one he was staying in, would have been 'responsible' for him. According to this legal frame, the German state could make its right of abandonment valid to withdraw all citizenship rights according to this stateless status. That is why my father could never travel anywhere for more than three months at a time. The German state was legally protected, and 'they could apply for abandonment' if he had decided to stay away from the territory for over three months.

For Mbembe, freedom of movement derives from classical liberal ideas. In contrast, he points to a planetary and African precolonial understanding of movement in space. Debt becomes a constitutive element of care relations as an obligation to previous generations of dead and all living, depending on the border or spatial management. To mark the absent idea of the border as it is in manifold manners constructed nowadays, in pre-colonial societies, borders existed but were porous and permeable, while people until the 19th century were constantly moving and 'uncaptured.'[60] Surviving meant movement, and movement meant surviving. These crucial elements shape Africa's contemporary culture. Mbembe writes, "It was the driving principle behind the delimitation and organisation of space and territories. So, the primordial principle of the spatial organisation was continuous movement" (Mbembe, 2018, no page). In this sense, survival and crossings meant trading between regions, cultural exchange and circulation of cosmologies, commodities, humans, and non-humans.

[59] Centre National Ressource Textuelle e Lexicales (CNRTL), Available at: https://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/abandonner (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

[60] In their book *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labour* (2013), Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson track how the modern discipline of geography was developed in the 19th century and how a 'continental scheme' as a division of the world was sketched and naturalised, influenced, among other things, by the German geographer Carl Ritter.

Therefore, neoliberal abandonment can be conceived as a structural (or even moral) withdrawal of collective planetary responsibility reinforced vertically with lines of separation and measurement. It is an abandonment that is acted out through control of who can flow, move, and circulate and what/ who can be choked without killing or becomes 'ungrievable' (Butler, 2009). In which grey zones, hermetic desire for neoliberal abandonment is reproduced, broken, or deviated might give insight into its cracks. The relationship between ('bad') debt, economies of circulation and (labour) migration also becomes central in global power shifts and climate change. Imagining a borderless world might entail preludes. In this sense, the collective responsibility embraces all living creatures and cosmologies. This is for a possible 'unchained' and unrestricted circulation, contrary to "colonial entrapment as a precondition for exploitation of labour" and expropriation of life force (Mbembe, 2018). The abolishment of states to become planetary while becoming stateless results from the following: "As a stateless person, you can avoid or oppose the state, but you can no longer ally with it." - 36th thesis on statelessness- (Sattler, 1976).

The Panteleimonas cemetery and Kato Tritos are strictly operated within shades of gray between legality and illegality. This makes abandonment choices even more effortless to justify and needs clarification about who would be considered accountable for this situation.

The decision of the people migrating to Europe to leave, retreat from, or flee their countries had already been made. They do not (decide to) die in lawless areas without clearly defined rescue zones, even though the coveted rule of law is being constantly tested in the waters. For example, in the recent case of the floating prison ship Bibby Stockholm in the U.K.[61] By being illegalised on the move, one is deprived of one's international fundamental human rights, which are virtually doubled in the case of death. How can the dead claim anything?[62] Nation states are responsible for rescuing people in distress and not abandoning them. Disputes are postponed, blocked, and repressed. As E.L. states:

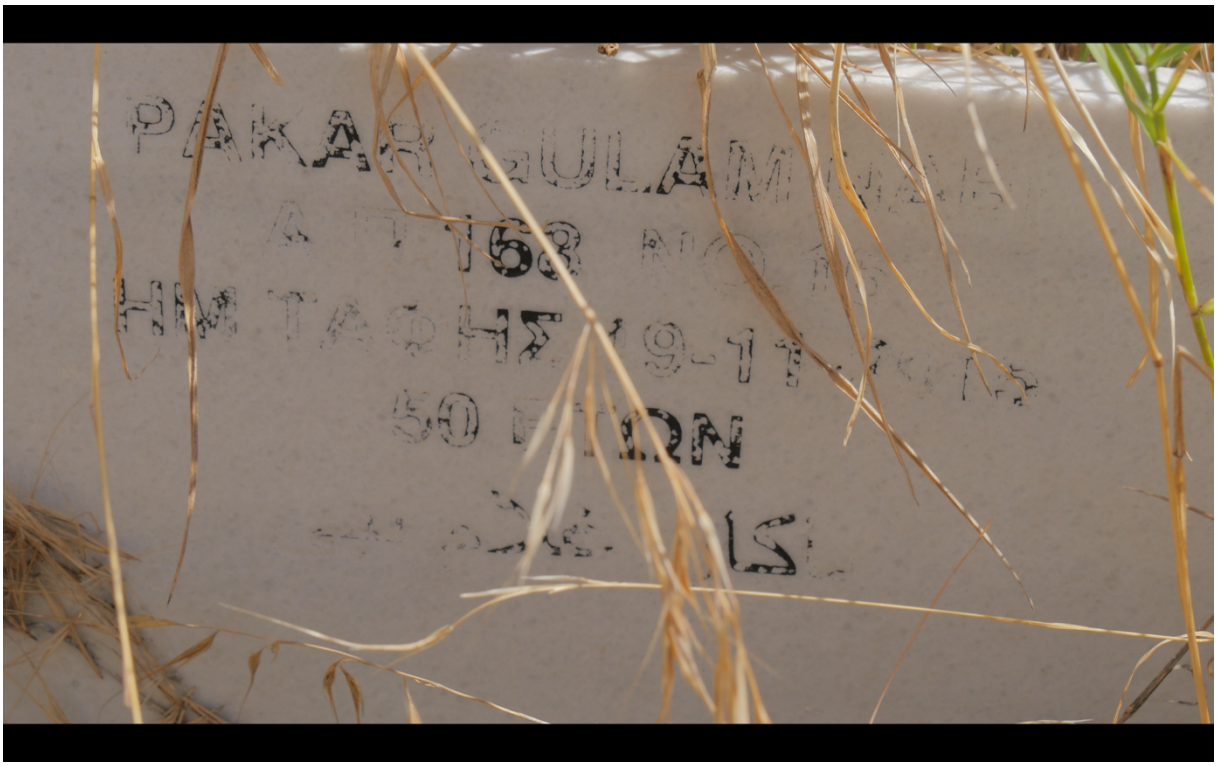
> "But the important thing is to be accountable. In many matters that connect with refugees, no one is accountable—no one!
>
> If the political will is not there, you can say that there are international laws and international organisations, but I also find it very weak, the way they operate here. Because knowledge now we have after so many years, and I'm part of this. […] It's always a mechanism somewhere operating from somewhere. And no one is accountable again. No one is accountable for the… someone has a mandate for it, who is controlling?"

[61] Taylor,D., Gecsoyler, S. and Syal, R. (2023) 'Legal reprieve for asylum seekers ordered to live on Dorset barge', *The Guardian*, 7 August, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/aug/07/legal-reprieve-asylum-seekers-bibby-stockholm-dorset-barge (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

[62] Except in the case of the shipwreck in Lampedusa in October 2013, where 268 people were abandoned in the sea by the Italian Coast Guard and Navy. In the aftermath, the dead received Italian citizenship to be legally buried in Italian territory. The survivors were sent to detention centres.
PRO ASYL, borderline-europe and WatchTheMed/Alarm Phone (2023) *Landmark court ruling on 2013 shipwreck: Italian coast guard and navy responsible for deaths of 268 refugees.* Available at: https://www.proasyl.de/en/pressrelease/landmark-court-ruling-on-2013-shipwreck-italian-coast-guard-and-navy-responsible-for-deaths-of-268-refugees/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

There needs to be more transparency about these processes of who will be (held) accountable through the institutional decision-making chain. In my conversations on the island, I deciphered some of the players acting as part of these processes on the local level. It seemed convoluted, as most spoke of the limitations or did not know how procedures were put in place in the first place. The consequences of the state of emergency of the so-called 'refugee crisis' are being realised through a policy that is not transparent; it is being dragged out through continued persistence in obfuscation by various bureaucratic bodies. Firstly, a detailed map of the grave sites and the indication of the graves are the key components to prevent 'precarisation' and disappearance of the dead. Re-traceability, in this case, would be indeed not very complicated. A DNA Database with a referral number linked to the map of the burial ground and to the plaque on the grave itself. During my first visit to Kato Tritos, we inquired whether there was an existing cemetery map.

48. Two dead were found near the coast of Plomari. Kato Tritos cemetery, 2022. Video stills. Source: My video archive.



49. Village View, 2022. Source: My archive

Dead (End) Replacement

The cemetery in Kato Tritos was built in 2015 on a former illegal rubbish dump and farmland. We, i.e., Ch. (a student of agriculture, local activist, and on-site translator) and I arranged to meet one of the village representatives of Kato Tritos. We agreed to do a video interview in his office, a small ancient building in the centre. The conversation began by him telling us that they started to retrace the village's history, which had to do with pirates stealing from across the sea. This opening sentence about the pirates resonated throughout the interview, as he spoke about an undefined sensation of fear by the villagers concerning migration on the island. There are numerous myths and rumours about what happened in the village of Moria near the camp, from burglaries to disappearing sheep. If there were other pirates today, they would probably not have sabres and no chance of moving on across the sea.

> “Look, it has been built around 1837 to 1840. It’s an old village... We ‘ve started searching about the village's history by gathering photos from back then. There are some. I don't remember exactly when our village was created or when it was built. All I know is that there were pirates. The pirates came here, and the residents hid the village; they’ve built it on a valley so that it wasn’t visible from the sea and this way, they could avoid the pirates. […] They attacked other villages, not only ours, which were built on the mountain.”

The village community has at most six hundred fifty inhabitants. The economic crisis and austerity policies have not spared this village either. Today, there are only two tavernas left and very few shops. And since it is not a tourist destination, it is quiet. The movement of the younger population from the rural regions into cities also concerns Kato Tritos, as many villages in Greece. Those who remain work for the fire brigade or other state institutions. Because of cuts in subsidies and the proliferation of industrial fishery, many local fishermen of Kato Tritos are slipping increasingly into poverty. Many people work at two nearby harbours like the one in Pigadakia, a tiny place with only one hundred inhabitants. Besides agriculture with olive oil and crafts, little work is available.

> "Due to the financial crisis, it is difficult now for a family of 4 or 5. That's why people avoid having many children. […] We have 20-30 deaths (per year), and so, little by little, the population is decreasing. Shops are closing. The taverns are closing. […] All the grocery stores have closed."
>
> I asked him how the situation with the migrants had affected the village:
>
> "Look… I don't think they affect our village or us. I don't think so. If they affect someone, that is Moria. There was a hotspot in Moria. The villages around this hotspot were affected because the immigrants burgled them, they slaughtered the animals, and their lives changed. They burgled the houses, they took wood, and the lives of the people there changed. They sold their houses; they left their villages because... They've built fences around their houses 5m and 10m long. They bought dogs... Fear! There was fear. Because they didn't stay in the hotspot, they were going around; they put fire to our churches, they peed inside them… […]
>
> Yes, there was a fear that they came here, that they would settle here, what would happen if they came here, where we would go, what we would do; that was the ambience. Now and then, we heard that each village would get 100 immigrants and that there would be a hotspot with 500 people in our area. This discussion occurred daily when they were in Moria because Moria was close to us. We kept wondering if they would come here, what we were going to do, where we would go, they would steal from us... We've heard so many things."

The rumours mingled with the fear-based fantasy remind me of an analogy of 'the exchange of populations' in 1921 according to the motto 'what do we do when they come, and we have to leave.' As already mentioned, most of the families in Lesvos were themselves descendants of so-called refugees and displaced persons from the former Ottoman Empire (parts of today's Turkey). According to Cathy Cartuth (1995, in Fassin and Rechtman, 2009, p. 19), one of Freud's principles and early accounts of Trauma were incorporated in his writings in *Moses and Monotheism* about his unsettling departure from Vienna and not only to ancient persecutions of Jews. Haunting memories of forced displacement as transgenerational trauma could, therefore, play a further role in the way transit migration is dealt with in Lesvos and Greece in twofold ways. Most village inhabitants seem to view the circumstances as a divisive element and a threat to their existence as local villagers. In contrast to the human rights activists who point to the painful memories regarding their families during the Asian Minor Catastrophe as unifying and empathetic. As a shared social history with the situation of today's migrant limbos. Therefore, it becomes clear that (transgenerational) trauma could establish a link between cultures, according to Cartuth, to acknowledge shared suffering, which lies in the capability to relate one's wounds to the wounds of other fellow beings. Nevertheless, even

experienced suffering is not guaranteed by empathy or universal thinking, as is understood in Cartuth's approach. In the intervening tones, such an analysis must consider the aftermath of the Cold War, namely those *Dangerous Citizens* (Panourgiá, 2009) persecuted by the military junta and the dictatorship until 1973, as opposed to those who joined the regime to banish the communists, subjected them to death, forced labour and torture on prison islands.

According to Fassin and Rechtman (2009, pp. 75-76), through the Holocaust, the category of the victim has developed a central and irreversible universal character in Western societies, which is closely interlinked with the traumatic event and the psyche, the testimony to trauma and memory. In terms of coming to terms with history in Greece, however, the situation is different, even though it is categorised as a Western society on the peripheries. The reappraisal of Jewish persecution, which goes hand in hand with the framing of the 'ultimate victim', was belated adapted to Greece according to the dominant model of the German, American and Israeli culture of remembrance. This makes it difficult to view the effect on Greek society and their experience of trauma in a more differentiated way, shaped by polarization[63] and marked by the dependencies of imperial aspiration of the Western superpowers and global shifts in financial capital. Therefore, I juxtapose Jewish Greek history with current violent events on the external borders of Greece to establish a multidirectional link within the actual Greek context.

An instrumentalisation of transgenerational trauma can be found today in political agitation and official commemoration of national historiography. The forced expulsion of Greeks from former Ottoman territories during the Turkish War of Independence and the founding of the Greek state is one of the most emphasised points of reference in official discourse linked to national identity. This emphasis serves political rhetoric and refers to the historical rivalry with Turkey that contributes to enforcing anti-Muslim ressentiment. To a certain extent, the state memorialisation of the Asia Minor catastrophe has overshadowed the Jewish-Greek experience and history of the country. In the 18th century, the pirates from the sea, according to the MP of Kato Tritos, attacked the villages in the mountains to steal, and then they would leave.

In the next chapter, I will expand on the echoes and resonances created by inquiring how the effects of violent histories led to the clinical category of trauma in relation to the recognition of suffering. How can traumatic reminiscences be traced and approached by thinking through (auto-) temporalities of memory, body and soil?

In 2015, the local council consisted of three MPs; today, there are five representatives. The olive fields, including where the cemetery was opened, were handed over to the municipality with the local

[63] Concerning the political and traditional right-wing and royalists versus the (divided) left and its history of persecution, the left consists of different orientations of patriotism. The far right, for example, the neofascist Golden Dawn Party (Chrysi Avgi), who was part of the government until 2019), called for 're-Hellenization' and a 'final solution' for migrants (Kotouza, 2019).

council's consent. Then, the field was cleared for burials. In the interview, the MP tells us that the village community was not involved in the decision.

> "This happened suddenly; that is, it had not been discussed that we would start here in a month to make a cemetery for the migrants. Here, we slept with the trees on the plot and woke up with no trees; the machines were there doing the excavations. […] That's how the migrant cemetery was formed in our area. If we had known it would be a graveyard, our village would have had a lot of reaction. Everyone would have had their say.
>
> It is next to Christians; ours is close to 20 meters (the village cemetery). It was a nice property of the community. They took it and made it a concession on the spur of the moment, which is why there are reactions."

What emerged was a rejection of the cemetery by most of the villagers. From his perspective as an MP, parts of the cemetery are to be returned to the village, and further burials are to be stopped. In 2020, a fire was discovered in the field of the cemetery. Whether it was arson remained unclear. Only the rumours that a mosque might have been built fed suspicion. His subsequent attempt to control when there would be burials with the objection that no gravestones should be installed for supposedly fear that the land would be taken over piece by piece. The MP's implication here is used actively to interrupt burials and reminds of the actions of civic vigilante groups.

> "That's difficult but we have to do something because, in the beginning, we thought there should be no tombs like that and I had gone to the funeral home that the municipality has assigned to do the burials and told them to inform us about every burial that will take place, you know tomorrow we will have a burial so that we could indicate them their place so that they wouldn't take all the parcel of the community. I think this is done on purpose because you have your place and suddenly you go to the 12 acres and do the burial near the road so that you get the whole plot."

During the conversation, I asked him if he could empathise with the relatives of the dead and that, according to Muslim belief, people should remain in their graves forever. His answer embraced respect for Muslim religious practice but became a demand to stop the burials since they can't displace them:

> "If the bodies can't be transferred, I think we must stop. […] Don't bury other people; stop burying there, because if it continues, we will have all 12 acres covered, and it will expand and take more parts of the community as well. […] If it's not possible if their religion doesn't allow it, we cannot exhume them; if it's not allowed, we respect the dead, but we cannot go with the machine to exhume them and then say take them and go.
>
> If we build more than one cemetery, our village cannot bear this burden. All immigrants come and must be buried somewhere. How many can be buried here? I don't know how many there are already here, 100-200 people.
>
> People are shouting: 'The burials must stop and return them.' 4 acres is more than enough. Our cemetery, ok, we take them (the bones) out after four years. Ours is just 1 acre and the other is 12 acres, and they want to build the cemetery, then churches (mosque) because their custom is to wash the bodies there. People will react and are already pressuring us to send someone to talk to the municipality's mayor.

> Someone was protesting the cemetery, he said to dig them out, that's not possible, he said to dig them out, we can't take them, what are they? A pack of cigarettes, to take it out and throw it away? […] We don't know the reason they've built it here, so that we could say okay guys we agree, that's the reason you built it here. No one knows why they've built it here."

It sounds like the migrant deaths would outnumber the Christian deaths. They feel ignored by the previous local politicians because the village community was not informed. The Christian deaths have less space and a smaller cemetery, which is seen as unfair. The dead migrants are a threat to the dead of the villagers. Even worse, they must be left in the ground, so where will they all be buried? There is no common plan, no policy. A struggle and discomfort against a cemetery became paradigmatic of the racist fantasy of being overrun by mass migration, whether dead or alive. In summary, the village council would like to reclaim parts of the cemetery and stop further burials. Today, the village doesn't want to take this 'burden', which is very different from 2015, when parts of the village councils agreed on the cemetery.

Another element of Greece operating like a buffer zone within Europe concerns migration governmentality. Regarding this, Hamilakis highlights a statement by the Greek Prime Minister on the 2500 anniversary of the Battle of Salamis, which is celebrated as a commemoration event: "Greek politicians would make a direct connection between the Persians in 480 BC and the new oriental invaders, meaning migrants and border crossers, today" (Greenberg, R., Hamilakis Y., 2022, p. 52). Today's right-wing agitation that spreads images to generate fear of infiltration by mass immigration is seen similarly in antisemitic propaganda films such as one of the most famous, *Jud Süß* (1940) by Veith Harlan, commissioned by the German Reich. The film uses a variety of antisemitic stereotypes, among them motifs of the mass immigration of uneducated, impoverished Jews from the East as a danger to the city's population of Stuttgart. City deputies outcry their hate within the sentence: "Like locusts, they are coming over our land!" (Verhoff, 2004, para. 9). Instead, today's repeated rhetoric in conservative and right-wing media are narratives that induce projection and fantasies of fear of 'Islamisation' of the Christian Majority society. The similarity between antisemitic tropes and anti-Muslim resentment is condensed in these images. At the same time, our conversation with the MP of Kato Tritos formed a curious analogy to the relationship of the 'oriental' pirates who robbed the village.

Projection is a form of assumption placed onto another subject according to one's belief systems or attitudes that might have nothing to do with reality for the other person but instead with one's fantasies. Projections can lead to false assumptions of possible future threats and individual or collective negative self-fulfilling prophesies. Another term deriving from the psychoanalyst Melanie Klein marks the word pair 'projective identification.' The basic meaning has been framed as a phenomenon in which a subject develops a defence mechanism, splits parts of itself off, and projects them onto the other person, which accepts the projection and internalises it as their sensation and thoughts. In contrast to a projection that is only perceived at first, the idea of the process of 'projective

identification' is that the same sensations, thoughts, and values are evoked in the other person. They are introjected, i.e., unconsciously absorbed and identified with. W.E.B. Debois has used the term 'double consciousness' (coined initially by Ralph Waldo Emerson) to describe a similar phenomenon concerning racism:

> "After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (Du Bois, 1903 in 2009, p. 6).

'Double consciousness' describes a re-orchestration or identification by the subject of a harmful projection within itself that can be turned against oneself. In other words, an introjection (in German, a deviation of the word exists as 'Täterintrojekt', i.e., perpetrator introjection) is followed by processes of 'projective identification.' Racist, sexist and classist stereotypes can be analysed as forms of introjection, but these intrusions proliferate as consciously manufactured through manifold repetition within micro and macro stratification in everyday life. Hamilakis notes that 'double consciousness' also concerns the Greek society insofar as he points to a constant anxiety of "What foreigners would say?" this highlights the hallmark of a crypto- and self-colonized society (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, pp. 48-49). Narrow projections and racist framing coupled with border security narratives in the public debate obscure the analysis of competing soft power within Europe and Greece. This systematic avoidance of historical and actual racial inequality and Europe's 'racelessness' sustains the 'refugee crisis' narrative that must be controlled (Goldberg, 2009, p. 189).

Memorial to Humanity?

In 2023, the local authorities presented an interim solution, in which the Greece-registered NGO called *Earth Medicine and Physical Rehabilitation*[64] requested to take care of the cemetery for a limited period. The plot has been determined to have no more than 240 new graves allowed, built on 6 acres.[65] From October 2023 to April 2024, the NGO, together with volunteers, Greek professionals, and asylum seekers, as stated in their report, have been framing 189 graves. However, it was impossible to reconstruct the site entirely: "The most difficult tasks during this stage were counting the graves and identifying the people buried in them. We haven't been able to find any records of the deceased and don't know if they exist. Most of the graves had been marked with a wooden stick which in some cases had no name, and in others, the name was written in ink, but it was now faded and illegible" (Velazques, 2023, para. 9).

[64] The director is Prof. Dr. Gerhard Trabert from the German organisation Armut und Gesundheit and MP candidate for the German left party in the European Parliament Elections 2024.

[65] ΘΡΑΣΟΣ Α. (2022) 'Οι «καλές ΜΚΟ» της δημοτικής αρχής Κύτελη', (2022) *Stonisi,* 7 December, Available at: https://www.stonisi.gr/post/48895/oi-kales-mko-ths-dhmotikhs-arxhs-kytelh-video#.Y5AyWx0NQxs.facebook (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

The NGO attempted to frame the cemetery in a humanitarian scope, regardless of religious affiliation. Their project title for the cemetery's reorganisation became *Memorial to Humanity*. The project could indicate a presidential case for a legalised cemetery status according to humanitarian principles at the outskirts of European borders.

Nevertheless, the title idea for the site remains questionable since a cemetery does not immediately signify being a memorial and vice versa. It is stated that on the 17th of April this year, the project of the framed graves, including a reconstruction of the graves with a professional topographer from the Municipality, will be inaugurated and handed over to the local authorities. Nevertheless, they write simultaneously: “It will be the responsibility of the asylum seekers community to preserve this place clean and organised after we conclude our work” (ibid., para. 21). An official ceremony marks the completion of the NGO’s project, which will be handed over to the local authorities on 17 April 2024. With this contradiction, it is unclear what the future of a continuous practice of caring for the cemetery might look like. Whether the maintenance of the site will be consistent and what will follow this date has not been made public.

Before our interview in the village, we sat down in a taverna on the main street of the old town. From the inside, the rooms looked as if they had been left behind in the 1960s. The innkeepers did not seem hostile to the cemetery in conversation, and we were the only guests apart from a few beer-drinking workers. We walked down the road across the parking lot to the village Orthodox church, which was closed. On the outside of the church, marble slabs were used as steps. There are few stories about the former Jewish families who lived in Lesvos. No one knows where their synagogue or cemetery might have been. I noticed a marble slab with a Rosetta symbol and wondered if the stone could be from a Jewish cemetery. However, it turned out otherwise. Rosetta motifs have been used throughout the ages.[66]

[66] *I wrote an email to Benmayor on the inscriptions on Jewish gravestones. His reply was the following:*
“Dear Yara, I tried to analyse the pictures you sent me to discover any trace of Jewish traditional ornamentation on the plaque in the pictures. Unfortunately, I could not discern any sign that might lead us to what you are looking for. […] I wish you luck and have a nice vacation. Kind regards J.”

50. Orthodox Church, Kato Tritos. Source: My archive

Disappearance, a drowned topic

Moria, the largest detention centre and the first so-called EU hotspot, burned down on 8th September 2020. In the coming month, the ruling party, New Democracy (ND), which regained a majority after Syriza in the Greek parliament in 2019, established another fenced hotspot camp, Mavrovouni (black mountain), also called Kara Tepe II. Not far away on the same coastal strip north of the town was the camp Kara Tepe I established by the municipality. South of Mytilene, just before the airport, was the *PIKPA* camp, a volunteer-run camp initiated around the group with E.L., established in 2012 for vulnerable people. Kara Tepe I and *PIKPA* have been evicted, meaning all new arrivals are centralised in one place. Mitaraki, the Greek Minister for Asylum and Migration, authorised the eviction in October 2020.[67] The closure of these two places has led to an immense deterioration of life in transit and to further exclusion from civil society. Since then, solidarity groups that established

[67] The video interview in 2022 lasted more than two hours. It touched on the core of my research questions, namely the limbo of ill-defined management of the dead, the engagement of the local solidarity networks together with the affective component of people involved over a decade, and finally, the question of support to the families.
'Save dignity, save PIKPA and Kara Tepe, 2020, More than 160 Greek and international organizations, academics, and other actors from all over Europe urge the Greek authorities to revoke decision to close dignified alternatives in accommodating refugees on Lesvos' (2020), *Human Rights Watch,* 30 September*,* Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/30/save-dignity-save-pikpa-and-kara-tepe (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

alternative structures built over a decade ago have been gradually criminalised and erased. Additionally, civil society, activists and journalists have been denied access to the semi-closed camp systems controlled by police and military.

The interview with E.L., which runs through the chapter, gives insight into complex developments, pitfalls, and achievements of the island's multi-layered phases of everyday solidarity struggles. E.L. has continuously been active and runs the Mosaic Support Centre. She is a crucial actor in the solidarity movements and has been active on the Island for over 15 years.[68] *Drawing on the perspective of E.L.'s situated knowledge. I consider this interview a fundamental base on which to navigate my research questions. Our dialogue touched upon the missing legislation and means of support during various limbos and grey areas of transit migrants' deaths.*

> EL: "I mean since 2002 there are only death certificates of people who died in Lesvos, but there a very few things and little information on these people. You have minimal information on death certificates. […] But still, we didn't find any trace of these people. We suspect that the first bodies of them might be unburied, and they took the bones to the central place where they take the bones for all the people. So, for them, they might not find anything."

Disappearance along migration routes with no traces, including vanished graves, is not a new phenomenon for EL. The only evidence or trace that might remain are death certificates, even if gaps are included, i.e., not everyone gets a death certificate. The number of graves that might have been excavated to create new space at local cemeteries remains blurred. I was told by Mr M. that there are no existing mass graves in Lesvos.

During my research, I found very little information on the subject. Starting from the No Border Camp in 2017, the transnational group CommemorAction formed and has since held protests and actions in North Africa and Europe to commemorate the disappearance and death on migration routes. Ever since my participation there, the question of mass graves has been on my mind. There, a young female sea rescuer tearfully told on the first Assembly how they buried people on a beach after a shipwreck in Italy because they did not know where to take the dead.

However, I came across this case, which seems to be forgotten today. Members of the *Welcome to Europe Network* found a mass grave in 2010 during a trip from Hamburg to the Evros region and nearby village Sideró in Northern Greece.[69] The area has one of the few remaining Muslim communities, and a local mufti has agreed to organise funerals near the village. The present state of the place is unknown to me, although graves became more properly arranged after the site went

[68] Lesvos Solidarity (2024). Available at: https://www.lesvossolidarity.org/en/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
[69] 'Journey back to the borders. W2eu memorials 2009 till 2021', 2021, *Welcome 2 Lesvos,* 4 February, Available at: http://lesvos.w2eu.net/2021/02/04/w2eu-memorials-2009-till-2021/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
'Lost at the Border', 2012, Antiracist network Welcome to Europe (w2eu), Available at: http://infomobile.w2eu.net/files/2012/01/lostatborder_bericht_web.pdf (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

publicly viral due to the reports mentioned by the network. With the production of mass graves, the recurring analogy to a war situation becomes more than comprehensible concerning the developments of relentless migration governance. Many cases of human rights violations are not reported. International coverage plays a crucial role in putting pressure on authorities at border zones because they generate attention and awareness to a broader public. Nevertheless, journalistic coverage is usually short-lived. As E.L. points out:

> "My experience was that in 2012, when there were 22 bodies found on the shore of Lesvos, it was called the shipwreck of Thermi and one morning they found 2,3 bodies and the next day the shore of Thermi, Pamfila was full of dead bodies, and at this point, there was big mobilisation from the local groups but also from the internationals, from the afghani community especially and some people came from Pakistan, so there was some kind of awareness about this in coverage.
>
> Sometimes they were taken responsibility sometimes [it] was not very clear who had the responsibility. […] And this is also another thing, is that we consider these people a danger to public health, alive or dead.
>
> Sometimes the bodies were in bad condition, sometimes they were carrying some documents on their bodies, but the authorities were not considering these documents as creditable, as fake so they burry them as unknown, this is another practice."

Sometimes, responsibility was taken and sometimes not, by chance of engagement from the side of local actors from state institutions, the loudness of media coverage by mobilisations from different actors on the island that put pressure, or both. Another layer of 'implicatedness' becomes a neighbouring zone of the complicity of disappearing. Namely, the question of what is considered credible by the authorities when it comes to detailed documentation of deceased ones. Whether someone is buried as an unknown person or not, in any case, the legal responsibility lies with the various chains of authorities. It can thus be described as an institutional act of abandonment.

A chain of 'bad practices' can be considered since people were buried as unknown because of unacknowledged documents or due to lack of (independent) investigation (for example, in collecting testimonies by other survivors). Thus, during these bureaucratic procedures, it is likely possible to become unknown in the first place. Cases of disappearance on migration routes are manifold, including gender-based violence and human trafficking. However, the disappearance of deceased persons is challenging to prove retrospectively. Observing these acts was only possible because of the engagement and monitoring of non-governmental actors since there is no other instance of control to monitor or witness these ill-defined practices. I would consider this another shade of grey; once a person is buried as unknown, a DNA sample by direct relatives is the only possibility of identifying the person. Suppose a plaque with the indicated registry number is faded without having an existing and detailed map of the burials. In that case, there is also the 'faded' possibility of re-traceability of the dead. Consequently, the dead become anonymous and lost forever.

We live among the perpetrators.

The Minor Asia Catastrophe (1921-1922) reshaped the Island fundamentally. Even though, in Greece, ethnicity is multifaceted, as minorities were forcibly produced and rearranged during and after the construction of the nation-state. I have outlined this in the first chapter. Most of its inhabitants carry family legacies and memories from their (grand-) parents who have experienced expulsion, forced migration and death marches from the former Ottoman regions of Constantinople and Smyrna. During my conversation with E.L., we elaborated on the question of possible historical analogies:

> "I can only compare it with the Greek case with what happened with the Asia Minor case when the Greeks were taken by force to the labour camps and disappeared. The relatives didn't have information about what happened. Most of them. I remember people listening to stories of the Red Cross missing people on the radio for years after.
>
> I mean the Jewish extermination, how they treated them, humiliated them, killed them, and there are many similarities, unfortunately. […] For me, it was a big lesson. The police investigated the disappearance- so this is what happens here, for the missing is the coastguard and for the pushback that is investigating, so for the disappearance of the Jewish people, it was the police investigating and murder committed by the police.
>
> [Here] it's not only the loss of the people, but also (it's) not only how they are treated, but it's mainly how the societies participate in the crime. They get used to this, and the crime has different degrees […] there is a kind of normalisation of the situation somehow and hiding the real situation behind it.
>
> We consider it like some casualties… You can also see it in the media like this, how they report on the deaths of refugees and how they report the death of another European Western citizen."

The question of the participation of society is described by E.L. as an effect of habituation, as is Tima Kurdi, the sister of Abdullah Kurdi, who lost his son and wife during the attempt to cross the Mediterranean during 'the summer of migration' in 2015. The image of the three-year-old boy Alan Kurdi, whose body was found dead stranded on the shores of Turkey, became emblematic of the so-called 'refugee crisis' (Iliadou, 2019, p.65). In 2020, I recorded a speech by Tima Kurdi at a Demonstration in Berlin:

> "I'm here today to share my personal experience. I leave you with the idea that the world we choose has to reflect the urge that we take. I'm here to plant a seed in your heart and mind. The seed of hope. […]
>
> I will never forget that day, 2 September 2015. I remember I screamed as loud as I could. I wanted the whole world to hear me. […] On that same day, my first phone call with my brother Abdullah, a father who had lost his entire family, cried to me and said: "The picture of my son is the wake-up call to the world." […]
>
> Five years later, today people around the world continue to suffer. It's getting worse and not any better. And they are asking for our help. We cannot close our eyes turn our backs and walk away from them. People are People no matter where we come from. We are all one. […]

> Are you part of this silent majority? Or will you stand up and add your voice to mine to be counted? Please don't be silent."

The painful event became a catalyst for Tima Kurdi. She raised her voice. The hope that the image of her nephew would be a wake-up call to the world didn't last long. What effect would have had on the image without her voice, if not a foremost symbolic one? The image of the dead child was used as the ultimate representation of Europe's deadly borders. In the hope of its father, Abdullah, it became a public thought note with an admonishing message to the world. The image through the proliferation of the press had a martyr effect. Tima's speech mirrors the process of her transition from grieving to gaining strength, standing up for justice, and expressing solidarity with all those affected. Simultaneously, she draws a clear connection between responsibility and implication when she asks: "Are you part of this silent majority?"

A similar question is asked by the local activists in Lesvos from the *Open Assembly Against Border Violence*. In a leaflet from May 2023, with the provoking title: "How Lesvos learned to love the Pushbacks", they write:

> "Which of our neighbours are murderers? […] Pushbacks are violent per se. But their existence outside the law has created a dynamic in which the perpetrators feel free to feed their sadistic impulses without fear of repercussion. […] We don't know their specific organisational identity – are they a paramilitary group? Are they coastguard officers? (…) A shadow army of masked man is not afraid to show their weapons to locals, nor to the police who do not intervene. We live among the perpetrators. […] Pushbacks not only affect people on the move. We have to ask ourselves what it does to a society to live in the scene of a crime whose existence is denied."

The strident language of the local activists points to the urgency of the question of power relations and perpetration on the islands. Here, too, analogies to war-like situations mash with the blurred milieu of secret complicity, 'implicatedness' and concealment of the identity of executive bodies. The denial of violence through daily pushbacks is addressed here as an effect on society at large. The terminology is not only reminiscent of atrocities against humanity but also has psychoanalytical leanings. 'Sadistic impulses', as they call it, acted out by the coastguards, are reminiscent, for example, of Italian fascism such as those approached in Pasolini's film *Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom* (1975). For Mbembe (2018), European governance and bureaucracies deeply entrench fascist impulses deriving from its colonial legacies. Thus, the consequences of habituating everyday violence on the island signify the proliferation of gradual shifts towards autocratic structures from 'within' and 'without' paired with fascistic desire affecting both the (partly divided) local population and (transit) migrants.

Blurred Reality

In 2015, amid the 'Moral Panics' (Hall, 1978 in Gilroy and Gilmore, eds., 2021), Alan Kurdi's image went viral worldwide. The notion of 'crisis' or 'refugee crisis' in this context has been critically challenged by several scholars (Bojadžijev and Mezzadra, 2015; Carastathis, Spathopoulou and Tsilimpounidi, 2018; Iliadou, 2019; Tazzioli, 2019) as a reconfiguration of European migration policies that fabricate 'states of emergency and exception' to legitimate harsher instruments of governmentality to criminalise transit migration and to control human mobility. Bojadžijev and Mezzadra point out that the former Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, initiated renationalising debates within the EU. Fences have been constructed along the 'Balkan route.' At the same time, uprising protests at the border of Eidomeni, with the *No Border Network* in Northern Greece and the protest march of refugees from Budapest to Vienna, took place in September 2015. This is not the first time in the history of Europe that something has been dubbed a migration crisis, but rather, as they write, another 'episode' during the simultaneous wars from Libya to Syria and the Greater Middle East.

> "At least since the early 1990s, the illegalization of migration has transformed the Mediterranean into one of the most dangerous and lethal border zones of the planet. Over the past decades there have been several moments in which the intensification of the movement of people across the Mediterranean and the reorganization, tightening, and even militarization of the European maritime border regime have reached a threshold that has been deemed as "emergency." One thinks, for instance, of migration from Albania in 1991 or from Tunisia after the "Jasmine Revolution" in 2011. Thousands and thousands of men, women, and children have lost their lives attempting to cross the Mediterranean" (Bojadžijev and Mezzadra, 2015, p. 1).

In the same year, after re-elections in 2015, the former left-wing governing party Syriza engaged in heated negotiations with the EU over austerity implementations by the 'Troika' (Τρόικα), the trio of the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that lead to "the referendum on the EU deal and second elections of September 2015 which Syriza was again able to form a government despite its capitulation and departure from the Left Platform" (Kotouza, 2019, pp. 263-264).

The conservative and neoliberal Party Nea Dimokratia (ND), with Prime Minister Antonis Samaras from 2012 to 2015, previously governed in a coalition with Pasok and the Democratic Left, lost its votes. The people's discontent, which had previously unfolded in the *Syntagma Movement* (2010 – 2012), grew due to the significant loss of confidence caused by the rigid austerity measures and their consequences of the impoverishment of large sections of society. During this time, initiatives like self-organised Solidarity clinics grew in Thessaloniki and Athens. Health care for everyone was brilliantly organised, including collecting medical facilities, complementary medicine, and consultation for those who couldn't afford it or had no papers. In the aftermath of riots by transmigrants that pushed through on the northern Border at Eidomeni, and due to the overcrowded

‘open camps’, migrants and activists squatted various houses, such as the *Orfanotrofeio* in Thessaloniki*,* which was demolished after the eviction (Kotouza, 2019, pp. 266-267). According to Kotouza the *No Border* protests in Northern Greece, in coincidence with the *No Border Camp* in Thessaloniki in 2016, together with the squats and growing solidarity structures, became a “threat to (the) local and national government and its projects of managing (the) migrant population” (ibid., p. 267). The protests by migrants and their self-organisation in Thessaloniki were, in contrast to Athens, less dominated by the ideas and practices of local activists. (ibid., p. 267-268). One of the best-known counter-projects to the policy of closed camps became the *Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza* in 2016. The place was paradigmatic for self-organised structures, with local and international activists growing in Athens for years. It hosted over 100 families from various locations and was entirely funded by private donations. In July 2019, after ND's election victory, the project decided to close (other places have gradually been evicted over recent years). Today's absence of these hardly fought-for and built alternative structures marks a significant turning point for migration struggles in Greece.

People on the move are confronted with ever-expanding entities of border control techniques executed by coast guards, police, military units and Frontex, and the dangerous crimes of illegal push- and driftbacks. Among the technocratic agencies that operate within the migration management system are the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation Europol and the European Agency for Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters Eurojust. These agencies seek to prevent uncontrolled onward travel of asylum seekers, especially to Central and Western Europe (Dublin Regulation), with the implementation of so-called Waiting Centres, i.e., the hotspot camps close to the border and often remote from populated areas.

Once migrants arrive at the Island of Lesvos, they must undergo technocratic processes, including interviews to verify their place of origin, swift identification, registration, and fingerprinting, while facing unpredicted captivation while waiting for their case approval. This implies the capture of identity in the database at Eurodac. Among practices of deterrence, imposed control and delay, i.e., putting people into states of infinite waiting and attrition, trapped in prison time (Iliadou, 2019, pp. 62–88). These procedures force people into inhuman living conditions and unpredictability that systematically produces powerlessness, which can lead to despair, (re-) traumatisation and physical illness within these evoked ‘hostile environments.’ Intrinsic systematic blocks and lack of basic facilities and health care produce a constant limbo for many before eventually reaching the desirable mainland of Europe. Then, other obstacles proceed. For those who lost loved ones during the crossings, a double burden arises: the navigation through the procedures of finding the lost relative, possibly getting their identity approved and finally having to find a way for a dignified burial ceremony and place or possible repatriation of the land of origin.

Today, the erasure of traces of people on the move and the production of anonymous death happens daily on the outskirts of European borders. Ruth Wilson Gilmore states: “Racism, specifically, is the state-sanctioned or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerability to premature death” (Gilmore, 2007, p. 247). With the aggravated conditions at the EU external borders, there are numerous cases of premature death; for example, one of the first graves at the so-called ‘refugee cemetery’ belongs to a small child who fell ill and died due to the poor heating conditions of Kara Tepe camp.[70]

At border zones, multiple actors exist within the scope of only one nation-state's policy or one political agenda. The extra-legal production of discrimination and criminalisation also leads to “a normalization of death and the a-normalization of migration appear as mirror processes” (Cuttita and Last, 2020, p. 11). Such normalisation depoliticises border policies (viewed as technical procedures that serve a higher purpose for control) staged back and forth between so-called security and humanitarian frameworks. Border deaths are often presented as tragedies followed by accidents, described as catastrophes and ‘collateral damages’ as if dying on migration routes occurs naturally.[71] This description of scenarios blurs the realities of violence of politically introduced border governmentality, that is, illegalising human mobility and criminalising freedom of movement that should be everybody’s right.[72]

Although the new left-wing government of Syriza in 2015 initially pursued welcoming rhetoric, while 1000 people per day crossed the border in the north, demands were nevertheless made to consider the Greek-Turkish border as a ‘European’ one, including demands for relocation programmes and ‘hotspots’ to be installed in Turkey with EU subsidies (Kotouza, 2019, p. 264). Prime Minister Tsipras himself publicly used the analogy of the ‘Asia Minor catastrophe’, that of 'our' grandfathers and grandmothers, who were also once 'refugees', and therefore promoted a ‘duty to rescue.’ In this way, the history of Greek forced displaced families and the term 'refugee' applied to them at the time was readapted in the context of a common experience. The affirmation of Greek hospitality, for example, by providing flats that would otherwise have been rented to tourists, resulted not merely from spontaneous empathy but was also motivated by the state (ibid., p. 265). The government's initial gesture of allowing alternative solidarity structures and international NGOs changed with the arrival

[70] Research Interview M.S. Lesvos 2021.
[71] ‘Greek migrant boat wreck may be Mediterranean’s ‘worst ever tragedy’ with hundreds still missing’, 2023, *CNN,* 19 June*,* Available at: https://headtopics.com/us/greek-migrant-boat-disaster-may-be-worst-ever-tragedy-in-mediterranean-sea-eu-commissioner-says-40304790 (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
‘Greece shipwreck: Latest tragedy in Europe's migrant crisis’, *FRANCE 24 English*, Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AB0urX6n8Q (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
[72] Deriving from a famous Slogan used on Manifestations across the EU: We are here, and we will fight! Freedom of Movement is everybody’s right!
Turner, B. (2022) ‘Greece: At least 22 dead and dozens missing after migrant boats sink near Lesbos and Kythira’, *Euronews*, 6 October, Available at: https://www.euronews.com/2022/10/06/greece-more-than-a-dozen-dead-and-90-still-missing-after-migrant-boats-sink-near-lesbos-an (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

of European funds and the implementation of conditions such as the EU's austerity measures, which Syriza pushed through despite the civil referendum against them.

It's a business.

A. was a taxi driver in Athens and founded a funeral service, first in Piraeus and later in Lesvos, Petra, in 1979. In 2015 and 2016, he was called by the coast guards to collect the dead from the shores after the significant shipwreck of Molyvos to bring them to the hospital's forensic department. They called him, he said, because he was the closest office at that time. He has not been paid nor received any coverage for his outgoing expenses, such as gasoline, to transport the 96 corpses from the shores to the hospital. We met him at the beach promenade in Petra and sat behind a small kiosk opposite a small bay. It was very windy. We asked him about his experience during this time.

> A: **"**It was a hard time. It was hard seeing a drowned person. Because drowning is a kind of violent, unintended death. A drowned person was forced to leave, he was put in a boat, then it got windy, and he drowned… He drowns. In any case, it was tough seeing little children drowned, thrown on the sand, without their clothes because they lost them in the open sea trying to reach the shore. Naked, with no clothes on. And you see men and women, dashed by the waves, dashed against the rocks with their bodies decayed. Some are bloated and dashed, and others are bleeding. They are 2- or 3-days dead, and you see them dashed against the rocks… Until we go to collect them. […] During all this time. End of 2015 until 2016. During this time, I took 96 people to the morgue. Young and old people included."

Further, the coast guards, he told us, steal from the dead. Things they find on their bodies.

> "They are stealing. […] They told me to check the bodies, and they took all their stuff—even the earrings from the little kids. They told me to take them off, and my wife responded to them, 'Shame on you! Leave the child with its earrings! Why do you want to take the earrings off the kid?' […] The port authority. The port authority was the first to see the corpses. They were all stealing, do you understand?"

A. and his wife were involved because of their urgently needed occupation. The authorities exploited them and never paid for their work. Both witnessed how the authorities conducted their duties directly after fatal shipwrecks. The couple used their 'implicatedness' to verbally protest the stealing of the belongings of the dead. A.'s wife protested verbally against the injustice of the theft. Because they were engaged as undertakers between the events, they retained an autonomous role in the events, although they had to follow instructions from the authorities. Their independent intermediary position is essential, as they are among the first to care for the deceased with the coastguard. Simultaneously, they could observe and criticise the authorities' actions. This would also enable them to play a decisive role in legal action by relatives if they were prepared to testify against state authorities. The coastguards collect the belongings of the deceased at first, but the exact place where belongings are stored on the island was not revealed.[73] Further, A. elaborated on how the

[73] This research revealed that border guards stole an estimated 2 million Euros from border crossers from 2017 to 2022, only in the border zone of the Evros region:

documentation was carried out after a shipwreck and kept reporting the exploitative conditions related to the lack of compensation for his labour. The transport of the corpse was not paid for, but the burials were.

> A: "If the corpses were found on the island's west side, I would keep them in my fridge if it was noon or afternoon because I had two vehicles; now I have one here. I had two, a Vanette Cargo and a Mercedes. I put them in, side by side, and then I drove them to the hospital. I would call the security department of the port authority and tell them, 'I'm coming. In 5-10 minutes, I will be in the hospital.' They came with labels with holes on them; we put the tyre up here, then an identification number in ascending order. I'd put the identification number, and they would take a picture of the face and put it in a file for identification in case there were any survivors. […]
>
> I went to talk to the vice mayor. Katzanos was back then in charge, and he would vanish. Galinos, the mayor, would vanish. […] Don't tell me that the European Union doesn't know that there is a war going on and there are dead people. What happens to them? Haven't they set up a fund for the dead people? I've worked. Shouldn't I get paid?"

The European Union is becoming a ghostly caricature of a ruined fabric in conversations on the island. In plenty of sarcastic comments, their synonym mirrors the failed policy of sealing off the external borders. The reference to warlike conditions in Greece must be read about the neglected repercussions of the Civil War (1944-1949) and the following dictatorship, which nevertheless plays an important role in the belated and still too little acknowledged collective memory. The persecution of the Communists and its Partisans (*EAM/ELAS*) produced an inner national split.[74] Intergenerational violence is not forgotten and could be activated within people's imaginations and traumas. The interview clarified that A. retrospectively could not file a lawsuit to claim his payment. I asked A. again how his work in 2015 and 2016 had affected him and his family:

> A: "My wife and children came with me and helped me. If you find a video from back then, taken from the boats of the coastguard, you will see my wife picking up a child or she would pick up a dead man and put him on the stretcher. […] How can I describe it? You would see young people who had so many years to live; you would see them being put in a tub and then drown. Couldn't they wait at least for the weather to break so that they could come? They drowned them. Why? For interests... All these happen for interests. Do you understand?"

At this point, it becomes clear that he is convinced that the people were deliberately drowned because there are interests behind it. He does not spell out the interests he means, but he is the first to say it very clearly. It seems that he means the smugglers, but not only. A conspiratorial undertone resonated. The interests of the deterrence policy also create opaque messages to people on the move. A message that sounds like: "Don't even dare to try, to take the deadly route across the sea." We further asked A. about the economic regulations of burials and what options families can choose under regular circumstances in Mytilene.

Malichudis, S., Mourenza, A. (2023), 'The Great Robbery: During Illegal Pushbacks in Greece, Refugees are Robbed by Border Guards', *Solomon*, 9 March, Available at: https://wearesolomon.com/mag/format/investigation/the-great-robbery-during-illegal-pushbacks-in-greece-refugees-are-robbed-by-border-guards/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
Further, I came across this Platform for transnational forensic projects, which is only mentioned here and cannot be elaborated on: Forensic Missing Migrant Initiative (2024) Available at: https://forensicmigration.wixsite.com/missingmigrants (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

[74] Rehabilitation of former *EAM* members took place only in 1982.

A: “When we have a funeral in Mytilene, we must go to the Charity Institutions, and they inform us that the first category of funeral costs 540 euros, the second category 304 euros, and the third class. Sorry, I meant class, not a category. So, we have first, second, and third-class funerals. The third-class costs approximately 18-20 euros.”

Classes, not categories. For a first-class funeral, the payment is up to 800 euros (he says in another passage), which is subordinate to a certain priest. The price difference between the resting places set up by the church (charity organisation) and those secondarily to the city administration is enormous. This is how the class relations of the dead are formed in a normative ‘holy’ common sense, firstly through the distinction between cemeteries led by the church and the city. Secondly, this is only possible because of the non-separation between the church and the state in Greece and with the consent of large parts of the population. At the very beginning of the interview, he showed us a photo of a dead child in a plastic bag. He saved it on his mobile phone and told us that it was taken by a photographer called Giorgos Moutafis.

A: “In 2016, when we had a lot of work. We were going to the fish farm and once he brought me a baby, which was found in a bag. It's such a little baby in a bag. He gave it to me here in Petra. Yes, Moutafis did that. He gave it to me and told me to take it with the other corpses and he told me to say that it was found in a bag in the fish farm. He found it in a bag. The sea had washed it out. […] 24th of January 2016. It was found on this day. In total decomposition, without the head. […] This was found on 24th of January 2016. At 14:16, that means at 2.16 PM.”

After so many years have passed, the child's photo is still stored on his mobile phone. He carries it with him. Not only the painful memory but also a photo like a reminder of the evidence of what had happened. But the only evidence this photo gave is a dead child in a plastic bag. What exactly happened and how it died remains unresolved.

Not related at all to life as life

The forensic doctor (Coroner of the Mytilene General Hospital) formally working for the Ministry of Health is now assigned by the Ministry of Justice. In front of the main entrance to the hospital, there is a large fountain from which small paths branch off, like in a park with benches. We met the doctor at the end of a tiny hut in the shade of tall trees, where a staff member sat down next to the tree with a severe face. We formed a circle of chairs.

N: “In 2015, I worked every day from early morning to 3 am at night, on weekends. And then I also had to go to Samos to see 55 dead people. The time passed, and I wanted to eat something; I hadn’t eaten anything; I was hungry. It was too much for someone to see, especially in 2015, little babies with their ‘babylino’ diapers. Such little babies… What can I say? You can’t say anything. I don’t even want to recall it. I have never been to Kato Tritos and don’t want to go there. I’ve seen almost everyone who is buried there.”

Beyond words as an expression of sadness, he copes with these memories by not ‘recalling’ them. Unlike A. from the funeral service of Petra, who showed us a picture of a dead baby on his phone

and thereby ‘recalls’ the image and the memories attached to it. A. decided to see it again and share with us what he saw. Beyond verbal description, the doctor describes these moments that he saw as indescribable and mentally challenging.

> “The situation was very tough; the things were not simple. I can’t describe it in words… Parents came to identify their dead children, and we saw them fainting, and we were trying to resuscitate them… Things weren’t simple. Words can’t describe what I saw… And after this image, you have to be mentally strong to proceed with the necrotomy of the little child, which was identified by its mother earlier.“

After a fatal shipwreck, the Coast Guards are first responsible for taking photos of the dead. Further, they should store their belongings. Where these things are kept, he did not say. “It’s the authority’s job.” When the bodies are taken to the doctor, certain visual features, such as tattoos, are documented. An autopsy is carried out, and DNA is taken, which is passed on to a database in Athens. The death certificate must be forwarded to the municipality. Further, the doctor describes the identification process after his years of experience on the island. In his opinion, everything went smoothly.

> “Let me tell you so that you understand the exact process when someone wants to identify someone who has been buried. The person can go to Athens and give a DNA sample, or if they are abroad, they can send it by the embassy and Interpol to the database in Athens for identification. […] Despite this, when someone comes, they must go to the port authority. […] The port authority will have to place an order so that I, the coroner, will collect a DNA sample from them and this DNA sample will be sent to Athens to be compared with other samples from unidentified people.”

The process of identification works via possible DNA matches. The additional photos of the clothes should ideally be taken, and the belongings should be stored in an unknown archive of the coastguards. When people have been in the sea for too long, deformations can occur, and they are no longer recognisable. A local activist and supporter of families stated that very few families go through the process of comparative DNA match. Many relatives refrain from sending DNA samples if they can recognise their family members from the photos and belongings. Finding witnesses and survivors of a shipwreck and consulting the local forensic doctor are the leading practices to find the deceased in the first instance. Because this doctor sees everyone who has died in a shipwreck. The death certificates are available at the city administration, but often with insufficient or incorrect information, as the interview with E.L. revealed.

> “For the burial to take place, the registry office of the Municipality must issue a death registration certificate. […] The registry office has everything, all death certificates. From the coroner and from the hospital. All deaths are to be found in the registration office.”

The question of repatriating the dead to their countries of origin is another complicated and very costly procedure. A court order is required to unbury a deceased person who has already been buried.

> "[…] Then he will go to a funeral home so that he can send the dead to Athens and then from Athens by plane to their homeland. If they have been already buried, then [it must go] through the public prosecution. The process after that is not simple. It's a complicated process because, first and foremost, if they are unidentified, they must get identified to get permission for exhumation so that they can be transferred to their homeland. An unidentified dead cannot leave the country."

The same goes for the racialised unidentified living, who can either move or must be restricted. The doctor describes the entire process covered by his range of tasks as smooth and orderly. Technocracy, which inevitably produces gaps and errors in its various chains, does not apply in his narration. The interview is imbued with the 'implicatedness' of a civil servant. Nevertheless, his feelings were expressed, and he said he supports legalising the cemetery for 'refugees.' He is implicated because of his position, not only because he reports directly to the ministry but also because of his power to issue necessary certificates and his need to maintain contacts close to the coastguards and the municipality. He knowingly provides support as a contact person for the few NGOs that support affected family members. Therefore, he becomes related to life and the afterlife of the dead concerning their need to be buried. Finally, he might not be related to life as life in chains of technocratic procedures but as a human affected by his daily encounter with death: Not related to life as life but related to death as living.[75]

The latest ICRC Report of the *International Committee of the Red Cross* brings together research from the fields of academia, civil society and international organisations concerning death and missing migrants along the Mediterranean routes. It points out that there is no standardised forensic process in Greece, according to general laws (death falls under the Prosecutor's office), which creates inconsistencies "as there are no available guidelines for the state actors that should be involved. The same gap applies to the identification of the bodies" (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2022, p. 23). It states that in some cases, a death certificate has taken several weeks to be issued in recent years.

According to the report and my interview with A. from the Funeral Service, a unique case number is assigned to each body, one by the coastguard and another by the forensic doctor. As stated, the Hellenic Coastguards and forensic doctors maintain both case numbers in their reports. It is a legal requirement that DNA samples be sent to police laboratories. How these are matched with the DNA references of family members and how the identification procedure works precisely is not transparent. Since 2018, there has been a digital and centralised Greek public registry office. The death certificates, which used to be filled out by address, contained copies of the various medical

[75] 'The Mytilini Declaration for the Dignified Treatment of all Missing and Deceased Persons and their Families as a Consequence of Migrant Journeys', 2018, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Available at: https://missingpersons.icrc.org/library/mytilini-declaration-dignified-treatment-all-missing-and-deceased-persons-and-their (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

reports. Therefore, the question arises about how this could be solved digitally so that all this information is accessible online as „challenges during the study as case file information was lacking."

A nine-month inquiry, *The Border Graves Investigation*, in collaboration with the Guardian and Süddeutsche Zeitung, was published in December 2023.[76] The team of journalists came to a similar conclusion (as in the Mytilini Declaration or the latest report by ICRC), namely that there "remains a legislative void" on the situation of dead transit migrants throughout Europe (Duncan, Ganguly: Kassam; *et al*., 2023, para. 6). Despite a resolution on the issue by the European Parliament in 2021,[77] which argues for mechanisms such as centralised data collection and joint coordination between the member states, Dunja Mijatović, Commissioner for Human Rights, stated that the EU is politically neglecting these issues, while governments should do more to improve the situation.

This section highlighted post-mortem practices and emphasised the various bureaucratic hurdles. The process of re-recognisability, even if the structure would be compelling by authorities, of the dead during dangerous border crossings is indeed complicated without testimonies or family members in the search for their fellow loved ones. For those affected, it is crucial to organise local legal assistance with a translator who, together with local NGOs, can support searching for missing persons. They often travel for weeks around the Aegean Islands due to opaque legal limbos in the Greek language. Meanwhile, the European Commission sealed a renewed migration pact, further de-democratising and criminalising the right to migration and protection (Kasparek, 2023). As long as there is no broad challenge (legal, parliamentary, international and social) to the externalisation policies between the EU, such as with Turkey, Libya, Lebanon and Tunisia or in the case of the UK with Rwanda, it can be assumed that militarised border practices will continue to aggravate.

[76] Cruciata G., Tolis, D., Gilmartin**,** Matejčić**,** B., Maragoudaki, D., E., Pattem**,** L., Ramirez, G., Xu**,** T. (2023) 'The Border Graves Investigation', *Investigative Journalism for Europe*, Available at: https://www.investigativejournalismforeu.net/projects/border-graves/ (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
L., Duncan P., Ganguly, M., Kassam, A., Lawrence, F., and Tondo, (2023) 'Revealed more than 1000 unmarked graves', *The Guardian, 8 December,* Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2023/dec/08/revealed-more-than-1000-unmarked-graves-discovered-along-eu-migration-routes (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
[77] European Parliament resolution of 19 May 2021 on human rights protection and the EU external migration policy (2020/2116(INI)), Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0242_EN.html (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC*)*. (2024) Trace the face. Available at: https://tracetheface.familylinks.icrc.org/start-your-search/?page=1&lang=en (Accessed: 24 March 2024).

51. A Demonstration organised by the *No Border* Camp Thessaloniki, 2016. Video still, Source: My archive.

European Trash

In 2015, the hospital and the local cemeteries could not host the numerous dead. The pressure to find a solution for a new burial place arose as a necessity and reaction to the many shipwrecks that caused the losses. The survivors became part of the struggle for the cemetery, which was finally suggested by the municipality to be initiated at an olive tree field in the village of Kato Tritos. Already in 2009, a protest arose by a group of Afghani people to not unbury the dead, introducing a first step to generating sensibility of different religious traditions concerning the dead. These moments of intervention are indispensable acts of 'rebellious mourning' and grief activism. Loss inevitably bears fruits for new tools of collective civil disobedience that create visions for justice, highlighting questions of ethical imbrication. Simultaneously, struggles for 'grievability' are closely interlinked with reaching accountability for crimes against humanity and genocide. For recognition of expropriated stolen land, looted culture-material heritage, and kidnapped kin. Here and in the next chapter, I argue that dealing with loss and grief (on a collective scale) draws resonances to manifold layers of transformational social processes from below and challenges official memory discourses that side-line claims of repair. 'Rebellious mourning' belongs to the social field of care as collective reproductive labour. It amplifies voices that belong to minor histories, which are side-lined and ostracised by dominant agents of societies.

In recent years, the term 'Memory Activism' has reached significance within memory studies (Gutman and Wüstenberg, eds, 2023). Even though struggles concerning memory have unfolded from communities affected by (potential) loss across the globe historically over centuries.

CommemorAction is a coalition of groups that have formed protests in Morocco, Tunisia, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Senegal, Togo, and beyond in recent years. Together with relatives who lost traces of their missing people on migration routes, they protest border violence. For the alliance, today's border regimes evoke 'organised abandonment alongside organised violence' according to the feminist theorist and prison abolitionist Ruth Wilson Gilmore. Their actions intend to invent rituals and languages of collective mourning that create political efficacy despite the absence of the body or knowing whether someone is still alive. The network articulates the need to get out, called the 'freeze mode', as the effect of trauma. By linking their agenda with the various global struggles, they create what Rothberg has called 'long-distance' solidarity in conjunction with a demand for justice as mourning strikes.[78]

'Ambiguous loss' (coined by Pauline Boss) multiplies with every dead body that is not found and with every disappeared person. Absence and uncertainty are the significant factors leading to intense sadness for the left-behind seekers. This kind of violence, which tears apart social structures and separates people from one another, generates frozen states of pain, which become part of the macroscopic effects of wars or war-like circumstances. Polarisation is reproduced on a microscopical level of affected people and in social movements for justice. The violence thus creates a power struggle and potentially divides different group formations, according to Guattari:

> "The microfascist elements in our relations with others must be found, because when we fight on the molar level, we'll have much better chance of preventing a truly fascist, a macrofascist formation on the molar level" (Guattari, 1975 in Lotringer., S, ed., 2009, p. 152).

It is not only in Lesvos' movements; the population is divided according to their various degrees of 'implicatedness' and political beliefs. The devastating conditions over the last few years weakened the influence of progressive forces. The lack of transnational exchange due to the pandemic produced a backlash of self-preservation and hyper-individualism on the micro level. In contrast, on the macro level, it marked turning points between neoliberal and authoritarian governmental strategies. According to Mitropoulos (2020), the complex layers of spatial confinement have been used to elaborate technologies of power in conjunction with racialised politics, the proliferation of new world borders and expanded capitalist definitions of private risk and (dis-) order.

[78] An example of disobedience against loss in the US concerned sacred sites equally indispensable for the dead and the living. The 38 miles of the Dakota Access Pipeline was built across sacred indigenous land. Spotted Eagle, from The Great Sioux Nation, stated: "If spirits linger, like they might in the case of violent deaths, and are then interrupted. They're not going to be able to find their way. They'll still roam on this land."
Ravitz, J. (2016) 'The sacred land at the center of the Dakota pipeline dispute', *CNN*, November 1, Available at:https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/01/us/standing-rock-sioux-sacred-land-dakota-pipeline/index.html (Accessed: 24 March 2024).
Since 2014, the Zapatistas, together with the Ayotzinapa families, protested in Mexico City with the slogan: "They were taken alive, and alive, we want them back." after 43 indigenous students in rural universities were kidnapped.
In the essay collection titled" Rebellious Mourning: The Collective Work of Grief", edited by Cindy Milstein; contributor Jeff Clark writes, 'In French, faire grève means "to strike." It was first seen with that meaning in an 1805 police report, and it's linked to Place de la Grève in Paris, where unemployed people seeking work would gather. The Place de la Grève refers to gravier (gravel in English), which in turn probably refers to the Latin gravare (to be burdened).'

In 2015, the mourning strike as a method was not an option for an effective protest; the singular and collective burdens that came with the overwhelming events initiated joint dialogues between the local authorities, civil society, and affected families. Something had to be done. The stories about these struggles for dignified burials exist only in transmitting oral histories of the people I met in Lesvos. They extend beyond the people who pass on situated knowledge because, in a tangled web of official bodies, one finds answers in micro-histories. The collective moments of key events remain in the memory of many as a drastic challenge. Reactive moments in movements often inhibit the power to act future-oriented but also hold the potential for the development of strength to interfere in times of crisis. E.L. described precisely the difficulties that came with the labour of sadness and loss.

> "Of course, we hosted some families of survivors in *PIKPA*, which was a mess. I mean it was a complete mess! […] I saw also how important it is to have a place to mourn, a decent place- to be in a house. To have a supportive environment and not be in a camp, or alone. Not prioritised the bureaucratic processes […] There was no support for the people who were looking for the dead bodies, for the relatives. […] I think it was the most difficult. I think it was the most traumatic part of our work."

The word trauma derives from the ancient Greek word *τραῦμα*, wound or injury. The immediate response by the social environment generates a possible containment of a traumatic event in the form of co-regulation, empathy and the acknowledgement of the shock created. It is a necessary act of care and compassion in what Maté (2022) calls 'a toxic culture.' In this sense, grief work is a care practice and inevitable for emancipatory struggles. As Hobart and Kneese pointed out:

> "…care contains radical promise through a grounding in autonomous direct action and non-hierarchical collective work. Instead of only acting as a force for self-preservation, care is about the survival of marginal communities because it is intimately connected to modern radical politics and activism" (Hobart and Kneese, 2020, p. 10).

Collective and singular containment of grief are fundamental elements embedded in cultural and religious practices within a planetary shared human and non-human history. With gestures of condolence and mutual support, ceremonies, and sit-ins to mourn the loss, help through emotional overwhelm and sadness. The importance of collective mourning practices differs according to custom, religion, and individual needs. Mourning practices help to give different stages of grief space and facilitate a process of acceptance of the loss. It is crucial not to get caught up in hyper-individuality but to work on creative adjustments and collective care. In other words, it is to transform trauma into strength.

For P.Y., from *Alarmphone Sahara*, with whom I conducted an Interview at the *No Border* Camp in 2017, it is Europe that must take responsibility because it is conducting genocide on transit migrants.

> "I am one of those called the "experts d'expérience" [the experience experts] because I was a migrant. In my convoy, some people died, and we didn't even have the strength to bury them. In the desert, there are no flowers, hearse, or funerals; there are only whispers of fear and muffled crying. Today, as human tradition says, we need people going to their last home to be well

> accompanied. I have tears in my eyes when I see the bodies coming back from the Mediterranean. Because the sea rejects everything which is dirty. This is the trash that Europe is sending. […] The situation in the Sahara, in the Mediterranean, is a genocide. Even if the international opinion refuses to recognise it, I insist people must know that a genocide is happening in the Sahara and the Mediterranean. Europe must take responsibility."

The opaque practices in dealing with the dead in buffer zones of Europe generate anonymous and unknown bodies that leave similar symptoms and traces of events like genocidal practices, i.e., the cover-up and neglect of the disappearing dead. For P.Y. to respect, the dying process must be 'well accompanied.' A fragmentation within fragments in continuity unfolded in the many stories and memories of the many cases of incidents of death by the interviewees. Thus, 'ungrievability' is produced for both the dead and the living (kin) because not dealing with the dead generates a creeping process of forced disappearance of the graves themselves.

In the interviews, the times also differed in the narration: Real-time description in the transmission of oral histories highlights how powerful haunted memories are recalled in the present. Repetition in real-time indicates the severity of animated wounds produced by the affects of violence in the retour and resonance in the body of an event. It is as if something is happening again, which is happening in real-time again. Every day at the outskirts of the European Borders. It is a vicious cycle of ambiguous loss. No one of the unknown is put to dignified 'rest' if they remain unknown.

On the level of collective social (un-) consciousness, it evokes the production of subjectivity, which, in the context of post-austerity aggression since 2008, inscribe the impoverishment of large parts of Greece as depression and cynicism. Neoliberal abandonment, in this sense, also targeted most of Greek society, which now turned into an accelerated aggressive privatisation hand in hand with the dispossession of the commons. Additionally, many people in Greece carry the transgenerational trauma of forced displacement, occupation, civil war and dictatorship as a reminder and a recurring potential threat, like a possible storm or cyclic reoccurrence. In the current climate in which the struggle for a dignified life determines everyday life as the snake of 'societies of control' has taken over, is memory work from below not even more necessary than ever?

The Reform of the Common European Asylum System with stricter measures, such as the hollowing out of the Geneva Conventions, has just passed the European Parliament. No matter what happens, migration remains a reality. The struggle for dignified burials and remembrance of the dead at the external European borders have been ongoingly addressed by those affected and those who still fight for transnational justice. Those responsible in politics and (security) business incorporate these gestures symbolically and misuse them for empty rhetoric with a logic of European and national self-preservation that distracts from their responsibility to comply with human rights legislation, including restorative justice concerning soft power and (crypto-) colonial power asymmetries. Symbolic gestures of remembrance on the part of the European Union, the IOM or national governments seem

perverted in the face of the crime and pain being produced. The question of (individual and collective) responsibility permeated the conducted interviews, in which it becomes more than clear that the people who have been involved with the matter of the dead migrants and their kin also carry their wounds deriving from these experiences, for which there is little public resonance nor acknowledgement that produce accountability.

To understand how the gradual erasure of traces is generated in Lesvos, I reflected on the notion of abandonment concerning indebtedness as a multi-layered geopolitical legacy and the difficulty of 'precarious' memory in contemporary Greece. Therefore, to think about implications in conjunction with apparent attempts to level the gravity of the circumstances in public debates concerning asylum policies and their racist framing was part of this survey. I outlined how relatives can search through the grey areas and blocks of institutions to find information. What is missing is an independent, effective, and severe mechanism and policy for the dead.

In the words of E.L.:

> "We are very responsible, and Europe is mourning, and we are sad about the losses. No, we are not sad about the losses- we are not sad for the people. If we were, we would have done something."

Maybe this 'we' can be thought of as what P.Y., the Cameroonian activist, calls "the European Trash."

Racial violence forgets hospitality (*Φιλοξενία*) and produces the abandonment of responsibility for the shared debt that entails dead and living alike, according to Mbembe. The wretched in the soil might become seeds, while human blood remains in the ocean for 260 million years, its molecules branching out and forming something new in the dwell time (Sharpe, 2016).[79] The remains of the unidentified dead accumulate in cyclic circles in the soil and water in a time that marks 'the here and now of their residence.' In between, the quiet attempt at Muslim burial rituals is interpreted as an insult to the Christian dead. No further space should be given to this 'foreign' dead carrying 'bad debt.' According to Harney and Moten, (bad) debt is social and unforgivable but can be remembered, while credit is asocial. Credit aims to accumulate more credit and more debt to continue to suffocate. The unrecognisable graves and precarious remains proliferate and remain uncivilised in mutual 'bad debt.' Consequently, their existence creates a 'fugitive public', escaping governmental grids, the credit to rent a grave, or the lease of a funeral. How many there could be remains incalculable. They squat land that becomes valueless and common. No one wants to privatise the plot. They don't pay!

[79] "The amount of time it takes for a substance to enter the ocean and then leave the ocean is called residence time. Human blood is salty, and sodium, Gardulski tells me, has a residence time of 260 years. And what happens to the energy that is produced in the waters? It continuous cycling like atoms in residence time. We, Black people, exist in residence time of the wake, a time in which 'everything is now. It is all now''(Morrison 1987, p.198, quoted in Sharpe, 2016, p. 77).

52. A burned-out excavator (German brand Liebherr) after a controversial protest against constructing the new hot spot camp Vastria, Mytilene 2021. Source: My archive.

Stratification of incidents

The resonance between the chosen sites of this dissertation, the vanished Jewish cemetery in Thessaloniki and the so-called refugee cemetery in Lesvos marks each historiographic-specific timescape. The historical background that led to the condition of the dispossessed Jewish dead (Chapter I) became the starting point for thinking about the current state of the neglected graves of transit migrants (Chapter II).

They mark the underlying *Precarious Twilight Zones* produced by the abandonment of 'singular memory' and its cultural material that carries their own 'auto-temporality' (Parr, 2008)[80] reflected peripherally in the cityscape of Thessaloniki and on the Island of Lesvos. The modality of the dead's legacies, i.e., their culturally fragmented matter, harbours an a-significant life of its own, which has arisen through an inherited (time) difference they produce. This 'interassemblage' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) between both cases built a multi-temporal cartography of this practice-based inquiry.

In this chapter, I read between and across the material of my two case studies to understand the implications of a multi-temporal cartography for the field of memory activism. Looking at both cemeteries through registers of effect, questions crystallised about shifts in knowledge production in relation to the concept of trauma and the figure of the victim. In contrast to the political motives for appropriating these categories, which can be reflected in official memory as cultural production in the service of state narratives and identity, I am interested in the nature of transmission of unacknowledged traumatic memory and its perpetuation. Those affected tried for decades to resist simplified pathologisations, make their voices heard, and use them as a generative force for social justice. On what epistemological levels can the traumatic traces of racist violence[81] inscribed at the sites, the human psyche and their material legacies be read? How can cemeteries as spatial arrangements and social-history archives of the dead point to grey areas of the apparatus of archaeology, separating what is considered culturally valuable and what is not? What differences create traumatic traces transferred in cultural material remains, and how do they persist and remain mobile in bodies and through land- and cityscapes despite all attempts at erasure? What are the micropolitical potentials and challenges in memory activism? I here return to the notion of singular memory from Chapter 1. According to Parr:

> "Singular memory is not given, meaning it does not denote a finite moment in time; it is an involution that necessarily implies deterritorializing movements that are not subject to the

[80] Parr (2008) differentiates remembrance as a cultural production that organises memory in the social sphere from (singular and traumatic) memory, conceived as a movement through the body that produces time-space constellations beyond chronology that produce an auto-temporality. Concerning Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's conception of desire and Henri Bergson's reflections on intuition, she explores cultural practices that emphasise reinstating the singularity of trauma and singular memory to elaborate on the question of what a dimension of a utopian (Fredric Jameson) memory culture could be imagined nowadays.

[81] In her book *On Violence*, Hannah Arendt (1970, p. 4) defines violence following Engels. According to his definition, violence, in contrast to power, force, or strength, always requires tools of execution (technology of warfare) that serve to an end. However, the end can be overpowered by the same means. The purpose of human action is not predictable or reliable, in contrast to what it causes or what is produced. Therefore, for Arendt, violence contains the element of arbitrariness in fateful and accidental events in human affairs, such as war scenarios.

> individual will of a 'self.' As such, singular memory is pre-individual as opposed to being an experience constituting the 'self' or located within the cogito; it is a modality of individuating differences prior to any given individual difference. As a differentiating force singular memory undergoes change in time but does not evolve over time. Singular memory is not a distinct or fixed entity or time, it is the deterritorializing dimension of history and of reterritorializing Memory; both are disjunctive and secondary in respect to singular memory. Deleuze and Guattari propose there is 'no history but of the majority, or of minorities as defined in relation to the majority" (Parr, 2008, p. 184-185).

By being expropriated, forcibly displaced, overwritten and neglected, the cemeteries have become minoritarian sites that have been written out of normative linear time regimes. Consequently, these legacies of cultural material evoke their singular memories, which evoke differences and produce temporality that escapes the fabrication of official historicity.

Here, four temporalities emerged as constitutive moments: their invention of race and its further repercussions and shifts of antisemitic and racial injustice in Europe, with my focus on the Jewish perspective and Greek history.

The first temporality concerns the year 1492, which Azoulay has described as a 'marker of reversibility', namely the expulsion of the Jews and Muslims from Spain and other places in Europe. In other words, the transition to white, Christian supremacy with its mentality of the conquistadors. The irreversible imperial condition introduced extreme violence that lasted for hundreds of years. The Europeans described the imperial desire to discover 'new worlds', although they conquered, exploited, and killed manifold worlds and cosmologies. Through global imperial ventures (which were accompanied by the establishment of institutionalised violence), the world was divided, racialised and deprived of most of its common worlds. A few decades earlier, in 1430, the Ottomans conquered the seventeen-hundred-year-old Roman, Hellenic, and Byzantine city of Thessaloniki (Salonika) on the other side of the Mediterranean. In his insightful essay *Excluding the Jew Within Us* (2020), the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy examined the development of antisemitism, which originated in the occidental world during the division of Europe during this timescape.

> "Unlike Christian countries, Islamic countries had not known virulent antisemitism until the end of the nineteenth century, when European premises and attitudes began to penetrate the "progressive" circles of the Ottoman Empire. Today an antisemitism circulates all around the Mediterranean–and, more widely, throughout the world–that has become banal again: that is, it feeds on beliefs and images produced over the course of a very long history, in which modern forms have mostly taken over from ancient one. The latter–often labeled as "anti-Judaism"–emerged first and foremost out of religious condemnations and their consequences (exclusion from many sectors, social status and professions). Modern forms– bio-ethnological racism, global conspiracy theories– come together in what Hannah Arendt characterizes as the making of an abstract figure, "the Jew," bearer of all flaws and perpetrator of all evil" (Nancy, 2020, pp. 12-13).

The second moment is the development of 'progress', and modernity after the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire went hand in hand with the construction of a national orthodox citizen

and the Hellenic nation-state while segregating Jews and expelling Muslim communities. The Greek Revolution and the funding of the Greek nation-state (1821-1913) marked a turning point in South Europe from a multi-ethnic society to the re-arrangement of racial policies with the invention of a new Greek Christian Orthodox dominant national subject[82] that went in conjunction with the (re-) framing of Jews and Muslims as oriental subjects and potential traitors against the newly founded nation. The clouded past before the founding of the Greek nation-state, together with the orthodox religion as the dominant identification of the 'new majority society' in the realm of the shift of race categories, remains a barely publicly discussed topic until today. Consequently, this unacknowledged past (self-) sabotages a differentiated debate within discourses of critical memory analysis but is also side-lined in anti-racist movements in Greece.

The third moment is the revival of the construction of the Jewish race as an 'internal enemy' and simultaneously pro-ottoman traitor within Greece had devastating effects, during the Second World War. This was belatedly addressed in the country's public sphere and beyond. Greece had lost more than 85% of its Jewish population, which is among the highest percentage worldwide (Droumpouki, 2021). The historian Rika Benveniste described the belatedness of integration of Jewish memory in the official memory discourses as "The Coming Out of Jewish History in Greece" (2001) in the 1990s. Although historical research into the fate of the Greek Jews has progressed over the years, the question of the responsibility of the collaborators, beneficiaries and implicated subjects and the question of looted property has widely been neglected except in the writings of the historians Rena Molho and Mark Mazower. New findings are addressed in the book *The Holocaust in Greece* (Antoniou and Moses, eds.), published in 2018, which brings together essential new findings from mainly Greek historians. The persistent, deeply engrained antisemitism in Greek society is nowadays once again enabled and gradually supplemented with anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim ressentiment. Goldberg points out in his book *The Threat of Race* (2009) that race was gradually abolished as an analytical category in Europe after the Holocaust and that today, there has been a shift in which anti-Muslim and anti-Migrant racism has become a booming phenomenon. This absence of analysis of race, likewise in antisemitism, is a problem today that is indispensable for addressing oppressive conditions of 'the war against migration.'

The fourth moment concerns the peak of intense circularity of people on the move, framed as the so-called refugee crisis or 'summer of migration' in Greece in 2015, which initially sparked incredible transnational solidarity movements and has been politically instrumentalised in recent years. This boomeranged deeply historical racist resentment without differentiating and framing it in a critical perspective in the context of the Greek national narrative and identity in contemporary society. The difference in this repetition of the affirmation of (the individualised) national subject is now the

[82] The Ottomans (after the fall of Constantinople in 1453) formerly subsumed all Orthodox people from different ethnicities under the 'Rūm millet.' During the Ottoman Empire, a millet system was constructed according to religious beliefs linked to privileges, hierarchies, and community land ownership. That's why there were many converts to Islam at that time; it gave people more privileges under Ottoman rule.

targeting and constructing of the figure of ‘the Muslim’ as a threat in today's nation-states that sustains itself with narratives of securitisation (law and order) and the ‘war against terror.’ Greece's legacy as a buffer zone of central European powers goes together with stricter enforcement of European border policies and austerity, and it has increasingly used oppressive measures against alternative solidarity structures, which little seem to have survived today.

These four temporalities have one thing in common: they were decisive for a turning point and shift in European superiority, inner division, and race construction. The repercussions of how race policies produce trauma are reflected in both of my case studies in the conducted interviews about the (cultural) material legacies of violence in the orphaned and obliterated cemeteries and becoming independent agents of minoritarian ‘singular memory’, escaping the stratification of power in the sense of the repeated fabrication of national historiography. This is equivalent to a continuous twofold inclusion and exclusion process of what is worth remembering and acknowledging; it is a constant process of re-establishing racialised hierarchies that can be changed, commodified, or twisted at will with political shifts and trends. Geopolitical realignments produced new orders of racial policies and ‘necropolitics’ that came with erasing (the making of the minor) memory of the vanquished that produced various levels of ‘ungrievability.’

Based on the search for traces of the material legacies, the microhistories of my research have also emerged from social circulations and interactions and the influence of the environment through the touch of the senses, such as sound, light, smell, and weather. Therefore, I consider this interplay of the gathering of stories in affect with the fragmented *Assembly of Sleepless Matter* as a cartographic ‘haecceity' which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, referring to Spinoza, arises on the plane of consistency consisting of the body, which is the total sum of, on the one hand, material elements of movements (longitude) and intensive affects harbouring inherent potential forces (latitude). These two elements of the body become a cartography.

> “There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance. […] A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations, movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities, to affect and to be affected” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp. 304, 306).

‘Haecceity' is a mode of individuation that inherits spatial temporality. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish two assemblages. The first one of the body is formed by longitude and latitude, and the second is an ‘interassemblage‘, which marks the potentialities of becoming and the milieu at the intersection of the body and environment. While both are inseparable, they are distinct. In this sense, my two case studies are at the intersection between body and environment. The interviews are directly linked with the fragmented and obliterated burial sites. The material legacies move and

morph in states of weathering in which they can change their materiality and position, affected by spatial-temporal cycles of nature.

Consequently, these violent historical repercussions created the underlying referential contexts that run through my two case studies. Both former and current cemeteries as sites reveal the current nature of abandonment and lack of recognition of responsibility in the wake of the normalisation of 'necropolitics.' Putting these sites and connections of violent events into dialogue thus forms the multidirectional approach, which marks a gap in Greek and European discourses on memory. As a complex geo-political landscape, reading the labour of memory in Greece through the lens of race(ism), loss and erasure of those traces is a new and barely researched terrain. But, according to Goldberg:

> "Race refuses to remain silent because it isn't just a word. It is a set of conditions, shifting over time. Never just one thing, it is a way (or really ways) of thinking, a way(s) of living, a disposition" (Goldberg, 2009, p.156).

In other words, the (immaterial and the material) traces of the aftermath and ongoing racial violence raise the question of which affectivity remains circulating and is transposed in different dispositions. In the following chapter, I will continue this thread of contemporary racialisation in Europe through developments of 'victim framing' in psychology, psychiatry and the making of superiority through archaeology apparatuses. The connection between the pathologisation of victim groups and the 'civilisation' of the earth opens two further pathways that have emerged for me as genealogies in dealing with immaterial and material animated wounds caused by antisemitic and racist oppression and persecution.

Through the ongoing negotiation with the material dialogue between the two cases, including its inscription with the cyclic seasons between the city and periphery, I tested *multidirectionality* as an applied tool of my research, reflected in my interviews, videos and writings. The limits became particularly evident in Lesvos, where the situation of death and post-traumatic stress of a large part of the migrant and partly local society was acute. The Holocaust and the Jewish persecution had almost no resonance for many local actors. In Greece, the figure of the 'ultimate victim' in collective consciousness has become the refugee from Asia Minor, which has only been made possible by the state's production of official memorialisation. In Thessaloniki, I have observed that in recent years, the Jew as the 'ultimate victim' has become more popular among cultural producers that fail to address their own 'implicatedness' and, therefore, bear the risk of producing 'art' that slips into the misrepresentation of the survivors and aesthetics of kitsch.[83] In the context of the Musealization of the holocaust, crypto-colonial adaptation for normative displays highlighting bourgeois biographies

[83] Berlinale Film Festival Berlin (2022) The City and the City (I Poli ke I Poli), Trailer. Available Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V_XwiNvkD4 (Accessed: 23 May 2024).

can be observed. In contrast, memory activism is a way to break with fixed victim categorisations and imagined and projected identitarian attributions when ambiguity is included.

I approach a genealogy of the condition of victimhood and the development of the term trauma as psychopathology. According to Fassin and Rechtman (2009), trauma has become a floating signifier. The term has a decisive impact, considering the victim's figure in the European development of psychoanalysis and (ethno-) psychiatry, which is today decisive for how difficult the labour of memory became concerning contemporary socio-political spheres. How are animated wounds of racial injustice produced today with 'the war on migration'? Is trauma as a category no longer adequate to describe mass suffering, and shouldn't be referred to as the fabrication of ambiguous loss instead? Thinking about potential political agency and memory activism in conjunction with trauma constitutes other ways to care in struggles for collective (reproductive) repair and transnational social justice.

Secondly, drawing from the 'beneficiaries' of state and institutional bodies concerning the Jewish tombstones and neglect of bones during the metro construction close to the University campus, the role of archaeology in Greece in its striking function is revealed in 'civilising' soil, including all surrounding (social) creatures. I will discuss, based on the writings of the archaeologists Hamilakis and Greenberg (2022), how the crypto-colonised apparatus of archaeology in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the modern Greek nation-state became a modern tool of framing, appropriation, and segregation of (material) cultural value concerning the erasure of the memory of former multidimensional lived existences hand in hand with the production of 'pure' symbolic capital and Hellenic historicity. Unfortunately, the authors forgot that 'orientalising' also affected the Greek Jews, like the expelled Muslims and that they should, therefore, not be written out of the analysis.

Thirdly, the (cultural) material legacies of the former and recent cemeteries affect if 'one chooses to see it', while as agents (affective matter), the reminiscences of the dead are multiplying circularly, which counters 'purification' and generates a transcultural *Assembly of Sleepless Matter*. Metaphorically, the nomadic matter gathers fragmentarily; it is not a material witness, but for me, it points to a traumatising neglected memory constellation; it marks the condition of ambiguous loss. The material itself carries a traumatic 'auto-temporality' (Parr, 2008) that points to fleeting resonances of the actual experiences of the dead, as well as to the transmission of an intergenerational trauma of violence that wishes to be erased and captured otherwise from the collective consciousness of social history.

The inability to rest the dead, their spirits, and thus the living points to principles of 'sleeplessness' throughout the different areas further into the future. 'Sleeplessness' thus becomes a vulnerable and precarious phantom of neglected relations that reappear in their cultural material legacies and affect the (urban and rural) milieux.

Relational Breakdowns

"A scar is the sign not of a past wound but of 'the present fact of having been wounded': we can say that it is the contemplation of the wound, that it contracts all the instants which separate us from it into a living present."

Gilles Deleuze[84]

At the latest, after the Holocaust and more recently after the attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York on 11 September 2001 and 'the war on terror', the expansion of the examination of the role of the victim and trauma became a broadly socially accepted moralising element and explanation of the effects of violence. Trauma is conceived as an injury or wound to the psyche and, on another level, as an immaterial trace or physical scar. Trauma "operates like a screen between the event and its context", and at the same time, it depends on the subject's meaning attributed to it (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009, p. 281). I consider some of these immaterial traces to become apparent in most interviews I have conducted in Lesvos because it was about the proximity of the people to the disproportionate death and, to a certain extent, in Thessaloniki concerning the erasure of former Jewish life. They were touched by and with the narratives that expressed the affects and effects of the experience in their language and embodied reference within the conversations, which without doubt included me as an implicated and affected (while affecting and vice versa) researcher within these constellations.[85]

Through the connection that emerges from my first case in relation to the modernisation of Greece and the consequences of the Holocaust in Southeast Europe and further relates to today's border politics, a multidirectional connection also emerges that interrogates the question of race in Europe today's European postcolonial conditions. The class of the 'ungrievable' must be considered planetary, encompassing all those who are not conceived as 'grievable', because of their absence of attributed value within assigned racial, national, and socially constructed belonging. Nevertheless, because of my 'situatedness' in Europe and in connection to today's border regimes, racialisation must be considered with its colonial amnesia within this realm and its repercussions on the Holocaust. The breakdown of relations of equality between the Global South and Europe is evoked by the disregard for Europe's colonial reappraisal and reinforced in the current border regimes; the selection and conquest of today's rule' over 'racelessness' (Goldberg, 2009) after the Holocaust is a crisis of the claim of an interpretative high ground.

> "This is a radically anti-relational presumption, one failing to understand how much modern and contemporary Europe has been made by its colonial experiences; how deeply instrumentalities of the Holocaust such as concentration camps were products of colonial experimentation; how notions such as racial hygiene can be traced to racially predicated urban planning around

[84] Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and repetition*. London: Athlone Press, p.77.

[85] During the Greek interviews, there were, on some occasions, back-translations into English, which partly included my colleagues' interpretation. However, there was still an atmosphere, tonality, and melody in the conversations that became apparent in gestures, pauses, and facial expressions, even if I couldn't understand every word.

> sanitation syndromes by colonial regimes; how the operations of emergency law worked out in colonies like India were reimported into European contexts such as Ireland and later Nazi Germany" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 155).

I have analysed the intricate stratifications of how 'minoritarian' memory can be conceived in Greece, first based on Jewish and then migrant minority histories, which are both affected by racialisation within Europe. By neglecting their traces and mapping their grey zones, new parameters emerge for references to the production of loss as an instrument of discrimination. The racial violence generated throughout the centuries resonates and oscillates not only as the production of death between those considered as enemies from 'within' or from the 'outside' but through ultimate dehumanisation after death, including their reminiscences and traces. Therefore, my two case studies can be considered an 'interassemblage' between mapping the grey zones of material and immaterial (traumatic) traces revolving around the former and current cemeteries. In both cases, traumatic elements attached to the sites or reminiscences appear, in fact, through their (belated) unacknowledged condition and in the danger of their complete disappearance. In other words, these losses will already be inscribed in the changing city and landscapes as carriers of traumatic temporalities in the future.

In the case of Thessaloniki, the expropriation of the cemetery after the initial destruction went on for several years during the subsequent Civil war, facilitated by state bodies. The dead were extinguished, while the living have been deported. As a result of the Greek collaboration with the Germans, the relationship with the local Jewish community was broken. The relational collapse followed directly with the persecution of the partisans who liberated the country from the occupying forces, marking the beginning of the Cold War in Europe.

Today, the bones found on the university grounds during the Metro construction continue and are handled covertly. I made an informal attempt to contact an archaeologist who works for the archaeological service at the Heptapyrgion, asking her if someone would speak to me on that topic and the question about the bones that must have appeared during the construction of the metro station beside the university's campus. She replied, "Good luck. I don't think anyone would like to speak about this delicate topic." Vaena, the pharmacist, reiterates the case of the cemetery as a crime by the state:

> "The community is a public and legal entity under public law, so its ownership rights cannot be abandoned. In 1944, the cemetery was simply transcribed from the ownership of the Jewish community into the ownership of the state – not confiscated. Simply put, the state changed the entry in the books. It cancelled the 'Jewish community' and wrote 'Greek state'; this is illegal not only by international standards but by those of the Greek state itself. What it did was non-existent; it undertook an act not mandated by Greek law. That was a problem for many decades because afterwards, in 1962, the community considered a lawsuit to reclaim ownership of the cemetery. Of course, it never pursued the lawsuit because it feared what this could mean for the community's survival.

> The whole case blew up during talks about the subway station's construction, set to pass through part of the university's campus, but also when Greece finally decided to adopt a national land registry – where everybody was asked to present their title for the land they owned. The university could not show any title. It could only present the one bought from them – but they cannot have sold it to them. Practically, the state had transferred the land ownership to Aristotle University, but it was not the stage for it to transfer it. On the contrary, the Jewish community had land that it could present. They started a joint commission, which was made up of politicians [...]. The community accepted compensation for seven hectares, and it would drop the case from 1943 that it had legal deeds on. The money, of course, has not arrived from the university. I don't know if it ever will. But that was when the university decided: "Now we can talk about what we did during and after the war." That's when the idea of a monument started forming."

The expropriation of the cemetery had no legal consequences, not even in the recent negotiations with the Jewish community. There were no complete investigation proceedings against the state or university nor reparation payments from Germany. The living presence of the wound can be seen in the nature of the last chopped-up gravestones in the city that point to the unfinished mourning 'screen between the event and its context.' They remind the state of its complicity in the fascist crime, which to this day treats the traces which inhabit 'singular memories' of the trauma produced with carelessness. In this case, the traumatic characteristic 'between the event and the screen', i.e. involving public knowledge, continues to be drawn out to this day because silence continues to be maintained and does not generate the need for an independent investigation within the complicit institutions.

The Mediterranean Sea is not a cemetery; it is a crime scene that bears flashes of traumatic memories for locals and non-locals alike simultaneously but differently. In Lesvos, the 'ungrievable class' have not yet been exploited by official memorialisation and thus symbolic capital because the practices of the burials do not serve to represent 'European values'; instead, they serve as a role model for bad examples to indict the murderous migration policy. The attempt to rename the cemetery as a *Memorial to Humanity* simultaneously marks the project title of the NGO, recently in charge of re-arranging the site for a few months. A project title will leave no lasting impression other than a symbolic gesture, while it remains questionable not to consider a distinction between a cemetery and a memorial important. The idea of a cemetery as a memorial is reminiscent of the heroic cemeteries of fallen soldiers, but Lesvos is far from a monumentalisation of the dead. What will happen after the project is completed remains uncertain. Where people can be buried in the future remains uncertain.

Both past and present cemeteries point to the complicity of racist state crimes (including at the EU level) with multiple opaque actors that continue to run their course and, therefore, remain unaccounted for. The monument, to commemorate the erased Jewish cemetery erected on the periphery of the university campus in 2014, marks a conclusion to the confrontation that never really began with the complicity and vested interests of the university itself. The symbolic gesture of erecting the monument initially seemed an important stepping stone to initiate public visibility on the

history of the destroyed Jewish cemetery. Nevertheless, it did not lead to a sincere recognition of the Jewish social history of the city, which would be necessary for coming to terms with traumatic events.

The official culture of remembrance is becoming increasingly commercialised, which is reflected in content and aesthetic forms that are oriented towards historical trends and the discovery of victim groups, such as the German expellees from Poland during the Second World War. This bears the risk of objectifying the victims (tokenism) and questionable (normative) modes of representation that often simplify a nuanced re-working of traumatic stories while failing to question contemporary politics concerning national memory production critically. If the financing of commemoration is influenced by political interests, i.e. it is decided who is commissioned and "who should speak for whom", hierarchies of representation must be questioned. Furthermore, the question arises as to the significance of dealing with image politics in the field of tension between the aestheticisation of suffering in exhibitions, monuments and memorials. Which forms of subjectivation, and narratives are evoked, and which are omitted?

According to the philosopher Adrian Parr, “the abstract, subjective essence of memory is discovered through the very system of private ownership that alienates and objectifies traumatic memory by territorialising it as a determinate mode of capital-money production” (Parr, 2008, p. 170). Commoditised memorialisation as objectification and alienation from traumatic memory, therefore, creates an abstraction from lived experience and the social sphere. However, the impossible mourning and neglected memory practices carry ‘singular memories.’ In the context of Lesvos, it refers to the latency of the lived experience of traumatic events and the concrete immaterial heritage (transmission of rituals, customs, and fairy tales) that circulate through oral narratives and cross-generational bodily transference.[86] Commodified memory risks producing a self-contained (often national) narrative, unlike' singular memory,’ which functions as a driving force carrying internal difference.

> “Singular memory is a differentiating force; it is an operative function that combines an aggregate of differences. Trauma is one possible aggregate. As univocal memory, trauma elides the negative position commonly ascribed to it. In this light, trauma no longer poses an irresolvable negation of Being or of life and it can be said to persist over time. However, this is not to suggest trauma persists in the same way over time. The differentiating power of singular memory is one of internal difference and if we were to follow Deleuze’s Nietzsche, it could be said to be ultimately creative.[87] That is, the activity of singular memory is untimely, not historical; it is positive, not negative, positive in so far as it is not different to the present and future – it is a mode of both – and it is also the condition necessary for future difference” (Parr, 2008, p. 186).

[86] According to Mehta, Miller; Bruenig *et al.* (2020), scientific studies of epigenetics show that immaterial wounds and scars, like symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD, a notion generated based on the treatment of Vietnam veterans in the U.S, marks a rediscovery of trauma as a clinical entity), can generate DNA methylation and show up in gene expression. Symptoms of trauma and posttraumatic stress (anxiety, lack of focus, restlessness, nightmares, and fatigue) are nowadays often medicated with Beta Blockers to reduce the impact (and to regulate emotionally) of reoccurring intrusive memories of traumatic events.

[87] ‘For Nietzsche this is the crux of his concept of Will to Power. Similarly for Bergson it is the key to understanding his concept of élan vital’ (Parr, 2008, p.189).

The aggregate of trauma can, therefore, become a driving force of difference that activates 'singular memory' despite the relevant triggers that concern my research, precisely that which is established, enabled, and legitimated by racist states and colonial violence over decades. Viewing trauma as a moral economy within the social recognition of a pathological category opens a politically valid perspective today, which is becoming relevant again in times of global racism and new wars. A critical genealogy of the pathological category and looking back to the origin of the conceptualisation of trauma helps place present-day contexts concerning the critical questions for embattled practices of memory and cultures of remembrance. The history of the pathologisation of victim groups as a collective must be considered in its differentiation to identify the normative appropriations of their history of suffering and, at the same time, to be able to highlight the commonalities that are indispensable for memory activism.

(Un-) captured traces and (pathologies of) trauma.

The interrelation between time, memory, mourning, and responsibility derives for Fassin and Rechtman precisely from a reconfiguration of the relationship between scientific development "in which the victim gains legitimacy as trauma comes to attest to the truth of his or her version" and as a moral economy (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009, p. 29). In their Book *The Empire of Trauma*, the authors critically examined the epistemology of the concept of trauma in its history of development.

> "…we believe that the truth of Trauma lies not in the psyche, in the mind, or the brain, but in the moral economy of contemporary societies. The fact that trauma has become so a pervasive factor in our world is not the result of the successful dissemination of a concept elaborated in the scientific world of psychiatrists, and then imported to the social space of afflictions. It is rather the product of a new relationship to time and memory, to mourning and obligations, to misfortune and the misfortunate. The psychological concept, trauma, has enabled to give a name to this relationship" (ibid., p. 276).

During the industrial age between 1866 and 1870, the first studies were conducted on the effects caused by the event of train accidents on the nervous system by the London-based surgeon John Erich Erichsen, which aroused the interest of French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot. Before the term trauma existed, Charcot subsumed the symptoms previously described as attacks on the nervous system as a disorder that is like 'hysteria' and that should concern both sexes neurologically and not just be gynecologically assigned to women. The German psychiatrist Oppenheim was the first to coin the term 'Trauma neurosis', which was later adapted and remodelled by Sigmund Freud and Pierre Janet as the psychological aetiology of the questionable hysteria theory (ibid., p. 30-34).

Freud's pathology is built on the aetiology of the psychic event that first appeared in *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), written together with Josef Breuer. The (exogenous) event (Ereignis) turns into a sign or symptom of the (endogenous) lived event (Erlebnis) (Malabou, 2012, pp.160; 85-100).

According to Malabou, the problem he raises is the question of how much influence can be attributed to a devastating event which, in conjunction with the deviant endogenous factors, can lead to neurosis and cause hysteria. How much agency does the individual have in the processing of internal processes when a fortuitous event's ('pathogenic') effect causes inner turmoil? The accidental event can affect the psyche, manifesting in symptoms that show themselves in 'unobtrusive' actions and gestures such as facial expressions, tongue slips, and dreams; "The symptom is situated at the intersection of the accident and hermeneutics: it is a meaningful accident" (ibid., p. 86).

For Freud, external (real) chance events can lead to superstition, in differentiation to the absence of inner psychic accidentality of lived events. The psychic event thus functions in the relationship and conjunction between the accidental event (Ereignis) and the inner experience (Erlebnis).

> "The link between the external accident and the endogenous event, between inside and outside, chance, necessity, contingency and meaning, is what, strangely in Freud's work will be called sexuality" (ibid., p. 89).

Sexuality becomes, in this logic, a transformer from one (signification) event to another and 'is at the origin of the conjunction between 'Ereignis' und 'Erlebnis', constituting types of (relational) eventuality.' In other words, sexuality is seen as a regime of events that can cause hysteria and neurosis. The primary role of the pathogenesis of hysteria is identified as the cause of psychic traumas, with the motives of defence mechanisms as the starting point of an analysis of the psychic event. Breuer and Freud conclude that all cases of hysteria can be equated with a traumatic shock, whereby the affect of fright and paralysing emotions become the central symptom of psychical trauma or memory of trauma. According to Breuer, the trauma is activated and is at work as a 'foreign body' (Fremdkörper), i.e., an agent living in the psychic system. In contrast to Freud's purely symbolic and phantasmatic interpretation of traumatic events, Breuer states that the (hysterical) shock affects the nervous system, comparing it to an electrical grid, producing a "short circuit" in the brain (ibid., p. 90). According to Breuer, the "intracerebral tonic excitation" is the force that causes the somatic effects, which is considered a phenomenon of conversion:

> "The coupling of incident and affect is due to the coincidence within the nervous system between (1) a shock received from the outside; (2) emotional excess that incites; and (3) the incapacity of the nervous system to discharge this excitation that finally turns into a symptom" (ibid., p. 91).

The differences between Breuer and Freud become clear through Malabou's analysis. She notes that the metaphor of the electrical grid becomes a sexual economy for Freud, consisting of the lexicon of energetics, as they inherit similar registers in terms of the relationship between tension and discharge. The etiological principle of sexuality then (rises above and authorises the cerebral) results in conversation and suppression. The radical 'foreign' to the nervous system becomes the transformer between the conjunction of 'Ereignis' and 'Erlebnis' which constitutes sexual operations

turned into a fantasy that becomes part of the structure and formation of the psychic accidentality (ibid., p. 91-92).

Freud's original (later further developed) theory of the traumatic event is therefore not only problematic regarding the question of the actual location of the trauma but also about the separation of material and psychic reality. A chain of meaning is produced in which fantasy is assigned based on sexuality. This produces a regime of representation as in theatrical re-enactments without further exploring the nervous system as a necessary (semi-autonomous) instance of the body and mind. How trauma was initially conceptualised is only touched on briefly but was profoundly addressed by Malabou with her development of the philosophical notion of 'plasticity.' By returning to the roots of the first interpretation of trauma in the Western world., it becomes clear how they have persisted on this basis for decades, influencing the practice and analysis of trauma within the fields of psychoanalysis and psychiatry. Modified elements of these are to be found in the concept of 'ambiguous loss', coined in 1999 by the psychoanalyst Pauline Boss, who was confronted with her family's experience of exile through her experience as a European migrant in the U.S.

As paradigm trauma unfolded with the belated memory of the Holocaust as a universal matrix in two ways: Firstly, because the Holocaust became an unavoidable reference for extreme violence and, therefore, trauma; secondly, because of the belated reappraisal, which only occurred after a period of silence. This delay between the event and public exposure marks its 'traumatic nature' for the authors. The bridge between the collective and the individual is formed by this connection between the effects on these two levels. Firstly, how did it affect the Jewish population collectively (memory trace in the group)? Second, individual symptoms have been delayed. The link between the collective and the individual thus "establishes a connection between culture and psyche" (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009, p. 18). Holocaust survivors were able to process their intimate experiences into moral inquiries, according to the psychotherapeutic assumption of the time. The survivors were assigned to the role of witnesses of those no longer alive (ibid., p. 75). In contrast, the real witnesses could no longer testify for Primo Levi and Giorgio Agamben. The industrialisation of murder evoked new discourses in social science, philosophy, psychology, (anti-or critical) psychiatry and literature that evoked new types of linguistics and reflection concerning previous extreme violence and exploitation by European Empires in the Global South.

Frantz Fanon, a pupil of Aimé Césaire (founder of the *Négritude* movement) and a member of the French anti-psychiatry movement, after having completed his psychiatric studies, wrote his fierce critique on the pathologisation of colonised subjects having migrated to France. Two articles, "The North-African Syndrome" and "West Indians and Africans", were published in 1952 and 1955. His three thesis on the racist environment in France mirrors the underlying suspicion by French doctors

during the medical treatment of Arab patients. The ‘North-African Syndrome’ derived from his observations during his medical practice:

> “FIRST THESIS.—That the behaviour of the North African often causes a medical staff to have misgivings as to the reality of his illness.
> SECOND THESIS.—That the attitude of medical personnel is very often an a priori attitude. The North African does not come with a substratum common to his race, but on a foundation built by the European. In other words, the North African, spontaneously, by the very fact of appearing on the scene, enters into a pre-existing framework.
> THIRD THESIS.—That the greatest willingness, the purest of in- tensions require enlightenment. Concerning the necessity of making a situational diagnosis” (Fanon, 1988, pp. 4-6).

During the Algerian Revolution in the 1960s, the psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, today famously known for his manifestos of decolonisation movements, worked as a clinician in a psychiatric hospital named Blida, where he was treating both *FLN* (Front de libération nationale) fighters and *Maquis*, (Resistance Guerrilla groups against the Germans in WWII in France and Belgium). At the same time, a 'psychiatry of immigration' was beginning to form among the Humanitarians in Europe, which in the French context highlighted the tension between universalism and so-called culturalism. The colonial-racist interpretation of psychopathologies is to be traced back to times of war psychiatry, also mentioned by Fanon’s writings in 1952, with its objective to treat the presumed diagnoses of malingering. In Algeria, starting from the French Empire in the 1920s and with Antoine Porot, the founder of the Algerian School, a category of the 'North African native' was created with the ascribed characteristics of exceptional ‘mental weakness’ and thus a paradigm of ‘Muslim psychiatry’ arose (Fassin and Rechtman, 2009, pp. 228-230). In the French and British Empires, during their colonial endeavours, new disciplines were founded, such as ‘ethnopsychiatry’, which combines colonial psychiatry with ethnography. In the colonial imperialist wars, for example, where enslaved soldiers made up part of the French army, it was assumed that they could not be affected by trauma because, as racialised soldiers, they were not capable of the same emotions and feelings as the European soldiers for cultural reasons and therefore pathologised as psychotic. For the philosopher Elsa Dorlin, the ‘monopolistic capture of violence’ during colonialism amplified “… an imperial economy of violence that paradoxically defends individuals whose self-defence has always already been recognised as legitimate. This economy maintains the legitimacy to use physical force for certain subjects, granting them powers of preservation and jurisdiction (vigilantism) that amount to a license to kill” (Dorlin, 2022, pp. xvii-xviii). Turning to the Holocaust, Goldberg sees analogies between the figure of ‘the Muselmann’, who is no longer of this world due to his hovering between death and life in reference to ‘the Muslim’ as already indicated as the harshly excluded (from the living) in the German concentration camps:

> “As the Muselmann in the camps, so the Muslim in Europe: the figure of the unwanted, the avoided, Europe’s untouchables. [...] The idea of the European excludes those historically categorized as non-European, as being not white. You are here but don’t (really or fully) belong. Your sojourn is temporary, so don’t grow too comfortable. Hence the constant drumbeat about sending “them” back”’ (Goldberg, 2009, pp.166-167).

This section indicated how colonial thought patterns, in conjunction with psychiatric classifications and cultural attributions (embedded in fictional projections), led to the pathological objectification and characterisation of colonised subjects. However, this already points to the shift in anti-Muslim resentment established during this period, which acts as today's echo chambers that are reflected in migration policy.

A turning point occurred in the 1980s (the earthquake in Armenia in 1988 and the war in Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2001, as well as in Palestine since 1995) with the invention of the term PTSD (posttraumatic stress disorder). The erasure of the term neurosis in the reworked DSM-III definition, including the acknowledgement of torture, became a crucial element. This led to significant shifts in claims for reparation and benefited the struggles of US Veterans and feminist movements alike. It was not until the 1990s that a more critical approach to 'ethnopsychatry' since transcultural methods began to take shape, and a 'psychotraumatology of exile' began to emerge, differentiating between forced displacement, the effects of torture and voluntary migration, particularly in France.[88]

The presence of *Médecins sans Frontières* (MFS) and *Médecins du monde* (MDM) in many African countries and, importantly, in Rwanda during the Tutsi Genocide (1994) made apparent the very limits of European humanitarian psychiatric attempts and NGO's mental health programmes which, from their Western point of view, had failed in the former colonies, as they realised that their concept of all-encompassing humanity contains the problem and imposition of 'western of consciousness' concerning race in the long tradition of colonial violence that continuous to produced 'the figure of the strange' and 'absolute otherness' (Mbembe, 2001 in Fassin and Rechtman, 2009, p. 187).

Increasingly, the subject of cross-cultural entanglements in psychotherapeutic practice concerning the tension between migration and trauma, including different kinds of mourning practices or resistance to it related to loss, came to the forefront with the amplified voices of people living in exile (ibid., pp. 225-249). A significant contribution to the visibility of the challenging migrant experience in France was contributed by the *Sans-papiers* movement.[89] The issuance of clinical psychological certificates became crucial to getting the right to asylum from the 1980s to the 2000s and until today.[90]

The concept of Trauma changed the clear-cut division between the victim and the perpetrator in societies. As "we are not dealing with an inert object, any more than victims are passive subjects", trauma has become a floating signifier 'to read violence in these terms produce (in) the social world

[88] By the co-founder François Sironi of the Primo Levi Centre and the evolving clinical practice at the Avicenne Hospital in Bobigny with Marie-Rose Moro, a newly invented 'trauma group' was initiated.
[89] Harzoune, M. (2022) 'The meaning of "sans-papiers"?', Available at: https://www.histoire-immigration.fr/en/the-words/the-meaning-of-sans-papiers (Accessed: 24 May 2024).
[90] Referred to by the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights. Nevertheless, new and constant changes of regulations in the various asylum procedures complicate the types of certificates in their differentiation from visible traces of torture from psychological stress.

in the moral sphere' (ibid., p. 278). The shifts in framing the figure of the victim are thus decisive for an analysis of how violence is constantly reconstituted and constructed. The encompassing (social) relationship is set to different understandings of power, subjection and subjectivation.

The term trauma has been redefined again and again over the decades. Nevertheless, the term combines time, memory, grief, and responsibility. These all-pervasive layers formed the central themes of my research into the neglected dead and their impact on the living. The traumatic events caused by violence are echoed in the temporalities addressed, outlining shifts in racialisation, with the singularity of memory inscribed both in the interviews and in the material of the cemeteries themselves. At the micropolitical level of impact, trauma is an uncaptured trace that stems from a created wound and co-exists in (psychic) life. The uncaptured trace creates a life of its own, like a ghost accompanying many of 'us.'

Abuse

Today, a decade later, the question arises of how trauma is misused as a moral category for rhetorical political agitation and purposes to legitimise violence and fuel resentment. In her book *Undemocratic Emotions* (2023), Eva Illouz refers to victim rhetoric as a politics of compassion (related to the singularity of the plight of individuals and not as an abstract overriding principle), referring to Hanna Arendt, who, as Illouz writes, became acceptable as a morally socially superior victim (Illouz, 2023, pp. 159-160). By legally recognising the damage inflicted on the victim groups, both psychologically and physically, they were transferred to an 'objective space.' In addition, the role of the victim conferred collective and individual political and performative power and has an identity-building effect. This moral reinforcement of the victim category, which established itself culturally and socially, has thus become a 'resource in the political sphere' according to Illouz. The right-wing populists' appropriation of the role of victim in the fight against left-wing forces, which was previously reserved (or fought by) for the latter, has therefore 'rendered it useless for the liberal forces.'

> "One of the main effects of populism is precisely to blur the moral categories contained or implied in liberal political language. Seen in this light, the effectiveness of populism lies less in its ideological clarity than in the immense political confusion it creates. A politics of resentment blurs the distinctions between identity and justice, universalism and particularism, victim and oppressor" (Ibid., p. 160) (my translation).

For Illouz, resentment, anxiety and abhorrence form a powerful emotional matrix that functions like a weapon in a civil war. On the one hand, it is used by neoliberal economic actors and, on the other, by 'the cultural avant-garde' (which might be a vague generalisation) battling each other. The fuelling of resentment distracts from structural oppression. It points to a 'crisis of the moral language of liberalism', which delegitimises the actual victims of inequality by eroding their modes of

representation. Thus, the emotional matrix divides and creates enmity and mistrust between social groups instead of reminding people of a sense of 'imagined community', which Illouz attributes to the feeling of love.

Tying in with Illouz's thoughts on the misuse of representation, this could be transferred to the field of official culture of remembrance. The philosopher Adrian Parr distinguishes remembrance from the work of memory, considering its singularities. Eroded modes of representation, in other words, can be framed as a dangerous mode of remembrance when a traumatic memory is being repressed and this open wound is being exploited.

> “A fascistic investment occurs when the social field resists the endurance of traumatic memory, finding investment for this wound in an authoritarian image of the sublime or through repressive modes of remembrance, what Deleuze and Guattari might otherwise call a paranoid investment of desire” (Parr, 2008, p. 187).

Therefore, the critical genealogy of the victim's figure through the concept of trauma in the history of modern psychiatry and psychology is remarkable and eye-opening but also provides necessary insight for a shift in the moral phenomenon and social-political fabric that affects cultural, memory and humanity studies alike. Trauma, loss, and mourning are inevitably connected as social and psychic processes, constituting singular and collective subjectivity with the work of memory (rather than commoditised remembrance). The politicisation of memory came about through the struggles of Holocaust survivors to express themselves in the form of testimonies. Their writings and ‘oral histories’ became part of a struggle to recognise the physical and psychological scars inflicted on them. Therein lies a commonality with decolonial (revolutionary) actors, migrants, feminists, and LGBTQI struggles in solidarity with critical psychiatrists and even humanitarians. There are inherent nuances in positionality, but overall, there has been a need for accountability, visibility and responsibility concerning the abuse of power and dehumanisation of specific groups.

Lost in ambiguity

"Without grievability there is no life, or rather, there is something living that is other than life. Instead, 'there is a life that will never have been lived', sustained by no regard, no testimony, and ungrieved when lost. The apprehension of grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of precarious life. Grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of the living being as living, exposed to non-life from the start."

Judith Butler[91]

Paris in April 1945. Marguerite Duras describes in her book *La Douleur* when the Allies opened the German camps, how she waited for her missing husband, Robert L., who had been deported to Buchenwald as a resistance fighter. While she searches for any trace of him, in constant uncertainty as to whether he is still alive, she visits a friend to see if there are any signs or information about her husband. After having left her friend's house without any news, she writes:

> "At around ten o'clock, I was suddenly overcome with fear. Fear of everything. I found myself outside again. Suddenly, I found myself outside again. Suddenly, I looked up, and the flat had changed, as had the light of the lamp, suddenly yellow. And suddenly, the certainty, the rush of certainty: he's dead. Dead. Dead. Dead on the twenty-first of April, on the twenty-first of April. I got up and walked to the centre of the room. It had happened within a second. No more knocking in the bedrooms. No more of that. My face dissolves: it changes. I dissolve, I collapse, I change. There is no one in the room where I am. I can no longer feel my heart. The inflammation slowly rises in me to a flood; I am drowning. I'm not waiting so much anymore. I'm scared. Is it over? Is it over? Where are you? How am I supposed to know? I don't know where he is. I don't know where I am any more, either. I don't know where we are. What is the name of this place? What kind of place is this? What is it about?" (Duras, 1986, p. 46) (my translation).

The sense of bodily displacement, due to Duras's melancholic catastrophising states, is described with inherent parts of the anxiety of waiting for any trace of whether her husband is dead or alive. The absence of any trace of any information about him causes 'ambiguous loss', as psychologist Pauline Boss (1999) describes as the phenomenon of a desired beloved person, environment, territory, body, or object being lost or (processual) disappearing but remaining present in a subject's consciousness.

> "First, because the loss is confusing, people are baffled and immobilized. They don't know how to make sense of the situation. They can't problem-solve because they do not yet know whether the problem (the loss) is real or temporary. If the uncertainty continues, families often respond with absolutes, either acting as if the person is completely gone or denying that anything has changed. […] Finally, because ambiguous loss is a loss that goes on and on, those who experience it tell me they become physically and emotionally exhausted from the relentless uncertainty" (Boss,1999, pp. 6-8).

The phenomenon can arise in many circumstances, like homesickness in exile or death without knowing what happened or where the body is. It can also apply when someone is present but

[91] Butler, J. (2016) *Frames of War. When Is Life Grievable?* London and New York: Verso. p.15.

becomes absent due to the illness (Boss uses the example of Alzheimer's). In other words, something or someone is absent and present simultaneously, generating a description that outlines the relationship of unfinished business with open wounds, what Boss calls ‘frozen grief’, i.e. immobilisation, which is constantly re-actualised. This applies to memory and grief work to find some closure or transformation of (the frozen) pain, but also to the way violence inscribes itself into the subject as a traumatic element as a spiral of unbearable emotions when containment is absent.

I hypothesise that ‘ambiguous Loss’ has become a central instrument used in migration policies with the restriction of movement, in keeping people with unclear immigration statuses that can be revoked at any time, deportation measures that rip apart families as well and the mismanagement of migrant death. The implication or rather torture of this psychic condition produces animated wounds that remain open, creating a limbo of impotence that creeps in as a constant factor, a gyre around on the affective level of 'abandonment' that works on the physical, psychological, and material levels.

> “The inability to resolve such ambiguous losses is due to the *outside* situation, not to internal personality defects. And the outside force that freezes the grief is the uncertainty and ambiguity of the loss. […] Unlike death, an ambiguous loss may never allow people to achieve the detachment that is necessary for normal closure. Just as ambiguity complicates loss, it complicates the mourning process. People can’t start grieving because the situation is indeterminate. It feels like a loss, but it is not *really* one. The confusion freezes the grieving process. People plummet from hope to hopelessness and back again. Depression, anxiety, and somatic illnesses often set in. The symptoms affect the individuals first but can radiate in a ripple effect that impacts the whole family, as people are ignored or, worse yet, abandoned. Family members can become so preoccupied with the loss that they withdraw from one another. The family becomes a system with nobody in it” (Boss,1999, p. 11-12*).*

‘Ambiguous loss’ as a traumatising mass affect creates the constant search for traces of a missing loved one, which can cause manifold ripple effects of severe distress. Based on Boss’ conducted interviews in collaboration with the Centre of War Studies in the U.S. with wives missing their husbands who have been military pilots in Cambodia (1974) and Vietnam, she claims that ‘the power of ambiguity in complicated loss’ evoked by the ‘outside’ situation (exogenous event) often remained for a lifetime, is due to the lack of information together with the absence of official verification of the missing. The memorised ‘lost object’ remains present daily while bodily is uncertainly absent (ibid., p. 13). During her clinical work on Alzheimer's as a family therapist, Boss questions what she calls her 'ethnocentric' focus, visiting First Nation Anishinabe women in northern Minnesota who lived with family members with dementia and quotes one interviewee who stated: “I had a funeral for Ma because the woman that I knew was just not there anymore” (ibid., p. 17). The acceptance of her mother turning into another persona with dementia is made possible with the help of a ritual burying the old version of her to close a cycle and continue with what is to come next. The eye-opening visit to the Anishinabe women leads Boss to conclude that these women tolerate the unknown and can cope with ambiguous losses. In other words, due to their cosmologies and related rituals, which form a completely different approach to life as affirming uncertainty and ambiguity that doesn’t necessarily

have to cause waves of anxiety and distress as is the case with her primarily metropolitan middle-class clients. In concluding that more research is needed, she writes:

> "The Anishinabe women were able to cope with debilitating illness because they believed that life is a mystery that they must embrace and give themselves to willingly. This belief is clearly illustrated in an Anishinabe morning prayer: "I step into the day; I step into myself; I step into the mystery. […] They saw an elderly person's illness as part of nature's cycle from birth to death. […] The women's goal of harmony with nature rather than mastery over it, their patience and humor, and their comfort with ambiguity opened up a new path for my thinking. From them I learned that ambiguous loss does not have to devastate. […] The existence of rituals to mark ambiguous losses is an indicator of a culture's tolerance for ambiguity" (ibid*.,* p. 17-18).

The differentiations arise from individual and diverse generational, social, and cultural beliefs and values that potentially escape colonial and neoliberal registers.[92] The containment of grief through specific rituals that foster acceptance of a problematic situation marks an important point. At the same time, Boss describes the U.S. mainstream society with a common mindset of having to be (individually) 'mastery-oriented', i.e. 'effort matches outcome', which causes tremendous stress when problems become unsolvable (ibid., p. 19*).* Therefore, embracing collective endeavours in inventing other ways to mourn (for example, within the frame of social movements) counteract individual pathologisation in painful loneliness and self-blame against the neoliberal principles in a post-austerity-driven society as it is (incorrectly) written on public walls in Thessaloniki: "So many: I am the designer of my own catastrophy." [93]

For the acknowledgement of loss in the psychoanalytic and clinical context, Pauline Boss developed pragmatic approaches to deal with types of melancholy, which can become or are caused by trauma. As Boss explains, based on further studies with stressed families, difficulties are also found in other forms of communities because ambiguous loss is not, as she writes, a 'clear-cut' loss, as in the case of a death, for example. With four points, she addresses (clinicians and healthcare workers) the possible options for dealing with loss within a (classical) family constellation. Firstly, stress is amplified when change occurs, such as ambiguous family loss. Secondly, this can lead to creative adjustments and accepting external help to manage stress. Thirdly, Boss points to the importance of sharing (psychological) knowledge and information with affected families. Fourth, she assumes that ambiguous loss can traumatise, while she makes a clear distinction from the common PTSD diagnosis:

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[92] Nevertheless, I would argue that it makes a difference whether a loved one has disappeared under unclear circumstances or whether he/she/they are physically present with a changed character caused by Alzheimer's or Dementia. Again, these diseases are not simply naturally occurring as one gets older but can be due to various triggering causes such as tablet addiction, other harmful chemical influences, or heredity.

[93] Therefore, 'ungrievability' also concerns all those rendered 'useless' in a neoliberal market logic. For Judith Butler (2022, pp. 96-97), having reflected on the governmental tools, such as institutional violence that arose (and were tested by nation-states) during the pandemic, market calculation became a noticeable central feature in letting die. Hence, the current border policy is to have the dead counted and analysed by agencies such as the IOM to monitor the 'damage control' and keep dying on seemingly controllable migration routes. In other words, the observation and counting of letting die functions like the mechanism of measurement, which calculates the scales of 'acceptable damage' for Migration Policymakers that exceeds any rational dimension. Butler attributes the melancholy triggered by mass extinction to the migration policy at the EU's external borders and sees this phenomenon as collective melancholic suffering worldwide during the pandemic.

> “Ambiguous loss is also a psychologically distressing event that is outside the realm of ordinary human experience; like the events triggering PTSD, it lacks resolution and traumatizes. But with ambiguous loss, the trauma (the ambiguity) continues to exist in the present. It is not post anything. Ambiguous loss is typically a long-term situation that traumatizes and immobilizes, not a single event that later has flashback effects. The outcomes of PTSD are also similar, though not identical, to outcomes of long-term ambiguous loss. Both can result in depression, anxiety, psychic numbing, distressing dreams, and guilt. But ambiguous loss is unique in that the trauma goes on and on in what families describe as a rollercoaster ride, during which they alternate between hope and hopelessness. A loved one is missing, then sighted, then lost again. Or a family member is dying, then goes into remission, then the illness returns again in full force. Hopes are raised and dashed so many times that psychically people no longer react” (Boss, 1999, p. 24.)

In this sense, ambiguous loss can become a never-ending cycle of traumatic reiteration that can be described as a ripped open wound, a roller-coaster that people live with. Nevertheless, this suffering is not recognised under the umbrella of a floating signifier like the term trauma, let alone included in a socio-political analysis as a microscopic devastating phenomenon of violence that has an impact on an intersectional level in global societies. The separation and deprivation of something beloved (like a social bond) undoubtedly happens in the case of war, apartheid and prison systems, and catastrophic and violent incidents but works well alongside the precarisation of life, one of indebtedness as a form of governmentality that keeps people in continuous states of uncertainty and rather potential loss already projected into the future (in distinction to ambiguous loss) about their work contracts, health care, and housing situation. Persistent reminders of what is lost produce a psychological economy or machine of restlessness, dysregulation, depression, anxiety, and anguish that constantly seeks closure, rupture or escape in times of uncertainty.

The production of ambiguous loss through ‘bad policies’ concerning the abuse of power by the executive and complicit bodies of authority within border regimes (and manifold institutions) is a form of micropolitical violence that functions as an amplifier of transgenerational trauma. Memory activism within social movements in the struggle for justice and recognising systemically produced harm indirectly addresses this psycho-social damage. Reversing the view of the void from individual loss to loss as (an expanding and inherent governmental technique of patriarchy, racism, classism and so on) to a collective phenomenon enables transnational solidarities beyond a zero-sum game of victim competition. At the same time, a connection is created in the social exchange that inevitably arises during the organising processes in movements, making it possible to compare and relate the (singular) worlds of different and multiple transgenerational losses. These exchanges signify potential generative collective forces that can produce constitutive elements for 'memory work from below.'

The archaeological apparatus

The apparatus of archelogy in constructing and integrating modernity in (secular) nation-building forms another level for thinking about race, gravesites, and material remnants. The archaeologists Greenberg and Hamilakis discussed the field juxtaposing Greece and Palestine/Israel to generate a critical epistemology of the discipline deeply rooted in a colonialist mindset, which still is remarkably side-lined. Both cases differ in specificity within the transformation from the Ottoman Empire towards nationalisation. At the same time, both served as buffer states "between the Judeo-Christian West and Islamic East" (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, p. 110).

I will refer here mainly to the work of Hamilakis concerning Greece and its intersection of colonialism and nationalism as foundational elements of the Hellenist state, who considers the field of 'ethnoarchaeology' (Hamilakis, 2007) critically with a vision of decolonising the imagination of archaeology itself (ibid., p. 110). He assumes nationalism as what other scholars have described as 'derivative discourse and imaginary' first emerged in colonialism. At the same time, Western Hellenism was a form of colonialism in Greece that gradually became an ideology:

> "Western Hellenism was the form that colonization took in the case of Greece, at first colonization of the ideal, and the vehicle that allowed in cooperation of that land and its people to the Western sphere of influence. Western Hellenism can be defined as the construction of a certain version of Hellas, [which had only a tenuous connection to the social realities of Ancient Greece, as an eastern Mediterranean phenomenon] and its designation as the ordinary moment of Western civilization" (ibid., p. 11).

The period of the 17th century is described as the Western 'rediscovery' of the country, with ancient Greece as the cradle and historical reference to the new national, ideological, and racial construct serving an imaginary European civilisation. In other words, colonisation, in this case, implies and evokes the construction of a nation and nationhood that went hand in hand with modern archaeologisation as a technology intersecting and producing monumentalisation and capitalisation of ancient sites "expressed through unearthing ancient classical ruins, renaming the land using ancient Greek toponyms, and investing it with ancient Greek mythological connections and associations" (Ibid., p. 23). Considering a critical epistemology of archelogy in Greece makes visible what kind of values are attributed, side-lined, or neglected regarding cultural material and what are considered sacred sites. Which one of the remnants is acknowledged and therefore valued as representable and sustained or contested and lost for the sake of European identity and telos (a temporality introduced entailing the idea of 'progress')?

The close entanglements between religion and the state were already apparent before and during the Greek War of Independence or the Greek Revolution beginning in 1821. The 'revolt of the Christian millet' had a profoundly religious connotation and was formed from various Christian movements against the Ottomans, which meant fighting against Muslim religious predominance. In 1852, Greece was called 'ethnos agion, saintly, or holy nation' stated by the historian Spyridon

Zambelios during the emergence of Greek national historiography, in the process defined the term Ellino-Christianikos (Helleno-Christian), which expressed a synthesis between religion and the ideology and imagination of messianic religion and the modern Hellenic state (ibid., pp. 98-101).

> *"Epanastasi,* the Greek word for revolution, is very close phonetically and grammatically to *Anastasi*, resurrection, with its Christian connotations. In this vernacular Christianity, you need to be cleansed and purified of your sins to achieve redemption, so that divine providence can grant you liberation from the Muslim yoke" (ibid., p. 99).

The Greek national project as an expansion of Christian Europe started in 1830 with the influence of the different Great Powers, namely, Britain, France, Russia, and German elites and Royalists. King Otto (Otto Friedrich Ludwig von Wittelsbach) from Bavaria became the first monarch of Greece (1832 – 1862) due to the decision by the Great Powers at the London Conference of 1832 and with the definition of the borders in the Treaty of Constantinople (1832), which marked the establishment of modern Greece in separation from the Ottoman Empire. Thus, it was a German neo-classical archaeologist, Leon von Klenze, director of antiquities and professor, who wrote the first legal writings on archaeological law and, as an architect, dubbed the Acropolis in Athens the most essential national archaeological site. However, this was not without criticism and clashes of local intellectuals and scholars far from the allegiance of the king, which Hamilakis describes as having an affinity for what he calls 'indigenous archaeology' and names Kyriakos Pittakis, who was part of Greece's liberation struggle, and the first Greek to be employed for the archaeological service (ibid., p. 22).

In 1913, the former foremost Jewish city, Thessaloniki, during the Ottoman Empire, became part of the Greek state only. The Triple Entente[94] were allies of Eleftherios Venizelos, which installed in 1916 a republican counter-government against King Constantine I., while British and French troops arrived in northern Greece and Thessaloniki. On his behalf, the city was modernised after the Great Fire in 1917, when the King was expelled. The French urban planner, architect, and archaeologist Ernest Hébrard laid out the new city plan as if the city itself were a blank slate. Hébrard, the Director of the Archaeological Service of the Army of the Orient, was stationed in the town during WWI and taught at the National Technical University of Athens. His mission highlighted the Byzantine elements of the city to introduce a central axis with boulevards in the newly designed centre, which eradicated most of the medieval and Ottoman elements. For Elsa Dorlin, the mindset of a blank slate within landscapes, cities and territories refers to classical colonial rhetoric:

> "Considered to be outside the sphere of productive relations, colonized peoples were portrayed as governed by nature's cyclical time, an immature time, reproductive rather than accumulative, that left them the doorstep of history. They were thus seen as being without any knowledge or skills to capitalize on them" (Dorlin, 2022, pp. 21-22).

[94] It was founded and based on the Russian-French alliance, which was formed in 1894 against the Central Powers: Ottoman Turkey, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. The alliance consisted of the Russian Empire, the French Third Republic, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

The historical violence in Greece cannot be viewed with the same power asymmetry as in French colonies such as Senegal or Algeria, which Dorlin critically examines. Nevertheless, it shows how the local and indigenous population was despised and not taken seriously. Also, the modernising zeal in Greece ignored the local people, whose different communities and customs were intermingled during the Ottoman period. According to Hamilakis, constructing a 'terra nullius' as if the land was empty of people indicates a 'fair game for conquest' and thus a colonial impetus. The new concept of time was translated into architecture and hence 'civilised' everyday life, the social sphere of people in modern Greek cities and across Europe. For Goldberg, introducing 'civility' in the 18th century was inherently fabricated in the architecture of modern nation-states that standardised and enacted 'racial characterisation' as central violent instruments of governance and 'new civic religion' of the bourgeois classes.

> "The architecture of states of embedded violence (individualized and institutionalized) rendered standardized relations and modes of violence regular even as they become regulated, structurally embedded, in a word, civil. Conceived in large measure as the face of structurally inscribed and embedded violence, modernizing civility is enacted through racial characterization. By the late eighteenth century, race had begun to take hold across the European orbit as the new civic religion, offering novel threads to the civic fabric(ation) of being and relation. Race provided the artifice of substance to otherwise abstracted social intimacy, fashioning permissible or acceptable contours to civility in the face of – as responses to – rapidly expanding populations, quickening urbanization, intensified demographic and cultural heterogeneities, increasing anonymity, and the collapsing intimacies of close(d) kinship communities" (Goldberg, 2009, pp. 41-42).

This interaction between the liberation of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslims, and the so-called oriental despots was seen as a project of civilisation beyond Greece and the relationship and cultural appropriation of Greece during Hellenisation in conjunction with the symbolic Westernisation without much consideration of local life and people. The transition from the Ottoman Empire to Hellenization also led to a shift in maritime trade routes and new economic alliances, described as the beginning of a new form of capitalist and proto-capitalist economy. In the eyes of Western orientalists, the free-market economy seemed to be previously hampered by the Ottomans, embedded in racist stereotypes such as the modern, thriving Western entrepreneur versus the lazy Turks (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, pp. 15-21).

The institutionalisation of archaeology signalled a turning point in time that geographically and temporally 'cleansed' itself of oriental elements and moved towards Bavarian neo-classicism and a reinterpretation of an all-encompassing Hellenism modelled on other European metropolises. Between the significant Western powers with their different archaeological schools (German Reich, France, Britain, including Italy and the United States), this led to competitive rivalries as to who could claim which ancient sites (such as Delphi, Olympia, Knossos, and the Athenian Agora) for archaeological excavation and study in Greece, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. An entrance fee for visiting the Acropolis was introduced in 1834 (ibid., pp. 22-29).

> "Antiquities were transformed into national landmarks and sacred locales, but this did not prevent them from being marketed as commercialized tourist sites at the same time, symbolic capital that can be converted to financial capital" (ibid., p. 24).

In 19th-century Greece, cosmologies were celebrated far from anthropogenic conceptions, but they have been referred to as indigenous Hellenism, with objects categorised as folklore and antiquities. Capitalist modernisation meant monumentalisation and capturing ancient Greek sites, whilst an increasing ideology of homogenisation of the people encompassing the national narrative, including ancient Macedonia. This was evoked further by the arrival of the Greek Orthodox refugees from Minor Asia in northern Greece and after the Lausanne Treaty between Turkey and Greece in 1923. The Jewish (prevalent socialist groups) and (mostly expelled) Muslim communities, with their rituals, collective cultural goods, and places, including their burial sites, were equally orientalised by the Western and Hellenistic dominant forces. Foremost, mosques were remodelled into Orthodox churches. Minarets were demolished and replaced with bell towers. The first Greek parliament was housed in a former Ottoman Mosque in Nafplio 1825. In other words, polluted sites were 're-sacralised' (ibid., pp. 104-105). Muslim burial grounds were overridden with state buildings, housing projects, and fairs or turned into flattened green areas without any indication of a former sacred site. In one case, in Thessaloniki, a mosque was turned into a porn cinema and in Chania, the mosque on the harbour is today a cultural centre. The archeologisation and its technology as a striking factor of nation-building, which became a vital tourist enterprise, was a side-lined topic in Greece and continues to be an ongoing process until this day, according to Hamilakis (ibid., pp. 22-29). Greenberg further expands on the attempts of purification in Palestine/Israel:

> "In terms of archaeology, the modern determination is clear cut to what is ancient and what is not, what has value and what does not. And this quest for categorical purity ties into moral, physical, and ritual dimensions […] and to the modern Western need to put order into chaos, which was part of the burden of the colonizers in the East and certainly in Palestine. I also see a parallel of the archaeological method itself, because its "plan of attack", as they used to call it in the early (and not so early) days — drawing up a grid, trenching, cutting sections — it's all about reducing the chaos of the archaeological site into an order that we can control. It's embedded in archaeological thinking, these acts of purification, of creating distinctions" (ibid., p. 77).

The authors make two distinctions concerning their conversation about archaeology as purification as central to the discipline. First, these practices imply the stripping of soil and the disregarding or neglecting of finds that would not correspond to the national objective or scope of an archaeological project, i.e. 'matter out of place' and pollution (referring to Mary Douglas, 1966), which according to Greenberg can be rethought as 'matter out of time' (ibid., pp. 75, 78). Secondly, purity, cleanness and pollution vs contamination have bodily, moral, aesthetical and religious connotations, which have been used in pseudo-scientific racial research (occurring and generated in the fields of Anthropology, Ethnography and Fascist 'rationality') with the assumption of bloodlines or disassociation in the form of so-called mixed races. Modern parameters are used in archaeological technology, implying

methodologies of dissecting, cleaning, separating, evaluating, documenting, and organising the spatial dimension and the social environment. All these are methods and tools of civilising the soil by ordering its ancient remnants to attribute sacralised national and moral value to it.

Uncivilised reminiscences of the dead

The fear of the 'foreign' Muslim dead in the village of Kato Tritos reminds us of precisely these semantics of pollution and chaos vs order of the plot and soil. The municipal commission initially blocked the legalisation, arguing the supposed danger of polluting the village's groundwater, even though the Christian cemetery is much closer to the village's water pipes. The cemetery 'creates chaos' due to unwanted visitors and the confusion of who, how many are buried there and when. The cemetery is seen as 'out of the hands and lacks control' by the local MPs and people of Kato Tritos. It is chaotically arranged, taking away space for the olive grove- the value of the fertile field.

Additionally, the Christian dead would be gradually outnumbered by the Muslim dead and, therefore, threaten the local dead with their national religion and sacrality. The reminiscences of the dead are being put into question as to whether they should belong to this place 'matter out of place.' They are reminders of a 'matter out of time' threatening the local patriotic historical narrative while carrying a repeating temporality of the ongoing so-called 'refugee crisis' introducing 'foreign' bodies, rituals and the old rivalry of the Muslim religion in dealing with the earth of the soil and how the bodies are buried. The cemetery, therefore, represents a different temporality to that of the village that begins in 2015 and with the summer of migration. The matter is 'out of place and time' of national value and inscribes itself into the earth in cyclic seasons. Whilst the Jewish tombstones were put out of place and time by the desired modern 'progressive' and linear ear, they proliferate and inscribe themselves in the architecture of places 'to be preserved' such as the city's pride, Saint Demetrius Church. This delinquent cultural material represents reality, a being there (an existence) that cannot be 'cleaned up.' At the same time, purification and whitewashing as such, as national and colonial mindset evoked, has never been possible in its totality or an all-encompassing sense.

The binary separation between object and subject, nature and culture, past and present, are inherent parameters within the (colonial) apparatus of archaeology. This apparatus belongs to machines that generate 'exemplary' symbolic capital in a country conceived, despite its crypto-colonial dependencies, as a "cultural super-power" (ibid., p. 162). At the same time, however, this technique can also be understood as an abstraction and separation machine of European modernity of the formerly multi-ethnic social composition of the Ottoman Empire, which had to be civilised:

> "Euro-modernity's fragmentation of the social, ironically, claimed resolution through the naturalizing artifice of newly abstracting and fragmenting racial connection and dislocation. The

> longing to connect, to be part of a civil order, came to be conjured, among other modalities, through racially driven lines of demarcation" (Goldberg, 2009, p. 42).

To critically interrogate imperial desire and entanglements, or to imagine decolonisation of the field, is to contextualise the effects of dislocation of its racist dimension and its effects on the omissions produced while enabling other possible critical epistemologies. By neglecting the question of the Jewish race in Greece in the context of the immensely destroyed material cultural heritage, five centuries of 'indigenous culture' are overlooked. In approaching the effects of 'whitening' and race politics, enabled by archaeological tools, the authors focused foremost on the erasure and the ruins of former Muslim (sacred) places and the absence of accounts of Sub-Saharan and enslaved Black people in Greece. Side-lining the remodelling of the Jewish race construct in Greece as one of the 'enemies from within' and stylised as oriental subjects and pro-ottoman 'foreigners' (Molho, 2015). Thus, this double dimension of the construct of the Jewish race in Greece encompasses internalisation and externalisation in the same vein.

Considering thoughts on decolonising archaeology in Greece, therefore, cannot exclude the country's Jewish history of (orientalist) racialisation. Simultaneously, this indifference by beneficiary institutions and individuals that expropriated gods, artefacts, and cultural material on a massive scale is once again pushed to the margins of a critical and otherwise insightful discussion on the epistemology of a colonial apparatus, such as archaeology. The similarities between antisemitism and anti-Muslim resentment as 'oriental elements' went hand in hand with the fiction of a Christian Greek national identity. The Jewish community that had been settled in the Ottoman Empire for nearly five hundred years was 're-orientalised', replaced with semiotic signifiers of the 'of the non-patriot.'[95]

The racist narrative deeply rooted in (Helleno-) and European Christianism and nationalism contributed significantly to the Jewish community's ostracisation and extinction. These are rooted in the assumption that the Jewish population cannot be Greek, which is mainly based on Orthodox religiosity until this day. The invention of a homogeneous identity of the Western world retains the so-called 'Judeo-Christian' tradition of the West, which imagines a twisted Philo-Semitic redefinition of Jewishness as exclusively (white) European. Anti-Muslim and pro-Israel positions have gained political currency, accelerated by far-right forces. However, as Rose (2020) aptly pointed out, Philo- and antisemitism are two sides of the same coin.[96]

[95] One example previously mentioned in the first Chapter was the outbursts against a Jewish neighbourhood in Thessaloniki also known as the Campbell pogrom on June 29 and 30 in 1931.
[96] Rose H. (2020) 'The New Philosemitism: Exploring a Changing Relationship', Available at: https://icsr.info/2020/11/10/the-new-philosemitism-exploring-a-changing-relationship-between-jews-and-the-far-right/ (Accessed: 22 May 2024).

Tools of compossibility

"Our grief- our feelings, as words or actions, images or practices- can open up cracks in the wall of a system. It can also pry open spaces for contestation and reconstruction, intervulnerability and strength, empathy and solidarity. It can discomfort the stories told from above that would have us believe we aren't human or deserving of life-affirming lives- or for that matter, life-affirming deaths."

Cindy Milstein[97]

The following example shows border activists' generative labour and their constantly developed tools in the struggle for 'rebellious mourning' (Milstein, 2017) and transnational justice. The transnational network *Missing at the Borders* works on different levels on what is creatively called *CommemorAction*. The term merges commemoration and action and affirms a collective action for a political practice of memory work from below. Its tools are recording and publishing testimonies of affected families, facilitating meetings between family members and activists, legal support and collective rallies combining public demands on border violence with mourning.

The testimonies of affected families published by the activist network *Missing at the Borders,* consisting of different groups mainly based in Northern African Countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia) and South European countries (Italy and Spain) at the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, give a glimpse into the unbearable, 'unfinished' grief of family members who miss their kin. In their statement, they point to the absent resonances of their voices in public:

> "As for the migrants' loved ones, the desperate condition in which these families live is not even part of the public discourse. The families are living in anguish, not knowing what happened to their son, daughter, spouse, parent, or grandchild" (Missing at the Borders, first para).[98]

The heaviness caused by the simultaneous presence and absence of the missing is described in all published testimonies. The narratives of the families mirror the effects of repeating traumatic events by reiterating the last moments of encounters with loved ones while searching for them in everyday life continuously. The limbo of the lack of support from authorities and other NGOs in the search or any possible traces along the internet, TV footage of a shipwreck across the countries, and testimonies of others could indicate any information about their stay along the routes or transit countries goes on for years if not decades. Since Salim Benbekai left on the 17th of April 2007, the family have been mourning:

> "My brother Salim Benbekai is lost at sea. He was born on September 23, 1980. He was a good man, very kind. All the neighbours miss him. They all speak very well of him. […] Everybody feels his absence."

[97] Milstein, C. (Ed.). (2017). *Rebellious mourning: The collective work of grief*. Ak Press, p. 8-9.
[98] Including the groups: *Milano senza Frontiere*, *Palermo senza Frontiere*, *Como senza Frontiere*, *Caravane Migranti*, *Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France, Alarm Phone* and *Watch The Med*.
Missing at the Borders (2024). Available at: https://missingattheborders.org/ (Accessed: 22 May 2024)

His mother says: “He dropped out of school when he reached Middle school. He was one of the pillars of our family. He worked and helped us with everything; he even helped around the house. He worked as an outdoor vendor.”

The father adds: “If he only had the chance to travel regularly…”

The mother continued: “Sadly, their circumstances lead them away. He did not have any help from the state, not even a work permit that allowed him to leave regularly, leave his country with dignity, and go where he wanted! Our institutions are completely absent! Near where we live, there are two industrial complexes. But there is no possibility of getting a job. Nothing! Unfortunately, there is no work in Algeria! […]

His sea crossing was stopped by the Tunisians. We have proof showing they were stopped by Tunisian guards. Sea currents pushed them toward Tunisia. They were stopped while they were at the sea, still alive and well! Nobody on board had perished! We are certain that the Tunisian Navy arrested them!

Nobody has ever been able to prove to me that my son is dead. If he were dead, we would have found his body on some beach, on the Tunisian or Algerian coastlines. […] It was April 17th, 2007. From that moment, we had no news. None at all! Since then, we mourn them, and we would like to know what [had] become of him and his fellow travellers. We want them back… Whether dead or alive!

Since he left, this is no life anymore, for the whole family. Every little thing… When I see his photograph, I cry and his brothers cry, too. None of us are at peace! Even food has lost all flavour. Water can’t quench our thirst! I don’t even feel like getting dressed up! Since he left, everything has changed. I often go where he sold merchandise, hoping to find him. I tell myself: maybe I’ll see him there, selling like he used to do… I often imagine, unexpectedly, that he would hold my hand as I walk. My life no longer has any meaning because of his disappearance. I beg my son’s forgiveness! He left because he wanted to improve our lives. He dreamed of helping his brothers and his father. I always pray to God that I may hear his voice or that he will come knocking at our door.

If any nation or authority can hear me, I ask them to bring him back to me, even dead… Even just one of his shoes so that I may bury it! Or just the shirt that he had on when he left [which] that I remember perfectly well. I ask [of] them that they help us. We are devasted; we don’t have a life anymore! That’s all.”[99]

The effects of ambiguous loss within the graphic narration of the mother of Salim become apparent in her testimony. She describes the state of unbearable sadness and depression evoked by the uncertainty about how the disappearance without a trace of her son came about. That causes a spiral of mourning and deprivation of life force and a life worth living, imagining, and wishing for the return of the son holding her hand. The absence of the trace becomes somehow a traumatic machine, in an immaterial and material sense: An immaterial trace of the slightest concrete information of what had happened, and a material trace; only a shoe or t-shirt to be able to bury it to find peace.

Loss inevitably refers to the question of what remains. The animated wound described by the family might continue without finding a last trace of their son. The open wound of loss marks different states

[99] [Transcript from Subtitles] Missing at the Border (2024) Salim Benbekai. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4tXtQ9vJUoQ (Accessed 22 May 2024).

of melancholy with depressive effects. Reworking Freud's distinctive notions between mourning and melancholia, the latter evokes, according to Eng and Kazanjian (2003, p. 4), "precisely this continuous engagement with loss and its remains."

> "For instance, we might observe that in Freud's initial conception of melancholia, the past is neither fixed nor complete. Unlike mourning, in which the past is declared resolved, finished, and dead, in melancholia the past remains steadfastly alive in the present. By engaging in 'countless separate struggles'[100] with loss, melancholia might be said to constitute, as Benjamin would describe it, an ongoing and open relationship with the past—bringing its ghosts and specters, its flaring and fleeting images, into the present" (ibid., p. 3-4).

An ambiguity of loss is a melancholic element constantly activated and pervasive in the subjectivation processes of those who must struggle with it. An activated echo of the 'lost object' collapses in overlapping temporalities within the affected body, as described by Marguerite Duras. At the same time, she remained an active member of the Resistance movement in France. In this sense, the limbo of 'unresolvable' grief caused by trauma (or which can cause trauma in the first place) coincides with melancholia that possibly activates not only struggles for the 'lost object' in the present but also indicates an ongoing 'open relationship' with its spectres.[101]

By attempting to create collective care practices to generate acknowledgement, visibility, reparation (in the social and political sense), and empathy, another way of compossibility for and with ambiguous losses might arise. Struggles for 'rebellious mourning' as part of Memory Activism can be considered essential tools for the labour of memory from below. Hence, they are embedded in manifold Social Movements (such as *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*, *Ni Una Menos* and *Black Lives Matter*) that address precisely this relationship between the micropolitical and the macropolitical spheres. When other possible mourning rituals and public recognition are absent; they must be reinvented. These creative social practices shift the focus from produced limbos to potential tools for transforming a relationship in which pain is abused, re-directed individuals, and made abstract, which helps to enable secure (affective – such as self-precarisation) governance.

Therefore, on another layer, 'rebellious mourning' is connected to a 'singular memory' creatively activated in consistent social organising that produces joyful moments. That works like an antidote to a hermetic melancholic mindset on the level of a micropolitical battlefield of subjectivity, which embraces grief as an indispensable layer of the struggle for social justice. It is therefore important to emphasise once again that social movements that evade ultimate (self-) victimisation mean, according to Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos (2008), enable a production of desire as "an embodied political practice which contests a dominant understanding of social change as the result of a response to suffering. Casting action as the force of pain is a terribly Eurocentric view. It

[100] Freud, S. (1957) Mourning and Melancholia,"in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. 14, Trans. and ed. James Strachey. London: Hogarth Press, p. 256.
[101] The term 'ambiguous loss' could undoubtedly be expanded concerning (self-) governance and precariousness from the objective of today's entangled power structures (cognitive capitalism, digitality, et cetera) while considering specific and manifold contexts.

demands that we become, or worse wheel in, a victim whose capacity to act is reduced to a mere response to pain" (Papadopoulos, Stephenson and Tsianos, 2008, p. xx).

Social desire in collective endeavours arises not only from grief and sadness but from the power of becoming, in the sense of practising co-possibility. Violence remains a call to action towards an ambiguous understanding that encompasses the subtle lines of extreme loss and its impact on socially and politically traumatising conditions that can evaporate across generations and might reproduce new forms of cohesion. However, this does not mean engaging with the goal of 'security politics' within social struggles, but as Dorlin argues:

> "The more we protect ourselves against insecurity, the more we exhaust that power that community can otherwise signify for us –united in solidarity ourselves, a source of strength and anger–and the more we bring about a biopolitics on scale of our struggle, *bioactivism*" (Dorlin, 2022, p. 144).

The critical addressing of biopolitics at the reproductive level is a fundamental element of feminist care practices, without affirming itself as a reactive victim of pain. For Silvia Federici, joyful militancy is about politicising the pain, healing together, and realising interdependencies. By this, Federici means understanding the many scars created that many carry. For her, the 'radical left' has neglected the reproductive side of political work for too long, and thus, the importance of the affective relationships that bring people together on different occasions to feel joy. By following Spinoza, Federici describes joy as 'not a stagnant state of being but a feeling that comes from a process of transformation', which implies (mutual) understanding (Federici, 2020, pp. 126-127).

To think further, today, it is a matter of not allowing sovereignty-affirming narratives of entrenched victim categories to be played off against other victim groups while not shaping political goals from a reactive (self-) identarian stance. The cultural appropriation of the global right aims to introduce a restrictive politics of contested remembrance and commemoration and to further develop new forms of acceptable representation in the categorisation of 'good' and 'bad' victims. This includes the policing and framing identities (delegitimising or legitimising certain speaker positions) misused for political purposes. It is, therefore, essential to counteract the ideologically loaded appropriation practices that go hand in hand with shifts in the linguistic description of relationships with amplifying multiple voices and modes of expression. In times when the trauma of the Holocaust and the Nakba is being revived while being politically instrumentalised through the weaponisation of the political economy of emotions and religion (Masada, Shahada), multi-directional thinking and wide-ranging solidarity are urgently needed.

Today, the global right wing is gradually hijacking this contested field over narratives, memory, and legacies of violence, leading to a (linguistic) civil war of blurred moral values. Or, to put it another way, the right is rehearsing a desired 'rebellion' with authoritarian forces (together with an affective

investment in populism) against historical responsibility and the acknowledgement of 'implicatedness' exhuming ghosts of the past.

According to Rothberg (2019, 2023), addressing' implicatedness' means drawing attention to the speaker's position. In other words, it means pointing to the locations from which one speaks or is situated in societies with an unequal distribution of privileges while simultaneously using these privileges to amplify the commonality of concerns (Rothberg in Gutman; Wüstenberg, eds, 2023, pp. 80-85). For example, the sea rescuer Jason Apostolopoulos (*Mediterranea Saving Humans*) held a speech in the European Parliament and said:

> "During our mission with the Italian ship, I can no longer tell the survivors where I come from because after each rescue, we spend a lot of time on the deck, and we are chatting. Where are you from? What's your name? Whenever I say that I'm from Greece, people show me scars on their bodies from the torture they suffered in Greece, and they explain to us how authorities captured them, stripped them of their belongings, tortured them and pushed them back to Turkey."[102]

Inherent addresses of 'implicatedness' as a 'surplus citizen' turn the tables on the 'bystanders' and policymakers by highlighting responsibility for the nation's cruel practices, like, in this case, torture by Greek coast guards. Memory activism that fosters multi-directionality creates an open relationship to multiple pasts that do not fit into (national) amnesia without relationships. Their potential lies in embracing the very psycho-social and affective levels of grief while pushing against these right-wing attempts to capture victim categories and their inversion, through which historical revisionism is made possible.

Therefore, as an integral part of Memory Activism, the core of 'rebellious mourning' lies in the collective invention of (micropolitical) care practices and (solidarity) rituals, including critical biopolitics. Consequently, in conjunction with actions and intervention along border zones, documentation (creating archives, art, writing and performances) and amplifying untold stories, their activation and visualisation in various creative forms of commemorative actions are an indictment of the structural conditions of violence. At the same time, social movements need to battle for and with these ambiguously lost ghosts, thus joining them together in the sleeplessness of living in the face of Thanatos (*Θάνατος*).

For the pharmacist Vaena, who collects dispersed Jewish tombstones in Thessaloniki, the memorial erected in 2014 on the University campus to commemorate the cemetery's destruction indicates that the institution's responsibility and reappraisal of history 'is practically done.' Molecular reminiscences of abandoned matter (bones) and culture material (stones) keep proliferating through soil, water,

[102] Speech by Jason Apostolopoulos (Field coordinator of the Italian humanitarian organisation Mediterranea Saving Humans) in the European Parliament on the shipwreck of Pylos, 14th June 2023.
TVXS Greece (2023) Ο Ιάσονας Αποστολόπουλος στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο (Jason Apostolopoulos at the European Parliament). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-IGCTxMRI8w (Accessed: 22 May 2024).

cities, and landscapes. It is quiet, liminal, and barely visible as if within a transforming light of the twilight zones. This indicates its cyclic morphing between disappearance and transformation within their displaced random (re-) arrangement. In this case, constructing a Monument on the Aristotle University Campus became, for Vaena, a mere empty symbolic gesture of memorialisation that does not embrace further research considering the topic of collaboration in conjunction with a long history of antisemitism from the institution's side. For him, the scattered tombstones in the city are material witnesses of stories he had heard about former Jewish life that “disappeared into nothing.” The affective dimension between the stones, linked to the transmission of oral histories, lies in the relationality that Vaena ascribes. In this sense, the violation of the material witnesses speaks to the legacies of violence that lead to destruction and thus mirrors the breaches of this relationship and the ‘nothingness’ and void created with it. ‘Singular memory’ ultimately means working on the interaction with loss arising from relational breakdowns caused by (racial) violence.

In this sense, I would not think of these remains of cultural material (and the material nature of the places) as witnesses who are no longer among the living and thus cannot give testimony to Primo Levi’s account but as circulating clandestine agents of engraved stones and bones that, through the effect of their ‘auto-temporality’ together with "the stories we have heard about them", as Vaena said, built a relationality between past, present and future. At the same time, the remaining points to questions of perception and ‘unrepresentability’ of involvement and complicity rather than being material witnesses themselves. On the contrary, those who decide to see them witness their habitability, giving rise to new stories and fairy tales that can be actualised differently at any time.

Auto-temporality of racialised matter

Different levels form a cartographic inquiry of my artistic research in a multi-directional approach: the historical shifts in power relations and their socio-economic components of mirroring or boomerang effects appear between both cases concerning race and politics of official remembrance in contrast to the transfer of minor knowledge written out or side-lined in the construction of national identity discourses in Greece. The production of national and European subjects is a constant interplay of reassurance and dissociation from race, functioning at the level of fixed and pure Identity imprisonment that can be morphed for any given form of capital interest. However, society is forced to come to terms with the ‘migrantised’ (i.e. including the process of ongoing migration and diversification of societies) of the last decade and thus with its abandoned minority politics, its externalised colonial heritage, and its role as a contributor by questioning the subjectivity and memory of the dominant society in a different light.

The analysed topographies and their traces can be analogies to formerly lived, scarred bodies inscribed in these contemporary landscapes. This also refers to the materiality levels of the

destroyed and neglected cemeteries, which in both cases refer to the resonance of immaterial traces of the differently produced trauma. As informants wandering through the earth and modernist architecture, they thus elude purification, while carriers of 'evil guilt' remind us of various tools of violence. Above all, the five-hundred-year-old Jewish gravestones refer to the shifts in divided imperial Europe and governmentality from the beginnings of the nation-state to its current post-austerity modification.

The gradually 'scarred' (culture) material in both cases unfolds in the present time as a traumatic memory in movement and incompleteness in the question of the productivity of affects and concerning the actors who care about their condition in these places. The fragmented inscriptions of the Jewish tombstones remain engraved in the cityscape of Thessaloniki and beyond, freely circulating because they are not subject to the apparatus of the archaeological service unless they mark the period before 1830. After all, 'Greek' antiquities before that date that fall under it would thus be placed under the national cultural heritage. In this sense, they continue to be orphaned by the national narrative in a certain way, but on the other hand, they are free to migrate and proliferate through landscapes. Unlike the remains of the dead, which are still taboo today, there is no evidence of their whereabouts or any known interest on the part of the archaeological service in the metro construction of the city on the university campus.

The legacies of the dead in Kato Tritos remain embattled. There is no marble, or only in a few cases with newer graves, which just got vandalised while this dissertation has been written. The precarious situation of the cemetery reflects the unwillingness to take responsibility for mourning them and giving them a place in the island's memory. Both cases break dichotomies of official remembrance because their presence manifests within the enmeshment of silenced history. The state of the material 'escapes' a homogeneous and hegemonic monumentalisation, which, despite all, has clandestinely been inscribed in the memory of the places themselves. Therefore, these contested cemeteries and their mobile matter generate an effect of 'auto-temporality' that is inherent to traumatic memory as a lively movement in the body, which doesn't distinguish past, present and future, pointing to its very condition held in limbo of abandonment of 'orientalist debt', 'ambiguous loss' and 'ungrievability', which they escape at the same time.

> "…the relationship to memory, trauma may best be understood as a particular arrangement of differences and degrees of intensity that generates its own temporality, and it is the singular movement of memory that creates the conditions for this auto-temporality" (ibid., p.185).

The 'auto-temporality' takes place in the context of the cemeteries here differently than in a body itself, memory as a living organism in motion, but rather as singular inscriptions that carry auto-temporality in themselves, which in their uniqueness dock onto other places, mix and circulate on layers of 'haecceities.' Each fragmentary artefact and bone are singular, while the 'interassemblage' marks each singularity at chaotic sites becoming plural- in unreasonable arrangements due to

displacement, neglect, or coincidence. The resonance of the traces of the Jews of Thessaloniki and the ‘migrantised’ of Lesvos consists in their pertinent clandestine or nomadic inscription of the legacies of the (multi-religious) dead, which is so fragmented that no apparatus can fully capture it until now. Their existence is almost like an overload and reminder of traumatic (collective) memories that need to be constantly suppressed for some and forgotten for others.

Conclusion

"Never again, and yet again and again, even now, never more so before our very eyes. Seeing but not; seeing but not believing; believing but believing it immediately not my problem, our problem; seeing and believing but frozen from action, too distracted or busy or unconcerned to do anything about it; acting but not in concert, not concertedly."

David Theo Goldberg[103]

Every testimony is an immaterial legacy, which, in this sense, also consists of an 'auto-temporality' that inscribes itself in differences to a fixed historicity machine. My research questions, therefore, revolved around an interplay between the ability to be affected by contested places and (cultural) matter in space, in conjunction with oral transference of stories, like testimonies (interviews). At the same time, their traces in land- and cityscapes assemble within a current spatial-temporal cartography of transcultural memory in Greece.

My journey led me to the point that Memory Activism cannot be negotiated without addressing the interplay of the initiators and those affected, including those implicated, given the specific context of both cases. All the interviews conducted reveal different positions and roles of those involved and point to different individual concerns, traumatic traces and ethical considerations in relation to the treatment of the dead and the state of the cemeteries. This includes me as an artist and researcher, descending from a 'mixed race' and hybrid (Greek-Jewish and German non-Jewish) family constellation. A reflection on pathological and moral categories of trauma is essential and, at the same time, ambiguous because, on the one hand, they have helped to understand the suffering produced but have also (re-) produced racism. Given the current global political shift to the right, the denial of structural racism must, therefore, be considered regarding the flattening of the (official) culture of remembrance and the associated attempts to appropriate the twisting of victim categories.

Today's legacies of violence are shadowed and of liminal appearance in cities and landscapes in Greece mirrored in my video titled *Precarious Twilight Zones* and in the video material shot at Lesvos, which will become a second video essay in the future. In Thessaloniki, six topographies were activated through the contextualisation of printed posters, stickers, and maps, together with reproduced photographs in the urban space. The medium is a figure of a silent student protester who circled the sites and cultural material that mark these grey areas of categorisation norms that escape linear temporalities because also the matter migrates and is mobile, which indicates its nomadic penetration through modern until today's neoliberal logic.

[103] Goldberg, D.T. (2009) *The threat of race: reflections on racial neoliberalism*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, p.156.

The conducted interviews and the collected image archive of my research from 2016 – 2023 went along with searching for and shooting the material legacies of stones and (overwritten and 'precaritised') graves. The attempt was to confront the perspective of stratified temporal regimes through their nature and their fragmentary inscription in the landscapes in the apparatus of scientific categories such as historiography, politics of memory, archaeology, and anthropology. Thus, my archive of interviews, images and video recordings forms a cartography, a 'haecceity' consisting of resonant matter circulating through ongoing attempts at ideological 'purification' and of disciplines and ideologically hijacked time regimes (history of the winners).

The nature of animated wounds in 'singular memory' reflects the precarious milieu of these legacies, pointing not only to a resistance to extinction (even if only microscopic or molecular) but to unfinished mourning that pervaded ambiguously through the sites on an affective and social level. The return of 'bad debt' in this realm happens in twofold ways. Firstly, literally due to the former implemented Austerity measures in the crypto-colonial Greek society and global machine of opaque financialisation producing indebtedness as a violent tool that is threatening people's lives. Secondly, according to Harney and Moten, the notion of colonial legacies carried by descendants of slavery make large numbers of migratory subjects nowadays. The labour of debt to the practice of memory in Greece thus has two complex dimensions (which were subdivided and expanded in my research with various historical cornerstones), which, according to Mbembe, ultimately signifies understanding this as a practice of care and thus becoming responsible for countering racial capitalism, neoliberal abandonment, and its crypto-colonial accelerators.

How responsibility can be assumed is reflected in the critical possibility of addressing 'racelessness' and 'implicatedness' in the interplay of multi-directionality that counteracts a zero-sum game of hierarchies in victim competition. My two case studies show how this can be applied to artistic research and practice. My research began with the neglected question of racialised Jewish history and expanded to Greece's external EU borders. Therefore, the multi-directionality within this inquiry does not consist of two past moments but refers to the ongoing violence of European 'necropolitics.' *Assembly of Sleepless Matter* is, therefore, to be understood as an intervention that evokes a connection between similarities to antisemitism and anti-, Muslim, Black and Migrant racism, which has not previously been present in the context of Greek remembrance work.

Thus, the precarisation of 'singular memory' and the labour of memory from below in this sense cannot be viewed without race and economic stratification within hierarchies of (moral) value attributed to it with trends of (official) remembrance culture in Europe. The labour of traumatic memory implies reproductive forms of care and is vulnerable to becoming a form of capitalist exploitation when it is commodified, fixed and isolated into the private sphere. Therefore, on a subjective level (self-) care work risks being pushed back into isolation and loneliness. In other

words, (individual) care work bears the risk of getting pushed out of the social-political realm and into individualised treatment and (racist) pathologisation.

Consequently, ‘rebellious mourning’ is a life-affirming social practice that builds a force of de-individualisation that counters simplified (self-) victimisation. It is a transformational micropolitical tool that exists worldwide in multiple versions and profoundly and sensibly strengthens communities. As an integral potentiality of Memory Activism initiated by manifold actors and agents, including from ambiguous loss and trauma-affected subjects and their kin, it points to global and site-specific struggles to recognise injustices for responsibility. Thus, these forms of activism are struggles for productive forms of ‘grievability’, confronting pain on a micropolitical scale while generating creative acts of protest and mobilising hopeful social forces on the macroscale. This means that Memory Activism (generative and lively), in contrast to commodified remembrance culture (expressive and symbolic), can potentially counteract the danger of the fascist deviation of mnemonic politically induced trauma and, at the same time, potentially escape the hijacking and moral exploitation of the victim category as a political instrument to legitimise repercussive acts.

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Archives

Archive of the Jewish Community Thessaloniki

Archive of the Museum of Photography (PHMK), Thessaloniki

Archive of the Thessaloniki History Centre

Digital Archive of the Observatory of the Refugee and Migration Crisis in the Aegean

The Arolsen Archives

The archives of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

My audiovisual archive 2016 - 2023