The Dynamics of Cultural Borders
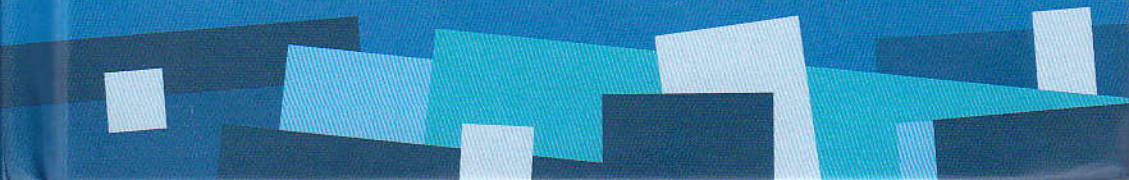
Approaches to Culture Theory
Volume 6

The Dynamics of Cultural Borders

Edited by

Anu Kannike & Monika Tasa

Aims & scope

The Approaches to Culture Theory book series focuses on various aspects of the analysing, modelling, and theoretical understanding of culture. Culture theory as a set of complementary theories is seen to include and combine the approaches of different branches of science, among them the semiotics of culture, archaeology, environmental history, ethnology, cultural ecology, cultural and social anthropology, human geography, sociology and the psychology of culture, folklore, media and communication studies.

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
Press

European Union
Regional Development Fund   Investing in your future

Contents

Wandering borders

Bordering ruptures: the dynamics of self-description

List of photographs

List of figures

Notes on editors and contributors

Merja Ellefson (merja.ellefson@kultmed.umu.se) is assistant professor at the Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University. Her research focuses on press and communication history, minority media, the media generally, ethnicity, gender and social class.

Tiiu Jaago (tiiu.jaago@ut.ee) is associate professor at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu. Her fields of interest are problems of understanding time and history in folklore (popular narrated histories, family histories, etc.), the social context of the folk song tradition, and the history of folklore studies in Estonia.

Anu Kannike (anukannike@yahoo.com) is researcher at the Estonian National Museum and managing editor of the book series Approaches to Culture Theory. Her research focuses on the ethnology of everyday life, particularly the home and food culture.

Franz Krause (franz.krause@tlu.ee) is senior research fellow in anthropology at Tallinn University. He works on the relationships between humans and their environments, in particular water. Krause has conducted research in Mali, the Philippines, Finnish Lapland and Estonia.

Tuulikki Kurki (tuulikki.kurki@uef.fi), adjunct professor, is a senior researcher of cultural studies in the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland. Her research interests are Finnish-language literature in Russian Karelia, amateur writers in Finland and literature in national borderlands. She was leader of the "Writing cultures and traditions at borders" research project (Academy of Finland, 2010–2014).

Riin Magnus (riin.magnus@ut.ee), PhD in semiotics, is research fellow at the Department of Semiotics, University of Tartu.

Liivo Niglas (liivo.niglas@ut.ee) is a filmmaker and research fellow at the Department of Ethnology, University of Tartu. His research focus is visual anthropology, visual methods, documentary filmmaking, reindeer herders' ethnology, and

native cultures and the oil industry. His field of research is the Russian Federation, in particular Siberia (Western Siberia, Kamchatka, Chukotka).

Irina Paert (irina@paert.com) is senior research fellow at the School of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Tartu. Her research focuses on Russian Old Believers, the history of religion, and Orthodox schools in Estonia.

Tuija Saarinen (tuija.saarinen@uef.fi), PhD, is a coordinator at the Doctoral Programme in Social and Cultural Encounters, University of Eastern Finland. In her research, she has examined Finnish popular magazines to gauge contemporary Finnish perceptions of the political and cultural situations in the Soviet Union, as well as the customs of Finnish and Estonian coffee drinking.

Uwe Sperling (uwe.sperling@mail.ee), PhD degree at Free University Berlin (2011), is a post-doctoral researcher at the Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu. His research focuses on material culture and production systems (metalwork and pottery) in the eastern Baltic Bronze Age.

Irena Šutinienė (irena.sutiniene@gmail.com) works as a researcher at the Institute of Sociology, Lithuanian Social Research Centre. Her research is mainly focused on social memory, national/ethnic identity, and biographical research.

Monika Tasa (monika.tasa@ut.ee), MA, is series and managing editor of the book series Approaches to Culture Theory, and a project manager and doctoral student at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu. Her current research focuses on interdisciplinary cooperation in the humanities from an anthropological perspective.

Eva Toulouze (evatoulouze@gmail.com) is professor of Finno-Ugric studies at INALCO, Paris, and research fellow at the Department of Ethnology, University of Tartu. Her research focus is the anthropology of religion, missionary studies, animism, written culture and native intellectuals. Her field of research is the Russian Federation, particularly the Udmurt Republic, Bashkortostan, and Western Siberia.

Kadri Tüür (kadri.tuur@ut.ee), MA, is research fellow at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu, and coordinator at the Estonian Centre for Environmental History.

Acknowledgements

internal and external information, gathered funds, for example by organising lotteries and organising Lotta and White Guard events and fetes. This section later had more diversified tasks, for example working as army secretaries, telephone operators and enemy aeroplane spotters.

4 In the late 1920s and the early 1930s Finland experienced a surge of right-wing radicalism, which turned into so-called Lapuanliike (the Lapua Movement). Its activities culminated in the Mäntsälä rebellion. Several hundred White Guardists interrupted a socialist meeting and gave the government an ultimatum including, for example, the demand that the Social Democratic Party should be abolished.

Since there were thousands of armed White Guardists around the country, the situation was serious. Challenging the government was a mistake, which ended the Lapua Movement. The government and President Svinhufvud, a well-respected conservative politician, decided to use the law against subversive activity against the rebels. The situation calmed down after Svinhufvud's famous radio speech asking people to go home. Public opinion also turned against the radicals. The rebels were convicted and the Lapua Movement was abolished. Its leaders founded the small right-wing party Patriotic People's Front (Fi. Isänmaallinen kansanliitto, IKL).

Negotiating borders: conflicting memories of World War II participants in Lithuania

Irena Šutinienė

Abstract. The chapter explores the memory strategies employed by Lithuanian war veterans at the level of communicative memory in order to cope with issues perceived as problematic or conflicting in present contexts of remembrance culture. Based on the analysis of oral history narratives of three groups of war veterans, the chapter reveals how on the level of communicative memory, on the one hand, problematic issues of war memory are negotiated or mitigated, and, on the other hand, how the memory of traumatic war experience expressed at this level may impede resolution of contradictions. Analysis reveals the importance of strategies of victimisation and apology-forgiveness rituals in overcoming contradictory issues of war memory and resolution of memory-based conflicts among war participants.

Introduction

After the re-establishment of the independence of Lithuania, the memory of World War II was among the intensively contested issues on both public and private levels of memory. In spite of the long temporal distance, this event remains among the most important events in the collective memory of Lithuanians. According to empirical representative research, it takes second place after the events of regaining independence in 1990 (Šutinienė 2008, 116). Apart from the 'return' of old conflicts silenced or suppressed during the Soviet period, new dilemmas also emerged in the assessment of diverse groups' war experience in the new contexts of dominant national narratives as well as of European and global memory discourses. Among the 'old' issues that post-Soviet society had to face were memories of the Holocaust and Lithuanian participation in it, and the memories of wartime conflict between Poles and Lithuanians, based on pre-war territorial disputes. Debates on these issues permeated the entire sphere of Lithuanian–Jewish and Lithuanian–Polish relations. Another group of problems, which particularly concerned the level of individual and collective remembrances of participants in the war on both Soviet and Nazi German sides, relates to the

dominant Lithuanian national narrative of Soviet occupation and its opposition to the former Soviet narrative of the Great Patriotic War. The dominant European remembrance discourses also exert influence on public and private levels of war memory, although their contradictions to the post-Soviet national narratives are decreasing with the emergence of transnational perspectives on the war, which have challenged national discourses of victimhood as well as traditional Western perceptions of the war (Hackmann 2009, 167). Although the dominant war narrative in Lithuanian memory culture is becoming less contested, this event remains the source of contradictions and conflicts at the level of communicative memory for diverse groups.

The aim of this chapter is to explore memory strategies applied by the members of these diverse communities of war participants in order to avoid contradictions and problems at the level of communicative memory. The chapter is based on analysis of the oral history narratives of three groups of World War II participants whose memories are problematic in contemporary contexts of Lithuanian remembrance culture and/or global memory discourses. The chapter also contributes to the research on the complex and dynamic interaction between cultural, communicative and individual levels of memory by revealing how borders and contradictions created by dominant narratives of memory cultures are negotiated at the level of the communicative memory of groups of war veterans.

Definitions, data, methods

According to information presented in historiography, approximately 140,000 Lithuanian inhabitants participated directly in World War II. More than 100,000, mainly in 1944–1945, were called into the Red Army (3000 of them fought underground). About 20,000 Lithuanians were involved on the side of Nazi Germany in diverse military, police and paramilitary units. About 10,000 people were in the Polish resistance and approximately 5000 Lithuanians belonged to units of underground resistance, which fought against the Nazis (Nikžentaitis 2011, 392).

There are two main areas of contested or conflicting memories of World War II at the level of the communicative memory of diverse "communities of memory" (groups connected by a sense of bonding through common memory of shared experience; Irwin-Zarecka 1994, 47–48) in Lithuania: ethnic group memories (also linked to ethnic identity and national memory narratives) and war participant memories held by those who fought on different sides (Nikžentaitis 2011, 388–389). Disagreements between ethnic group memories are generally expressed in the memories of veterans of the Polish Home Army and veterans of the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force, of which the latter was created in 1944

to support the Nazis and fight against the Red Army in Lithuanian territory. Both forces fought against each other at the end of the war in a conflict that was based on a pre-war territorial dispute in the Vilnius region. Memories of those who fought on the side of the Red Army – veterans of the Red Army's 16th Lithuanian Rifle division – are also problematic in the context of the dominant culture of remembrance. This group's memories directly express the contradiction between the dominant Lithuanian narrative of Soviet occupation and their experiences, which were formerly interpreted within the framework of the Soviet Great Patriotic War narrative. In the context of dominant national narrative, members of anti-Nazi resistance and of the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force represent fighters for Lithuanian independence, while for members of the Red Army the role of 'occupants' was sometimes attributed a priori (op cit, 393).

Communicative memory here is defined according to Jan Assmann: as history and recent past presented in the framework of autobiographical memory, transmitted in the form of the informal traditions and genres of everyday communication and encompassing the time horizon of three or four interacting generations (2008, 117, 126).

The theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis of veterans' memory strategies is mainly based on (1) the insights of John Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth into the strategies of managing traumatic memory (the "heritage of atrocity") as a resource of conflict, (2) the insights of Aleida Assmann into the narratives of victimhood as a resource of positive group identity in contemporary culture of remembrance of traumatic events, and (3) Thomas J. Scheff's theory on the emotions of pride and shame as mechanisms generating both social conflict and social cohesion (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996; Assmann 2006; Scheff 1994).

Aleida Assmann defines the present contexts of remembrance of traumatic events creating a framework for interpretation of the war memories of particular collectives as the "post-traumatic era", where, in contrast to heroic interpretations, moral criteria prevail and the central positive value is ascribed to the passive victim (2006, 80–81). This fundamental shift of memory paradigm is manifested in various forms, among them through the 'individualising' and 'anthropologising' tendencies in war memory cultures; it is demonstrated, *inter alia*, in the representations of wars in European museums, where war is approached from the perspective of the individual human being. From this perspective, the political and moral categories of conquerors, defeated heroes, and friends and enemies are relativised, presenting all individuals as war victims (Wahnich 2008, 43–56).

The acknowledgement of crimes and traumas alongside heroic deeds also changes the legal consciousness of societies and determines a victimological

identity policy of collective actors; competing narratives of victimisation become a characteristic feature of contemporary memory of traumatic historical events (Assmann 2006, 74-77). The status of victim creates a positive collective identity, whereas guilt implicates its destruction (op cit, 81). The strategy of victimisation (the self-identification of a group, or of an individual, as victim) is considered as one of the most successful strategies for coping with the problems of traumatic memory on political, moral and psychological levels (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 106-108; Scheff 1994, 61). However, the moral criteria of interpretation create new problems for the memory of traumatic events: the status of passive victim also implies the responsibility of perpetrators creating "traumas of guilt" (Assmann 2006, 99); moral criteria may also recast heroes as perpetrators of atrocities, or winners as losers (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 108).

Other strategies are employed to manage perpetrators' memory, among which deliberate amnesia is a popular defensive strategy (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 109). This approach can help to resolve the memory conflicts, and forgetting may 'heal' some 'wounds of war', although this strategy has no 'healing' power in cases of exploitation, dehumanisation and the extermination of innocent people (Assmann 2006, 78). The memories of those who have persecuted are also interpreted according to the strategy of demonization, limiting blame to a specific group that can be demonised as solely guilty (thereby exonerating the rest), while the strategy of relativisation reflects efforts to relativise responsibility ("all were involved", etc.) (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 108-110).

However, attribution of the status of passive victim to nations, groups and individuals is complex in many cases (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996; Assmann 2006). This complexity is especially inherent in war memories in which "reducing all humanity to the twin roles of victim and perpetrator" contains many complexities and biases (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 99). In war memories, the same actors are often defined as 'victims' and 'villains' while the definitions of 'winners' and 'losers', as well as of the limits of atrocity and guilt, might also be ambivalent (Assmann 2006, 65-78; Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 99). In the memories of war veterans from the Baltic countries, the categories of 'friends' and 'enemies', 'winners' and 'losers', 'victims' and 'persecutors' are complicated and ambivalent due to the historical situation of complex intertwining between two occupations and the hopes held by Baltic people to regain independence. In this case war participants have often been forced to make difficult choices "between bad and worse" (Kõresaar 2011, 10-16).

Memory conflicts, especially identity based ones, include a strong emotional dimension (Tint 2010, 246-247). The memories of those who participated in war are strongly connected to categories such as 'winners' and 'losers', and therefore emotions of shame and pride, as revealed in the sociological theory of emotions by Thomas Scheff, are significant for these memories. According to Scheff, feelings of pride arise with achievements, success, and acceptance, whereas shame emerges from failures and rejection (1994, 53). Acknowledged and unacknowledged shame generate different social effects: "Acknowledging shame helps connect parties; admission of feelings of weakness or vulnerability can build solidarity and trust" (op cit, 61), whereas unacknowledged shame leads to conflict (op cit, 54). Scheff also explores the psychological and social outcomes of public apologies, in which the role of acknowledgement and "authentic feelings of sorrow, regret, remorse, and responsibility" for the success of these actions is revealed (op cit, 54-56). Psychological mechanisms for the construction of positive identity based on the status of victim are also revealed in this theory: ascribing victimhood to oneself compensates for the shame of failure because it gives, for a "sinless loser" (innocent victim), a feeling of moral superiority over a "sinful winner" (aggressor or perpetrator). Recognition of the victims' unjust suffering restores their dignity (op cit, 61).

Communicative memory as an arena of expression of war memory creates preconditions for both the generation of conflicts and their resolution. In contrast to memory culture, in which political aims and values prevail, in communicative memory moral values are more important (Jordanova 2000, 162). The traumatic character of war experience is another source of conflicting issues within the communicative memory of war participants: historians can agree, but for the bearers of traumatic experience memories it is more difficult to agree (Frei 2004, 22). However, there are also preconditions for the mitigation of contradictions at the level of communicative memory due to the aforementioned 'individualising' and 'anthropologising' tendencies, which contribute to the depoliticisation of war memory.

The oral history narratives of members of three war veterans' organisations are analysed in this chapter: veterans of the Polish Home Army, the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force and the 16th Lithuanian Rifle Division of the Red Army. The analysis is aimed at an exploration of the discursive strategies employed by these groups in order to resolve their war memory issues (perceived as problematic or conflicting in the current contexts of remembrance culture) as well as looking at the (re)construction of a positive self-image in these contexts. Representations of themes and issues that can be identified as problematic in contemporary contexts in terms of the moral criteria governing global memory culture, and/or of the hegemonic narrative of Lithuanian memory discourse, or with regard to the memories of other groups, are analysed empirically; the presentations of groups' self-images are also identified in the narratives. The narratives were collected

during semi-structured interviews conducted in 2006. In the interviews, the veterans were asked to talk about their experience of participation in the war, its aftermath during the Soviet era, their present attitudes towards the problematic issues surrounding their experiences and the status of their memory, and their present activities in veterans' organisations. Six narratives were chosen and analysed from each of the three groups under study.

The Polish–Lithuanian conflict in the Vilnius region 1939–1944 and its representation in the Lithuanian and Polish discourses of memory culture

The Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force was a short-lived armed Lithuanian volunteer force created in February 1944, and disbanded in May 1944. Previous attempts by the German forces to create an SS unit or other armed force from the local population had been unsuccessful and mobilisations boycotted. The Territorial Defence Force was subordinate to German authority, but had some autonomy and was staffed by Lithuanian officers. Its goal was to fight against the approaching Red Army and Soviet partisans within the territory claimed by Lithuanians, and to provide security within this territory. Many people joined the unit in a very short period following its announcement in February 1944 (it quickly grew to approximately 10,000 men). The Nazis made constant attempts to use this force to fight in the Wehrmacht, but such attempts were blocked by Lithuanian commander general Povilas Plechavičius. After brief encounters with the Soviet partisans and the Polish Home Army, and an attempt to send it to the Eastern Front, the force disbanded itself in May 1944. Its leaders were arrested and deported to prison camps, and many of its members were executed by the Nazis. Others were either drafted into Nazi auxiliary services or joined the newly formed anti-Soviet resistance known as the Forest Brothers. Their main enemy in the Vilnius region was the Polish Home Army as a result of the territorial conflict centring on Vilnius.

In contemporary Poland, the Home Army is the central heroic figure in the myth of the Warsaw Uprising and struggle against the Nazis. However, in Lithuania and in the territories of contemporary Belarus and Ukraine that formerly belonged to Poland, the role of this army was ambivalent. Although their main declared aim was the fight against the Nazis, in Lithuania they also fought against Lithuanian forces, local administration and police, sometimes also collaborated with Nazis in battles against Soviet partisans, and were involved in massacres of civilians. The main goal of the Home Army in this region (also formulated by the Polish government in exile, to whom they were subordinated) was to regain

the territories lost in 1939, and their enemies were any forces who were perceived as obstacles to this goal (Bubnys 1998; Wołkonowski 1996). This small-scale civil war between Poles and Lithuanians was encouraged by the German authorities and culminated in the massacres of Polish and Lithuanian civilians in two villages in June 1944.

At the level of remembrance culture, the role of both units is evaluated differently in the national narratives of contemporary Poland and Lithuania. In the dominant narrative of Poland, the assessment of the Home Army as hero is applied to all territories. In Lithuanian memory culture the assessment of members of the Territorial Force as patriotic heroes is also important, although the debate over the massacres of civilians and collaboration with German authorities is also present in public discourse. Contradictions arising from this conflict are characteristic of the works of some historians, media debates and memoirs:

> When reading the memoirs of contemporaries or the works of some historians about the Home Army that were edited in Warsaw, one can have the impression that the Vilnius region was not occupied by Nazis, but that Poles and Lithuanians were fighting against each other. In the memoirs of Lithuanian contemporaries and works of some historians the main actors in this conflict are also the same ethnic groups, but the 'right' and 'wrong' sides are opposite (Nikžentaitis 2011, 390).

The main differences in the assessment of the Lithuanian–Polish conflict in the Vilnius region in the historiography of Lithuania and Poland are reflected in the articles of Lithuanian and Polish historians summarising the historical research of both countries (Nikžentaitis 2004; Bubnys & Gluza 1999; Karbowiak 2007–2008). According to Lithuanian historians, taking the Vilnius region in October 1939, in accordance with a treaty with the USSR, is recognised as a liberation, and Poles are accused of causing the conflicts that took place before the war. The participation of Lithuanians in the actions exercised by Germans against Poles is acknowledged, although the activities of the Lithuanian administration and police in the region are presented as not being autonomous. Thus, according to Lithuanian historians, in 1939–1940 Lithuanians implemented humane reforms in the Vilnius region that were not always understood by the Poles, who therefore resisted them. All responsibility for actions in this region from the beginning of the Soviet occupation in 1940 to the end of World War II, except the massacre of civilians executed in one village by the Territorial Defence Force, is attributed to Russians and Germans (Nikžentaitis 2004, 18; Bubnys & Gluza 1999). Summarising Lithuanian research, Alvydas Nikžentaitis comes to the conclusion that

"Lithuanian historians cannot be accused of absolute concealment of facts or their distortion, however the form of their presentation shows that, in analysing the Lithuanian–Polish conflict, Lithuanian historiography protects Lithuanian national interests" (2004, 17).

In Polish historiography, the 1939-1945 period is presented as an occupation of the Vilnius region carried out by Lithuanians. Although the dates of Soviet and Nazi occupations are indicated, the Lithuanians are always considered to have been the main offenders against Poles in the region. The actions performed by Germans against Poles with the participation of Lithuanians are often presented as executed by Lithuanians alone (Karbowiak 2007–2008). Some Polish historians even blame Lithuanian security structures, which had allegedly earlier made lists of the Poles being persecuted (Nikžentaitis 2004, 17), for the deportations of Polish nationality residents from Lithuania performed by the Soviets in 1940. Lithuanians are also blamed for deportations of Polish men to forced labour in Germany (Karbowiak 2007–2008). The Home Army's contacts with the German authorities are concealed. Responsibility is assumed only for one massacre of civilians, performed in 1944 as an act of revenge for the aforementioned massacre of Polish civilians by Lithuanian forces; other murders of civilians and actions against them are justified or concealed (Karbowiak 2007–2008; Bubnys & Gluza 1999; Nikžentaitis 2004). Thus, the complicated period of Soviet and Nazi occupations in the Vilnius region is presented as the fight of oppressed Poles against Lithuanian 'invaders' (Nikžentaitis 2004, 18).

In Lithuanian memory culture, this local conflict became relevant at the beginning of the nineties due to disagreements between Lithuanians and Poles during the struggle for the restoration of Lithuanian independence and threats raised by Soviet leaders to take away the Vilnius and Klaipėda regions from Lithuania. The crimes perpetrated by the Home Army against civilians, and the collaboration of these civilians with the Nazis, were emphasised in order to demonstrate the illegitimacy of Polish actions in the region; in 1994 the Home Army was declared a criminal organisation (Nikžentaitis 2004, 17). A status equal to the position of anti-Communist post-war resistance was assigned to veterans of the Territorial Defence Force, emphasising their objective of restoring independence and their refusal to fight with the Nazis. In 2004 their commander, general Povilas Plechavičius, was posthumously awarded the supreme award of the Republic of Lithuania, which had previously been given to the commander of the Home Army in the Vilnius region, general Aleksander Krzyżanowski. In 1994, after the signing of the Lithuanian–Polish Friendship Treaty, the conflict became less relevant. The conflict also lost its relevance due to the dominant memory policy:

in the hegemonic national narrative the fight for independence took the central position and questions of territorial integrity became marginal (op cit, 18).

Today the conflict between both groups of former enemies seems to be resolved at the political level as well as in many official arenas of remembrance culture. The memories held by both groups are recognised within the memory culture: monuments for civil victims and fighters from both sides are built and commemoration practices are performed. The Declaration of Reconciliation between veterans of both sides, supported by the president of Lithuania, was signed between both sides in 2004.

Memory strategies of veterans of the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force

The construction of positive group identity and unproblematic communicative memory has not been an easy task for either group: both have undergone not only traumatic war experience and post-war persecution, but also collective traumas of defeat in military operations and in respect of the aims they pursued. The guilt and responsibility for civil victims is another important moral problem for both groups of veterans.

When struggling for recognition of their memories, veterans of the Lithuanian Territorial Defence Force follow the main template of the dominant Lithuanian narrative, stressing their attempts to fight against the Soviets and avoiding claims of collaboration with the Nazis. However, they rarely present themselves as heroes; the patriotic motives and unrealised goals of anti-Soviet resistance are probably insufficient for the heroic narrative. Some tension is felt about their identity as 'pure' defenders of Lithuanian independence and there are also signs of shame and guilt in the narratives. The massacre of Polish civilians is depicted as a collective responsibility, although it is an unpopular topic, and the Polish Home Army is blamed for provoking fights and murders. The veterans generally present themselves as victims of German and Soviet aggressors. The narratives about the Nazi repressions after the self-disbanding of the Defence Force help veterans avoid claims of collaborating with the Nazis. The experience of suffering after war (many had experienced Soviet repressions) also takes an important place in their narratives, simultaneously expressing the roles of victim and fighter against the Soviet regime. Stories about war experience and post-war suffering are told in detail, thus possibly expressing the "biographical necessity for narration", which is characteristic of traumatic war memories, affects the present and future of a narrator's life, and contributes to the collective justification when presenting oneself as a victim (Rosenthal 1991, 40).

The Declaration of Reconciliation lessened the memory conflict, but neither side participated actively in the subsequent reconciliation (common commemoration ceremonies and other events) and some experts state that this process has been fraught with difficulty (Degutis & Komar 2006, 11-12). However, the apology-forgiveness ritual started a new phase in the attitudes of members of both groups towards each other, and to some degree in Lithuanian–Polish relations in general. The apology-forgiveness transaction "signifies the removal of a threat to the social bond" (Scheff 1994, 136) and helps "to acknowledge and integrate the power of the historical content but move forward" (Tint 2010, 251).

The feelings of beginning a new phase are expressed in the comments of the leaders of both veterans' organisations. According to the chairman of the Union of Territorial Defence Force Soldiers "[…] after signing the declaration as if a stone fell down from our hearts, all our anger and hatred ended" (XXI amžiaus horizontai 2004); a similar opinion was expressed by the chairman of the Polish Home Army veterans in Lithuania: "We are Christians, so we must forgive each other. During the war we were on different sides of the barricades. It should not have happened, but nobody can change history" (op cit). As the later behaviour and narratives of the members of both groups demonstrates, this apology was not completely successful. Yet, members of both groups often cite this ritual when expressing their will to achieve reconciliation and social solidarity.

The realisation of the reconciliation at the level of Territorial Defence Force veterans' communicative and individual memory seems to be hindered by the emotional importance of memories of the pre-war territorial conflict with the Poles and emotions connected to the trauma of defeat by the Home Army, especially when these emotions relate to losses of combatants and civilian Lithuanians (in this conflict, the Territorial Force, poorly trained and lacking experience, suffered more defeats and heavier losses than the Home Army (Karbowiak 2007–2008; Bubnys 1998)). Some veterans confessed that they approve of reconciliation, but personally and emotionally they still cannot forgive when remembering the combatant and civilian Lithuanians killed by the Home Army. The emotional importance of these memories may also be based on influential pre-war national narratives, in which 'the question of Vilnius' took an important place, and the image of the Pole as enemy was very strong. Lithuanians were the victims and Poles the aggressors in this narrative. These old cultural templates, though not corresponding to present memory cultures, may exert influence on personal memory: "Their [cultural templates'] efficacy lies in the fact that they circulate in cultural spaces which antecede, and thus are part of the constitution of, personal memory. […] Templates do not always work in the service of a dominant national narrative" (Ashplant et al 2000, 36). The relevance of 'the

question of Vilnius' for this group's memories is also illustrated by the commentary of the former chairman of the veterans' union, in which the claims of Poles for this territory are reiterated: "I always knew that Poles still have their objectives in Vilnius region, but we made this step in order to make consensus easier for everyone" (VR4, 2006). Though the status of victim of German and Soviet aggression applies to both conflicting groups, some veterans of the Lithuanian forces dispute the 'equality' of the victimhood of the Home Army in comparison to their own at the level of communicative and individual memory.

Thus, although the positive self-image of this group is strongly supported by the dominant narrative, contradictory and problematic aspects of their memory are present that invoke the strategy of victimisation. This strategy partly helps them overcome the tension between pride and shame, alleviating traumas of defeat and guilt and contributing to the construction of the group's positive self-image. However, this does not fully resolve these tensions: the lack of ability to forgive and other emotions connected to the shame of defeat remain an obstacle for complete resolution of memory conflict between former enemies at the level of individual and group memory, although this conflict is resolved and peripheral at the level of memory culture. However, despite emotional obstacles, the apology-forgiveness ritual is perceived in this group as a point of departure from which to 'move forward'.

Memory strategies of veterans of the Polish Home Army

The experience of veterans of the Polish Home Army is problematic in the contexts of dominant Lithuanian narrative and the negative attitudes of some social groups. The role of hero attributed to them in the Polish narrative helps to maintain collective and personal dignity, but all members of this group emphasise the importance of recognition in Lithuanian contexts for them as well. Two memory strategies are applied in their narratives, presented for a Lithuanian audience in order to avoid conflicting points in their memories: the strategy of victimisation and the strategy of deliberate amnesia.

The strategy of victimisation is the main means of normalisation of their experience in present Lithuanian contexts. The heroic aspects are not mentioned in the narrative presented for the Lithuanian audience. In contrast to Polish historiography, in which Lithuanians are depicted as the main occupiers, only two enemies are named – the Soviets and the Nazis ("Two bandits – Hitler and Stalin – divided our countries" (AK3, 2006)). As in the Polish narrative, participation is defined as defence of the homeland from German and Soviet occupation, although in Poland the regional aspect is emphasised: "You must defend

the homeland where you live" (AK5, 2006). Lithuania and Poland are portrayed as victims of the war and of the pact between two demonised aliens, thus both sides of the conflict are presented as 'equal victims'. This common victimisation helps to create solidarity between former enemies (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 106).

The role of victim also alleviates the trauma of territorial loss: "Soviets captured Vilnius and gave it to whom they wanted" (AK3, 2006). This common victimisation also helps those affected to look for unifying points in history: "We were suffering together during the Soviet period" (AK1, 2006). Similarly to the dominant Lithuanian narrative (and in contrast to the Polish narrative), the 'Soviets' in the narratives of Polish Home Army veterans seem to be a greater enemy than the Nazis.

The narratives of Home Army veterans contain 'amnesias' and partial denials of facts unhelpful to the formation of a positive self-image. This strategy was probably chosen as a defensive reaction in the situation of tension between the national narratives of Lithuania and Poland and negative assessment of their experience still present in some manifestations of Lithuanian memory discourse. The strategy of deliberate amnesia is applied to the topics of the massacre and rebellion of civilians, the anti-Lithuanian character of their struggle, and partly also to the themes of episodic collaboration with Nazis and the Red Army, as well as battles with Lithuanian forces. Responsibility for the massacre of civilians is avoided mainly by denying the involvement of the Home Army unit to which they belonged ("Those were local conflicts, members of the local population killed them, not us" (AK5, 2006)); some veterans recognise the massacres but assign responsibility at the level of the individual.

In the narratives of the veterans of the Home Army, the war experience is presented fragmentarily, while long and detailed narratives are told about post-war Soviet repression. Similarly to accounts by veterans of the Lithuanian forces, the narratives of post-war suffering, apart from strengthening the role of the victim, can also be told as 'cover-stories'; in situations were a group is faced with the question of political responsibility, it is possible that 'cover-stories' will appear which deal with personal suffering and serve to normalise the past (Rosenthal 1991, 40).

Among Lithuanian veterans reconciliation is evaluated positively, as an important sign of the recognition of their memory in Lithuanian contexts and as a significant step towards social consensus. Even though the collective apology-forgiveness ritual itself means recognition of guilt and repentance at the public level, in this case the detachment between the past and present created by this ritual also serves as a motive to forget the problematic past. According to Thomas Scheff (1994), only acknowledged shame helps to create solidarity.

However, both sides of the conflict appeal for reconciliation as a positive ritual, which is important for consensus (although some Home Army veterans confessed that only the younger generation would be able to resolve the conflict: "Nothing will change until those born before 1950 die" (AK3, 2006)). Again, the need for acceptance of the contemporary political situation, and for loyalty, is also admitted: "At that time we thought we were behaving properly. Poland was here, but now it is not. If you did not emigrate, you have to be loyal" (AK1, 2006).

Although "acknowledging differing national narratives is seen as a key element to working with parties in long-term, identity-based conflict" (Tint 2010, 250), the narratives reveal the importance of the apology-forgiveness ritual for both groups, even when the narrative of the opposite group is not fully acknowledged. Both groups see this ritual as an important point of departure that opens a new phase as well as possibilities for the processes of reconciliation and the establishment of social cohesion. Narratives indicate that the dividing line between past and present made by this public ritual also serves as a basis for contemporary and future changes of communicative and individual memory. This confirms the importance of collective apology-forgiveness rituals, as stressed by Bernhard Giesen:

> Only collective rituals can mark the opposition between past and future and heal the fundamental breakdown of commonality between perpetrators and victims. Just as traditions that attempt to continue the past require rituals of commemoration, so rupture between past and present, too, requires rituals of repentance and cultures of memory (Giesen 2004, 154).

Thus, in the case of Home Army veterans' memories, strategies of victimisation and amnesia help to avoid conflicts with the dominant Lithuanian narrative and with former war enemies' memories. However, the strategy of amnesia in general is considered to have little effect on reconciliation and social cohesion: the process of reconciliation requires an acknowledgment of responsibility (Tint 2010, 250; Scheff 1994, 64), while "deliberate amnesia appears likely to be successful only in the short term" (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996, 109). Despite the apology-forgiveness ritual also significantly reducing the contradictions of the Home Army's memory in relation to Lithuanian remembrance culture and conflict with former enemies, the absent full acknowledgment of the shameful events of the past impedes complete resolution of memory conflict. However,

the rising marginality of this conflict in Lithuanian memory culture also works in favour of conflict resolution.

Memory strategies of
veterans of the Red Army 16th Lithuanian Rifle Division

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the roles of members of this group as 'hero-liberators' became irrelevant, and their part in an army officially recognised as occupational began to look rather ambiguous. In order to maintain positive individual and group identity, the veterans had to reinterpret and normalise their memories according to contemporary discursive contexts.

The common means of normalising the memories of this group of veterans, which appears in all narratives, is the strict separation of the war and post-war periods, stressing different logic and assessment criteria for these periods: according to one of the veterans, "the war is quite a different thing, it is clear with whom we were fighting" (16D1, 2006), and occupation was performed "by the NKVD, not the army" (16D1, 2006). Another common feature is the depoliticisation of the war experience as part of the victimisation strategy: the war is presented in veterans' narratives only as the war 'against' fascism, but not 'for' any aim, and its experience is separated from political goals and consequences. The war is perceived as an alien war in which they were involved violently: "People perished for nothing. The soldier won the war, but Stalin and the Communist party made profit from this victory" (16D6, 2006). The soldier is treated as the main figure of the war – both as hero and victim of an alien war between two dictators and regimes. The victimisation is also expressed by means of 'anthropologising' and 'individualising' memory. In this case the perspective of an individual helps to depoliticise the memory and disassociate it from the present narrative of Soviet occupation. The motif of violent conscription emphasised in some narratives also corresponds to the role of victim. The heroes in the narratives are not abstract symbols, but concrete individualised soldiers. Therefore the monuments the veterans accept are mainly tombstones with the names of perished soldiers: "Only respect for perished people should be expressed in the monuments. There was and there is no idea in this war, only violence; we were expelled like serfs. Everybody knew that we would die" (16D3, 2006). In some stories the glory of the dead soldier is also transferred to the enemy, thus ignoring the political aspects of the war:

> Every monument of the perished soldier must be respected. All was done by people, Gods and [political] power must not be glorified. I saw German

prisoners in Germany, then I was against them. Now I think that the soldier was not guilty because he was mobilised, I can forgive the squaddie, but I cannot forgive the SS workers, they were not at war, but killed innocent people (16D6, 2006).

Apart from common features, three slightly different memory strategies can be identified in the accounts of Red Army veterans. The first one is based on the Soviet/Russian narrative of the Great Patriotic War, with the Soviet soldier presented as a heroic liberator from fascism. The continuity of Soviet commemoration practices and the institutional recognition of their memory and relations with veterans in Russia are especially important for veterans following this strategy. The treatment of the Red Army as occupiers is avoided by separation of war and post-war periods and logics, and by emphasising the arguments of 'liberation from fascism'. The Soviet soldier is presented as a hero in this group of accounts.

The other group of narratives is similar to the first, but the interpretations it contains are based on the transnational discourses of the struggle against Nazism, and the veterans stress the anti-fascist ideology and their membership in the transnational community of war veterans. The soldier in these narratives is represented as a hero and a victim simultaneously.

The strategy of victimisation is expressed most 'genuinely' in the third group of narratives. War memory is presented only from the 'anthropologising' perspective with the status of victim attributed not only to a single soldier, but also to the entire division and to the whole country. This group of narratives lacks the heroic motif, and the ideological schemata of the 'Great Patriotic War' are not important and insufficient for the meaning making of the veterans' war experience. Memories of traumatic experience take an important place in these narratives in which suffering, inhuman behaviour, and the numerous and meaningless losses are emphasised. The experience of all veterans of the 16th Lithuanian Rifle Division is traumatic to a great degree. The division was sent unprepared and in haste to its first battle. In the battle in the vicinity of Oriol, as well as in the last battle in the Baltics, many units of the division suffered heavy casualties. This experience still remains important for veterans:

> It is impossible to forget. Even now I see in my mind fields with killed people, a range of dead men at every five or six steps, this way they were sent into attack. But there were some empty places. It means that in this place somebody remained alive and crawled out (16D6, 2006).

Some members of this group already felt the dissonance between their experience and official interpretations during the Soviet period and perceived their and their unit's experience as that of a victim of manipulation by command. In their opinion, the meaningless deaths of numerous combatants could have been avoided, but were part of the plan (this opinion is confirmed by present publications from Russian and Lithuanian historians, as well as other documents):

> At the very beginning, when our division was sent into battle, it was wiped out. It seems they wanted as few Lithuanians as possible to return to Lithuania. We did not speak about these episodes formally. We said confidentially that it was done on purpose because there were some soldiers from the pre-war period in the division. Many of them were killed, many deported to the camps, but some remained, entered the party and swore allegiance to Russia (16D3, 2006).

Therefore the activities of this group of veterans and their organisations are today aimed not only at commemorative practices, but also at the reconstruction of the more 'authentic' history of their division than the official Soviet version; they perceive this reconstruction as a duty towards their dead comrades. The themes of nationality and Lithuanian patriotism can also be found in the war narratives of this group: "They wanted to kill more Lithuanians, especially at the end of the war" (16D5, 2006).

The victimhood narrative of the 16th Lithuanian Rifle Division veterans is recognised in present public discourse and by a large part of society, while the claims of 'collaboration with occupiers' have become less numerous. The status of this group as a victim is recognised even by the members of post-war anti-Soviet resistance – the heroes of the dominant national narrative. According to the opinion of the chairman of their organization "there were patriots among them as well, a lot of them perished meaninglessly, they were betrayed" (LLKS1, 2006). The depoliticising tendency of interpreting war memory from an individualised, 'anthropologising' perspective, according to which all 'ordinary' participants are presented as victims, has also become popular in the public discourse of war memory. The typical attitude is illustrated by the following quotation:

> A human attitude wins: at first it is necessary to respect the memory of those who were fighting on the foreign fronts, who died or returned with wounds or were disabled. It is even more important that in these historical cataclysms and divisions of occupants there were few parents and grandparents who were able to choose – either to go to the forest, deep underground, fly away

from Lithuania or with clenched teeth put on the overcoat of the Red Army soldier (Iškauskas 2011).

Conclusions

The results confirm the complexity of interaction between various levels of memory. At the communicative level of war memory, the assessments of political discourses of remembrance culture are negotiated and mitigated to a great extent. However, the traumatic aspects of war experience may also cause contradictions and problems that are not present in remembrance culture.

The strategy of victimisation characteristic of the 'post-traumatic' era prevails on the communicative and individual levels of the war memory of all three groups. The cases analysed reveal that the victimhood narratives in war memories can help to reduce contradictory and conflicting issues, especially when the role of persecutor can be attributed to 'alien' forces. However, although victimhood narratives offer communities of memory a high status and a positive self-image, they are not easily applicable to the memory of the ambivalent experiences of those who have participated in war.

Among the cases analysed, the strategy of victimisation most successfully helps to diminish the contradictions between the dominant, national anti-Soviet narrative and the experience of the war veterans who participated on the side of Soviet occupation. These contradictions are mitigated by presenting Red Army veterans as passive victims of alien aggressors and by relating the group memory to the global discourses of anti-Nazi resistance. Transnational discourses of war memory according to which the war is approached from the perspective of the individual human being, also support the image of victimhood and help to depoliticise this group's memory.

The strategy of victimisation also helps to reduce the points of conflict in the communicative and individual war memories of ethnic groups – former war enemies – despite the remaining contradictions between the dominant national narratives of both groups. However, although the role of victim helps to reduce the trauma of defeat and partly shift responsibility to external forces, the emotions connected with ethnic identity and war trauma, as well as the morally unacceptable experience of persecuting civilians, create obstacles to the construction of a positive self-image and complete conflict resolution for both groups of veterans. In the memory of Lithuanian Territorial Forces veterans, emotions related to the trauma of defeat and guilt hinder the adoption of a positive image of heroic independence fighters. Conflict resolution at the communicative and individual level of the memory of these veterans is also impeded by the emotional

inability to forgive based on the old cultural templates and the traumatic memory of defeat. In the memory of veterans of the Home Army, attribution of victim status is facilitated by the strategy of amnesia, which partly allows ignorance of the role of perpetrator; the status of victim also helps this group to cope with the trauma of defeat. Here the apology-forgiveness ritual plays a more significant role than among veterans of Territorial Forces, even though the lack of any ability to acknowledge the shameful past also impedes complete conflict resolution.

The cases analysed confirm that "traumatic experience of suffering and shame are generally not integrated with ease into positive self-images" (Kõresaar et al 2009, 32). In addition the analysis also contributes to research revealing "the impossibility of a clean break with the past in view of the moral, emotional and political resistances to a quick fix" (Rigney 2012, 254).

Veterans' war memories reveal the importance of public apology-forgiveness rituals in resolving memory conflicts based on ambiguous traumatic experience. This is true even when the public process of reconciliation is initially less supported by the informal levels of memory and no common alternative narrative of the problematic past is established, as the different narratives of opposing sides are not fully acknowledged by conflicting groups. This confirms the multiple functions of these rituals and the multidirectionality of the ways of reconciliation (Tint 2010, 250; Rigney 2012, 252).

Interviews

Author's fieldwork material, 18 interviews in total, conducted in Lithuania, 2006.

Respondent index	Date of interview	Sex	Age
AK1	February 2006	Male	77
AK3	March 2006	Male	83
AK5	March 2006	Male	84
LLKS1	April 2006	Male	77
VR4	March 2006	Male	92
16D1	February 2006	Male	79
16D3	March 2006	Male	82
16D5	April 2006	Male	82
16D6	April 2006	Male	85

Newspapers

Iškauskas, Č. (2011) 16-ji lietuviškoji divizija – šlovinti ar smerkti?, *Atgimimas* 17, 6 May, 4.

XXI amžiaus horizontai 2004 = Lietuvos vietinės rinktinės ir Armijos krajovos Susitaikymo deklaracija (2004) *XXI amžiaus horizontai*, "XXI amžiaus" priedas apie Lietuvą ir pasaulį 17, 8 September, 1.

References

Ashplant, T. G., Dawson, G. & Roper, M. (2000) The politics of war memory and commemoration: contexts, structures and dynamics. – Ashplant, T. G., Dawson, G. & Roper, M. (eds) *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration*. Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative, 3–86. Routledge, London, New York.

Assmann, A. (2006) *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit: Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. C. H. Beck, München.

Assmann, J. (2008) Communicative and cultural memory. – Erll, A. & Nünning, A. (eds) *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*, 109–118. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, New York.

Bubnys, A. (1998) *Vokiečių okupuota Lietuva (1941–1944)*. LGGRTC, Vilnius.

Bubnys, A. & Gluza, Z. (1999) Stosunki Litewsko-Polskie podczas II wojny światowej. – Traba, R. (ed) *Tematy Polsko-Litewskie: Historia, Literatura, Edukacja*, 118–134. Wspólnota Kulturowa Borussia, Olsztyn.

Degutis, A. & Komar, J. (2006) *Paduodami rankas suartiname tautas: Lietuvos vietinės rinktinės ir Vilniaus apygardos Armijos Krajovos susitaikymas*. Valstybės žinios, Vilnius.

Frei, N. (2004) Preodolennoe proshloe? Tretii reikh v sovremennom nemetskom soznanii, *Ab Imperio* 4. Issledovania po novoi imperskoi istorii I natsionalizmu v postsovetskom prostranstve, 21–40. [Фрай, Н. (2004) Преодоленное прошлое? Третий рейх в современном немецком сознании, *Ab Imperio* 4. Исследования по новой имперской истории и национализму в постсоветском пространстве, 21–40.]

Giesen, B. (2004) The trauma of perpetrators: the Holocaust as the traumatic reference of German national identity. – Alexander, J. C., Eyerman, R., Giesen, B., Smelser, N. J. & Sztompka, P. (eds) *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, 112–154. University of California Press, Berkeley, London.

Hackmann, J. (2009) From national victims to transnational bystanders? The changing commemoration of World War II in Central and Eastern Europe, *Constellations* 16 (1), 167–181.

Irwin-Zarecka, I. (1994) *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory*. Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick.

Jordanova, L. (2000) *History in Practice*. Arnold, London.

Karbowiak, A. (2007–2008) Konflikt polsko-litewski na Wileńszczyźnie w latach 1941–1944, *Glaukopis* 9–10, 231–257.

Kõresaar, E. (2011) Introduction. Remembrance cultures of World War II and the politics of recognition in Post-Soviet Estonia: biographical perspectives. – Kõresaar, E. (ed) *Soldiers of Memory: World War II and its Aftermath in Estonian Post-Soviet Life Stories*.

On the Boundary of Two Worlds. Identity, Freedom, and Moral Imagination in the Baltics 27, 1–34. Rodopi, Amsterdam, New York.

Kõresaar, E., Lauk, E., & Kuutma, K. (2009) The twentieth century as a realm of memory. - Kõresaar, E., Lauk, E. & Kuutma, K. (ed) *The Burden of Remembering: Recollections and Representations of the 20th Century*. Studia Historica 77, 9–34. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki.

Nikžentaitis, A. (2004) Rytų Lietuva lietuvių atminties kultūroje ir politikoje: istoriko ir atminties kūrėjo santykio problema, *Kultūros barai* 10, 15-19.

Nikžentaitis, A. (2011) XX a. diktatūrų laikotarpis Lietuvos gyventojų atminties kultūroje: dominuojanti ir diskriminuojama atmintis. - Nikžentaitis, A. (ed) *Nuo Basanavičiaus, Vytauto Didžiojo iki Molotovo ir Ribbentropo: atminties ir atminimo kultūrų transformacijos XX–XXI amžiuje*, 379-398. Lietuvos istorijos instituto leidykla, Vilnius.

Rigney, A. (2012) Reconciliation and remembering: (how) does it work?, *Memory Studies* 5 (3), 251-258.

Rosenthal, G. (1991) German war memories: narrability and the biographical and social functions of remembering, *Oral History* 19 (2), 34-41.

Scheff, T. J. (1994) *Bloody Revenge: Emotions, Nationalism and War*. Westview Press, Boulder.

Šutinienė, I. (2008) Socialinė atmintis ir šiuolaikinė lietuvių tautinė tapatybė. - Čiubrinskas, V. & Kuznecovienė, J. (eds) *Lietuviškojo identiteto trajektorijos*, 111-134. Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto, Kaunas.

Tint, B. (2010) History, memory, and intractable conflict, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly* 27 (3), 239-256.

Tunbridge, J. E. & Ashworth, G. J. (1996) *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*. John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, New York.

Wahnich, S. (2008) XXth century history museums in Europe: ambiguous messages. - Wahnich, S., Lášticová, B. & Findor, A. (eds) *Politics of Collective Memory: Cultural Patterns of Commemorative Practices in Post-War Europe*. Cultural Patterns of Politics 1, 43-56. Lit Verlag, Wien.

Wołkonowski, J. (1996) *Okręg Wileński Związku Walki Zbrojnej Armii Krajowej: w latach 1939-1945*. Adiutor, Warszawa.

Notes

The Stalinist prison camp in Estonian life stories: depicting the past through continuity and discontinuity

Tiiu Jaago

Abstract. This chapter discusses the use of the concept pair of 'continuity–discontinuity' in Estonian life story research. The concepts are used in both history and literary studies to describe the dynamics of Estonian culture under different foreign authorities. One of the premises for life story researchers is that the standpoints presented in public discourse are also represented in life stories dealing with the Soviet period in Estonia. Two problems are raised in this chapter. Firstly, how discontinuity and continuity are revealed in autobiographic descriptions of life in Stalinist prison camps. Secondly, to what extent the time of narrating influences the presentation of the past through discontinuity rather than continuity, and vice versa. Eighteen narratives from the Estonian Life Stories collection of the Estonian Cultural History Archives are analysed. Nine stories date from the end of the Soviet period (1989–1991), the remaining nine from the late 1990s. Analysis shows that episodes describing life in the prison camps are presented following the same narrative strategies, regardless of whether the stories were told at the end of the Soviet period or ten years later. However, it appears that authors of the earlier autobiographical narratives engage in public debates on Estonian history, which authors of the later narratives do not. In prison camp episodes discontinuity (the takeover of government in Estonia, change in the narrator's social status, etc.) and continuity (humane behaviour, finding balance in one's culture) are intertwined. When narrators reflect on the political context of their lives, the rhetoric of discontinuity generally comes to the fore.

This chapter is part of oral history research, focusing on strategies that narrators and researchers use to interpret the Estonian past. Continuity and discontinuity are analytical tools with which to present the past that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s, both in discussions held on the self-descriptions of Estonian culture (for example Krull 1996; Jansen 2000; Pilv 2008; 2011) and in studies on life stories (Kõresaar 2005; Aarelaid-Tart 2012). In the self-description of culture, interruption marks a situation in which one's 'own' culture is interrupted by

The Dynamics of Cultural Borders

Edited by Anu Kannike & Monika Tasa

Borders – of either the physical, geopolitical, personal or intangible variety – are areas of intense activity that substantially contribute to the dynamics of culture. Changes in borderlines and boundaries, as well as negotiations and self-reflection within and across those borders, have significant influence, from shifting routes in familiar landscapes to coping with controversial memories. The issues analysed in this volume – mainly based on the Baltic Sea region – demonstrate the sophistication of practices across borders that have been redrawn because of social rupture, ideological conflict, or physical movement.

APPROACHES TO CULTURE THEORY 6