

Summary

Memory and oblivion

Studies on the culture of memory

Chapter 1. Central Europe's Struggles with the Culture of Memory

Although diverse, in its last two centuries Central Europe has had several features and events in common. The region's historical culture of macro memory usually focuses on several similar questions: regaining independence and constructing nation states in 1918, the Second World War and the region's role in the conflict, and usually the subsequent occupation or forced dependence, and its relationship with the Holocaust playing out in this region, as well as the communist dictatorship and liberation from it in 1989. There can be no denying that each and every one of us experiences some problems with memory and its components, rejecting uncomfortable content. Stefan Troebst proposed a typology for the region, divided into four categories and not free from simplifications. In the first of these he places states within which the fundamental consensus functions, in the form of a categorical rejection of the communist system, and to which he qualified the three Baltic States, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. He is also ready to add Croatia and Kosovo to these, perceiving the changes in socialist Yugoslavia as a modification of the Soviet system in the form of Serbocommunist. With some reservations he also counts Slovakia among these states, which might prompt doubts. The second category contains states where vigorous debate rages around their totalitarian and authoritarian past. Such states include Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Poland, and also, with a certain degree of caution, Ukraine. In the third category, Troebst sees states in which a certain ambivalence exists towards the recent past. Communism was not only perceived there as an imposed system but to a certain extent as a modernizing force of backward structures, states such as Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro. The final category includes countries where the contemporary eli-

te is derived from the former communist one, replacing their geriatric or more disgraced predecessors. What functions in such countries is a continuation of authoritarian structures without any clear distancing from the practices of the communist governments. This group includes Russia and Belarus, in some senses Moldova, and also that strange creation in the form of the Republic of Transnistria. Desovietization has been replaced by the imposition of earlier cultural patterns. Troebst's idea, though interesting, has its weaknesses, e.g. the lack of consequences regarding Poland's classification: he qualifies Poland to one category then to another. Nor is it easy in the case of Belarus or Serbia. Particularly in Poland's case, this text draws attention to disputes about recent history related to the political and economic transformation.

Chapter 2. Polish Public Space as a Sphere for Culturally Regulated Memory

The article discusses the characteristics of Polish public space as a space for manifesting memory. Its author discerns how memory is indeed manifested in democratic space, in which no restrictions exist, but is not accompanied by reflections on his own views and emotions. Interpreting monuments, which constitute the starkest way of manifesting memory, he maintains that they are not symbolic messages open in meaning. Thus public space is democratic, but the statements that function within it are communiques that by definition are not open to the reinterpretation and updating of their meaning.

Chapter 3. Cultural Heritage as a Sphere of Trans- and Interdisciplinary Studies

The author depicts the trans- and interdisciplinary nature of studies on cultural heritage using examples of carriers of memory, places of memory, memory implants, technofact and preposterous history. Some scholars take the view that we can even talk of a separate field of studies, heritology. The hybrid and marginal nature of such studies constitutes both a risk and huge potential. The first is the result of many research centres adopting a paradigmatic, disciplinary approach, often independent of the declarations made towards interdisciplinarity; the second stems from the unique theoretical possibilities that can only appear where scientific fields meet in all their diversity. Presenting the variability of frameworks of meaning of the key terms makes it possible to grasp the characteristics of this research field, providing a basis for discussions on the theoretical foundations of this future discipline.

Chapter 4. The Sieniawa Crypt and its place in the Polish culture of remembrance

One of Poland's most important necropolises in terms of the significance of those interred there is the Czartoryski family crypt in the Subcarpathian village of Sieniawa. Most of its 22 coffins are of figures of exceptional importance to Polish history at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. It was most often the case that these individuals died in exile and their remains were brought specially to Sieniawa. Count Władysław Czartoryski was the initiator of the idea to make Sieniawa the family necropolis. This text not only chronicles the achievements of particular individuals, beginning with Izabela Czartoryska, grandmother to Władysław and one of the first to be placed in the Sieniawa crypt, but also the place's significance for shaping the culture of memory and national identity. This provides an opportunity to recall the role of cemeteries in shaping societies' historical memory, and that they are special, unique places of memory. In nearby Jarosław, the wreaths of members of this eminent patriotic family are well preserved. Sieniawa is one of the most important national necropolises, alongside the Wawel, Lviv's Łyczakow, Rossa in Vilnius, Krakow's Rakowicki Cemetery and Warsaw's Powązki Cemetery. This fact is not changed by the publicity around the family connected with the repurchased painting *Lady with an Ermine* by Leonardo da Vinci or the disputes in the Czartoryski family itself.

Translated by Rob Pagett