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Title of Session: Creating and Dealing with Otherness: Ethnopolitical Conflict and Trauma in the Process of Storytelling and Visual Imagination

Name of Session Convener(s): Roswitha Breckner; Gabriele Rosenthal

University/Organization incl. City: University of Vienna, Institute of Sociology (Breckner); Georg-August-University of Göttingen, Center of Methods in Social Sciences (Rosenthal)

Chair: Roswitha Breckner; Gabriele Rosenthal

University/Organization incl. City: University of Vienna, Institute of Sociology (Breckner); Georg-August-University of Göttingen, Center of Methods in Social Sciences (Rosenthal)

I) Title of Selected Paper: Narrations of violence. Tensions between individual and community accounts

Name/s of Author/s: Maria Six-Hohenbalken

University/Organization incl. City: Austrian Academy of Sciences, Social Anthropology Research Unit

Abstract: During the “Operation Anfal” in Iraq in 1987/1988, the Iraqi Regime murdered 180,000 Kurds, huge numbers were deported and 4500 villages were destroyed. In March 1988 the region around Halabja was attacked with both conventional and chemical weapons, killing 5000 civilians and injuring 7000 persons in a single day. This paper will attempt to examine the long term consequences of these genocidal acts on the narrations in Diaspora communities. What kind of memories and narrations have emerged in the Diaspora? How are refugees still affected psychologically and physically, and how are they dealing with their experiences? Which atrocities have been excluded from these diasporic national narrations?

The paper is based on testimonies and biographical experiences of refugees in Austria, told twenty years after genocidal processes in the Kurdish Regions in Iraq. Herein I have been confronted with tensions between the memory discourses as presented by the highly political Kurdish Diaspora communities, the ‘mythico-histories’ (Malkki 1995) and the personal/individual narratives of the victims. These ‘mythico-histories’ have a

didactic quality, using certain formal devices such as rhetorical questions and repetition – the experiences are ‘culturally mediated and stored in a society’s collective memory’ (Schmidt & Schröder 2001, 8). These narrations helped to give sense to their living in Diaspora, to bear the misery of being continually confronted with reports from home about violence and persecutions. Personal experiences of suffering is shaped, transformed and in some cases, ignored through the ‘official’ narratives and Diaspora memory culture. These individual experiences and narratives of atrocities are discussed differently according to whether they are found in the more global discourse on human rights based on facts, in the national memory discourses, or in the Diaspora narrations. However, within the Kurdish narrations there are discrepancies between diasporic and individual narratives, regarding not only how and where individual stories are included, but also which portions of the individual narratives are welcomed and which remain better untold. So expressions of violence are not only purely personal revelations, but authored and authorized dialogically and collaboratively within the recollections in community (Jackson 2002).

Sources:

Jackson, Michael (2002): *Politics of storytelling: Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.

Malkki, Liisa H (1995): *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Schmidt, Bettina E. & Ingo W. Schröder (2001): *Anthropology of Violence and Conflict*. New York: Routledge

II) Title of Selected Paper: Between Experience, Narration and Taboos. Ethnic Germans as Perpetrators and Witnesses of the Holocaust in South Ukraine

Name/s of Author/s: Niklas Radenbach

University/Organization incl. City: University of Goettingen, Center of Methods in Social Sciences

Abstract: My paper takes a family historical, biographical and discourse analytical approach to discuss the experience and impact of having been a witness of the Holocaust. I would like to show that the experience of witnessing mass murder as a child may have a serious impact in future life. This is particularly the case if the concerned persons do not have the possibility to talk about their experiences due to socially imposed taboos or instrumentalization of the history and even more so if the own parents or other family members had actively participated in the commitment of the crimes.

My analysis is based on a prolonged field research stay in South Ukraine and including biographical-narrative interviews with members of the ethnic German minority and participant observation in their community. In my paper, I focus on those ethnic Germans who experienced the Nazi occupation of the Ukraine from 1941-44 and the Holocaust as children. Firstly, I will discuss how my interviewees experienced the mass murder of Jews and Roma as witnesses, considering that, in a number of cases, the interviewees' own parents participated in those events. Secondly, I will take a closer look at the dialog in their families and the discourse in the ethnic Germans associations, the so-called “Landsmannschaften,” as well as in the scientific literature. It has to be emphasized that the family dialog and the discourse in the ethnic Germans associations

as well as in the scientific literature are strongly dominated by a tabooing of the Holocaust. This can be interpreted as a result of the former identification of many ethnic Germans with the Nazi ideology and the active participation of a number of them in the Holocaust. The tabooing makes it much more difficult for those ethnic Germans who were witnesses of the Holocaust as children to work on their experiences. In conclusion, it can be said that the experience of having been witnesses, the participation of the own parents in the Holocaust, the tabooing of it and own experiences of being discriminated during the Soviet time, cause a mix which has to be analyzed in detail.

III) Title of Selected Paper: The Effect of the Very Distant Past on Migrants: An Armenian Family in Germany

Name/s of Author/s: Viola Stephan

University/Organization incl. City: Georg-August University of Goettingen, Center of Methods in Social Sciences

Abstract: In my paper I focus on ethnic conflicts and discrimination from a family-biographic perspective. Based on the case of an Armenian family from Turkey, who has lived for about forty years in Germany, it will be examined how a family past – marked by genocide, persecution and continual discrimination – influences the biographies and present lives of the next generations. I would like to concentrate upon the following aspects: In which way do the individual members of the family talk about their own biographies and about their migration to Germany? How does the family past influence their experience of the emigration to Germany and of their lives in Germany? In which way does the family history and the experience of persecution and discrimination influence the migrants' sense of belonging? Finally, the effects of the public debates about the Armenian genocide and of the denial by the Turkish Officials are examined. The presentation is based on a study on Armenian families from Turkey, living now in Germany.

IV) Title of Selected Paper: Life through Otherness. A Case of an Armenian Repatriate

Name/s of Author/s: Zaruhi Hayrapetyan

University/Organization incl. City: Yerevan State University

Abstract: In this paper a part of a research concerning Armenian repatriates from the Middle East, especially from Syria, is considered. The aim is to present how definitions, experiences and dealing with Otherness change according to social contexts' changing and transformation. The methodological framework of this presentation is social phenomenology, particularly the concept of Otherness by Alfred Schuetz, the social boundary concept by Frederic Barth, and case study methodology in migration research by Florian Znaniecki and William Thomas. All presentation will be in the frame of one case, one biography, accompanied by other case analyses in the context of similarity or difference.

Armenian Diaspora was formed in examined countries after Armenian genocide (1914-1921), and had weak ties with Armenia and its habitants till the collapse of the Soviet

Union. However, after recovering the status of an independent state by Armenia (1991), the interest increased. Flow of migrants from Diasporas of Western and Eastern countries increased too. At the same time, social transformation in Syria, modernization and nationalization, changed the Diaspora's life context. All these processes are added by cultural globalization as the framework of modern life.

I'll show the trajectory of an informant's life, how a repatriate, being a third generation migrant, was born and lived in the close ethnic community separately from other parts of society. The social context and its changing was the stimulus to come to Armenia in "accidental", "subjective" circumstances. This repatriate came to Armenia, as he imagined, to "his home". Here he was faced with another type of otherness, which he perceived more affectively. If in the country of origin experiencing otherness was mediated by community (its organizational structures and stable, fixed by culture behavioral patterns), in Armenia he has met otherness alone. Otherness' definitions changed. If in Syria Arabs were "others", here social networks are constructed with other repatriates (in spite of their political views) together with Arabs and Persians. Indeed, repatriates use symbolic mechanisms to exclude locals from their networks. "Other's" definition becomes very mobile. Social context transformation results in displacement of social boundaries and transformations of stratification structures of the repatriates' community in Armenia. New "others" lead to changes in the "our group" frames' meaning.

V) Title of Selected Paper: Migration and Identity Crisis in Marjane Satrapi's

Autobiographical Comic-Writing *Persepolis*: Representing the Experiences of an Iranian Migrant Woman in Austria

Name/s of Author/s: Barbara Eder

University/Organization incl. City: University of Vienna, Institute of Contemporary History

Abstract: From the perspective of an universalist discourse Non-Western women are stigmatized through 'double otherness': In the first place, they don't fulfill the presuppositions to speak in the name of manhood because of being marked by gender; second, they are othered because of cultural heritage and the lack of nationally defined citizenship. In addition to these socio-symbolic differences, 'otherness' is also part of the organisation of the visual field, in which the having or having-not of the gaze is central. [Mulvey ([1975] 1996)]

Concerning Marjane Satrapi's Comic-Autobiography *Persepolis* (2000; [2004] 2006) the gendered dichotomy of looking and being looked at is contested by a female narrator with an own gaze on things and places. Even if the Iranian protagonist is sometimes veiled or forced to be veiled, the chador allows her to look secretly. Further on, the Western frame of reference is strongly contested by the Iranian narrator named Marjane. The Western reader, who identifies with the Iranian protagonist, does see his/her country from the perspective of the 'other'.

In my paper I will focus on the representations of Marjane Satrapi's experiences of status difference, identity displacement, the loss of familiar bonds and in consequence the feeling of loneliness back in Iran as well as strategies of masking ethnicity and gender

during her time in Austria. My ambition is to analyse her cultural in-between-position on the level of gendered and ethnic intersections as well as a result of a narrative biographical framework.

VI) Title of Selected Paper: 'Making Pictures': Photographs as Historical Documents and Field of Imagination

Name/s of Author/s: Roswitha Breckner

University/Organization incl. City: University of Vienna, Institute of Sociology

Abstract: In processes of 'taking' and 'making pictures', of showing, looking and gazing, meaning is created in a visual dimension. The way how situations, experiences, events are pictured, and how these pictures are looked at, constitute a social field of symbolic interaction and imagination. The status of photographs as proof and/or iconic formation of lived through experiences and historical events is contested and vindicated at the same time. The ambivalent status of photographic pictures becomes specifically apparent in public discourses dealing retrospectively with human atrocities, which are rarely photographically documented at the time they happen, especially not from the perspectives of those confronted with persecution and extermination. With an exemplary analysis of pictures from the Armenian Genocide the paper aims to show different dimensions of the making of photographic pictures, and to discuss the role they play in processes of dealing with experiences of extreme violence.