Table of Contents:

The IPSI Internet Research Society

The IPSI Internet Research Society is an association of people with professional interest in the field of the Internet. All members will receive IPSI Transaction Journals upon registering at the Society.

Member copies of Transactions are for personal use only
IPSI TRANSACTIONS ON INTERNET RESEARCH
www.ipsitransactions.org

Editorial Board

Communicating the Holocaust

Mevorah, Vera

Abstract: *This paper deals with role of digital culture and ICT in rethinking Holocaust remembrance, arguing for a semantic, or rather a theoretical change in analyzing Holocaust memory practices – from re-presenting the Holocaust to communicating the Holocaust. We will explore how this framework can provide a new tool for better encompassing and understanding of wide range of memory and representation practices we equate the Holocaust with, from traumatic Holocaust survivor testimonies, historical, cultural and national memory politics, education practices, Jewish Churban, to numerous memorial and artistic production about the Holocaust, but also add to the debates around issues of (non)representability of the Shoah, ethical imperatives of Holocaust memory and post-Holocaust thought. Our goal is to analyze how much this new platform is dependent on the digital turn, that is, how much of this change in perception of Holocaust memory can we find in the cultural paradigm change that came with ICT and digital technology. This digital turn in Holocaust memory is perceived in the increase of the amount of information about the Holocaust, social networks and social media culture dominated landscape, significance of digital archives, networking and collaborative projects, image, video and text reproduction and appropriation, focus on interactivity and communication in education and memorial institutions. We will showcase how big historical and institutional narratives about the Holocaust gave way to the exchange of multitude of stories, opinions and perspectives. How museum, memorial and school settings became entwined with online platforms and their digital materials, and also in what way are those digital materials used, reproduced and changed. Further, we will discuss how the third and fourth post-Holocaust generation are connected to this digital turn in Holocaust memory and whether in their memory and representational practices we can also find the communication turn.*

Index Terms: *Holocaust, Shoah, representation, digital culture, memory, communication*.

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most debated and most relevant aspects related to Holocaust memory is the issue of Holocaust representation. The problem is that when discussing the Holocaust in framework of (re)presentation we continually face issues like the lack of original source, distancing from the event itself, appropriation by various discourses, trivialization etc. There is no avoiding reading national and collective memories as politicizing ideological practices. All of this leaves us with a never-ending social turmoil about the past in the present and often confusion about which segment of history is important and which is not, even if we put aside the elusive concept of final and encompassing historical truth.

We've known for couple of decades that media and technology we use to preserve or pass on memories also play a significant role in (re)framing those memories (McLuhan 1964). This becomes especially important when digital memory is concerned. All these mechanisms rather than welcome the new, widened understanding of history and the present, continue to pose danger to the historical truth and accepted understanding of any historical event.

We want to explore in broad terms what happens if we exchange the idea of representation with one of communication. The goal is to introduce a new theoretical framework for reading the Holocaust (history/ memory/representations), one that will remove the conflict between event itself and its representations, present in media as much as the narratives we use to understand the Holocaust, and try to get past the stalemate of theories of non-representability of the Holocaust.

The first section of the paper will present the main argument of removing the concept of representation and explore this new theoretical framework of *communicating the Holocaust*. It will illuminate the issues we relate to Holocaust representation, as well as the limits of representation and discuss how the idea of Holocaust communication can be used to overcome these issues. The second part will

8

bring a closer reading of some of the main representational narratives about the Holocaust, like survivor's testimonies, differences between representations in different generations after the Holocaust and collective Holocaust remembrance, rereading them through the lens of new communication centered theoretical framework. The last section of the paper will discuss the digital memory turn related to the Holocaust more closely, showcasing how the idea of Holocaust communication when analyzed through ICT and digital practices ceases to be just a metaphor and becomes the embodiment of Holocaust remembrance.

2. COMMUNICATING THE HOLOCAUST

The question of Holocaust memory, or rather, the Holocaust itself, is very strongly tied to its representations. It is important to stress that when talking about Holocaust representations, we are not only talking about films, literature, art and museum exhibitions, but indeed all kinds of cultural texts and signifying practices about the Holocaust. Holocaust representations therefore also include historical narratives and documents, collective and national memories, memorial and educational practices, politics of memory, as well as schools and systems of thought about the Holocaust.

There are some significant and hard to overcome issues which are mostly related to the polarization and conflict inherent to the main questions the representation framework brings. Although there are many debating issues around Holocaust representation we could use for our argument, we will elaborate on the question of history vs. representations, the issue regarding who speaks about the Holocaust, the issues about the media we use and lastly the question of non-representability of the Holocaust.

The question of history, historiography and historical truth about the Holocaust is maybe the issue with most far-reaching consequences of all issues related to the Holocaust. The Holocaust is one of the most documented events in human history, primarily due to its institutional base and large and detailed bureaucratic documentation

kept by the Nazi regime. The result was that most of what we know and dominantly equate the Holocaust with to this day, is actually about the perpetrators of the Holocaust and mechanisms of its implementation. Raul Hilberg's great historical study of the Holocaust *"The Destruction of the European Jews"* from 1961 best illustrates the cruces of historical analysis of the Holocaust. His basing his work on the bureaucratic documents of the Nazi regime, his refusal to highlight Jewish resistance and include the accounts of survivors in his historical work, initiated one of the most heated debates on what Holocaust history should be. Hilberg himself admitted that it is the historian who unavoidably creates the historical narrative: "[…] the words that are thus written take the place of the past; these words rather than the events themselves, will be remembered […] (Hilberg 1996, 83). Positioning the Holocaust in a pan European context is something we struggle with to this today due to complex and often conflicting national histories and changing memory cultures around Europe. While some of these memory practices are somewhat benign, as building of the POLIN museum celebrating the rich history of Poles and Jews at the site of Warsaw ghetto; others dispute or change historical facts and contexts – like political struggle between Serbia and Croatia on the number of victims in Jasenovac concentration camp.[1] All these aspects of Holocaust history bring their own specific problems for the idea of unified, comprehensive history, consequences of which far exceed the scholarly debates. They become the basis of school curriculums around the world and pillars of national and collective memories.

With the highly publicized political trial to Adolf Eichmann in 1961, events like recovering of the Oneg Shabbat archive[2] of Emanuel Ringelblum in 1946 and 1950, as well as voices like that of Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel coming forward in the decade following the liberation of the concentration camps, testimonies about the Jewish life and deaths gained a strong and significant place in Holocaust histories. Personal accounts and testimonies about the Holocaust bring issues of their own to the table. Aside from the unstable nature of traumatic memories, as soon as surviving victims came forward, voices of opposition were raised within their own ranks,

---

[1] For more about this issue, see: Karge Hajke, *Sećanje u kamenu – okamenjeno sećanje*, Biblioteka XX vek, Belgrade, 2014.

[2] The Oneg Shabbat archive was a project of a group of more than 60 people led by historian Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum, who collected the documents and wrote about everyday life in Warsaw ghetto in Poland during World War Two between 1939 and 1943. Thanks to two surviving members of this secret group, the documents buried in the ghetto in tin cans and boxes, containing over 6.000 documents on over 35.000 pages of diaries, newspapers, personal documents, drawings etc. (see: Samuel D. Kassow, *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Onyeg Shabes Archive*, 2007).

questioning the right to speak for the dead, the difference between the "real" horror of the Holocaust and the stories of the fortunate few. Primo Levi famously spoke of this in his final work *The Drowned and the Saved*: "We, the survivors, are not only a tiny but also an anomalous minority. We are those who, through prevarication, skill or luck, never touched bottom. Those who have, and who have seen the face of the Gorgon, did not return, or returned wordless [...]" (Levi 1986). Or in words of Elie Wiesel: "Only those who were there will ever know, and those who were there can never tell" (cited in Laqueur, Baumel-Schwartz 2001, 208). All of the survivors give the same reason for speaking out from their uncomfortable position – to pass on the experience so that it is never forgotten and so it never happens again. This battle between the message or the lesson and the historical fact rages to this very day in debates about education and all forms of representations of the Holocaust.

But the issue of who speaks about the Holocaust and by which means, didn't end with Holocaust survivors and first Holocaust histories. It continued with generations of descendants of victims and brought new challenges with each next generation removed from the Holocaust. Marianne Hirsch coins the term postmemory in an attempt to explain the complex and troubled relationship of post-Holocaust generations with this event and its aftermath. From the end of the 20th century and to this day, the main issue of postmemory practices, or Holocaust representation and remembrance becomes entangled in questions like: what is the Holocaust? Who should speak about it and what is the right way to speak about it? This in turn brought unprecedented scrutiny to media we use to represent the Holocaust, from literature (Langer 1975, Lang 1988, Horowitz 1997 etc.), film (Hirsch 2004; Insdorf 2003), images (Zelizer 2001), music (Arnold 1991; Gilbert 2005, 2008), digital technology (Shandler 2017; Cole, Gigliotti 2020 forthcoming), to the words themselves.

While difficulties brought by historiography, memory and media forms most often than not leave us a little humbler and somewhat dazed, the biggest conundrum the Holocaust left in its wake has to with the question of the very possibility of representing it. The idea is primarily based today in ethical considerations about right, contexts and responsibility in representing a monstrous, unspeakable crime such as the

Holocaust, one which inspired works of art like Claude Lanzmann's 1985 nine-hour film *Shoah* and is ever-present in Holocaust literature in themes of lack, silence emptiness and darkness. Proponents of this idea believe that we possess no mimetic means to truly represent the Holocaust and that most of the time attempts of such a thing are unethical and disrespectful to the victims and enormity of their suffering, or that the Holocaust is non-representable because there is nothing to compare it with, that it is a singular, unique event in human history. But the idea actually comes from a philosophical consideration brought by Theodor Adorno in his essay "Cultural Criticism and Society" where he wrote those famous words *it is barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz*[3]. His largely misunderstood statement is part of his diagnosis of (Western) society with its entire system of thought and language, that ultimately led to the Holocaust and which remained essentially unchanged after it. His valuable insight in the end spoke not against representation, but for kind of re-presentation which would always reveal the barbarism of its origin (Adorno 1961, 1966, 1967).

There is undeniable value in the impasse, or rather an uncomfortable self-conscious action that the issue of non-representability of the Holocaust demands from us, like there is value in all the questions that emerged from studying Holocaust representations. But we haven't really learned from the warnings about progress the Holocaust placed in front of us, neither as societies nor in different spheres of creation. What we are left with is not a deeper understanding of the Holocaust, but a whole new post-Holocaust universe consisting of countless very diverse representations that we constantly struggle to make sense of.

There is a reason for presenting these aspects of the Holocaust as *issues*. They are all part of the same representational framework we now consider part of the accumulated knowledge about the Holocaust, something we take as a given. Is it perhaps possible to read these widely known complexities of the post-Holocaust world as something other than problems and contradictions, which distance us from better understanding the Holocaust and the post-Holocaust world rather than bring us closer to these important goals? The goal here is not to offer an exchange of one all-encompassing framework for another, but rather explore if there

---

[3] "Cultural criticism finds itself faced with the final stage of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz

is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today[...]." (Adorno 1997, 34).

is something we could gain in changing the way we talk about Holocaust representations, in introducing yet another tool for analysis of the complex Holocaust or any other representation universe.

So, what does *Communicating the Holocaust* mean and how does it help us overcome the above-mentioned issues? Communication is a metaphor which explains the relations between the representing actors and what they represent more clearly. Instead of talking about the failings and issues with reaching the signified, communication framework forces us to talk about the relationships, exchanges of meaning, transmissions and articulations of history and memory which are taking place. If we postulate that Holocaust representations tell us more about the context of said representations than the source they are meant to represent, regardless of whether we are talking about personal testimony, archival documents, historical narratives, exhibition or an artwork, than a better understanding and analysis of that context should be our goal. The communication framework allows us to step out of the ring fighting for the source of truth about the Holocaust and deal with what is accessible to us – our many perceptions, ideas and actions related to the Holocaust. It allows us to perceive practices of Holocaust representation outside of binary framework of objective historical fact or all-encompassing truth and revision or omission through representation.

Communicating the Holocaust is an interaction and dialogue between any individual person, collective, system, institution or discourse and any given idea about the Holocaust or the Holocaust as such. It is a creative process which comes out of our need to relate with the *tremendum* of the Holocaust, to fill out the gaps and ruptures of traumatic memory, to attempt understand it (through text or production of text). It is not only communicating to others but with the Holocaust itself, with ourselves in out attempt to grasp it. To communicate the Holocaust means to insert personal, subjective or collective meanings into reading it. It is also an act of relaying or diffusing this interrelationship. Most of what we perceive as representing the Holocaust can be read as communicating the Holocaust. We do this in writing of histories, schoolbooks and curriculums, building museums, memorials and policies, creating art, safeguarding memories, as well as when we utilize it in industries, theoretical work or everyday conversation.

The communication framework allows us to read these constellations of meaning in a different dynamic, but also illuminates the importance of discussing media we use in this communication, or better to say, it offers an explanation of the undeniable focus on media in Holocaust representation studies. More to the point, perceiving Holocaust representations as communication allows us to circumvent the issue of (non)representability of the Holocaust. Whether we are talking about the insufficiency of words, ethical imperative for silence, Adorno's demand for self-reflection or inefficacy of media, the idea of communication allows for silence as a message (Agamben 1999), ethics as a motive, and self-critique and reflection.

3. COMMUNICATION TURN IN HOLOCAUST MEMORY

The reason for the introduction of this new theoretical framework is to see if it could become a new tool for Holocaust studies. This section of the paper will explore how this idea applies to important topics such as Holocaust testimony, postmemory, universalization of the Holocaust, collective and institutional memory practices and Jewish perceptions of the Holocaust and is there a possibility for a communication turn in Holocaust memory?

Survivor's testimonies and memories are one of the most important elements for both histories of the Holocaust, as well as Holocaust remembrance. The accuracy of such narratives has been questioned by many historians and thinkers and rightly so. One of the most memorable, often cited accounts is about a woman testifying about four chimneys blowing up during Auschwitz uprising, where in fact, historians knew for certain that only one chimney blew up. The story was presented by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in their work *Testimony*. They write about the witness's face lighting up, as if waking from a dormant and passive state as she (inaccurately) relayed this part of the story. As they write: "She had come, indeed, to testify, not to the empirical number of chimneys, but to resistance, to the affirmation of survival, to the breakage of the frame of death […] (Felman, Laub 1992, 62). Felman's and Laub's work is significant for the argument here, because it not only speaks of fragility and subjectivity of testimony, but also about the construction of the narrative that happens in interaction with the one hearing or writing down testimony (Felman, Laub 1992). It is undeniable that the witness was communicating her own personal experience, not

only of the uprising (historical interest), but the Holocaust itself. Analyzing this example as communicating the Holocaust removes it from the context of historical truth the authors themselves put it in (title of section of the book is "Testimony and Historical Truth"). There is something about memory which, especially traumatic memory which gives birth to the creative process of communication. Communication happens in re-creating memories. It happens in the attempts to come to terms with traumatic past.

But what kind of communication happens when dealing with someone else's memories. Marianne Hirsch's postmemory marks the challenge of safeguarding and making sense of fragmented traumatic memory by generations without direct connection to historical events. In Hirsch's own words: „[...] How can we best carry their stories forward without appropriating them, without unduly calling attention to ourselves, and without, in turn, having our own stories displaced by them? […] (Hirsch 2012, 2). The problem is that what Hirsch tries to warn us against, is precisely what happens with postmemory, and what post-Holocaust universe is consisted of.

One of the most paradigmatic examples of postmemory, but also of communicating the Holocaust in the context of second generation of Holocaust survivors, is the famed creation of Art Spiegelman, two-part graphic novel *Maus* (1980-1991). Art Spiegelman's *Maus* tells a story of Spiegelman interviewing his Holocaust survivor father Vladek and their own relationship as this narrative unfolds, presenting in a humorous manner the challenges of testimony, connecting to the Holocaust and responsibility in postmemory context. Before the beginning of the first book titled *My Father Bleeds History*, there's a short piece recollecting the childhood moments of Spiegelman with his father, where he illustrates a moment where he was sad because his friends left him behind after he fell down from his bike, to what Vladek told him: "Friends? Your friends? If you lock them in a room with no food for a week THEN you could see what it is, Friends!" (Spiegelman 2003, 2). *Maus* brought many controversies. Spiegelman was criticized for his portrayal of Jews as mice, Germans as cats and Poles as pigs, as well as using humor and what was essentially considered comic book format for representing the Holocaust. As Terrence Des Pres famously said: "The Holocaust shall be approached as a solemn or even a sacred event, with a seriousness admitting no response that might obscure its enormity or dishonor its dead" (cited in: Copley 2010, 3). Even though the issues

surrounding *Maus* brought fruitful debates on Holocaust representations in popular culture and art, they misread what *Maus* was about – an attempt by a son of a Holocaust survivor and an artist, to communicate his own experience of the Holocaust. *Maus* is a many-layered form of communicating the Holocaust. In the narrative itself, it is a conversation between a father and a son, between a Holocaust survivor and receiver of testimony; through the symbolic depiction of people as different animals it is a message that the artist is the one telling the story about the Holocaust, through his own lens; and lastly, it is that hallmark of postmemory, the difficult communication with himself about what he is doing – a critical self-reflection which all (if it really has to be judged in such a way) responsible representations of the Holocaust have.

Another form of Holocaust representation we will analyze here is the universalization of the Holocaust. It is interesting that even the word "Holocaust" is filled with conflicts around representation. As an old Greek translation of the Hebrew word *olah*, as in "burned religious offering", it was rejected from the start by the Jewish world, which preferred *Shoah* – the catastrophe. The rejection of the term Holocaust was in part due to equating this term with a more modern form of signifying the mass destruction of peoples – *genocide* and a resulting universalization of the (Jewish) Holocaust. The universalization of the Holocaust means that more and more, Holocaust is being represented not as Jewish (or historically specific) suffering, but universal suffering of man, one in a line of genocides and primarily relevant as message and warning for the entire human race. This question of universalization of the Holocaust is one more example of communicating the Holocaust. Still ongoing universalization efforts are always focused on the *message* or lesson of the Holocaust, rounded up in the catchphrase "Never again". This kind of universalizing approach and indeed many political, memorial and educational practices which came out of it, rarely even touch the specificity of the Holocaust, neither its history nor constellations of meanings, often using it as an example for more universal human rights and discrimination issues. If we succeed in understanding this kind of discourse, and indeed practice it, as communicating the Holocaust rather than representation of Holocaust/Holocaust itself, we could better separate and safeguard the plurality and complexity of its specificity (it's many lessons and contexts), and be more transparent and honest

about our practices and their goals. More importantly, communication framework makes it possible for us to recognize actors in communication and analyze meanings which are today disseminated by politicians and institutions, which are increasingly present in media and education. These discursive acts could then be dissected and analyzed, questioned and justified. Wulf Kanesteiner defines collective memory precisely as a "shared communication about the meaning of the past" (cited in: Whitehead 2009, 130). Or if we consider the question of opposing or conflicting collective memories as communication, we could borrow from Rothberg's "multidirectional memory" where he explains that "[…] memory works *productively* through negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing […]" and further, that "[…] collective memories of seemingly distinct histories are not easily separable from each other, but emerge dialogically […]" (Rothberg 2014, 176). Perhaps we should not ask the question of whether United States Holocaust Memorial Museum or the new POLIN museum in Warsaw represent the Holocaust the "right way", or who is at fault in ideological and political memory struggles, but ask what are these actors communicating about the Holocaust and why?

4. ICT and DIGITAL CULTURE IN COMMUNICATING THE HOLOCAUST

Through most of the modern human history, technological and social progress was accompanied by a corresponding new language, discourse we use to explain and understand human life and society. In the 19th century, the industrial revolution brought forth concepts like process, technology, production. The 20th century and rise of computer technology brought us words like reproduction, network, algorithm, information and communication. These were not only specialized terms related to particular technology or field, but also means and frameworks by which we both understanding the society and help create it. Today, networks and information are the basis of our social world. Algorithm and processing are very present analogies for human thinking. Information is the center of gravity in all fields, from economy and education to science and art. There is no denying that memory field has been taken over by the digital much the same way as all other spheres in society. It is no different with the field of Holocaust

memory. But we want to argue that aside from creating new forms of memory or understanding of memory cultures, ICT and digital culture illuminated something already present in the Holocaust memory field – a communicative rather than a representational mode of remembering.

Much of what we perceive as digital memory turn regarding Holocaust remembrance is directly related to changes that came with information revolution in all aspects of society. What used to be limited number of significant dates, marked institutionally or at the community level (aside from individual or family memories kept inside the family unit), is today joined by countless databases, archives, websites and digital collections, tasked with safeguarding memories. This means that frameworks of memorialization have become significantly more numerous and diverse, with significantly more information to deal with and a strong demand for a participating audience, interactive and communicative experience.

The first mention of the idea of communicating the Holocaust was connected precisely to research into digital and internet memory practices about the Holocaust. It came out of recognition that what we see in memory practices, especially in 21th century, resembles communication much more than representation (Stojanovic, Mevorah 2015: Dakovic (ed.) 2015). The same form of communication we presented in the case of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, or second generation of Holocaust survivors, also happens in representational practices of generations further removed from the Holocaust. As we move further away from the source of memory and into the information superhighways of the digital world, the more the communication happens with various forms of representations, rather than with the source of memory or the idea of the Holocaust itself.

The way generations of digital natives, the third and fourth post-Holocaust generation, encounter and deal with the Holocaust, is dominantly through internet forms of communication on social networks – through "shares", images, "likes" and comments. They react to and communicate these appropriated messages further, more often than not closely tied to their own personal context rather than some greater narrative. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), the leading Holocaust education and remembrance organization in the world, recognized this trend in 2018 and cited social networks Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest and Google+ as

main platforms where younger generations encounter or create Holocaust discourse. Significant memorial and educational Holocaust institutions, keepers of Holocaust memory and knowledge in the 21th century, struggle to compete with this fast-pasted (and short attention span) communication environment, where in best of circumstances what they do is try to create their own interactive and communicative platforms in an attempt to bring lessons of Holocaust to new generations, but in most cases they simply follow the digital marketing guidelines for making their information more appealing to new user-driven generation of consumers of information. This transformation of Holocaust representation in the digital age brought many concerns because of the uncontrollable and diverse use of information about the Holocaust, but read in a communicative framework, the internet also significantly increased the amount and forms of communicating the Holocaust, brought into play many more actors who are communicating on many different levels and in many different places.

Good example of such practices is a project by Israeli-German artist Shahak Shapira named *Yolocaust* from 2017. Within his project, Shapira took "selfie" photographs of 12 different social media users taken at Holocaust memorial sites, all of them showing users posing and having fun, and merged them together with historical images of the Holocaust, now showing dreadful suffering of Holocaust victims as background to image of the selfie takers. In addition, he left an e-mail address for those users, "undouch.me@yolocaust", giving them an opportunity to write, publicly apologize and take the selfies off their social media pages. All 12 users did this. Here we can see that the communication is happening between the artist and users, but also that the whole project is a commentary on communication, both related to how most people perceive the Holocaust and Holocaust remembrance in the 21th century and about the forms of communication on the internet.

In a different paper we explored something called a virtual memory of the Holocaust, connecting this change in Holocaust memory field with the *education turn* in Holocaust memory (Mevorah 2018: Dakovic, Mevorah (eds.) 2018), which is closely connected to both digital turn and what we here explore as the communication turn. This is important because due to disappearance of Holocaust survivors, media oversaturation and changing habits of digital natives, communicating of the Holocaust in the digital age becomes education/information centered practice. Information saturation is arguably the main aspect of the digital memory turn. And the main challenge becomes how to manage and utilize the vast amount of information gathered about the Holocaust. Archives become digitized and through this process gain an important communicative aspect. As Wolfgang Ernst wrote in his study of digital archives: „Although the traditional archive used to be a rather static memory, the notion of the archive in Internet communication tends to move the archive toward an economy of circulation: permanent transformations and updating. The so-called cyberspace is not primarily about memory as cultural record but rather about a performative form of memory as communication" (Ernst 2013, 99).

It is precisely with the goal of further developing this communication aspect of its archive, that the Shoah Foundation started the *New Dimensions in Testimony* project in 2012. The pilot of the project developed in cooperation with Institute for Creative Technologies, University of Southern California and Conscience Display company created two holographic, interactive Holocaust survivor testimonies supported by artificial intelligence and natural language processing technology (there are 25 of them as of year 2020). The idea was to keep the educational model of conversations with Holocaust survivors alive for future generations. Virtual Pinchas Gutter, installation modelled on the man who survived six concentration camps during the Holocaust, can answer up to 20.000 questions including those not directly related to his Holocaust experience, like "Do you believe in God?" or "What is your favorite book?", but also show various facial expressions. We can see in this project that representing the Holocaust (embodied by the survivor witness) actually takes place in a dialogue form, but in line with the education turn, one oriented towards learning.

There are many challenges with understanding how communicating the Holocaust takes place in contemporary, digital culture. It becomes impossible to overlook the role the technology and its interfaces play in mediation of memory and understanding those media becomes more important. In his book *Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age* (2017), Jeffrey Shandler offers a still rare, close examination of how transformation of the technological medium changes the form of testimony and memory, analyzing the digital transformation of the Visual History Archive (VHA) of the USC Shoah Foundation.

Interestingly, Shandler does not speak of "information technology" or "digital technology", but of "communication media" and "communication technology" which, for him, becomes the main form of mediation of Holocaust testimony (Shandler 2017). It seems that in the age of digital and internet technology, it becomes hard to deny that Holocaust representations come almost exclusively and quite literally in the form of communication.

5. CONCLUSION

It is only continual speech – continual production of the textuality of any kind that keeps the platform of any knowledge alive – and the Holocaust knowledge is certainly an important, actual and relevant knowledge not only for the Jewish history of a certain place, but also for a wider social history, thus becoming a great responsibility.

Dragana Stojanovic

The questions of relation between communication and memory, as well as communication as crucial part of mediation of experience are not new. Communication theories should play a more important role in Holocaust studies. A good example of how communication scholars contribute to the questions of memory is the work by Paul Frosh and Amit Pinchevski *Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication* (2009). Their work can also be read as a strong support to the main thesis of this paper. As they write in the introduction of their book: "Media witnessing, we contend, offers new ways of thinking through some abiding problems of media, communication, and culture that were previously addressed by terms such as 'representation', 'mediation', 'reception', 'dissemination' and 'effects'" (Frosh, Pinchevski 2009, 1-2).

Why do we need Holocaust communication theory? Because despite some crucial insights into media, ethics, collective memory, history and warnings about where our civilizational progress could lead us to, we haven't been able to agree on the most important questions about the Holocaust – what is it and why it happened – nor are we doing enough to preventing it from rising from the pillars of our civilization once again.

There are no escaping issues around Holocaust representations, there is no controlling or erasing them, but what is possible is to strive to understand why they came to be in the first place. Striving to release some of the pressure on

its main signifier and starting the process of understanding our own understanding of the Holocaust better. Isn't it also possible that what was actually going on from the moment the first witness spoke, the first archive was compiled and the first book written, that we've been trying to communicate rather than represent Holocaust?

REFERENCES

[1] Adorno, T., "Cultural Criticism and Society" in Adorno, T., "Prisms", *MIT Press*, (1967 first published), 1997, pp. 17-35.

[2] Adorno, T., "Commitment" in Adorno T., "Notes to Literature Vol 2", *Columbia University Press*, (first published 1961), 1991, pp. 76-85.

[3] Adorno, T., "Negative Dialectics", *Rautledge*, (first published 1966), 2004.

[4] Agamben, G., "Remnants of Auschwitz - The Witness and the Archive", *Zone Books*, New York, 1999.

[5] Arnold, B., "Art Music and The Holocaust", Holocaust and Genocide Studies, Vol. 6, No. 4, 1991, pp. 335-349.

[6] Cole, T., Gigliotti, S., "The Holocaust in the Twenty-first Century: Relevance and Challenges in the Digital Age", *Northwestern University Press*, 2020.

[7] Copley, J., Modes of Representing The Holocaust: A Discussion of the use of Animation in Art Spiegelman's 'Maus' and Orly Yadin and Sylvie Bringas's 'Silence', Opticon1826, Issue 9, Autumn 2010.

[8] Dakovic, N., Mevorah, V., "Graničnici sećanja: Jevrejsko nasleđe i Holokaust" [Markers of Memory: Jewish Heritage and the Holocaust], *Jevrejski istorijski muzej Saveza jevrejskih opština Srbije*, Beograd, 2018.

[9] Felman, Sh., Laub, D., "Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History", *Routledge*, London, 1992.

[10] Frosh, P., Pinchevski, A., (eds.) "Media Witnessing: Testimony in the Age of Mass Communication", *Palgrave Macmillan*, 2009.

[11] Gilbert, Sh., "Music in the Holocaust: Confronting Life in the Nazi Ghettos and Camps", *Oxford University Press*, 2005.

[12] Gilbert, Sh., "Buried Monuments: Yiddish Songs and Holocaust Memory", *Oxford University Press*, History Workshop Journal, Issue 66, 2008, pp. 107-128.

[13] Hilberg, R., "The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian", *Ivan R. Dee*, Chicago, 1996.

[14] Hirsch, J., "Afterimage: Film, Trauma, and the Holocaust", *Temple University Press*, Philadelphia, 2004.

[15] Hirsch, M., "The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust", *Columbia University Press*, 2012.

[16] Horowitz, S. R., "Voicing the Void: Muteness and Memory in Holocaust Fiction", *State University of New York Press*, Albany 1997.

[17] Insdorf, A., "Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust", *Cambridge University Press*, 2003.

[18] Lang, B. editor. "Writing and the Holocaust", *Holmes & Meier*, New York, 1988.

[19] Lang, B., "Post-Holocaust Interpretation, Misinterpretation, and the Claims of History", *Indiana University Press*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2005.

[20] Langer, L., "The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination", *Yale University Press*, New Haven, CT, 1975.

[21] Levi, P., "The Drowned and the Saved", *Vintage International*. New York, NY, 1989.

[22] McLuhan, M., "Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man", McGraw-Hill, 2003 (1964).

[23] Mevorah, V., „Virtuelno sećanje: Edukacija o Holokaustu u informacionom dobu" [Virtual memory: Holocaust education in the Information age] in Dakovic, N., Mevorah, V., "Graničnici sećanja: Jevrejsko nasleđe i Holokaust" [Markers of Memory: Jewish Heritage and the Holocaust], *Jevrejski istorijski muzej Saveza jevrejskih opština Srbije*, Beograd, 2018, pp. 195-213.

[24] Rothberg, M., "Multidirectional memory", *Témoigner. Entre histoire et mémoire*, 119, 2014, pp. 176.

[25] Spiegelman, A., "The Complete Maus", *Penguin Books*, London, 2003.

[26] Shandler, J., "Holocaust Memory in the Digital Age", *Stanford University Press*, Stanford, California, 2017.

[27] Stojanovic, D., Mevorah, V., „Portraits and Memories of the Jewish Community in Serbia before the Holocaust: Facing the inscription of Holocaust in the postmemory media representation contexts", in Dakovic, N. (ed.), "Representation of the Holocaust in the Balkans in Arts and Media, *Diskurs*, *Faculty of Dramatic Arts UAB*, Belgrade, 2015, pp. 54-68.

[28] Whitehead, A., "Memory", *Routledge*, London & New York, 2009.

[29] Wolfgang, E., "Digital Memory and the Archive", *University of Minnesota Press*, 2013.

[30] Zelizer, B. (ed.). "Visual Culture and The Holocaust", *The Athlone Press*, London, 2001.

Vera Mevorah is a Research Associate at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. She is one of the editors of the book *Markers of Memory: Jewish Cultural Heritage and the Holocaust* (Jewish Historical Museum in Belgrade, 2018) and one of the authors of the handbook for teachers *Portraits and memories of the Jewish Community of Serbia before the Holocaust* (Federation of Jewish Communities of Serbia, 2014). She is a member of the ShoahLab: Holocaust Research Laboratory of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory. Her research interest also includes: social theory, Internet and new media studies, digital humanities, new musicology, contemporary art and art theory. She lives and works in Belgrade, Serbia.

Reviewers:

Authors of papers are responsible for the contents and layout of their papers.

Welcome to IPSI Conferences and Journals!

http://tir.ipsitransactions.org

http://www.ipsitransactions.org