

Remembrance to Repression:

Public Space, memorial landscape and collective memory
in post-WWII Vienna

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[Key Words]

Collective Memory, Public Space, Memory and Space, 20th Century
Vienna, Memorials, Architecture and Politics, Commemorative
Architecture

Architectural History Thesis

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April 2022

Abstract

In his influential work 'On collective Memory', French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs described an intrinsic relationship between the past and present, a reconfiguration of the perceived past through the lens of its current generation's ideas and experiences. This represents an increasing challenge in the urban realm due to the growing amount of historized fragments left within its fabric as a result of the modern societal obsession of leaving traces behind. This thesis therefore investigates what influence commemorative architecture has today as integral parts of our city and the negotiation necessary to work this historized palimpsest. To do this, the city of Vienna, Austria will be investigated as the turbulent decades following WWII led to a first reconstruction of national memory based on a founding lie in its 'Opferthese'. Once that mythos crumbled in the 1980s, it resulted in palpable shifts of its collective memory which were materialised in a tangible form through monuments around the city. Through an excursion to Vienna, the circumstances leading to the construction of three prominent monuments, their performance and the broader developments of Vienna's memory politics were studied. Local and foreign papers on Vienna's past century and collective memory, historical photographs, newspaper reports, vocal reactions to the unveiling of the monuments, personal writings as well as archival research formed a supplementary background to the excursion for this study. The thesis investigates it through three parts, foremost, it creates an overview of the events shaping memory politics in Vienna post WWII. This historical understanding will be accompanied by a theoretical framework on the concept of collective memory based on predominantly on the theories of Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora. The second portion will include thorough case studies of three important Viennese memorials: 'Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial' (2000), 'Memorial against War and Fascism' (1988) and 'Deserter Monument' (2014). This chapter will connect them to the context of their realisation, historical site context, design, and spatial performance. Thereby, understanding how collective memory forms public space and its perception through physical edifices. Lastly, the paper forms a connection between the theoretical ideas and their physical manifestations. Through a broader view of urban effects, the findings of the research and the dialogue between them, it hypothesises on the increasing historicization of our cities, its memorial landscape and the constant negotiation architects and inhabitants face in the context of our palpable past.

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Introduction

French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs explains as part of his theories on collective memory: “The past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present... Collective frameworks are... precisely the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with society’s predominant thoughts.”¹ The phenomenon he described is based on an intrinsic relationship between the past and present, a reconfiguration of the perceived past through the lens of its current generation’s ideas and experiences. It is of interest in the context of a growing historized character of our cities, an increasing permeation linked to a modern trend of constructing archival edifices as a seeming admiration towards leaving lasting traces behind. This is linked to a new awareness for French-Jewish historian Pierre Nora as he described in his paper:

“Modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image. What began as writing ends as high fidelity and tape recording. The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs[.]”²

Vienna exhibits a great environment to study the growing awareness of collective memory in the urban realms of our cities due to its turbulent past century. In this period Austria faced a need to reconstruct its national identity and memory following WWII, leading to a distortion of its past in order to allow for a master narrative to be established. Thereby, resulting in a belated dawn in the 1980s as its ‘Opferthese’ failed. All these events are essential to understand Vienna’s relation to its past. The changing ideologies became manifested as a tangible construct in the form of monuments.³ Memorials by essence connect to notions of historical representation,

¹ Maurice Halbwachs. *On collective memory*. (L. A. Coser, Ed.). 1992. p.40.

² Pierre Nora. Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, (26), 1989. p.13.

³ Heidemarie Uhl. The Politics of Memory: Austria’s Perception of the Second World War and the National Socialist Period. In Bischof, G., & In Pelinka, A. (Ed.), *Austrian historical memory & national identity*. 2017. p. 74.

narration and the evocation of memories. Hence, their manifestation remains a topic of contention, deeply linked to its political and social roots. Nevertheless, in recent times these symbols of grief or remembrance are starting to become integral pieces of the urban space and become central to the image of the city. Therefore, the connection between the memorial landscape of a city and the collective memories as well as rituals it fosters need to be truly understood to create meaningful interventions into the urban palimpsest of our modern cities.

By studying the circumstances leading to the construction of three prominent Viennese monuments, their performance and the broader developments of Vienna's memory politics, I want to answer: How has the shifting collective memory of World War II informed the public space and commemorative architecture in Vienna considering its memory politics and identity-building processes? By looking at this fundamental issue I will address the following questions: How do ideals, visions, narratives, and edifices shape the development of today's urban realm? What can be learned from the integration of public memory in its context? How can spatial elements inhibit public life and influence social interaction and the performance of urban space?

With their works on the urban and political history of Vienna, Porem, Eva Kuttentberg and Abigail Gillman illustrated the different historical realities, while authors such as Halbwachs and Nora constructed frameworks to understand the concept of collective memory. This work will contribute to the growing field of collective memory research in the domain of architecture through a more complete focus on the edifices, their creation, role and points of overlaps within the urban space specifically. Through the tools of literature research, mapping and image analysis, this thesis hopes to further a discussion on how the historical narratives influence the experience of people in space and what this historized palimpsest means for its current inhabitants. This will be done through the study of the individual memorials through time with the resources of historical photographs, newspaper reports, vocal reactions to their unveiling, field study and personal writing as an extensive literature study to base the analysis of them in the context of their inception.

This paper will be split into three parts: Chapter 1 consists of a historical overview following the events shaping memory politics since World War II in Austria. This historical timeline will be complemented by an overview of the framework used to understand the concept of collective memory. The second chapter will have a closer inspection of the three case studies: 'Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial' (2000), 'Memorial against War and Fascism' (1988) and 'Deserter Monument' (2014). This part will relate them to the context of their realisation, through the lenses of their background, inception, design and performance. Thereby, yielding a framework examining how collective memory shapes public space and its perception through physical edifices. The final chapter of the paper forms a connection between the theoretical ideas and their physical manifestations. Through a broader view of urban effects, it aims to understand the context in which the memorials were built and how they start to relate to each other, creating a memory landscape.

1 Austria's Fascination towards Memory

On Christmas Eve 1945, Austria's Chancellor Leopold Figl painted an image of the precarious state Austria found itself in after the end of World War II. In the form of a short radio speech, he conveyed the damages and ruins of bombed cities, trying to quell the desperation of the population and alluded to the poverty they found themselves in. "Ich kann euch zu Weihnachten nichts geben, kein Stück Brot, keine Kohle zum Heizen, kein Glas zum Einschneiden. Wir haben nichts. Ich kann euch nur bitten: Glaubt an dieses Österreich."⁴ Images that generations since can hardly associate themselves with anymore, albeit not so distant in the past. This chapter will focus on this conundrum of shared collective memory, its creation, uses or abuses, and manifestations through the lens of Vienna in the last century. The main question thereby lies in memory and history; understanding the situation the city found itself in after 1945. Key themes within this are: How was the idea of collective memory/identity abused to further specific historical narratives? What is the importance and concept of collective memory in the context of this work? Which physical traces can we find of this memory politics in Vienna, and how did those shape the public realm around them?

⁴ In the emotional speech Figl gave through radio on Christmas 1945, he alludes to the hardships a ravaged Austria experienced following the war. Mentioning how he could give the people nothing and could only ask them the belief in this Austria. While also showcasing Austria's will to persist and rebuild. As the original speech was not recorded, the authorised and re-recorded speech from 1965 will be the closest we will ever come to the original speech. Available through here: "Weihnachtsrede, Leopold Figl. 24. Dezember 1945". (1965). Retrieved 11 March 2022, from <https://www.mediathek.at/atom/133035A1-15C-00057-000006B0-132FA736>

1.1 Vienna and Austria in the Wake of WWII

The 1st of November of 1943 signifies a critical moment in the freeing of Austria and its following nation-building, through the Moscow declaration. It represents the earliest instance of Austria getting acknowledged as the first victim of Hitler's Aggression.⁵ An ideology and belief that came to be the primary reference for Austria's identity ('Opferthese') and attitude towards shared responsibility in the next 30 years. Best exemplified in the lacking prominence it gave to the notions of its self-responsibility and guilt in the declaration of Austrian Independence, 1945, as it only surmounted to an addendum.⁶ When analysing the wording of the paragraph from the declaration cited below, one can immediately see how ideas of economic stability were put ahead of the acknowledgement of guilt.

*"[...], the new state government will immediately take measures to make every possible contribution to the liberation, but feels obliged to point out that regrettably, and in view of the exhaustion of the people and the impoverishment of the country, this contribution can be only a modest one."*⁷

This narrative is further supported when looking at the state Vienna was left after the war. (Fig. 1) Large portions of the building fabric were in ruins. 41% of Vienna's houses were destroyed or partly damaged (46,862 buildings), the cost of these damages was estimated to be 2.5 Billion Schilling in 1945 (equals to about 10.7 Billion Euros in 2022).⁸ Figure 2 shows an excerpt of the Bombenplan (bombing damage map) for the first district of Vienna, emphasising the sheer amount of destruction the people had to endure.

⁵ Eva Kuttnerberg. Austria's Topography of Memory: Heldenplatz, Albertinaplatz, Judenplatz, and Beyond. *The German Quarterly*, 80(4), 2008. pp. 468-469.

⁶ Judith Beniston. "Hitler's First Victim"? — Memory and Representation in Post-War Austria: Introduction. *Austrian Studies*, 11, 2003. p. 3.

⁷ Cited in: Ibid. p.3

⁸ Zweiter Weltkrieg. (1. February 2021). *Wien Geschichte Wiki*, .
(https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/index.php?title=Zweiter_Weltkrieg&oldid=465430, accessed 10. 03. 2022)



Figure 1 | Der Albertinaplatz mit Blick auf die Albertina und den Philippshof nach dem Bombentreffer vom 12. März 1945 [Photograph]. Retrieved from: Archiv Albertina

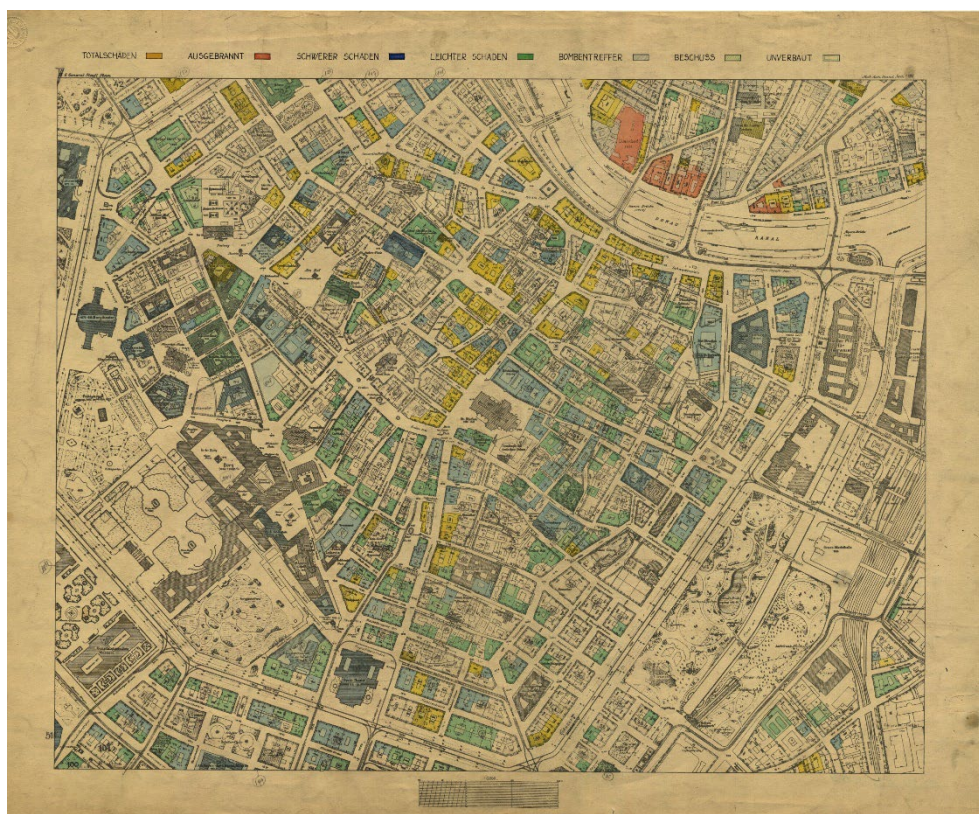


Figure 2 | Bombenplan 1946. Retrieved from Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv

1.2 Selective Historic Narratives and Construction of Identities

“Österreich ist frei!”⁹, Figl proclaimed famously as part of his speech following the signing of the state treaty, ending ten long years of occupation by the allied forces on the 15th of May 1955. This event, however, did not only signify the start of an independent Austria once more, but it also represented a temporary escape from its responsibility towards actions carried out in WWII. The portion of its collective guilt had progressively been reduced in importance from the Moscow Declaration 1943 to the Independence Declaration 1945 and was finally completely removed in the state treaty.¹⁰

Albeit this by no means is meant to admonish Austrian politicians for the decisions taken as a general approach of painting the victim thesis as bad would be too simplistic. It would reduce the various forces at interplay down too much, leaving a complex network of intricacies behind. One might even need to ask what alternatives were available at the time and if the process of repression is not essentially a natural in response to the national trauma?¹¹ Hella Pick, a British-Austrian Journalist, rows for collective responsibility of the allied forces as they gave Austria the excuse of victimhood and then did not impose any pressure for Austria to face its past in the coming years.¹² As for them, the victim thesis was just an effective tool of propaganda to keep Austria away from any pro-Germany thoughts.¹³

The above described inactions led to the mythos of Austria being Hitler’s first victim remaining almost unchallenged until the 1980s¹⁴ Hence, resulting in a very delayed start in engaging with the collective memory of WWII, which was in stark contrast to the events in Germany as they had to confront their past and find methods of working

⁹ Full speech available online: <https://www.mediathek.at/staatsvertrag/15-mai-1955/im-radio/>

¹⁰ Uhl. op. cit., pp.64-69.

¹¹ Anton Pelinka. Taboos and Self-Deception: The Second Republic’s Reconstruction of History. In Bischof, G., & Pelinka, A. (Ed.), *Austrian historical memory & national identity*. 2017. pp. 95-102.

¹² Hella Pick. *Guilty victim: Austria from the Holocaust to Haider*. 2000.

¹³ Uhl. op. cit., p.69.

¹⁴ Clemens Jabloner. *Schlussbericht der Historikerkommission der Republik Österreich: Vermögensentzug während der NS-Zeit sowie Rückstellungen und Entschädigungen seit 1945 in Österreich : Zusammenfassungen und Einschätzungen*. 2003. pp.21-27.

through the collective trauma of the nation immediately.¹⁵ However, this radically changed in 1986 with the affair concerning chancellor candidate Kurt Waldheim.¹⁶ As the international spotlight shone on the involvement of the Wehrmacht in operations on the Balkan, the role of Austria and Austrians in the atrocities of WWII had to be re-evaluated once again. The growing international pressure sparked a radical shift in Austria's memory politics, away from collective victimhood towards admission of responsibility.¹⁷

1.3 Collective Memory and its Role

"History was recounted, written, recorded, and made by the political camps."¹⁸ As Anton Pelinka described it, accurately summarised the distorted nature of history in the Second Republic. Most of which can be traced back to the lie of victimhood that formed the foundation of modern Austria. In his speech, marking the 53rd anniversary of the liberation of Mauthausen in 1998, Cardinal Franz König, reprimanded this situation: "those who choose to forget history are condemned to live through it the same again".¹⁹ This suggestion towards repression and a belated return shows a wider acceptance of the idea of collective memory concerning the Nazi period.²⁰

Jeffrey K. Olick, an American sociologist, summarised the risk of collective syndromes from unresolved pasts – such as fascist tendencies remaining within the German democracy from an inability to properly mourn their legacy and have a therapeutic confrontation through it.²¹ While for American psychologist Daniel Schachter, the act of remembering is not the recollection of a past image and instead

¹⁵ Uhl. op. cit., p.69.

¹⁶ Especially contentious were his comments: "had only done exactly what hundreds of thousands of Austrians had done, namely fulfil my duty as a soldier". Quoted in Ibid. p.83. As it unravelled the national history and events surrounding their involvement.

¹⁷ Ibid. pp.83-89.

¹⁸ Pelinka. op. cit., p.98.

¹⁹ Quoted in Pick. op. cit., p.220

²⁰ Beniston. op. cit., p.10

²¹ Jeffrey K. Olick. Collective Memory: The Two Cultures. *Sociological Theory*, 17(3), 1999. p.344.

the connection of past memory with the impetus from the present.²² This is of importance once one looks at the concept presented by Olick:

“The salience and evaluation of historical memories [...] is thus powerfully shaped by generational effects understood in this way: Generations and memories are mutually constitutive, not because of some objective features of social or cultural structure but because of experiential commonalities and resultant similarities in individual memories of historical events.”²³

These ideas locate shared memory in the individual and collective consequences as the sum of individual ones. As such the individual's connection with the historical event becomes central in the negotiation of common pasts and their meaning. This also aligns with Halbwachs' theories, affirming that only individuals remember, even if they do it collectively.²⁴ Furthermore, Suzanne Vromen, a Belgian Sociologist, believes that for Halbwachs the past and present form a relation of chains to facilitate collective memory. Society understands the past through the lens of the present, while the present only develops sense and emotional value through the time it rests on.²⁵ Hence, in Halbwachs' work, compared to history, collective memory is irreducibly linked to lived experiences; testimonies and interpretations forming the basis of a lived past and its semblance being informed by its connection to the present.²⁶

In a similar sense, Nora argues that “the memory of the past is central to the identity in the present.”²⁷ He thereby distinguishes between collective and historical memory. Whereas collective is comprised of experience of groups (or nations) and what they construct based on their past; historical memory is the collective memory of historians, focused on filtering, accumulating, reasoning and transmitting.²⁸ What is

²² Daniel L. Schachter. *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past*. 1996. p.71.

²³ Olick. op. cit., p. 339

²⁴ Halbwachs. op. cit., p.25.

²⁵ Suzanne Vromen. *The Sociology of Maurice Halbwachs* [Ph.D. dissertation. New York University]. 1975. p.220.

²⁶ Ibid. p.215

²⁷ Patrick Hutton. *History as an Art of Memory*. 1993. p. 89.

²⁸ Pierre Nora. *Mémoire collective*. In J. Le Goff et. al., (Ed.), *La Nouvelle Histoire*. 1978. pp. 398-399.

of particular importance in the case of Nora for this paper is his work understanding and formulating French history through memory and the idea of 'lieu de mémoire' – or memory-sites. He understands an array of memory-sites, filled with enduring expressive significance, to be the basis for the history of all modern nations. Therein, the 'lieu de mémoire' are entities or symbols of a group formed through the passage of time or human will.²⁹ Therefore, the study of such memory-sites in the context of important cities such as Vienna allows us to view the wishes a nation has for its past perception.

1.4 Manifestations of Memory, Remembrance and Repression

"The Second World War belongs to world history, but not to Austrian history. It was not an Austrian war. Austria did not participate in it."³⁰ Quoted from a conventional Austrian history book, it shows the approach of 'externalisation'³¹ of their past. This also demonstrated the required distortion just to support its victim thesis. Robert Menasse, an Austrian writer, links this to Freudian theories, elaborating that repetition was not therapeutical for Austria as it revealed itself in a cycle of 'Forget – repeat – explain to the outside world' ignoring remembrance and coping in the process.³² Hence, the physical object and edifice of commemorative architecture acts as a medium for cultural memory, agents of remembrance and as such play into the construction of identities. The very act of externalising memory through them evokes images of the past and functions as an indicator of the changing ideology in memory politics.³³

The shift from victim mythos to a public admission of responsibilities in Austria's memory politics presented in tandem consequences for the memorial landscape in Vienna. This change in ideology brought with it an increase of monuments built into

²⁹ Nancy Wood. *Memory's Remains: Les lieux de mémoire*. *History and Memory*, 6(1), 1994. pp. 123-4.

³⁰ Felix R. Görlisch & Ernst Joseph. *Geschichte Österreichs*. 1970. p.551.

³¹ Term introduced by M. Rainer Lepsius, a German sociologist to describe Austria's situation of dealing with its past trauma.

³² Robert Menasse. *Das Land ohne Eigenschaften: Essay zur Österreichischen Identität* (1st edn). 1995. p.62.

³³ Sabina Tanović. *Memory in Architecture: Contemporary memorial projects and their predecessors* [Doctoral Thesis, TU Delft]. TU Delft Repository. 2015. p.16.; Uhl. op. cit., pp.74-75.

more prominent locations at the heart of Vienna's inner districts. (Fig. 4) Additionally, the sheer amount monuments being constructed in this period drastically increased as well, with initial spikes in the remembrance years of 1988 and 1995, and having reached its highest peak in 2008. (Fig.3) The opposing views of the different generations of edifices now create a more pluralistic, controversial and ambiguous image of the past as the conflicting ideologies are still very much expressed in Vienna's urban realm.³⁴ Thereby, resulting in a challenging proposition where new additions need to negotiate their meaning and context as well as contribute to reshaping the static collective memory of their predecessors.

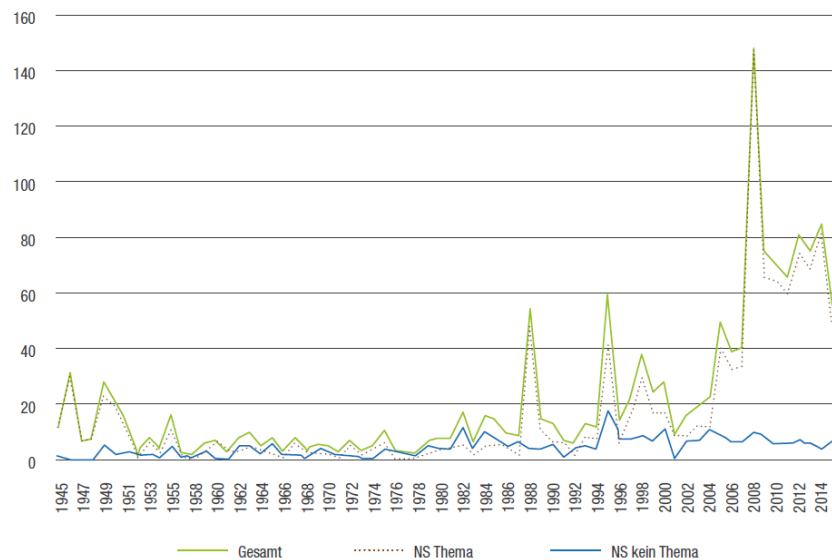


Figure 3 | Construction of Monuments in Vienna. From *Verliehen für die Flucht vor den Fahnen... Das Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NSMilitärjustiz in Wien*. (p. 143) , by Alton J. et al. (Ed.), 2016, Wallstein Verlag.

³⁴ Uhl. op. cit., p.89.



Figure 4 | New Additions to Vienna's Memorial Landscape.
 Author's Personal Work with Data Retrieved from:
<https://www.univie.ac.at/porem/maps/>

2 Collective Memory in Context

“Die Namen geben den Menschen ihre Identität zurück, die ihnen die Nationalsozialisten rauben wollten” - Alexander Van der Bellen ³⁵

As I discussed in Chapter I, in the wake of the ‘Waldheim Affair’ in 1986, much scrutiny was placed internationally on Austria’s role during World War II. The narrative constructed through the Moscow declaration 1943, formalising Austria as the first free country falling to Hitler veiled much of the people’s involvement and constructed an ‘Opfer’-metaphoric (victim mentality).³⁶ Thereby, in comparison to Germany’s immediate need to work through its traumatic actions, Austria evaded this portion of collective memory for the longest time. This resulted in new challenges once it had to accept its role and break up solidified memory structures and rectify its national identity. Through the course of this chapter, this changing notion of memory and approach will be studied through the works of Alfred Hrdlicka’s ‘Memorial against War and Fascism’, Rachel Whiteread’s ‘Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial’ and Olaf Nicolai’s ‘Deserter Monument’. Each edifice represents a unique shift from previously established historic views and circumstances as it needed to mediate between the layers of its meaning, current context and historical importance. By reading these in conjuncture with each other we can try to understand the transforming collective view Austria had of its past. Hrdlicka’s memorial marks a violent dawn as Austria tried mending its past, however, his message might have been too direct and controversial in its statement as it became the catalyst for Whiteread’s memorial. In her piece, we see more subtle notions of guilt and symbolism, as the idea of the monument and its language started shifting with it. Lastly, Nicolai’s piece presents the first instance where the key theme of the memory was not based on victimhood anymore. Instead, it puts the perpetrator at the centre, fullending a quite remarkable period of memory political change and rectification for a national memory.

³⁵ His words translate to ‘The names give people their identity back, the identity National Socialists wanted to rob them off’. This quote was taken from the speech he gave Remembrance Day on January 27th, 2022. For further reading: “Die Namen geben den Menschen ihre Identität zurück, die ihnen die Nationalsozialisten rauben wollten”. (2022). Retrieved 4 March 2022, from <https://www.bundespraesident.at/aktuelles/detail/weremember>

³⁶ Kuttnerberg. op. cit., pp. 468-469.

2.1 Vocal Controversy – Mahnmal gegen Krieg und Faschismus

*“Nur wer sich erinnert, kann die Schrecken der Geschichte anerkennen.
Nur wer sich erinnert, kann aus den Fehlern der Vergangenheit lernen.
Nur wer sich erinnert, kann es heute und in Zukunft besser machen.”³⁷*

Sebastian Kurz, 2018

2.1.1 Context and History

Hrdlicka's Memorial against War and Fascism spreads itself over the Helmut Zilk Platz in central Vienna, neighbouring popular destinations such as the State Opera, the Albertina art museum or the Sacher Hotel. The memorial today facilitates a constant flux of visitors and serves as a meeting point for tourist tours due to its opportune location at the heart of Vienna.³⁸ Hence, one can understand Hrdlicka's choice to design the memorial in this location, considering the historical relevance and memories it represents. The square became the stage for two tragedies, both relevant contextual layers for the to-be memorial. Firstly, on March 12th, 1421, the square was the site of Jews burning at the stake during a pogrom;³⁹ and secondly, on March 12th, 1945, it was the casualty of an Allied bombing raid, burying close to 200 people alive underneath the ruins of the former Philliphof in the process.⁴⁰ (Fig. 5)

³⁷ In the commemorative year 2018 (80 years since the annexe), then Chancellor Sebastian Kurz gave a speech in front of Hrdlicka's Memorial against War and Fascism from which this excerpt was extracted. The full speech and information on the event are available from Bundeskanzleramt Österreich. (2018). Gedenken an die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus in Wien und Mauthausen. Retrieved from <https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/bundeskanzleramt/nachrichten-der-bundesregierung/2017-2018/gedenken-an-die-opfer-des-nationalsozialismus-in-wien-und-mauthausen.html>

³⁸ Tanja Schult & Diana I. Popescu. Infelicitous Efficacy: Alfred Hrdlicka's Memorial against War and Fascism. *Articulo – Journal of Urban Research*, 19. 2019.

³⁹ James E. Young. *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. Yale University Press. 1993. p.106.

⁴⁰ Kuttnerberg. op. cit., pp. 479-480.



Figure 5 | Wien, I. Albrechtsplatz, 1908. From Sperlings Postkartenverlag (M. M. S.) (Producer), Wien Museum Inv.-Nr. 167795, CC0 (<https://sammlung.wienmuseum.at/objekt/341102/>)

2.1.2 Placement, Design and Architecture

Conceived as a commemoration of Austrian history between 1938 and 1955, Hrdlicka designed the memorial as a fragmented ensemble of 5 sculptures placed in the roughly 25 sqm plaza.⁴¹ (Fig. 6) The memorial starkly contrasts the canon of the Holocaust iconography composed by a language of voids and abstract architectural features.⁴² As the informative plaque placed on the square lists, the monument's sculptures are in order of their intended experience: The Gates of Violence, the Street-washing Jew, Orpheus enters Hades and the Stone of the Republic.

Once one arrives on the site, it is the Gates of Violence greeting you. The sculptures extend close to seven metres high and are placed on a granite podium mined from the site of the former concentration and labour camp.⁴³ With this specific choice, Hrdlicka connected the sculptures to Austria's past and infused them with meaning. The scale of the pillars evokes a sense of smallness in the subject and their engraved

⁴¹ Kuttnerberg. op. cit., pp. 479-480.

⁴² Schult & Popescu. op. cit.

⁴³ Young. op. cit., p.92.

symbolism tell of the horrors of the war, rounding off your entry into the space.⁴⁴ Moving past the gates, one arrives at the second piece, the Street-washing Jew. Its position, scale and material stick out in contrast to the other pieces, the dark patina bronze sculpture depicts Reibpartien⁴⁵ after Austria's annexe in 1938. By placing the figure on the ground one needs to look down on it and actively becomes part of the ensemble.



Figure 6 | Memorial against War and Fascism. Author's Personal Work, 2022

In the back of the Street-washing Jew, the sculpture of Orpheus arises. The figure poses a confusing choice by the artist in the form of a mythical Greek figure in the context of a Holocaust memorial to rectify the mythos of Austria's Second Republic.⁴⁶ Orpheus' symbolism, of tragic resistance for his lover in Greek mythology, could be seen as a metaphor for the victims of resistance during WWII in this instance if any

⁴⁴ Schult & Popescu. op. cit.

⁴⁵ This refers to the act of forcing Jews to scrub the streets clean of propaganda with brushes or sometimes even toothbrushes. For further information: Ibid.

⁴⁶ Kutenberg. op. cit., p. 482.

connection needs to be drawn. Lastly, one arrives in front of the Stone of the Republic, a column inscribed with the state treaty from 1955. For Kuttenberg, this could be seen as Hrdlicka trying to create a happy end within the experience of the memorial as the state treaty symbolises the beginning of the republic, however, at the same time misses the mentions of any shared responsibilities.⁴⁷

2.1.3 Performance and Effect

If the goal of Hrdlicka was to provoke an impulse, he achieved this, however maybe not the one he was looking for. In a stone plate, embedded in front of the Gate of Violence, a text by himself is integrated, ending with "This monument is dedicated to all victims of war and fascism". This ambivalence of victimhood was one of the points of criticism aimed at the memorial. It dismissed victim groups such as homosexuals while at the same time creating an equivalence of victimhood between war victims and victims of the national socialists. Another criticism is the image of the humiliated Jew. Newspaper read: "kein Denkmal, sondern ein Schandmal",⁴⁸ and polls showed only about 31% of the people were in favour of the monument.⁴⁹ While prominent figures regarding Austrian memory politics also voiced their opinions. Simon Wiesenthal called it an inadmissibility to have such a memorial, "That is not our memorial ... one cannot represent the Holocaust by means of a figure."⁵⁰ Or Ruth Beckermann opposing the image of the Streetwashing Jew, stating "in this country, our feelings and thoughts, our identity as children of the survivors are ignored and offended."⁵¹

⁴⁷ Kuttenberg. op. cit., p. 482.

⁴⁸ Cited in: Florian Menz. Hrdlicka: „Bildhauer, Waldheim-Jäger, Antifaschist und Stalin-Verteidiger“. Zur Kampagne eines Boulevardblattes und deren Echo in den Leserbriefen. In Hess-Lüttich, E. W. B. (Ed.). *Medienkultur - Kulturkonflikt: Massenmedien in der interkulturellen und internationalen Kommunikation*. 1992. pp.349-363.

⁴⁹ Young. op. cit., p.107.

⁵⁰ Quoted in: Abigail Gillman. Cultural Awakening and Historical Forgetting: The Architecture of Memory in the Jewish Museum of Vienna and in Rachel Whiteread's "Nameless Library". *New German Critique*, 93(93), 2004. p.165.

⁵¹ Quoted in: Schult & Popescu. op. cit.

Beckermann's account is particularly relevant as in 2015 she was commissioned to make an installation for the memorial labelled 'missing image'. (Fig. 7) It superimposed newly discovered film material showing the smiling perpetrators and bystanders during the Reibepartien. This new piece also puts the Stone of the Republic with its treaty and omission of guilt in a new light.⁵² Thereby, showing the potential for the smaller interventions to break up solidified notions of collective memory. Despite interest to keep the addition permanently, the idea never manifested due to bureaucratic issues and the denial by Hrdlicka's family.⁵³



Figure 7 | Beckermann's Missing Image. From "RuthBeckermann.com" by Philipp Dietrich, 2015 (<http://www.ruthbeckermann.com/en/projects/projectlist/the-missing-image/>)

⁵² Peter Pirker. Vom Kopf auf die Füße: Das Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NS-Militärjustiz in der Erinnerungslandschaft Wien. In Alton J. et al. (Ed) *Verliehen für die Flucht vor den Fahnen... Das Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NSMilitärjustiz in Wien*. 2016. p. 146.

⁵³ Thomas Trenkler. Beckermann-Installation in Wien abgebaut. *Kurier*. (<https://kurier.at/kultur/beckermann-installation-the-missing-image-in-wien-abgebaut/173.160.202>, accessed 04.03. 2022)

2.2 Silent Sobriety – Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial

“Neben den Worten soll heute die Stille ein beredtes Zeichen sein. An diesem Platz fließen Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft ineinander. Die Stadt will ein Zeichen setzen, dass sie mit und in der Wahrheit leben will.”⁵⁴

Peter Marboe, 2000

2.2.1 Context and History

Following vocal criticism towards Hrdlicka's and other memorials representing guilt or commemoration around the time, the idea for a new monument dedicated to the Jewish victims during 1939 and 1945 in Austria was perceived.⁵⁵ Judenplatz was selected for its location, presenting a valuable example for the layering of collective memory and historic past in the creation of commemorative architecture. As one of Vienna's town squares, it used to be the centre of its Jewish community until the pogrom in 1421. This incident, also referred to as the First Wiener Gesera, marks fierce riots with the aim of expelling, murdering or forcefully converting the Jewish population in Vienna. It ended with over 1000 Jews dying or being expelled. The synagogue formerly on the Judenplatz was burned down during this occasion as 80 Jews barricaded themselves inside and lit the fire to resist the forced conversion.



Figure 8 | Remnants of the Synagogue 1421. Author's Personal Work, 2022



Figure 9 | Remembrance Stone of the Synagogue 1421. Author's Personal Work, 2022

⁵⁴ The then cultural council gave this speech as part of the unveiling of the memorial. He described this place as combining the past, present and future. As well as the will to live with the truth. Available from: Mahnmal am Judenplatz feierlich eingeweiht *Der Standard*. (<https://www.derstandard.at/story/369214/mahnmal-am-judenplatz-feierlich-eingeweiht>, accessed 25.02.2022)

⁵⁵ Kuttenberg. op. cit., p.485.

The pogrom in 1421 highlights very early traces of antisemitism within Vienna's past, preceding the atrocities that occurred in WWII.⁵⁶ The excavated remnants of the burned synagogue are today displayed underneath the square in the Jewish Museum (2000) (Fig. 8) and a symbolic plaque reminds of its position in the square itself (Fig. 9). This makes the choice for the construction of Whiteread's memorial in this location an intriguing decision. For instance, Nora believes there to be a valuable distinction between memory and history. While memory grows and attaches itself to a location and site, history is tied to its events.⁵⁷ Thereby, Whiteread's memorial is placed in a peculiar position right from its inception as it needs to mediate the local memory of the Jewish community and tragedy of 1421 with the historical events of World War II it is dedicated to.

2.2.2 Placement, Design and Architecture

As outlined during the competition for the memorial, it needed to address the site's history through the medieval remnants, Hitler's Judenschule, the victims and atrocities committed during WW2.⁵⁸ Whiteread's sculpture, dedicated to the 65,000 Austrian Jews murdered by National Socialists between 1938 and 1945, expresses itself in the form of a 10m x 7m x 3.8m concrete cast. (Fig. 10) Her design differentiates itself from other pieces of remembrance such as Hrdlicka's through a sense of abstractness and ambiguity in its symbolism. This design displays the memory not through the lenses of victimisation or guilt, refraining from the many points of contention other edifices had to deal with.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gillman. op. cit., pp.146-147.

⁵⁷ Nora. op. cit., p.22.

⁵⁸ Kuttnerberg. op. cit., p.485.

⁵⁹ Ibid.



Figure 10 | Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial 2000.
Author's Personal Work, 2022

However, this equivocality creates challenges in itself. Its austere and non-theatrical representation in the image of an inverted library, a place for learning, recollection, and knowledge with endless rows of books on each of its sides and an unopenable door as only visual disconnection can be seen as a symbolism for a plethora of meanings. These could be inferred in the shape of the records of the victims, the lost history of the Jews, or their lost heritage.⁶⁰ The presentation of the books in rows, where the spine is flipped inwards further strengthens this narrative of multiplicity and ambivalence. (Fig. 11) As it depicts the notion of anonymity of the victims, not stating to whom it is truly dedicated. Therein, however, we can see a troubling visual of Austria's memory politics during this time. In the wake of Hrdlicka's ensemble of sculptures at the Albertina and the sheer directness it confronts one with the atrocities of Austrian national memory, Whiteread's sculpture lacks such impetus for change or confrontation.

⁶⁰ Moran Pearl. Books and Libraries as Witnesses of the Second World War and the Holocaust in Monuments: Vienna and Berlin. In G. Bischof & F. Karhofer (Ed.), *Austrian Federalism in Comparative Perspective* (Vol. 24, pp. 151–171). 2015.



Figure 11 | Judenplatz Holocaust Memorial Texture
2000. Author's Personal Work, 2022

2.2.3 Performance and Effect

This equivocality and ambiguity in its dedication and meaning could not have been inaugurated or perceived without backlash and concerns from people. In particular, the opposition of the local shopkeepers on Judenplatz and Austrian artists caused major delays; resulting in the memorial being unveiled four years later than initially planned.⁶¹ Key points of concern were the loss of business in the square, according to Arik Brauer the memorial resembled a “Monstergrabstein, der den Platz Jahrhunderte verschandeln und Antisemitismus regelrecht heraufbeschwören würde”. In addition, Hrdlicka called it “eine Parodie” and “einen Angriff auf seine Person und Denkmal”.⁶² These concerns, albeit seemingly driven by personal agendas, have validity once you visit the now unveiled sculpture. The monument lulls one in, creating a break from the other squares one visits in his journey through Vienna. It makes the past palpable in the present which in turn asks the visitor for constant negotiation with the edifice; nullifying many aspects of daily life and buzz one sees elsewhere.

This uniqueness reflects Nora’s belief that modern memory in essence is archival; resulting in a perpetual dialogue and different readings of the past.⁶³ However, within this lies a conundrum for any space/edifice dedicated towards specific collective memory, as the remembrance for the long-gone could extinguish the potential and presence of the living. As seen through the qualitative change of Judenplatz to sobriety or maybe an even more striking example were the concerns of the Viennese Jewish populace in response to the growing memorial culture in the 80s and 90s. In fear of becoming nothing more than walking monuments and substitutions for the dead Jews, they advocated that a memorial for the dead is not one for the living.⁶⁴ Thereby, questioning the role of memorials such as the one on Judenplatz and their dialogue between past and present.

⁶¹ Kuttnerberg. op. cit., p.486.

⁶² Brauer and Hrdlicka quoted in: Ibid.

⁶³ Nora. op. cit., 1989. pp.13-14.

⁶⁴ Doron Rabinovici. Der Spiegel der Finsternis. Schattenspiel oder Die richtige Art des Erinnerns. In Id., *Credo und Credit. Einmischung*. 2000. p.102

2.3 Belated Amends – Deserteurs Denkmal

"Jeder soll wissen, dass es ehrenhaft ist, in der Auseinandersetzung mit einer brutalen und menschenverachtenden Diktatur seinem Gewissen zu folgen und auf der richtigen Seite zu stehen".⁶⁵ - Heinz Fischer, 2014

2.3.1 Context and History

In 2009 Austria's national council rehabilitated the victims of persecution during the NS period, which resulted in the decision by the city of Vienna to construct a monument for them in 2010.⁶⁶ Whilst the memorial depicts a specific period, the aim was for it to stimulate in its negotiation an inquiry into our present and future. Especially, the discourse on the extent of orders and obedience is of interest in the face of the continued warfare in modern times across the globe.⁶⁷ The competition was won by German artist Olaf Nicolai in the end, with his design visible, since its inauguration in 2014, on the Ballhausplatz neighbouring the federal chancellery and presidential office. (Fig. 12)

2.3.2 Placement, Design and Architecture

The memorial encompasses an area of roughly 14m x 36m, bordering on two of its sides the fence of the Volksgarten and the Ballhausplatz and Heldenplatz on the other two respectively. Nicolai's sculpture appears as a pedestal missing its symbolic figure, which could be seen as a metaphor for the missing historical image of the victims it tries to address and the general state of Austrian memory politics at this time.⁶⁸ It distinctively has a spatial presence through its size and contrast of materiality to the brighter pavement, nonetheless, its meaning and dedication remain hidden to the passerby. Only once one goes closer and actively starts engaging with the monument will the different layers start revealing themselves. This feeling is

⁶⁵ An excerpt of the then federal president Heinz Fischer's speech during the inauguration of the monument. Retrieved from: "Tag der Genugtuung": Deserteursdenkmal in Wien eröffnet, *Die Presse*. (<https://www.diepresse.com/4195805/tag-der-genugtuung-deserteursdenkmal-in-wien-eroeffnet>, accessed 09.03.2022)

⁶⁶ Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NS-Militärjustiz. (<https://www.koer.or.at/projekte/denkmal-fuer-die-verfolgten-der-ns-militaerjustiz/>, accessed 09.03.2022)

⁶⁷ Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NS-Militärjustiz: Wettbewerbssieger: Olaf Nicolai. (<https://www.koer.or.at/projekte/denkmal-fuer-die-verfolgten-der-ns-militaerjustiz-wettbewerb/>, accessed 09.03.2022)

⁶⁸ Corinna Tomberger. Ein Denkmal der unbekannten Deserteur: Das künstlerische Konzept von Olaf Nicolai im Kontext von Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik. In Alton J. et al. (Ed) *Verliehen für die Flucht vor den Fahnen... Das Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NSMilitärjustiz in Wien*. 2016. pp. 48-51.

intended by the artist himself as he wanted to create something anti-representative to contrast the architecture and other monuments nearby.⁶⁹ This could also be an intended allegory by the artist wanting to raise awareness of the general lack of discourse about the victims of NS military justice.



Figure 12 | Deserteur Denkmal Ballhausplatz.
Author's Personal Work, 2022

The instance one arrives in front of the monument and climbs the steps of the 'X' a poem by Scottish artist Ian Hamilton Finlay becomes visible spelling 'All / Alone'. (Fig. 13) Semantically, it has a certain duality to its meaning, depending on how the poem is read. 'all' and 'alone' allude to comradeship and individuality while the combined reading of both spells 'all alone' both could be references to the pain and suffering the deserters had to endure during the NS rule.⁷⁰ While the figure of 'X' itself has a certain symbolism as well. In the sphere of mathematics, it commonly is used to indicate undisclosed values.⁷¹ This rhetoric is further affirmed by the installed plaque near the monument alluding to precarious situation the victims were in as it writes: "bedroht von Anonymisierung und Auslöschung die ihn zu 'X' in einer Akte werden lassen."

⁶⁹ Juliane Alton. „Bevor es verahrlost, muss man es wegräume“ – Olaf Nicolai im Interview mit Juliane Alton. In Alton J. et al. (Ed) *Verliehen für die Flucht vor den Fahnen... Das Denkmal für die Verfolgten der NSMilitärjustiz in Wien*. 2016. pp. 242-253.

⁷⁰ Tomberger. op. cit., pp. 48-51.

⁷¹ Ibid.



Figure 13 | Deserteur Denkmal Ballhausplatz. From *BBC*, 2014 (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29754386>).

2.3.3 Performance and Effect

Austrian historian Oliver Rathkolb voiced concerns about the possibility of a new mythos on more active Austrian deserters due to the prominent position of the memorial.⁷² However, as seen through the course of this subchapter, the memorial more so actively tries to rectify part of the victim narrative and shed light on the general lack of discourse for this particular sub-group. Not only does the memorial fit into the memorial culture of resistance of previous monuments but also breaks the common narrative. Nicolai's symbolism through the poem on top and the language of an 'X' puts the decision making and as such the perpetrators themselves at the focus of remembrance.⁷³

⁷² Pirker. op. cit., p.130.

⁷³ Ibid. p.154.

2.4 Comparison and Final Remarks

Throughout the second chapter, we were able to see via the three case studies progressive change in Austrian national identity and memory politics as well as how each of these edifices embodied this memory. Hrdlicka's Memorial against War and Fascism was a controversial and violent dawn for Austria, even if the memorial remained static and exemplifies the nation's period of rediscovering itself. Whiteread's Nameless Library on Judenplatz, as a direct response to Hrdlicka's, showed an impressive leap in the acknowledgement of guilt as well as changes to the concept of commemorative architecture. Gone were the figurative sculptures and prescribed notions of experience and instead the loss and remembrance remained abstract and to be found in the negotiation between visitor and edifice. What stood out as well in her case was the more intense reconciliation between the authentic memory of the site and the imposed historical memory of the monument. Lastly, Nicolai's Deserter Monument saw not only a progression of the counter-monument ideas Whiteread already applied in his abstract architectural language but also showed a more formal break in the philosophy of remembrance. It put the collective responsibility of the perpetrator at the centre of his design and as such completely broke away from the mythos of the victim-thesis in Austria and the collective memory it presents in other memorials to this day.

3 Memory and Identity in Flux

The first chapter drew attention to Austria's past, the effort going into the creation of a collective national identity of victimhood and the role collective memory, and the memorial landscape of Vienna played in this endeavour. While the second chapter continued from the crumbling of this thesis and studied three concrete examples of commemorative architecture exemplifying the changing ethos and ideas that went into Vienna's memory politics. Therefore, this chapter will continue this process and analyse the outcomes of the shifting ideology in Vienna's memorial landscape and the role collective memory and history had more broadly. This examination will happen through the three lenses of site, materiality and meaning. Each highlights the fluidity and plurality that has started to settle in the solidified concepts of Viennese commemorative architecture and their necessity in continuing the collective memory of its past.

3.1 Continued Inheritance

Memorials took an establishing function in determining the collective memory at the start of the Second Republic, aimed at preserving memory.⁷⁴ However, not every intervention into the canon of Viennese remembrance needs to be a premeditated piece commissioned by the authority similar to the ones discussed in the previous chapter. One such example of defiance was erected in 1951 by the KPÖ⁷⁵ on the Morzinplatz, the location of the former Gestapo headquarters in Vienna. The illegally placed memorial stone reading "Für die Bekenner Österreichs, die unsterblichen Opfer" remained there until it was replaced by a bigger memorial in 1985 with the same inscription.⁷⁶ (Fig.14) This idea of persistence and emotional value links back to Nora's ideas of memory-sites. For Nora 'lieu de mémoire' result from the absence of real 'environments of memory' or the lack of groups in which its recollection could happen.⁷⁷ These memory sites are created through the disappearance of a large

⁷⁴ Uhl. op. cit., p.75.

⁷⁵ The communist party of Austria

⁷⁶ Pirker. op. cit., p.129.

⁷⁷ Gillman. op. cit., p.149.

stock of memory, leaving only the object under history's scrutiny; entities such as festivals, monuments, sanctuaries or archives remain.⁷⁸ This is important as he further theorised that “the history of modern country is made of an ‘array of sites of memory that have been invested with enduring and emotive symbolic significance.’”⁷⁹ Which would in turn support the significance edifices of collective memory such as memorials carry in our urban realms and their context. Monuments thus contribute to the public realm they are built in; their construction is an instrument to transform individual and historic memories into a collective one and thereby translate the space into one for remembrance. However, within such actions lies the risk for conflict or contention as the spaces become filled with emotional and historic value. French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre describes this aspect of the urban realm: “Space has been shaped and moulded from historical and natural elements, but this has been a political process. Space is political and ideological”⁸⁰



Figure 14 | Mahnmal am Morzinplatz. Author's Personal Work, 2022

⁷⁸ Nora. op. cit., p.12.

⁷⁹ Joseph R. Llobera, Halbwachs, Nora and “history” versus “collective memory”: a research note. *Durkheimian Studies / Études Durkheimiennes*, 1, 1995. p.42.

⁸⁰ Henri Lefebvre. Reflections on the politics of space. In R. Peet (Ed.), *Radical geography*. 1977. p. 341.

The world is transforming increasingly urban centric, with the greater part of humanity living in cities today. Hence, urban realms, such as Vienna's, become mirrors of our societal aspirations, ideologies and struggles.⁸¹ Urban landscapes can therefore not be seen as only material, acting as stages of power struggles, contests about identity and belonging. Spatial practice is thereby not unbiased; it is formed based on its past memory and is subject to the powers at play as can be seen through the deliberate construction of memorials in the first two chapters as means of furthering a national narrative and creating a mythos of its past, painting selective views and victimhood through that practice. Memorials thereby become mediums for inclusion or exclusion as we saw in the previous chapter in the selective groups of victim Hrdlicka's piece addressed or the vocal response current Jewish residents had as they saw the monuments of Hrdlicka and Whiteread as mere dedication to the dead Jews and excluding the situation of the still living.

3.2 Manifested Language

Nora surmised: "[...], so have we gone from the idea of a visible past to an invisible one; from a solid and steady past to our fractured past; from a history sought in the continuity of memory to a memory cast in the discontinuity of history."⁸² He, therein, alludes to a changing condition of the past, cast in doubt and a break of the arborescence between past and the present as its continuation. The fixation on commemoration and its steadily increasing permeation visible within Vienna can thereby be also seen as a means of eluding the dread of this discontinuity and gripping to the last remaining fragments of the past. In a similar fashion Austrian historian Heidemarie Uhl mentions the value of monuments as signs of a shifting philosophy.⁸³ As we have understood so far, this changing ideology can be seen through the meaning, architectural language or typology of the monuments.

⁸¹ Andrzej Zieleniec. *Lefebvre's politics of space: planning the urban as oeuvre*. 2018. p.8

⁸² Nora. op. cit., p.17.

⁸³ Uhl. op. cit., p.74.

Through the lens of meaning, the three memorials showed a shift in dedication. Hrdlicka's veiled in controversy due to its equivocality between specific victim groups, while excluding others entirely, mirrored the changing period of Austria's identity and directly led to Whiteread's library. In her case, the meaning was still conveyed through victimhood, however, it was not as direct in its dedication anymore and instead left it ambiguous to whom we mourn, seen for example in the inverted books around the perimeter never letting us see its content. Lastly, Nicolai's sculpture might be the most direct shift in meaning and typology flipping pre-conceived notions as it puts the perpetrator at the centre of its remembrance. Instead of mourning victims and suggesting guilt, it intends to warn to not repeat these actions. Nonetheless, the transformations not only included the edifice itself but also its relationship with the visitor. The memorial against war and fascism led the subject through a predefined set of performances of historical events; the monument on Judenplatz was already more fluid in the way one can engage with it, fostering a reflective dialogue between object and subject. Finishing in the need to actively stand on the monument at Ballhausplatz to fully see its meaning.

Where these changing perceptions and creation of memorials start to tie in with the theory of networks of memory-sites constituting the national memory, described by Nora, is in the increasingly diffused form of memory in Vienna's memorial landscape. As seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4, the 1980s and 1990s saw an immense increase in the construction of commemorative edifices. In particular, the discovery of more than 60,000 Austrian Jewish victims' identities during the NS period and their remembrance through 'Gedenksteine' laid in the pavement helped in this process.⁸⁴ These represented a more palpable and ever-present form of memory all around Vienna, making the past and its memory a stage for the everyday interactions of the present. (Fig. 15)

⁸⁴ Pirker. op. cit., p.153.



Figure 15 | Gedenksteine. Author's Personal Work, 2022

However, complacency with the memory of the holocaust should be feared, as Wiesenthal described it at the opening of the Whiteread's library "It is important that the art is not beautiful, that it hurts us in some way"⁸⁵ attributing the potential of a memorial to their capacity to disturb the common urban context and causing the acquainted to seem unfamiliar. Thereby, the importance lies in the fine balance between the presence and disturbance of their materialisation in the context of the wider urban landscape.

3.3 Polyphonic Meaning

Aside from the greater diffusion of memorials and ideas of interconnected systems of remembrance already discussed in this chapter, another important point of flux and negotiation was the polyphony⁸⁶ in dedication and meaning. If we stay with Nora, according to him memory-sites can only last through a continuous cycle of reinvention.⁸⁷ This notion would solve concerns that were and are still present in Austria as the generations switch, how will the newer engage with the memory without having experienced it?⁸⁸ As Halbwachs mentioned: "Every collective memory requires the support of a group delimited in space and time."⁸⁹ However, this raises

⁸⁵ Quoted in: Rachel Carley. Silent Witness: Rachel Whiteread's Nameless Library. *IDEA JOURNAL*. 2010. pp.28-29.

⁸⁶ Referring to an assemble of individual pieces acting in harmony with each other

⁸⁷ Nora. op. cit., pp.18-19.

⁸⁸ Uhl. op. cit., p.83.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Llobera. op. cit., p.37.

the question for whom the memory embodied in the memorial truly are? As we saw in the example of Hrdlicka, his memorial was frozen in the fluid period of identity finding after the victim-thesis started failing and later interventions such as Beckermann's 'Missing Image' were only allowed to be temporary. Thereby, the monument itself seems to have remained static.

Another example of such negotiation was seen in the case of Judenplatz where the monument needed to negotiate its position with the local history of the 1421 Vienna Gesera and the remnants of the burned synagogue excavated on the site. Albeit a unique case, it shows a growing permeation of historical fragments within our city, both formed through time or human will in the form of memorials. While the comparison of the three cases revealed a contention each new intervention had to overcome as it negotiated with the palimpsest of the urban fabric of Vienna. This mediation between edifice, context and history becomes integral to our understanding of reading them as Halbwachs believed that memory was always connected to groups, both by disposition "multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual."⁹⁰ History on the other hand was seen as universal, for all and none. This fragmentation of memory and history results in the multiplication of 'private memories' that seek 'individual histories', reflecting modern societies' obsession of archiving and leaving traces. In turn, creating a proliferation of archival edifices that would form a palimpsest 'historized memory'.⁹¹ These chains of constant archival, result in overloading the sensible state of a city's memorial landscape in the process and forcing the viewer, resident as well as designer in a negotiation between their subjective internal memories and the externalised devices of remembrance they encounter.

⁹⁰ Nora. op. cit., p.9.

⁹¹ Ibid. pp.8-15.

Conclusion

Modern cities see an ever-increasing palimpsest of historized memory and the intrinsic need for its inhabitants to constantly negotiate with the images of a tangible past. The architect and designer thereby need to carefully consider any intervention in the context of the memorial landscape. Vienna forms a very distinct and pronounced example of this phenomenon through its noticeable shift in memory politics in the 1980s and 1990s. The founding myth of being Hitler's first victim started becoming undone and with it also the national identity and the physical manifestations of this notion. Hence, Vienna and Austria as a whole found themselves in an identity crisis trying to break up solidified memory structures and rework their memory politics.

In the process of working through their past, memories and trauma from WWII we saw an indication of externalisation both in philosophy and means. The idea of participation and guilt were labelled as not being part of the Austrian historical canon, which also started manifesting itself in the urban realm. The medium of monuments became a form of externalised collective memory, or more so a form of memory politics. They became an indicator of Austrian identity and the shifts of perception the country went through as it worked through its past. All in the pursuit of trying to come to terms with it and reconcile their narrative with the atrocities of a collective WWII trauma.

Thus, unravelling these edifices exposes how memory and spatial practices were intrinsically linked in their processes. Whilst their function as a medium of abstract notions of collectivity and memory formed the basis for the creation of novel architectural images of cultural importance. To understand the tangible effects this had on the urban realm and their experience, three case studies were investigated, each presenting a progressive shift in philosophy and context.

The themes of site history, embodied meaning, urban setting, architectural language and spatial performance were the basis of this study. In the case of Hrdlicka's memorial, we saw the need for a strong impulse to shake up the status quo. The image of his street washing Jew remains a controversial piece of Vienna's landscape. However, in his ambivalence of victimhood between NS-victims and war victims, and the figurative nature resulted in the monument itself remaining static and an example of the shifting period away from a collective victim thesis. Later interventions tried to rectify this, yet so far, they have only been of temporary nature.

The Nameless Library, as a direct response to the controversy of Hrdlicka's piece, showed a rapid development in the language. Abstract symbolism replaced figurative ensembles, leaving more room for interpretation and negotiation between the context, visitor and edifice. It further exemplified the struggles inherent in trying to balance the authentic memory of the site with local historical memory. As was seen in the delays and scrutiny stemming from the excavated remains of the former synagogue.

Lastly, Nicolai's sculpture showcased a more formal revolution in the dedication and remembrance embodied in it. It moved away from only remembering the victims and instead focused on the perpetrator, setting it apart from the founding lie of the Second Republic. We could not only see progressive change in memory and the architectural language of the memorials through these three examples but also saw a changing relationship between visitor and monument. Hrdlicka's represents a preconfigured performance of historical events; while Whiteread's library focuses a more reflective experience based on a dialogue with its viewer. This culminated in Nicolai's piece in which the user needs to actively walk up to it and stand on the monument to see its full meaning.

These grand forms of memory however are not the only types of tangible history we encounter every day. As illustrated in Chapter 3, the city's inhabitant is in constant negotiations with various kinds of memory. This is further accentuated by the growing diffusion of memory in the forms of 'Gedenksteine' in Vienna's case. Thereby, forming a constant reminder for citizens that the past is not limited to history, but instead forms new stages of everyday interactions with their collective memory.

These phenomena become tangible in the increasingly overloaded memorial landscape as new monuments try to negotiate with existing narratives. This is becoming further complicated by our modern addiction to preserve and archive. It, therefore, leaves us to question, if at the end the best we can do is just to continue the growing palimpsest of memory and hope for future interventions to rectify past mistakes? Or if there would be more sensible theories to engage with our palpable past?

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