

Difficult heritage in Europe: paradoxical dimensions of time, place and memory

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Introduction

The notion of overcoming difficulty is considered to be the central paradigm of the ‘European memory complex’ (Macdonald 2013) and yet it is beset with difficult and seemingly unconquerable paradoxes, emerging from the inherent multiplicity of Europe and European perspectives on its past, present and future. Analysing the paradoxical nature not only of democracy, but also multiple paradoxes within European heritage, this chapter focuses on *time* as a dimension relating to place, memory. It addresses the Holocaust as the original founding myth of Europe, the expansion of the European narrative eastwards following the end of the Cold War, and ongoing absences from the official heritage record of Europe. Bound up and entangled with Arendt’s ‘promise’ and the paradox of democracy - past, present and future time is found to be in flux, through the ‘continual unsettlement’ (Macdonald 2009) of European memory by different actors within the politics and practice of heritage.

Time as a dimension affecting European heritage, identities and memory, connects to processes of adjusting to losses and change over time. It underpins this chapter’s focus on three paradoxes inherent within difficult European heritage, and as part of the bigger notion of the paradox of democracy (Sztompka 2000). The chapter builds upon the paradoxical concepts of freedom and power at the heart of both Hannah Arendt’s idea of the ‘promise’ of renewal and of the democratic foundation of the European Union from the metaphorical and physical ashes of nations decimated by dictatorships, wars and atrocities. In doing so, it examines how paradoxical norms have become entangled with the ideals, practices and processes of European heritage and memory. These paradoxes exist not only in relation to *which* parts of history are adopted (or not) as part of the European heritage record, or *where*, *when* and *why*, but there are also further paradoxes in the ways in which such heritage is presented and communicated to changing communities and publics within Europe – now and for the future. The changing demographics and politics of Europe in the 21st century, where both anti-democratic movements and right-wing populists within democracies are making use of the frames and discourses of established heritage and memory practices, have led some to see current times as “a moment of danger” (Levi and Rothberg 2018).

Heritage and memory

The ‘slippery’ nature of distinctions between *heritage* and *memory* (already discussed in Chapters One and Two) emerge again here. Sharon Macdonald provides a means by which to distinguish the two:

where ‘memory’ entices social researchers into analogues with individual memory and the language of psychology and also prompts questions about veracity and transmission, ‘heritage’ directs attention to materiality, durability over time and value (Macdonald 2013, p.17).

At the same time, she points out that interconnecting heritage and memory, such as the critical heritage studies approach taken in this volume, ‘leads to interrogation of why and how some things come to count as “heritage” and the consequences that flow from this ‘ (ibid). Gerard Delanty (2018) echoes this perspective when he writes that difficult heritage in Europe acts as a reminder:

that heritage is not only about the loss of something. It is also about commemoration and mourning. It is where excluded peoples and marginalised memories define themselves. It is dissonant and plural (2018, p.214).

The consequences and implications of *selective* or potentially ‘competing’ memories in relation to Europe’s past highlight the importance of the plurality and adaptability – or multidirectionality (Rothberg 2009) – of memory, heritage and identity for contemporary societies. Extending this, the chapter will raise concerns about the future viability of a multidirectional approach to difficult or contested heritage, in light of contemporary populist politics and strategic and tactical uses of memory practices and discourses to further exclusive and anti-democratic agendas. This chapter therefore not only uncovers the approaches to European memory already taken by heritage actors, but also how future approaches might respond to the politics of identity. As Ann Rigney has indicated, many of the recent reconceptualizations of memory – including multidirectionality, cosmopolitanism or travelling memory (Erll 2011) – ignore the European frame, instead going straight from the national to a global frame (Rigney 2012, p.618). Rigney highlights how the heterogeneity of Europe, its entanglement with global, national and local scales over time, and its containment of otherness through borders both within and without the European frame are what make it such rich material for analysis: ““Europe” can be seen as a multidirectional framework that is continuously ‘under construction’ in a dialectical relation with existing imaginaries’ (2012, p.619). Delanty makes the point that despite the fact that political, management and regulatory structures of heritage and culture all assert a dichotomy between the tangible and intangible, in reality:

all of culture is intangible. The notion of tangible culture, as in the enduring monument, is highly problematical since the monument does not survive the unrelenting passage of time. Time is the enemy of memory (Delanty 2018, p.217).

It is this awareness of Europe – and of European heritage – as an unfinished or ‘open work’ where memory and time are at odds, that shapes the current analysis of the paradoxical nature of difficult European heritage through time, place and in memory.

Approaching the field

The research for this chapter was undertaken with the scope of the CoHERE project, which involved explorations of heritage, memory sites and museums around Europe, within and beyond the borders of the EU. Fieldwork specifically for this chapter has focused on a number of key museums and heritage sites of the type considered to be part of the ‘authorised heritage discourse’ or AHD (Smith 2006, see chapters 1 and 2 this volume), in addition to online research into virtual memory sites. Site visits and display analyses were carried out at the physical sites, to examine how different founding myths and the challenges to them are exhibited; semi-structured interviews with high-level museum and heritage site staff were undertaken to uncover how and why decisions around past, current and future display, interpretation and education strategies have been made; participant observation was undertaken at museums and on heritage tours to observe visitors, as well as tour guides, and to be involved personally in the experience of visiting; observation at commemorative activities and protests. The virtual sites were analysed online, and through a semi-structured interview.

Three primary heritage sites form the basis of the empirical data analysed here, one associated with each historical ‘moment’: the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin; Schloss Cecilienhof, site of the Potsdam Conference; and the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam, former home of Johannes Lepsius. Additional sites (both virtual and physical) and interviews with significant figures within the heritage and memory realm provide further layers. Each of these main sites relates predominantly to one of the key paradoxes at the heart of the notion of a ‘European heritage’: firstly, the paradox of a heritage which is both universal and singular (through the example of the Holocaust); secondly, the paradox of heritage and memory which is simultaneously shared and divided (using the Cold War as an example); and finally, the paradox of a heritage which is both beyond and within Europe physically and metaphysically in terms of both time and place (taking the ‘Armenian Genocide’ as an example). This triple paradox at the core of European heritage highlights that it is not only difficult due to the specific histories, but also the uses and understandings of them which circulate within the present and project future. The absorption of such paradoxical thinking into each site, each history and, significantly for this volume, into the very foundations of European heritage and memory, mean that the paradoxes have become commonplace and therefore to some extent silenced, adding an additional layer of difficulty to the already difficult heritage of Europe.

As such, the research undertaken has necessarily been broad and wide-ranging, but with an in-depth focus on specific sites of particular relevance rather than a systematically broad comparative approach. Only very few heritage sites, museums and memory practices consider themselves to be ‘European’ in the sense of their own or their visitors’ identity, instead the local, national or even global scale is almost always seen as more relevant – mirroring Rigney (op cit). Their location around Europe is also not comprehensive or necessarily ‘balanced’, the choice of sites is focussed much more on the centrality of the paradoxes of ‘European heritage’, within each site’s historical significance and contemporary purpose. This approach enables us to hone in on specific issues of increasing significance to our discussion of European memory and difficult heritage at different points, allowing others to fall back where their relevance decreases. The chapter takes three key ‘moments’ of deep significance to European history – the Holocaust, the Cold War and the Armenian Genocide

– in order to analyse not only three key paradoxes at the heart of European heritage, but also the changing ways in which difficult memory and heritage have become both foundational and challenging for Europe. The chapter draws out the transnational (even European) nature of these pasts within the present, the ongoing struggles over which memory and heritage ‘belongs’ to Europe now, and how a changing European demos might see this heritage in the future.

In addition to analysing the paradoxical nature of European heritage, a number of contemporary challenges facing heritage, memory and politics in Europe today will be analysed through the case study sites. Challenges to established cultural norms are an integral part of the ‘culture of trust’ which is essential for the functioning of democratic societies (Stompka 2000), and yet they can also be threats to democracy. As such these challenges and responses to them illustrate a further paradox – the paradox of democracy (ibid). The challenges evident within the fieldwork research include, firstly how to present difficult histories to younger generations, for whom they have shifted beyond the bounds of memory and who themselves may feel less connected to a Europe which looks to the idea of a common past. Perceived competition between the Holocaust and other difficult histories, combined in some cases with simplification of memory and heritage practices towards either the commemoration of victims or the celebration of heroes, forms a second challenge. Both of these challenges interconnect with recent trends of multidirectionality and multiperspectivity in heritage and memory practice. Most recently, the challenge arises from increasing populism and nationalism around Europe and the use of heritage and memory affective-discursive discourses (Wetherell 2013) and practices by populists for anti-EU and anti-democratic purposes. The influence of theories of historical multi-perspectivity and multidirectional memory (Rothberg) – although never more than implicit in our interviews with key heritage professionals – is evident in their approach to contemporary and forward-looking heritage practice. However, the question remains as to whether these inherently democratic, liberal approaches to the past and its value for the present can stand up to the challenge of increasing nationalism and populism across Europe – connecting to the ultimate paradox of Europe, what has been called the ‘paradox of democracy’ (Sztompka 2000, Mouffe 2015).

Paradoxical democracy: the promise and the founding myth

Remembering and mourning the past underpin the foundations of the European Union, and much of European heritage and memory centres on the notion of overcoming difficult pasts in order to create a common identity, grounded within acknowledgement of that past (Sierp and Wuestenberg 2015, p.324, Rigney 2012, Whitehead 2016). The European founding myth as a political frame stems from the ‘never again’ motto of post-World War II, together with the awareness of the unprecedented scale and reach of the crimes of the Holocaust. As such, it has also become the paradigmatic European (and EU) heritage and metaphorical *lieu de mémoire* (Nora 1989), a ‘negative absolute [...] itself not subject to political dispute but [which] has the status of a prepolitical measure’ (Hoye and Nienass 2014, p.436). Of course, events used as ‘founding myths’ are not myths at all, but rather significant moments,

processes or dynamics within the development of a unified (or unifying) sense of identity. For adherents of that identity position, the founding myth or myths are seen as crucial to building and maintaining a collective demos in relation to an apparently timeless notion of what it means to belong. Often such founding myths may be perceived as over-used by critics of that identity position, particularly as the founding myth frequently becomes the ‘touchstone’ for discussing other issues from the past (Hirsch and Spitzer 2010, p.391) within the present and into the future.

The incorporation of the Holocaust as both *locus* and *topoi* of Europe’s collective moral conscience, within which the sites, objects and narratives of Holocaust memory are integral to Europe’s future, can be seen as a Derridean act of mourning, where:

mourning has to do with incorporating not just the deceased, but their gaze, a gaze that makes us responsible before the deceased and that can be responded to only as a kind of absolute imperative (Naas 2003, p.79).

Hoye and Nienass reflect that for Germany ‘the Holocaust is not included in the political sphere directly, instead it is the core from which reflection, new self-images, and the political can circulate’ (2014, p.431) – a statement which could easily also be made about the EU. This model of responsibility (of the past in relation to the future) has been absorbed into the structures and practices of the EU memory canon, based in part on the ‘German model’ of cultures of memory as collective atonement (see Rigney 2012, pp.614-615). In fact, the integration of the Holocaust into the history of the EU as a ‘founding myth’, can be seen as an attempt to encompass an Arendtian notion of ‘freedom’ into its being. Keenan’s analysis of freedom in Arendt’s work is apt here:

freedom needs the support of political foundations to be more than an occasional or marginal occurrence; yet such foundations, unless they somehow are able to build within themselves a respect for the fragile, unpredictable temporality of freedom, threaten to assist in its forgetting (Keenan 1994, p.300).

Although Arendt was writing in the abstract, rather than in relation to the EU, her support of post-war European integration as a potential solution to the crisis of World War II and the Holocaust (Verovsek 2014, pp.405, 408) adds to the resonance of these ideas in relation to the European memory politics. The idea of mourning the losses of the Holocaust, taking responsibility for its future memory and building political structures on these foundations turns a negative founding myth into a positive narrative of overcoming difficulty to create a better future, and so connects to Arendt’s promise.

The EU then, could be said to have been founded in relation to remembering the loss of freedom caused by World War II and the Holocaust, so that the sense of responsibility to preserve that memory into the future, through the ‘never again’ motto, constitutes an Arendtian ‘mutual promise’ which:

extends power into the future, thus giving it duration. This extension into the future simultaneously gives power – and with it the political community – a past by giving it the time for memory (Keenan 1994, p.307).

The intangible nature of this ‘promise’ can be seen simultaneously as its power and its weakness – it allows the community (whether the political community or the populous) to see it as a moral or quasi-religious directive for creating a new future, and yet, as with much religious doctrine, it is hard to pin down or to define clearly. This inherent paradox is also mirrored in the ‘never-again’ narrative of Holocaust memory. Here a complex mass of events, places and people have become subsumed into a single moral directive for the future – one which is all encompassing and even overwhelming, yet hard to position against (in the sense of a multidirectional rather than a relativist approach) other possible genocides or mass atrocities.

Over time, both the Arendtian promise and the so-called German model of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) have been challenged as a result of wider political and social developments – both in Germany (since the Historians’ Dispute of the 1980s raised by Habermas and Nolte, documented in Augstein 1987) and across Europe. Time does not stand still, therefore new difficult heritages and memories continue to be created even within Europe, while ‘old’ difficult heritages and previously hidden memories may emerge more strongly than before as the European discourses change and adapt. Memory and heritage operate within both the physical *and* metaphysical realms of time and place, where compressions and expansions of time connect to the strength of difficulty, affective power and perceptions of injustice. Multidirectionality would appear to be more important than ever in approaching the difficult memories, heritages and ongoing structural inequalities within Europe which have resulted from Colonialism, for example. The future difficult heritages and memories of migration and refugeism, being created across and at the edges of Europe as we write make the present as difficult as the past (see Whitehead 2017), if not more so. As part of the recent increase nationalist and populist politics and discourse across Europe, which can be seen in Hungary, Poland, and the UK with Brexit for example, we find another paradox. In these cases, both pro- and anti-EU political actors have brought the ‘founding myth’ and ‘promise’ of Europe into play for opposing purposes:

defenders of the European project used the Nazi past as a cautionary tale against division; meanwhile, EU discontents interested in recovering a mythical national sovereignty tried to suggest that the EU was comparable to Nazi expansionism (Whitehead 2017).

This highlights the ways in which political actors across Europe and beyond have adopted the models of historical consciousness used within democratic societies to further populist and far-right agendas (Levi and Rothberg 2018), underlining the paradoxical nature of contemporary political, memory and heritage discourses. Simultaneously, in what has been described as a ‘post-truth’ era, where the phrase ‘fake news’ is not only heard from the political margins but instead is at the heart of some governments, the challenge facing democratic societies internationally is one of *trust* (see Sztompka 2000 for analysis of cultures of trust). The paradoxical multi-dimensional nature of European memory and heritage today, placed in conjunction with the EU motto of ‘unity in diversity’ and European heritage instruments (see chapter 3) which aim to celebrate commonality, might – rather ironically – be seen as factors in the erosion of trust and appearance of distrust.

The paradox of the Holocaust as both singular and universal memory

Beyond the positioning of the Holocaust as the ‘founding myth’ of the European Union, the different ways in which it has been integrated into European memory creates the first ‘difficult heritage paradox’ of Europe.

Although embedded within World War II as European history, the Holocaust was experienced differently in each country and is remembered differently in various European countries (for historical and contemporary political reasons). As pointed out by Calligaro (2015) and Kaiser and Storeide (2018) however, the differences between these national and local histories have been problematic for attempts to integrate multiple national memories into a European memory framework, whether in relation to collective remembrance, education or soft-power Europeanisation. The idea of the ‘German model’, considered to be at the heart of European Holocaust remembrance, is itself criticised by some involved in Holocaust memory in Germany. Jasch points out that the long and challenging process of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* (working through the past) is still unfinished, even in Germany where the Historian’s Debate of the 1980s highlighted the need for and provoked an open-ended process of working-through. He says: “today Germany is often regarded as a champion in reworking the past and as a model, but if you look at it more closely, you will see that this has been quite a difficult and thorny road of denial, of silence and really a matter for the third generation to actually confront these crimes more openly” (Jasch pers. comm. Nov. 2018).

Responsibility for the Holocaust and its memory within Europe has been seen as not only a German responsibility, but also as the responsibility of the whole of Europe – for a collective future after conflict – despite the fact that the specific histories, memories and affective positions are very different for each country within Europe. Layered onto this, the significance and symbolism of the Holocaust tends to be presented as *singular* – unique within history – as well as *universal* – pertaining to all people, in all places. This contradiction or paradox lies at the core of recent challenges to the official narrative of memory and heritage in Europe as being premised on the Holocaust, framed within a western-European understanding of that history. International norms of commemoration and the place of the Holocaust in education have both been established as part of Europeanisation processes (Kaiser and Storeide 2018). Simultaneously, the notion of the Holocaust’s universality has been criticised (notably by Finkelstein 2003) for de-personalising, displacing and potentially exploiting the suffering of millions in order to further transnational political or financial agendas while enabling other human rights violations to go unacknowledged.

Sites such as the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin or Auschwitz Memorial and Museum in Poland, while both inextricably linked to the singularity, authenticity and places of the Holocaust, attract visitors from across the world who may see the Holocaust as part of a wider, more universal and less localised history of humanity. For both institutions, it is crucial to have the ability to provide evidence and authenticity, in addition to their educational purpose around the Holocaust as a key part of Nazism and of great significance

for German, Polish and European history. One of the means by which they each achieve this is to take a dual focus – one which in fact mirrors the singular/universal paradox. Firstly, there is a focus on the huge scale of the mass atrocities committed within the Holocaust; and secondly on the individuals implicated within the decision to implement the Final Solution (as at Wannsee) or the personal stories, objects and biographies of those murdered (as at Auschwitz). In doing so, both sites combine the notion of the universal with that of the singular, layering both parts of the paradox into the visitor experience.

This approach to display, interpretation and education enables visitors to simultaneously grasp the almost unfathomable magnitude of the Holocaust while also being moved to see both victims and perpetrators not as either part of a faceless mass or as monsters, but rather as individuals. At Wannsee, Jasch describes that many visitors assume that:

...these were monsters, because they were accomplices in a monstrous crime. But we also wanted to show that they were indeed ordinary men, that there was nothing which presupposed them to become *genocidaires*, which is the more troubling thing because it tells us that this can happen to anybody (pers. comm. Nov. 2018).

Presenting the banal administrative processes and individual people involved in deciding the fate of others is a key component of their strategy to make the Holocaust relevant and to show how the actions of individuals can destroy the lives of millions: ‘we can actually show [...] that the Holocaust was mainstreamed into the normal working administration and became a normal matter of daily work for many people working in the civil service’ (Jasch, pers. comm. Nov. 2018). The director of the Oslo Centre for Holocaust Studies and Religious Minorities, in the context of Norwegian complicity, confirms the importance of showing: ‘that the perpetrators and the victims were Norwegians, and not these strangers, not only dehumanised victims and not monsters, and they coexisted before and coexisted afterwards’ (Hjeltnes, pers. comm. March 2018). Arendt’s idea of the ‘banality of evil’ (see Bergen 1998) is transferred here from her personal understanding of the crimes to a strategic method for presenting evidence of these crimes to the public. The singular individual perpetrator is shown to become part of a universally banal Holocaust administrative system, which in turn dehumanises individual victims of the Holocaust. These individuals – both perpetrators and victims – who form part of the ‘universal’ heritage and memory of the Holocaust, are now being re-represented as singular individuals by sites such as Wannsee in an effort to create a simultaneously collective *and* individual sense of responsibility.

< FIG8.1 AROUND HERE >

A similar combining of the universal and singular can also be found at Auschwitz Memorial and Museum. The site is in two parts – Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau – the first includes exhibits and objects on display which make the personal, human, everyday lives of those incarcerated there stand out to the visitor (Mensfelt 2018). Visitors walk through a corridor where framed photographs of individual prisoners line the sides of the walls. Further inside, in addition to the famous cases containing the masses of shoes, suitcases, glasses, artificial limbs, and bundles and bundles of human hair, visitors see the objects individuals brought with them: a comb, some cooking implements, tins of face cream or pomade, a

baby's toy. In this way, the individuality and *singularity* of the victims in amongst the huge numbers is brought out. In Auschwitz II-Birkenau no objects are exhibited: instead, the huge scale of the site, with its many wooden barrack buildings, each containing multiple sets of basic wooden bunks, the communal wash houses, and the ruins of the crematoria confront visitors in a way which both profoundly shocks and also enables them to transpose the individual objects seen in Auschwitz I onto this huge scale. To see the individuals through their objects, and then be faced not only with the enormity of the crime, but with the huge scale of it on the site is an extremely powerful juxtaposition of the singular with the universal.

The trend for current research on the Holocaust to take a new *differentiated universality* into account – where the specificity of local histories is intertwined with the universal message – has been noted as the new direction of research (Jasch, pers. comm. Nov. 2018). However, despite this, the universality narrative is also challenged by a tendency to see it as somehow in competition with other difficult histories, memories and heritages of Europe. A decline in knowledge of the Holocaust noted by researchers and reported in the press recently (Wall 2019, Schoen 2019) is seen in less simplistic terms by Jasch:

people generally, especially German visitors, generally feel that they are very well informed about the Holocaust. There's actually even a certain sense of 'Holocaust fatigue' almost, but there is a big gap between the actual knowledge and the 'felt' knowledge [...] perceived knowledge about the Holocaust (Jasch, pers. comm. Nov. 2018).

This is occurring at a time not only of generational change, which moves the Holocaust from lived memory to the realm of history, but also during a time of increased communication and the rapid spread of (mis)information through social media, online fora and such like. The complexities of the multiplicity of information, combined with a decrease of 'actual' knowledge, also relate to the political and spatio-temporal dimensions in operation, and the different actors involved in potentially competitive "epistemic framing", where the universalist language of transnational Holocaust memory is re-used to integrate anti-totalitarian memory into the European heritage frame (Büttner and Delius 2015).

Furthermore, the notion of 'competing memories' and other challenges to the Holocaust as the universal 'founding myth' of Europe, many of which occurred following the end of the Cold War, have created a multiplicity of approaches to European heritages of difficulty. Although the Holocaust "is, by definition, a European issue" (Jasch pers. comm. Nov. 2018) and has 'not replaced other traumatic memories around the globe but [...] provided a language for their articulation' (Assmann 2007, p.14), the multiplicity of experiences has created a challenge at the European level:

we have contrasting memories, but there is sometimes competition about victimisation issues, especially when it comes to Stalinist crimes in Central or Eastern Europe, which are also more recent than the Holocaust [...] you have these multiple levels of history you have to somehow deal with and you have to reconcile. You cannot privilege one over the other" (Jasch, pers. comm. Nov. 2018).

<FIG 8.2 AROUND HERE>

The paradox of the singular *and* universal European memory of the Holocaust, while providing museums and heritage sites with opportunities to engage visitors on multiple levels, also both complicates and forms a foundation for further paradoxical frames of European heritage.

The paradox of shared and divided heritage

The second heritage paradox of Europe is that of the histories and memories which are both *shared* and *divided* by European populations. Firstly, these are *divided* in the sense that nations have been at war with one another, borders changed and populations moved from one place to another, and yet *shared* as despite the different experiences and allegiances of the past, the same histories, sites and events are being remembered. Secondly, the ways in which these memory practices themselves are undertaken is *both shared and divided*, often according to contemporary politics rather than due to the histories themselves.

<FIG 8.3 AROUND HERE>

Schloss Cecilienhof, one of the Foundation of Prussian Palaces and Gardens sites and location of the 1945 Potsdam Conference, is a case in point of shared yet divided history. Here, an awareness of differing political perspectives on the past – and over time - is included within the site's current interpretation scheme. This has to take into account not only the events of the Potsdam conference itself, but the fact that 'the *assessment* of events surrounding the Potsdam Conference has been in flux over the course of decades' (anon. P1 pers. comm., added emphasis) as a result of the changing geopolitics of Europe with the Cold War, division and reunification of Germany, the European Union, and so on (anon. P1 pers. comm. Nov, 2017). So, the ongoing challenge is one of presenting a shared yet divided heritage, which has been repeatedly disrupted by changes in the epistemic framing, and which is still present in lived memory. As the staff member at Cecilienhof points out:

there are still many people coming here whose personal destiny was altered due to the Potsdam Conference. This first of all pertains to millions of Germans, but also Polish nationals who had to seek a new home due to the western shift of Poland (ibid).

In response to this challenge the interpretative panels and tour guides at Cecilienhof provide archival and visual evidence of the multiperspectivity of this shared heritage – presenting two contrasting narratives together to provoke a deeper reflection among visitors. Staff recount the difficulties some visitors have in reconciling not only opposing narratives on the same situation, but also in reconciling their pre-existing epistemic frames with a multiperspectival one (ibid). The staff at Cecilienhof thereby offer the visitor the opportunity to grasp the paradox of a shared/divided heritage by embedding it within the site's interpretative scheme. Such multiperspectivity is perhaps an integral part of the more recent post-reunification iterations of the 'German model' of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*, evident in other German sites researched during the CoHERE project (including the Berlin Wall Memorial at Bernauer Strasse and the Military History Museum in Dresden), but it still appears to challenge those

framing heritage policy and memory narratives at the European level (as discussed in Chapter 3, Kaiser 2015, Settele 2015 and Neumeyer 2015). Instead, the ‘official’ European narratives focus primarily on the notions of celebrating unity and of a common culture (Kaiser 2017) while drawing attention away from the more difficult aspects of Europe’s shared yet divided past – other than the Holocaust.

The end of the Cold War, emergence of democracy in central and Eastern Europe and the expansion of the EU eastwards in 2004 and 2007 provoked a challenge to the Holocaust as *the* founding myth of Europe. Pressure to integrate not only eastern European nations into the EU, but also their histories and memory provided a competing founding myth – that of overcoming Communism (Neumayer 2015). Other atrocities, dictatorships and the sites, memories and objects associated with them therefore needed to be included within a ‘new’ European memory narrative for a new post-Communist age, which spoke to citizens in those countries and to which they could attach their experiences and memories, as part of strategic Europeanisation.

Adding new layers of history to create a multivalent European founding myth of anti-totalitarianism has also generated polarising simplifications - rather than multiperspectivity’s constructive complications – of ‘difficult’ history, seen as essential by our interviewees at all the sites. Here lies the paradox of memories which are *both shared and divided*, according to the politics of commemorative practices.

Firstly, we find a trend towards the commemoration of victims (Clarke 2018), focussed on what we term *embedded victimhood*, where an entire identity is presented publicly as a victim, with no agency, no complexity, and no hint of potentially conflicting realities. Secondly, there is a trend towards the undifferentiated celebration of ‘heroes’ in a similarly simplistic manner. Both seem politically driven in order to focus on the ‘grand narratives’ often found in connection with ‘founding myths’ of nations, despite their use within a transnational, European frame. This trend can be found in some museums, notably the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk (see Clarke and Duber 2018 for a comprehensive analysis of the politics behind the origins of this museum and Bogumił et al for comparative analyses of museums in eastern Europe). Changes imposed on this museum – through political interference – both to its overall narrative and most notably to the film in its closing section (anon. G1 former staff member pers. comm. Nov. 2018), leave visitors with a strongly nationalistic, heroic perspective on Poland during and after World War II (chapter 6 this volume, see also Ciobanu 2017, Michalska 2017, Waszak 2018). While victim/hero simplifications can to some extent be found in official EU narratives for heritage instruments including the European Heritage Label, the nationalist tendencies of such simplifications can be minimised by the staff responsible for individual sites (for example, the Gdańsk Shipyard and European Solidarity Centre discussed in chapters 3 and 7).

The challenge then, in museum and heritage sites which deal with long-standing histories of conflict and entanglements between countries, is to present the past in a way which does not – as the recent political interventions in Gdańsk do – foreground a nationalistic, or one-sided perspective of the past in relation to the present or future. Instead the approach common to the other sites analysed is based on a combination of factual neutrality and multiperspectivity:

‘an open interpretation [...] without a commentary, it becomes clear to each visitor: you can find a justification for each point of view. In the end, it is a question of weighing up the facts.’ (Anon. P1, pers. comm. Nov. 2017). However, while Cecilienhof is politically supported in presenting an open interpretation to international visitors, museums which exist within more restrictive political regimes are not so fortunate. Predicting future political interference, the Gdańsk Museum was originally advertised with the slogan ‘see it before they close it’ (Ciobanu 2017). The subsequent dismissal of the original director and other staff, a political appointee as new director, and changes made to the exhibitions and media content of the museum all focussed on the new nationalistic narrative focussing on the combined commemoration of Polish victimhood and celebration of Polish heroes (anon. G1 former staff member, pers. comm. Nov 2018). These are echoed in the language and content of the short English language guidebook to the museum, titled ‘Poland First to Fight’ (Kopka & Kosiński 2018) and published following the changes. While the impact on the museum’s main exhibition was still relatively limited in late 2018 (anon. G1 former staff member pers. comm. Nov 2018), there is an expectation that more changes will be introduced in future which further redirect the narrative towards Polish victims and Polish heroes (ibid).

The paradox of a *shared and divided* heritage – which is just within living memory – and which has different political valences across European space is becoming increasingly evident. National myths have reappeared as significant factors within contemporary memory and political discourses in Hungary, Poland, Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, where they are being re-appropriated by new nationalist or populist movements. The apparent inability of the European Union to successfully integrate different national memories of post-Communist and post-Cold War heritage into a reworked European consciousness (Settele 2015, Büttner and Delius 2015, Kaiser 2017), building on the original founding myth of the Holocaust, reflects a growing sense of distrust towards the idea of a common European identity (Kaiser 2015). Although multiple attempts have been made at the European level to achieve commonality, the paradoxical nature of Europe’s difficult heritage, combined with the underlying paradox of democracy (Sztompka 2000) appear to be factors in their failure. At the same time, the fact that these contests over the place of particular memories in a European identity and heritage take place at all, and are played out in relation to different dynamics of politics and society, highlight the significance of Europe’s difficult heritage.

The paradox of belonging to European time and place

The third paradox in this investigation relates to *which heritage and memory* counts as belonging to Europe – as well as *where, when* and *why*. As the balance of social awareness has shifted towards recognising the ongoing impact of Europe’s involvement with and effect on people, places, histories and memories beyond Europe’s geographical or political borders, so too has the cultural expectation that heritage within Europe – which is inevitably shaped by such historical and contemporary entanglements of power – should address and respond to contemporary concerns of historical responsibility (Calligaro 2015, Büttner and Delios 2015). Paradigm shifts, such as this, often arouse paradoxical responses among the general public, political, social and cultural actors. As Settele (2015) also highlights, the recent paradigm

shift in European memory has focussed around narratives of diversity, tied particularly to the marginalisation of narratives of perceived ‘non-European others’, through for example migration and post-colonialism.

The paradox which resides within this attempt at multidirectionality is twofold. Firstly, it may be seen as offering enrichment to Europe through a *plurality of memory* – in other words, by seeing more events as steps or milestones along a path of progress towards defining a new European democracy. Secondly, it may be considered as highlighting a struggle over a perceived *hierarchy of memory*, articulated along various battle lines. For example, geographic distinctions between East and West, between left-wing and right-wing, or between revisionist and progressive. Echoing the challenges analysed already, here the paradox of belonging builds on the foundations of the previous European heritage paradoxes, with a heightened focus on the ‘policing’ of Europe’s difficult heritage and memory.

One such example is the European response to what may be loosely termed ‘the Armenian question’. A history of paramount importance to Europe, not only as Western European actors were involved in the deaths of Armenians during World War I, but also as political recognition or rejection of this as a *genocide* is entangled within the political relationship between the EU and Turkey (as a candidate state for EU membership). The Turkish state has repeatedly denied that what it prefers to call the ‘Events of 1915’ constitute a genocide (*soykırım*).

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In 2005, after considerable pressure from Armenian and diaspora pressure groups, Turkey proposed a ‘Joint Historical Committee’, which would include historians from Turkey and Armenia to investigate the shared issue of 1915. In the declaration by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), it was stated that ‘those who think it is possible to impose on Turkey to rebuild its history on one-sided and misleading assessment of propaganda material through a campaign of intense international pressure and those who make their calculations on this presumption are totally mistaken, and declares that this, ‘under no circumstances, will ever happen’ and ‘If Armenia wishes to establish good neighborly [sic] relations with Turkey and develop a basis for cooperation, it should not hesitate to accept Turkey’s proposal for a joint evaluation of history.’¹ It is not our purpose to deliberate on the reality or not of an ‘Armenian Genocide’ – any use of the term is political and is a matter of complex legal, diplomatic and civil deliberations (notably, the 2013 case of *Perinçek vs Switzerland* before the European Court of Human Rights²). Instead, we aim to understand it as a mobile and contested idea that circulates within memory debates and practices and configures, and is configured by, international relations.

¹ http://www.mfa.gov.tr/declaration-by-the-turkish-grand-national-assembly_-supporting-the-turkish-proposal-to-form-a-joint-historical-commission-with.en.mfa. In 2007 the government’s Centre for Strategic Research issued a related report questioning the validity of the term ‘genocide’.

(<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/DISPOLITIKA/ErmeniIddialari/ArmenianGenocideFactsandFiguresRevised.pdf>)
² <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-158235>

In 2015 – a century after the deaths of 1915 – Armenia entered a sombre and emotional ballad into the Eurovision Song Contest³, initially entitled *Don't Deny*. Performed by the band *Genealogy*, whose members had been assembled from Armenia and places of Armenian diaspora, it was accompanied by a video linking past and present. In the video, a multigenerational early twentieth-century Armenian family poses for a formal group photograph. Interspersed with images of the photograph being taken, we see the singers – in the modern day – walk around a film set of a bleak forest, dressed in black and adorned with badges showing the faces of the family members from the group portrait. Later in the video the photographic tableaux recurs, but the family members disappear one by one, until only empty chairs remain. Finally, the members of *Genealogy* take their places in the chairs vacated by the historic Armenian family.

The lyrics directly addressed a second person ‘you’ [the listener], who should ‘face every shadow that you denied’. The Eurovision website stated that the song’s theme was ‘universal values’ (echoing the paradigmatic universality of the Holocaust) and that its message was:

Happiness is born when people are united and live in harmony with themselves, their families, love relationships and so on. Generations are shifting with time but the genealogy remains, thus the values of love and peace are stable.⁴

Notwithstanding this anodyne rhetoric and the apparent attempt of the Eurovision organisers to de-politicise the song, controversy ensued because of perceptions that the Armenian state was seeking to convey political content through the song. Although there was no mention of this in broadcasts of the competition, online commentators as well as officials from other countries understood the nuance of the references: the iconography of the empty chairs, associated with remembrance, together with the ambiguous lyrics and, of course, the timing of the entry in 2015 (Denham 2015). Under pressure from criticism, not least because Eurovision rules say that no promotion of political causes is admissible, the song title was changed from *Don't Deny* to *Face the Shadow*.

If the difficult history of the Holocaust has become a commonplace – literally, in the case of the negative founding myth – then the fate of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915 is one of a number of ‘hot memories’ situated both *within and outside of* Europe (Pakier and Wawrzyniak 2016:9), highlighting the ways in which different dimensions of heritage and memory intersect and interact in spatio-temporal flux. Returning to the discussions earlier in this chapter, the notion that the German sense of memory as responsibility for the past and atonement somehow makes Germans ‘better Europeans than their European neighbours’ (Hoye and Nienass 2014, p.437) is particularly interesting in the context of Armenia, given the involvement of Germans and other European nations within the Armenian genocide.

As a construct, the ‘Armenian Genocide’ necessarily sits relationally with the Holocaust, as the mission of the Armenian Genocide Museum makes clear (‘the first Genocide of the 20th Century’⁵, which is an implicit reference to later genocides, obviously including the

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVVvgD0-Mu0>

⁴ <https://eurovision.tv/story/armenia-watch-the-video-of-don-t-deny>

⁵ <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/statement.php>

Holocaust). This also extends to the techniques of managing difficult history in the present – the question of whether a form of ‘coming to terms with the past’ (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) should be extended as an obligation to Turkey, has been mooted by powerful political actors in relation to EU accession (e.g. Michel Barnier⁶) Although Turkey rejects it as a precondition of accession, there remains a sense in which admission of culpability would represent a helpfully ‘European’ behaviour, not least because of the German Parliament’s Recognition of the ‘Armenian Genocide’ in 2016, which led to deep tensions with Turkey. The resolution makes very clear the discursive and ethical link with Holocaust memory practice:

Germany's own historical experience shows how difficult it is for a society to face the dark chapters of its own past. However, an honest appraisal of history is the most important basis for reconciliation within a society as well as with others. A distinction has to be made between the guilt of the perpetrators and the responsibility of those alive today. The remembrance of the past also reminds us to stay alert and to prevent that hatred and destruction threaten people and nations over and over again.⁷

The sense of a German – and more recently a wider European – responsibility and duty towards the history and memory of the Armenian Genocide (very much in the sense of Arendt’s *promise*, which we saw earlier in relation to the Holocaust), is also integral to the Lepsiushaus in Potsdam – a museum and research institute, which opened in 2011 as a Research Centre for Genocide Studies, in the former home of Johannes Lepsius. Lepsius set up the Armenian Relief Society and the German-Armenian Society in the wake of the massacres of Armenians in the late 1890s, later supporting Armenians fleeing from the 1915/16 killings. His 1919 book analysing German official documents about the massacre of the Armenians from World War I draws out the complicity of German and other European national officials: ‘this whole collection speaks the language of ‘helping’ but doing nothing during the Armenian Genocide. So, the role of Germany is not very good’ (Knocke, pers. comm. February 2018). Interconnections between Armenian, German and European history are brought up by a staff member of the Lepsiushaus when describing the background to Lepsius’ book *Armenia and Europe*. He points out that it was translated into English, Russian and French among other European languages, as a means of sharing the information not only about the killings but also about ‘the Western European great powers and their silence about it’ (Knocke, pers. comm. February 2018) with a wider public. The paradox of European complicity in a difficult heritage, which is temporally and geographically situated *beyond* the European Union, but from which a significant diaspora now resides *within* the EU could be described as a ‘time-travelling’ (Pettersson and Holtorf 2017, pp.4-6) heritage and memory.

<FIG 8.4 AROUND HERE>

⁶ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4092933.stm>

⁷ An unofficial translation of the resolution is available at https://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.528/current_category.7/affirmation_detail.html

The absence of contemporary recognition of European responsibility is a key motivation for the Houshamadyan project (of which more in a moment): ‘if European countries were part of WWI then it’s time for them to show some interest in Armenian history and research’ (Tachjian, pers. comm. November 2018) as well the Lepsiushaus (Knocke, pers.comm. February 2018). In Germany, it seems that this is more challenging than in other European countries (ibid):

there is this narrative of the Holocaust, of the Shoah and, of course it’s important, but if you compare, you don’t relativise. So, that’s the idea behind [...] the thinking that we don’t do this and we have to be very careful. Also, the older generation of professors, as you know, they grew up with all this historic strife and all these debates so they are very, very careful in what they do (Knocke, pers. comm. February 2018).

< FIG 8.5 AROUND HERE >

The online Houshamadyan project – an ‘unofficial’ heritage and memory site, or ‘imaginary archive’ (Baronian in De Cesari and Rigney 2014, p.80) takes up this issue of the entanglement of European responsibility for the Armenian past, present and future. By creating virtual ‘memory books’ (indeed this is the translation of the project’s name) of places and homes that have been left behind – connecting people, place, objects, memories and identities through time and space – the project highlights both their absences and the more abstract absence of recognition for Armenia in the official European heritage and memoryscape. Contributors mainly come from Armenian diaspora communities across Europe, and the main organiser of the project, emphasises how heterogeneous these individuals are, despite their collective identity as Armenians, as a result of their connections to different European identities and due to generational changes (Tachjian, pers. comm. 2018). This very entanglement of Armenian and European identities is at the root not only of the Houshamadyan project, but also of the paradoxical histories and future responsibilities which connect Europe with communities beyond its borders, such as Armenia:

It was the First World War [...] the European countries were very much involved in what was going on in the Ottoman Empire [...] So what happened in 1915 was also you can consider it as responsibility of not only of Turkey, but also of the central powers [Germany, Austria and Hungary and the Ottoman Empire] they were very much present [...] Even the [Ottoman] army was sometimes commanded by German officers. But it was in the interest of Germany not to talk about it at that time and to keep silent and not in any way to forbid Turkey to take that kind of fundamental action against the Armenians. Of course, it is also German heritage, the genocide.’ (Tachjian, pers. comm. 2018).

In one sense, both of these initiatives are outside of the mainstream. One is a relatively small house museum on the edges of Berlin, and the other is a website that is hardly imprinted on wider public consciousness, however well-resourced (it is funded by the Gulbenkian Foundation). At the same time, the website is a collective endeavour, with contents crowdsourced by members of the Armenian memory community internationally. The

continued relevance to younger generations is evident not only from the contributions being made to the Houshamadyan project, but also in the interest in teaching materials on the Armenian Genocide provided by the Lepsiushaus to local schools – including schools where many students’ parents or grandparents may originally be from Turkey (Knocke, pers. comm. February 2018). Equally, Knocke reports that of the groups visiting the Lepsiushaus ‘a lot of groups are very Islamophobic and this is equal to Turkish-phobic’ (pers. comm. February 2018). Such a polarization of public attitudes and general knowledge about Turkey and Armenia is in many ways comparable with some European attitudes towards forced displacement and conflicts today, enabling the Lepsiushaus staff to focus discussions on ‘this kind of perpetrator discussion and these kind of survivor stories and of course [...] this connection between the German silencing during World War I and the contemporary politics’ (Knocke, pers. comm. February 2018). So, the paradox of time-travelling returns in both cases here – *when* a past counts as a European responsibility – intersects with that of place-hopping – *where* a particular past or present is made relevant *to* and *for* Europe. While post-colonialism and migration may have been taken up by the official European heritage actors in terms of expanded, multidirectional memory narratives and heritage practices, this also serves to highlight that which continues to be absent. In order to strengthen the ‘culture of trust’ (Sztompka 2000) which is at the heart of democratic communities, further absences within the European heritage record – including that of the ‘Armenian Genocide’ – and the distrust which arises from such absences will need to be acknowledged in future.

The future of difficult memory in Europe?

The mythologising and instrumentalization of selective memories by different European nations – in different ways at different times – can be seen critically as a form of strategic memory use on the part of political actors. Particular narratives emerge from such selective approaches to the past, which are directed to fit a contemporary political, social or cultural purpose. This is evident both in relation to Holocaust memory and Cold War memory – where in many European nations the perpetrator or collaborator within the chosen community is pushed to the edges of the officially sanctioned memory myth. Instead, the memory community is presented primarily as being either victims or as resisters, rather than consisting also of perpetrators, or even recognising the limits of such a binary approach to the roles of individuals in shaping, responding to and acting within events in the past:

Myths arise when partial memories supported by experience are claimed as the homogenous and exclusive memory for the national collective, while memories deemed inappropriate are excluded from the national discourse and expunged from the collective self-image (Assmann, 2007, p. 16)

The picture across Europe is inevitably more complex, more differentiated and more nuanced than this over-arching notion of a European memory concept allows. The significance of loss, absence and trauma, in particular, but not only in relation to, the Holocaust, remains central to a pan-European memory, heritage and identity frame, whether on the official European level, or in more local, regional, national or transnational levels. Interconnections between

past collective experiences of difficulty and contemporary notions of potential threats or risks (where future difficulty is implicit) are evident within narratives relating to Europe, whether pro- or anti-EU. Individual, collective or imagined connections to difficult histories (Macdonald 2009, 2013), with the particular attachments and specificities that arise from these, shape the emotional response to contemporary identities within Europe and relate to the way in which different aspects of the past are shared or lost within the European heritage narrative. The notion of ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ heritage (Maier 2002) is evident in the cases analysed, in relation to the strength of the difficulty within the present. As our interviewee at Cecilienhof points out, that despite the passage of time, the history of the events of the Potsdam Conference:

is something that still moves people, it is not something that actually fades away into the annals of history. That moment has not yet arrived. If I compare this with Frederick the Great [who resided at Sanssouci in Potsdam], nobody gets excited anymore about whether he invaded Silesia or not. But the Accords and the events in the aftermath of the Potsdam Conference are still tangible today and present in the minds of subsequent generations [...] (Anon. P1, pers. comm. Nov. 2018).

The significance of time and place is particularly strong – or ‘hot’ – for difficult heritage and memory, and yet they are also *in flux* in the sense that the difficulty often *travels* (Erll 2011) beyond the specificities of real time or actual places.

Three paradoxes have been analysed in this chapter: the paradoxical universality and singularity of the Holocaust; the paradoxical shared and divided memory of Europe in World War II and the Cold War; and the paradoxical spatio-temporal belongings of heritage and memory beyond and yet within Europe. Running alongside these three paradoxes (which we argue lie at the core of European heritage and memory) is the presence of multiperspectivity and multidirectionality – both as theoretical responses to, and also increasing influences on, heritage practice. Their significance has increased not only due to political change, but also particularly due to the passing of the generations of contemporary witnesses, and with the changing social demographics of young people and school students, for whom diversity resulting from the migration of previous generations or from contemporary conflict-induced displacement may be the norm rather than the exception. Museums, memorials, heritage sites and memory organisations are now faced with the new challenge not only of adapting their offer to new generations, but also of responding to contemporary political change, influenced by populism and nationalism. If, as Delanty argues, ‘heritage is often now about how a political community atones for the crimes of the past’ (2018, p.218), how might we look again at Arendt’s *promise* in light of contemporary populist uses of heritage and memory for anti-democratic and divisive purposes? Lemm argues that Arendt’s promise aims to reverse the flow of time (2006) – it aims to enable control over the future, by always returning it first to the past – ensuring that memory is ‘kept alive’ within the roles and responsibilities of the state, so that ‘instead of being born into an uncertain future, one is born into a secured past’ (Lemm 2006). But, despite growing comfort with the discomfiting past – such as the Holocaust, as Macdonald (2013) has argued – this secured past is now also becoming uncertain as a result of contemporary populist attempts at destabilisation.

Taking each paradox briefly in turn, we can see how Macdonald's notion of 'continual unsettlement' (2009, p.192) pertains to the inability to secure pasts, presents or futures. While a focus on both *singularity* and *universality* within the commemoration and memory of the Holocaust as the seminal European heritage and memory complex may have been the necessary means by which to secure the past in order to achieve the renewal and stabilisation of Europe after World War II, the inherent paradox has created its own challenges as time has passed. In order to secure a past which is characterised in the present by a paradoxical *shared heritage of divided memory*, remembrance of the Cold War has been included within the European founding myths and as part of an expanded 'memory complex' (Macdonald 2013). Despite the frequent use of techniques of multiperspectivity to achieve this, it is still subject to contest and re-framing from opposing political perspectives. *Plurality* of the European memory complex, through the inclusion of difficult heritages that might previously have been seen as falling *beyond the European time or space* – such as the 'Armenian Genocide', Colonialism, or contemporary forced displacement and migration – is a further attempt to secure a past which is multidirectional, yet simultaneously *unsettling* of previous concepts of the European past.

The idea that a strategy of selective memory is being played out across multiple dimensions of both time and place in the public cultural sphere influences how the future of Europe is perceived in connection to its memory and heritage. An apparent human predilection for a sense of difficult memory (including actual and perceived loss, injustice, displacement or repression) as an identity frame – whether it is subconscious, unconscious, or entirely strategic – lies at the heart of much of what has been termed the contemporary identity crisis of Europe.

If we continue to consider Arendt's *promise* in relation to contemporary populism and nationalism around Europe, we can see that actors within these political spheres are using the opportunities created by the multi-perspectivity and multidirectionality of memory in their attempts to destabilise not only the past, but to do so in a way which also destabilises the present and the future. The inherent paradox of democracy (Sztompka 2000) becomes evident here in the adoption of cultural, social and political democratic norms by those who stand at the edges of democracy ready to throw stones.

Efforts by educators, historians, museum and heritage professionals, as well as policymakers and politicians to build a collective and contemporary social conscience for the future through an open – a democratic 'culture of trust' (ibid) - approach to the multiple perspectives and directions of European heritage and memory may be at risk from the strategic use of heritage and memory for populist purposes. Hirsch and Spitzer identified this challenge, pointing out that: 'the challenge that such historians still face, of course, is how to defend this enlarged notion of truth without opening the door to revisionism and denial' (2010, p.401). However, they considered that a cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust – one which included the perspectives of perpetrators, bystanders as well as victims, and which made space also for histories of colonialism, genocide and other difficult histories – would enable society to achieve a "universalized archive of memory" for the future (ibid pp. 404-405) through which to prevent future genocides or ethnic cleansing.

Hirsch and Spitzer's conclusion relies not only on the expectation that those presented with personal testimonies of trauma will be moved by them to act, or to prevent others from acting, but also on an optimistic expectation that members of society will encounter these testimonies, by visiting museums, heritage and memorial sites, or exploring historical archives. While one of the most important roles of public history may be to create opportunities for such material to be presented in formats which the widest possible public might engage with meaningfully, it is perhaps expecting too much to rely on this to influence society as a whole against divisive nationalism.

If multiperspectivity and multidirectionality provide a means by which the revisionism and relativisation of the Holocaust for nationalist purposes is not only possible, but somehow becomes almost acceptable (as one of many voices), then a new memory paradigm and heritage approach is surely needed for the future. Delanty argues that 'the absence of certainty and order liberates the past from the misconceptions of the present, including political instrumentalisation, in order that the present can be freed from the errors of the past' (2018, p.219), seeing this as a Derridean opportunity for renewal. However, he appears not to notice the instrumentalisation of the past by those eager to undermine, rather than to recreate a Europe based on plurality – whether of heritages, memories, identities. As such, we could argue that in paying attention to heritage and memory at all, many European populists are creating a new perspective on Arendt's promise – one which does not rest on either accurately remembering, nor on forgetting the past. In some ways, they could be said to be taking on a 'responsibility' for the difficult heritage of Europe, albeit in ways which serve their political purposes rather than as a social act. Their apparent recognition of the power residing within the public act of taking on such a responsibility may be at the core of this shift in rhetoric away from outright Holocaust denial and towards a supposedly differentiated re-appraisal of Europe's difficult heritages, for: 'responsibility is the privilege of those who give and promise to the other and who see in this gift and giving the greatest extension of their power' (Lemm 2006). Theories of 'agonistic memory' (Bull and Hansen 2017) and their proposed usefulness as a means to tackle growing populism, is rather dismissed by those at the forefront of such cultural clashes over the past: 'the idea that you could actually convince the right-wing extremist subculture is a noble idea that was not achieved – it's not possible to deal with people who are only interested in propaganda' (anon D1, pers. comm. February 2018).

While academics may debate the theories of memory in relation to difficult heritages, perhaps offering idealistic suggestions for future memory work, many politicians, museum and heritage professionals are engaged in a challenging process of protecting democratic and open practices of addressing the past, while others may use the structures and affordances of democracy, multi-perspectivity or multidirectionality to further anti-democratic agendas. As our interviewee in Dresden pointed out:

We stand before the question: why are we remembering? Why are we commemorating events? And if there *is* a purpose that will lead us into the future, it is in overcoming the enmities of the past, ensuring long-term reconciliation, developing

an understanding that we need to reject political violence that was responsible for so many tectonic shifts in the 20th century. (anon D1, pers. comm. February 2018).

The idea of a ‘European heritage’ circulates most effectively within the narratives of the European Union and somewhat perversely, within anti-EU populism, but *not* within the heritage sites or public memory interventions in Europe themselves. If the founding myth of Europe and the narrative of ‘unity in diversity’ no longer resonate as they are, then the democratic ‘culture of trust’ (Sztompka 2000) has also lost power. In order to counter the simplification and essentialisation of European heritages and memories, we argue that the paradoxical nature of any ‘European’ heritage needs to be ‘constructively complicated’ – through the taking into account of *differentiated universality*, of paradoxically *shared and divided* heritage, and of time and place as fluid concepts at the core of ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ memories associated with Europe. Otherwise the multiple paradoxes at the heart of European practices of heritage and memory across time and place may be too entangled with the inherent paradox of democracy for a culture of trust to persist - only time will tell.

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Interviews

Hans-Christian Jasch, Director, House of the Wannsee Conference, Berlin, interviewed by Susannah Eckersley in November 2017

Guri Hjeltnes, Director, Centre for Holocaust and Religious Minorities, Oslo, interviewed by Susannah Eckersley and Christopher Whitehead in March 2018

Claudia Lenz, Senior Researcher, Centre for Holocaust and Religious Minorities, Oslo, interviewed by Susannah Eckersley and Christopher Whitehead in March 2018

Anon. P1, senior staff member, Schloss Cecilienhof, Stiftung Preussischer Schlösser und Gärten, Potsdam, interviewed by Susannah Eckersley in November 2017

Roy Knocke, Researcher, Lepsiushaus Potsdam, interviewed by Gönül Bozoğlu and Susannah Eckersley in February 2018

Vahe Tachjian, Houshamadyan, interviewed by Gönül Bozoğlu in November 2018

Anon. G1, former staff member at the Museum of the Second World War, Gdańsk, interviewed by Susannah Eckersley in November 2018

Anon. D1, staff member at Saxon Ministry of Education and Science, Dresden interviewed by Susannah Eckersley in February 2018