

Aleksandra Brylska  
Faculty of „Artes Liberales”  
University of Warsaw

**How to experience the invisible? About the ways of remembering the nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl by Poles**

When in 26th of April 1986 the catastrophe in Chernobyl's Nuclear Power Plant happened, the world had changed irreversibly. This event influenced not only the Ukrainians and Belarusians, directly touched by the nuclear accident, but also Polish people. Initial lack of factual and reliable information on what exactly happened in Chernobyl had a great impact not only on how this event was experienced but also remembered.

The memory of Chernobyl's catastrophe was based on propagandist press materials, common knowledge about the nuclear radiation results and the myths aroused around the nuclear energy and also by the fear of nuclear war which accompanied daily life in Poland.

In my speech I would like to examine and reflect on the codes of the memory of Chernobyl's Nuclear Plant accident. My thought will be accompanied by the term *afterimage* from the Władysław Strzemiński's sight theory — by using it in my analysis I would like to reflect if this theory might be helpful in reflection about the nuclear accidents' trauma. By analysis of press materials and their language I would like to ask a question what and in which way was exactly remembered from those days in April 1986. How to remember something which is immanently invisible? Is it possible, or we can access only the postmemory of this kind event? Maybe the radiation polluted not only areas around the nuclear plant but also our experience and memory of the accident?

Olgierd Jan Iwanczewski  
European University Institute, Florence  
Italy

**Postmemory as form and strategy in recent Argentinian drama**

Argentina, where the dictatorship of 1976-1983 has provided stimulus for extensive reflection on the subject of memory, the term 'postmemory' has enjoyed relatively restricted use. It has mostly been applied in reference to the creative practice of a specific group: the children of the political dissidents assassinated by the military Junta. Those young people, most of whom formed part of HIJOS—an association for the children of those killed by the regime—have

undertaken a series of landmark interventions in the public sphere, which have had a strong impact on Argentinian (political) culture. A number of controversial documentaries produced in early 2000s by figures commonly associated with the group have been especially influential, as they triggered a wide-ranging debate not only on the content, but also on the form and perspective in mnemonic discourse. When I interviewed young playwrights and directors from Argentina on the subject of the Malvinas War of 1982, HIJOS and post-memory appeared as crucial points of reference. It was apparent that, although the interviewees situated themselves within the paradigm of ‘memory,’ the political and artistic practice of postmemory was a clearly identifiable influence on their work. Consequently, in the present study, I propose an analysis of a number of recent Argentinian plays supported by interviews with the theatre practitioners involved. The goal is to establish which formal strategies they identified as related to postmemory and what kind of meaning they ascribed to those strategies. The study provides, thus, an ethnographically situated perspective on the formal aspects of postmemory in recent Argentinian drama.

Łucja Lange  
Institute of Sociology  
Faculty of Economics and Sociology  
University of Lodz

### **Those Children should be remembered — the story of project „The Children of Baluty — Memory Murals”**

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto two artists Piotr Saul (assistant professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Wrocław) together with Damian Idzikowski (a student of the Academy of Fine Arts in Lodz) prepared three murals about the memory of children tragically experienced during the war. The first part of this project took place in 2014 — now there are more photos of other children on the buildings and a Memory Path for those, who would like to see all of the murals and learn more about the children, who often stay nameless.

The aim of my speech is to present how the project evolved and what is done to keep the memory of the traumatic events alive. The presentation covers the most characteristic opinions and attitudes towards art, memory and children from Lodz Ghetto. Have those pictures fit into the structure of the city? Are those children remembered or forgotten along with the project? How should such projects be maintained and by whom? Do the inhabitants have any ideas, that could help us remember the sad history? Is death of a child (in this case many children) a subject to talk about and to remember?

Steve Larocco  
Southern Connecticut State University  
United States

### **Postmemory, Denormalizing Rupture, and Metabolized Trauma: Equivocal Uptake and the Dream of Civil Society**

The cultural effects of postmemory are equivocal. On the one hand, postmemory manifests a melancholic, often ulcerating sublation of the traumatic past, producing a provocation to the ubiquitous fantasy of social normalization; that is, postmemory institutes a revenant disruption within the fiction of the normal that Western cultures imagine are the ways things are. In this vein, postmemory's incessant attention to recrudescing trauma as both menacing exposure and ethical rupture creates an agitating insomnia within the dream of civil society. On the other hand, postmemory also can create a phantasmatic chimera of past trauma, reproducing the event not as a miasmatic disquiet at the very heart of the social body as a fantasy of plural integrated community, but rather by fixing on the trauma as a "charismatic wound" (to use Michael Roth's term), serving as a means of cultural production to help fashion provisional victimary community around what I might call "simulation empathy," that is, a selective identification with culturally metabolized and assimilated trauma. When postmemory functions in this way, it helps to suture closed the very lesions in social fantasy that as ulcerating sublation it opens. This is especially the case when postmemory is produced for mass consumption, as spectacle rather than as provocation or rupture. What postmemory does then is equivocal: it reproduces the obscenity of trauma as disruptive and unbearable, *and* as usable and productive, as a symbolic resource that integrates heterogeneous populations into imaginary victimary community. Exploring this equivocal uptake is the subject of this paper.

Jana Pecnikova  
Matej Bel University, Banska Bystrica  
Slovakia

### **Postmemory in City as Story of Cultural Landscape**

The article is focused on the architectural cultural heritage as integral part of city's (urban) identity. Thanks to the typical architecture, the unique cultural landscape is created. From the context of postmemory, we live in the sceneries of the past and many buildings are linked to historical and cultural events, which were often very harmful and painful for citizens. In the article we would like to apply the postmemory concept to the town of Banska Bystrica, and to prove the cultural and architectural connections. The city is connected with the Osman attacks in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the German settlement in the 14 – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, but the most expressive are monuments, which commemorate the Second World War when Banska Bystrica was the

center of Slovak National Uprising and the city under the Nazi occupation. But the trauma is hidden also in the blocks of flats, in these grey buildings which come from the soviet period. We would like to show the transformation of the city and reflect the traumatic heritage we carry about.

Krzysztof Popek  
Institute of History  
Jagiellonian University in Cracow

### **Liberation and Exile. The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 in the Bulgarian and Turkish Memory and Historiography**

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 traditionally is called as the „Liberation War” by Bulgarians. The conflict led to freedom from the “Turkish Yoke” and started the process of creation of the modern Bulgarian state. The Turkish perspective on these events is much different. The War of 1877–1878 was remembered by the prism of the tragic experience of refugees (*muhajirs*) and suffering of the Muslim civilians linked to the pogroms, emigration, and exile. The presentation will focus on the image of these events in the contemporary Bulgarian and Turkish historiography, in which the topic (as the whole the 19<sup>th</sup>-century history of Christian-Muslim relations in that territory) is codified not by the reliable historic researches, but by stereotypes, propaganda, and current policy. One of the most important elements which had an impact on the post-memory about the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 are fresh experiences linked to the policy of assimilation of Muslims conducted by the Bulgarian Communistic Government in the 1970s and 1980s. The lecture will be based not only on the examples from the Bulgarian and Turkish historiography, but also on the sources collected in the archives and libraries in Great Britain (London) and Bulgaria (Sofia, Varna).

Anna Sikora Sabat  
Department of Dutch and South African Studies  
Uniwersytet im. Adama Mickiewicza w Poznaniu

### **Ollanders (Olędrzy) in Poland – reconstructing the memory.**

In this paper I focus on the mechanism of reconstructing of memory about Ollanders (*Olędrzy*) in the small town in Western Poland by the name of Nekla. Ollanders were a small community of settlers of mainly Dutch and German origin who immigrated to Poland in 16, 17 and 18th century and lived in settlements organized under a particular type of law, in Poland. After a time of a religious tolerance and freedom of worship there were periods of conflicts: starting

from the partitions of Poland the old laws and privileges given to the Ollanders ceased to be respected. This made the settlers either migrate or become totally subject. Most of the settlers from Nekla migrated to Australia. The process of recollection of and reflection on their past began in Nekla in the early 1990s with the visits of their descendants and took quite a structured course. In this paper I would like to follow that process and to demonstrate how Nekla's authorities construct the town's mental map by inhabiting it with places, symbols and memories connected with Olędrzy. I will try to emphasize the difference between the created/built sites of historical memory and the retrieved ones that for the sake of this paper can be called more natural ones. The former are places where people have constructed reminders of past events; they were in a way imposed on the tissue of the cities, whereas the latter have to be recovered from this tissue in order to recreate the memory.

Slavica Srbinovska  
University of Sts. Cyril and Methodius  
Skopje, Macedonia

### **Postmodernity after the End: The Cultural Logic of Skopje's "Colorful" Revolution**

Proceeding from Fredric Jameson's helpful insight into postmodernity's spatialization of culture, I attempt to think the circumstances of political reconfiguration over the course of The Colorful Revolution (*Šarena revolucija/Шарена револуција*), an organized response to, among other things, the renovation of Skopje's buildings and their subsequent transformation in a neoclassical/Ancient Greek style between 2012 and 2016. At the heart of my essay lies an effort to figure the implications of the protesters' strategy—to throw balloons full of paint on the buildings that signify the reclaiming of a Macedonian identity that is both new and ancient—through the practices of Marxist hermeneutics. Following a 1963 earthquake that nearly leveled Skopje to the ground, much of the city was reconstructed in the style of Brutalism through the financial, material, and creative efforts of a number of foreigners, the most prominent of which is the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. In coming to see that version of Skopje as a leftist, quasi-socialist utopia constituted by cosmopolitan labor, I contend that its totalitarian "restoration" in the 2010s is, first and foremost, a hermeneutical effort that shatters both local and cosmopolitan in favor of a nationalist discourse. But I also argue that The Colorful Revolution's strategy of paint-throwing figures as a kind of hermeneutics as well—one that inverts the amplitude of the contemporary historical moment. Just as the artwork will never be finished until it has demystified all the illusions of utopia that its gesture propagates, so too will the Revolution never be over until it has destroyed all the ideologies of revolution that it proposes.

Marie Stewart Averlino & George Cassar  
University of Malta

### **Negotiating a postmemory dichotomy: nostalgia and aversion in Malta**

Malta has served as a strategic colony since the dawn of history. From Phoenician and Roman times the island has been an important post in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. The last colonisers were the British who spent about 180 years using the islands for their imperial needs. Malta's military and naval role in the British Empire ended officially on 31 March 1979. This heralded a new economic and social reality which was not constrained by the exigencies of foreigners. Two major postmemory reactions kicked in – nostalgia and aversion to the ex-colonial life. The Maltese have come to exhibit a range of reactions which oscillate between love and hate for the British. On the other hand British ex-service personnel have continued to feel an affinity to the island base which they had come to acknowledge as a second home. They and successive generations make it a point to visit the island at least once, now not as soldiers, airmen, sailors or occupiers, but as tourists or expats. This allows a new type of relationship between the Maltese and the British visitor to negotiate issues of colonial postmemory.