Politics of commemoration and memory

John E. Richardson & Tommaso M. Milani

Introduction

Commenting on the spatial turn in applied linguistics, Clare Kramsch (2018: 114) forcefully proposes that "a post-structuralist focus on Space must be supplemented by a post-modern concern with Time". Inspired by Deleuze's (1992) work on power, she goes on to state that "without a humanistic sense of history, the wide open spaces of our translingual practices could easily be turned into societies of control" (Kramsch 2018: 114). Admittedly, Kramsch's critique is directed specifically towards the spatial metaphors of possibilities used by (some) applied linguists when analysing linguistic phenomena in digital environments. However, we believe that her comments are a powerful reminder of the analytical importance of time for applied linguistic research.

It is precisely time and its political and ideological dimensions that are brought under investigation in this chapter. More specifically, we focus on struggles about remembering and commemoration. This is with the aim to marry an applied linguistic concern with "real-world problems in which language is a central issue" (Brumfit 1995: 27) with an ever-expanding number of studies examining the ways that the past is variously represented, 'remembered' and made material (as, *inter alia*, street names, museums, monuments and other memorials) in public (see Ben-Rafael & Shohamy 2016; Blackwood and MacAlister 2019 on memory and memorialisation in linguistic landscape research). National pasts have been particularly scrutinised, focusing on whether it is possible for a nation to 'remember' its past at all and, if so, the role that such 'collective memory' can play in national and political cultures.

In what follows we begin with an overview of key academic discussions about remembering and collective memory; we then move on to present the discursive ingredients in acts of memorialisation, before presenting two very different case studies that illustrate the politics of commemoration.

Memory and remembering

Memory is a concept that is simultaneously easy to comprehend and elusive to define. Norman (1970), for example, lists twenty-five categories of psychological memory alone. However, since the work of Tulving (1972), it has been commonly accepted to consider individual memory as being constituted by "two information processing systems" (p.385): episodic memory and semantic memory, which are acquired, respectively, through experience and semiosis. "Episodic memory receives and stores information about temporally dated episodes and events [...] and it is always stored in terms of its autobiographical reference" (p.385) – that is, episodic memories are our memories of our own personal experiences. Semantic memory, on the other hand, "is the memory necessary for the use of language [...The] organized knowledge a person possesses about words and other verbal symbols, their meaning and referents" (p.386). In other words, semantic memories are memories "of meanings, understandings and other concept-based knowledge" (Gavriely-Nuri 2013: 49). The two systems of memory overlay each other, to the extent that we may sometimes remember the moment that we learnt something (and so an episodic memory is the moment we acquired a new semantic memory); equally, our episodic memories can be shaped and/or distorted by being exposed to others' accounts of the same or related events. What should be clear from the above summary is that language use is central to both episodic and semantic memories.

The concept of memory has since been stretched by a range of additional concepts, including "collective memory" (Halbwachs 1992 [1925]), "collected memory" (Young 1993, 2000), "collective remembrance" (Winter 2006; see also Winter and Sivan, 1999), "cultural memory" (Ben-Amos and Weissberg, 1999), "communicative memory" (Assmann 2006) "social memory", "public memory" and "vernacular memory" (see Kansteiner 2002). Pearce (2014: 4) suggests that the "objects of interest within memory studies are the exchange, interaction and relationship of memory between individuals." Communication, and semiosis more broadly, are central to these personal and inter-personal processes of memory exchange and interaction, with individual memory involving "interior communication' within someone's mind" and collective memory requiring "an act of communication among people" (Gavriely-Nuri 2013: 51).

Of all these concepts, collective memory is the most widely used definitional term, however it is still "poorly understood in contemporary academic discourse" (Wertsch & Roediger 2008: 318). Indeed, the "conceptual haziness" at the heart of some studies suggest that – for some – collective memory is an academic buzzword, a fashionable way to badge research on cultural history, historical identities and historical consciousness (Fogu & Kansteiner 2006). First suggested by Halbwachs (1992 [1925]), collective memory is predicated on the idea "it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize and localize their memories" (p.38). Accordingly, collective memory refers to both the process through which (individual, psychological) memories are acquired, and the ways that these mnemonic products are shared, circulated and become more or less 'settled' within a group of people. Taking each in turn: for everyone except the desert island bound hermit, personal episodic memories are the result of collective interaction between groups of people – friends, families, work colleagues and other people we encounter on a daily basis. The memories we hold are therefore selfevidently 'collective' in as much as they originated in these shared social interactions and speak to the society, the time and the place in which they were formed (Middleton & Edwards 1990). However, we commit the fallacy of 'concrete generalization' if we then assume or argue that we all share the same mnemonic product as an outcome of these shared processes. Even family members have different memories of the same collective events – not least because our memories are also a record of our individual, sometimes affective and/or emotional, reactions to these collective events.

Summarising Halbwachs' argument regarding collective memory-as-product, Meyers et al (2014: 3) argue that "social groups construct their own images of the world by constantly shaping and reshaping versions of the past." Through this process, social groups implicitly (and, occasionally, deliberately) create boundaries that separate them from other groups who share different interpretations of the same historic events and processes. More succinctly, Fogu & Kansteiner (2006: 287) suggest that collective memories should be understood as "collectively shared representations of the past". This deceptively simple definition should then require us to consider (1) who produced such 'representations of the past', when, and with what aims; (2) how they are shared, by whom, and the extent to which this is a joint/cooperative process or a more powerful social/political group imposing a particular representation of the past on the rest; and (3) as a result, which social group's past/present they represent.

The construction of a collective memory is strongly influenced by political, social and cultural forces. Nevertheless, whilst these 'memories' bear the hallmarks of shared communications, often produced and disseminated by cultural and/or political elites, they

still need to resonate with "the life-worlds of individuals who partake in the communal life of the respective collective" (Kansteiner 2002: 188). Much of the published work on the history of memory focuses on national "memorial projects, compensation legislation, parliamentary debates, presidential speeches, school textbooks and the like" (Niven 2008: 434), which speaks to the central role that 'the nation' continues to assume in collective identities. National collective remembering tends to involve "an identity project (usually based on a narrative of heroism, a golden age, victimhood, etc.) [...] relies on implicit theories, schemas, and scripts that simplify the past and ignore substantiated findings that do not fit the narrative" (Wertsch & Roediger 2008: 321). The fact that such national 'collective memories' are the focus of these various "memorial projects" is itself evidence of two further observations: first, that these 'collective memories' are neither fixed nor universally retained by a population (otherwise a project to fix a memory would be unnecessary); and, second, that different accounts of the national past have differing political and moral rewards and, on occasion, legal ramifications (otherwise a project to fix a memory would be unbeneficial). For Rousso (2011: 233), "in most of the contemporary disputes over the past, the real issue is not so much question of 'memory' but rather a claim for official recognition by an institution". The stakes/consequences of disputes over 'collective memory' are such that "most countries and their intellectuals propagated narrowly self-serving interpretations and memories of their past" (Lebow 2006: 21), particularly 'memories' that relate to wartime conduct in general and, for Europe at least, the Second World War in particular. The wartime conduct of the vast majority of Europe diverged, to a lesser or greater extent, with positive senses of these nation's collective identities, leading to a widespread quarantining of "the war, the fascist period, the era of collaboration, or whatever events were troubling [...] as diverging from the 'normal' trajectory of the nation" (Lebow 2006: 31).

Consider, for example, the politics of post-war memory in Britain: Kushner (1997: 8) has argued that "Britain's war memory was essential to its post-1945 national identity." Although, during the war, "detailed information about the Holocaust was received, believed and broadcast" by the BBC (Seaton 1987: 53), not least the Allied Declaration on the fate of Jewry (17 December 1942), which made official the assessment that the information previously received had been true, the British 'memory' of themselves as 'suffering heroes' of the war "was too precious [...] to have been brought into question by the experiences of another people whose suffering and losses made British sacrifices pale into insignificance" (Kushner 1997: 8; see also Kushner 1998, Cesarani & Sundquist 2012). Accordingly, still, British people are far more likely to consider the 'British collective memories of WWII' as incorporating the 'Blitz', the Battle of Britain, D-Day and – at a push – the liberation of Bergen-Belsen by British troops rather than, for example, the five-year Occupation of the Channel Islands between 1940-45. Carr (2016: 45) argues that "The occupation of the Channel Islands was similar in several respects to that of other countries in Western Europe. The Jewish population was persecuted and deported; those [gentiles] who committed acts of resistance were imprisoned locally or deported to Nazi prisons and concentration camps on the continent; and foreign laborers were imported to the islands to build the concrete bunkers of the Atlantic Wall." This history is doubly threatening to Britain's Churchillian account of plucky resistance, as it not only questions narratives of wartime suffering ('Us' and/or 'the Jews') but also examines who was positioned as the agent of, or responsible for, this suffering. The occupation of the Channel Islands during WWII reveals that British citizens were both the victims and the agents of institutionalized antisemitism (Fraser 2000). These uncomfortable truths regarding British complicity in incorporating antisemitism into the law

of the Channel Islands, in identifying British Jews for persecution and murder, and in identifying Jewish property for expropriation and 'aryanisation' reveal not only that some Jewish victims of the *Shoah* were British, but that their persecutors were also British (albeit living and operating under the constraints of the occupying Nazi German Army).

There are also "political and epistemological implications" (Fogu and Kansteiner 2006: 299) of categorizing shared representations of the past as 'collective memories' since this shift (from representation to 'memory') tends to entail they gain a "new respect as meaningful explanations in their own right" (Ibid.). Gedi and Elam (1996: 43) argue that 'collective memory' should only ever be used is a metaphorical sense: "It has the advantage of being a vivid and illustrative description, but as an explanatory tool it is useless and even misleading". This position accords with Funkenstein's (1989: 6) pithy reminder that, "Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, neither can it speak or remember." However, that hasn't stopped a large number of academics offering accounts based on a simplistic analogy between individual and 'collective' memory. Rahman (2010), for example, suggests: "A collective memory can be understood as the combined memory of a population that has experienced a common past" (p.60-61). Collective memory, in this account, is less a metaphorical extension of individual episodic memory to the level of society, and more a wholesale reimagining of collectivities "as though they are individuals writ large" (Handler 1994: 33). Such an approach not only reifies 'collective memory' as a thing, it also posits a transference between individual and collective processes.

Even the more acclaimed and field-defining publications – such as Erll (2011) – index the slippages and ambiguities characteristic of memory studies. As the book points out very early on, "Memory itself is [...] not observable. Only through the observation of concrete acts of remembering situated in specific sociocultural contexts can we hypothesize about memory's nature and functioning" (Erll 2011: 8). In one sense, this is correct: we do not have access to others' minds and so we (only) have recourse to what they say or do. Consequently, however, when people speak of the past we have no basis to suggest that what we encounter are "concrete acts of remembering" (our emphasis). What we have, in fact, are concrete acts of someone speaking about the past; to claim that these are 'memories' (whether collective or individual) grants them an additional epistemic status.

Later, in this same publication, Erll does state that "Memories are not objective images of past perceptions, even less of a past reality. They are subjective, highly selective reconstructions, dependent on the situation in which they are recalled" (Ibid.) Again, we would argue that this is correct, up to a point. Discourse is always produced according to context-specific factors including, but not limited to, (inter)personal, generic, institutional, functional and rhetorical factors. Such discourse therefore bears the hallmarks of those who produced it, the intended recipient and the context of situation in which it is produced/consumed; the various discursive strategies used should be taken to index these factors as much as the "past perceptions" or "past reality" being invoked. However, the ontology of 'memory studies' cannot quite grasp the full implications of this situatedness of discourse on history, and this is indexed in the vocabulary used. To state that memories are "subjective, highly selective reconstructions [of past perception], dependent on the situation in which they are recalled" presupposes that the discourse being shared exists – however partially, however imprecisely – as memory, in the mind's eye of the person doing this recollection. In other words, the person engaged in the concrete act of 'remembering' is involved in "an act of assembling available data" and presenting this "in accordance with the changed present situation" (Ibid.). Such an account doesn't seem to allow for the possibility

that the speaker could be vocalizing an account of the past that is not drawn from their own understanding — unless semantic memory is being folded into, and treated as indistinguishable from, episodic memory. In other words, this narrative of the past could have been produced by, and reflects the politics and discursive agenda of, person A but is merely being spoken by person B (cf Goffman, 1981). Accordingly, we propose analysing individual or collective remembering as (perhaps someone else's?) narrativization of the past, rather than as memory *qua* memory.

Commemoration: rhetoric, mediation, emotion

To summarise the preceding section: "The construction of the past and contestation of those narratives are political processes that take place in a broader linguistic and cultural setting" (Lebow (2006: 27; see also Meyers et al 2014). The processes through which certain narratives, and arguments, regarding the past come to prominence over others, how we are to understand them and how to understand ourselves in relation to these pasts, are matters of deep social significance (Edgerton & Rollins 2001; Kansteiner 2006; Stone 2013). Consequently, the theories, methods and analytical tools developed in linguistics, cultural and communications studies are required to examine, and to understand, in detail the ways that pasts are narrativized and pasts commemorated. In one of the first publications to take a discursive approach to collective remembering, the collection edited by Middleton and Edwards (1990: 1) makes a case for "remembering and forgetting as inherently social activities." Their discourse-analytic approach, an early example of discursive psychology,

orientates us to take people's accounts of the past as pragmatically variable versions that are constructed with regard to particular communicative circumstances. People's accounts of past events are treated not as a window on to the cognitive workings of memory, but as descriptions that vary according to whatever pragmatic and rhetorical work they are designed for, such that no decontextualized version can be taken as a reflection of the 'contents' of a person's 'memory'." (p.11)

Our approach, similarly, assumes that collective remembering (Wertsch 2002) is a rhetorical accomplishment which not only constructs a 'common past' but also presupposes a common/singular people who experienced this past. Frequently, this presupposition papers over fissures and conflicts based on class, sex/gender, race and religion within the national 'self'.

The field of remembrance and its various genres (*inter alia* speeches, marches, ceremonies and mass commemoration, places of memory, public funerals, minutes of silence) both reflect and illuminate the complex processes of (national) histories, individual memory and collective remembrance, and the ways that they mediate and interact with each other in social and historic contexts. Commemorations are dynamic processes, through which narratives about the past, about 'us' and 'them' as well as beliefs, values and affective conditions contained in these stories, are produced and reproduced. The ontology of 'collective memory' also tend to posit a mythic pseudo-organicist vision of the national self, wherein injuries to ingroup others in the past are positioned as trauma for the national self in the present – or, at minimum, something that the national self in the present needs to variously work through, address, negotiate, overcome, etc. In this way, 'collective memory' not only tends to position contemporary social groups as complex individuals, it also tends to

collapse any distinction between this self in the present (the collective/constructed 'we') and others in the past.

Commemorative events play a subtle role in the garnering of public consensus, working to consolidate myths about social in-groups and out-groups (particularly nations) and hence contributing to processes of group inclusion and exclusion. This facilitates room for the creation of unity but also the collision of opposing political interests and interpretations of the past, as well as the potential for conflict with the collective myths/narratives of other national, ethnic or religious groups (Heer et al 2008; Wodak & Auer-Borea 2009). Consequently, processes of collective memorializing are not neutral, but rather "have bearings on relationships of power within society" (Confino 2005: 48; see also Billig & Marinho 2017).

Remembrance and commemoration entail communication processes wherein people, events and stories of the *past* are recalled, retold and recontextualized in the *present*, frequently with a view to ensuring a just and moral society in the *future* (Gutman et al 2010). When 'the past' is recalled as part of a commemorative event, it is mediated by the immediate agenda of (typically institutional) "memory makers" (Kansteiner 2002), articulated to the preoccupations and discourses of the context, and according to hegemonic narratives of heroes, villains, perpetrators, victims and bystanders. Such commemorative discourse is always aimed at modifying or consolidating existing social relations. As Confino (1997: 1390) argues: "every society sets up images of the past. Yet to make a difference in society, it is not enough for a certain past to be selected. It must steer emotions, motivate people to act, be received; in short, it must become a socio-cultural mode of action."

The "socio-cultural mode of action" described by Confino (Ibid.) works through moving audiences into and out of emotional states. Middleton and Edwards (1990: 9) refer to this as "The rhetorical organization of remembering and forgetting", and note that it is reflected "in argument about contested pasts and plausible accounts of who is to blame, or to be excused, acknowledged, praised, honoured, thanked, trusted and so on, that occur as part of the pragmatics of everyday communication." Aristotle (2007) identifies three species of rhetorical discourse: deliberative/political rhetoric; forensic/legal rhetoric; and epideictic/ceremonial rhetoric. Epideictic or ceremonial rhetoric is directed towards proving someone or something worthy of admiration or disapproval, its means are praise and censure and its special topics are honour and dishonour. The three species of rhetoric are heuristics, of course, that seldom occur in everyday argumentation in a pure form. Commemoration represents a blended rhetorical genre that brings together the epideictic and forensic species of rhetorical argument, operates through a combination of praise/censure and accusation/defence, and draws on the special topics of (dis)honour and (in)justice. In such discourse, the language of values and praise typical of epideictic rhetoric is blended with narrative accounts of the past and the language of (self)identification, where the past is retrieved for the present (Wodak & De Cillia 2007: 346).

Epideictic rhetoric has, in the past, been depreciated as ceremonial "praise or blame" speeches which simply trade on commonplace knowledge. However, such an account misses the aim, and the normative power, of epideictic. Epideictic *does* orientate to praise and blame. However, given that the topics of praise or blame assume the existence of social norms, upon which this praise or blame is based, epideictic also acts to presuppose and evoke common values. For Hyde (2005: 11), epideictic acts as "a collective or public form of recognition, a pragmatic and 'moral act' that supplies meaning to life". Epideictic rhetoric *interpolates* listeners (Richardson 2017, 2018), calls to their sense of conscience (or guilt),

aims "to create a conviction and suggest a conduct. The encomium offers listeners models of virtue and encourages their imitation. The subject being praised inspires admiration and emulation" (Pernot 2015: 95).

The purpose of epideictic rhetoric is, therefore, not simply "to say the truth, but to reaffirm and recreate afresh the consensus around prevailing values" (Pernot 2015: 98). As with all forms of rhetoric, epideictic arguments can be advanced through what Aristotle termed *artistic* means of persuasion, which the speaker needs to invent, and *non-artistic* means of persuasion, such as other texts (laws, photographs, film etc.) which the speaker/writer calls upon and uses. To take an example of each in turn: Condit (1985) suggests that audiences "actively seek and invite" artistic epideictic speeches "when some event, person, group, or object is confusing or troubling. The speaker will explain the troubling issue in terms of the audience's key values and beliefs." Her analysis of the Boston Massacre Orations demonstrates that successful speakers didn't provide the audience with "newspaper-like reportorial accounts" of the five American colonists killed by British Army infantrymen, but instead "depicted events on a larger canvas" (p.294). The successful speeches offered an "abstract, yet passionate" account of the victims being commemorated as a way of placing the past "in the emotional and valuational contexts of the community" (p.296).

Non-artistic means of persuasion are frequently utilised in commemoration as a way to establish facticity: that 'this happened'. Photographs and archival film clips of the Shoah, for example, used in both commemorative ceremonies and museum exhibits, tend to repeat a number of well-established visual metonyms: inter alia, striped 'pyjama-style' suits, piles of naked corpses, railway lines particularly those leading to the Auschwitz III gatehouse, and images of emaciated survivors behind barbed wire fences. The power and repetition of these "atrocity photographs" have not only become the basis of collective representations of the Shoah (Zelizer 1998), they have subsequently "provided the template for all later photoreportage of mass murder, leading to the blurring of temporal boundaries" (Cesarani 2000: 10). For Bathrick (2008: 1), these visualizations serve "for some as virtual access to knowledge of the horror; in a few cases, they even provided preeminent verification that it actually happened [...] pictorial icons by which many have sought to capture the seemingly unimaginable." Therefore, photographs and archival film function as a way to not only index historic events, but also to imply an evaluative position for the viewer: as a way of parsing and emotionally processing the text. – Or, as the introduction spoken during the British Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony (2016) put it, they "remind us of the scenes that so shocked the world at the end of the Second World War, and are still shocking us all today" (2016: 2.41-2.48; emphasis added).

Clearly, such archival films and images also feature extensively in mass mediated representations of the past. Indeed, the mass media – both factual and fictional – constitute the most prevalent sites of historical and collective remembering in modern national societies (Huyssen, 2000). In recent years, "media researchers as well as collective memory scholars have increasingly explored the role of mass media in processes such as the commercialization of collective memory" (Meyers et al 2009: 456), though questions regarding the (in)ability of the mass media to do 'proper history' remain a perennial feature (c.f. Kershaw 2004). Gray and Bell (2013: 219) suggest that "it is certainly not impossible to create and broadcast commercially successful factual history programming", however the "key challenge [...] is to balance entertainment and information in the right proportions" (p.160). The "giving of pleasure is the primary imperative of most television production"

(Corner 1999: 93) and so the extreme nature of the *Shoah*, in particular, "illuminates both the limitations and the capabilities of commercial media in its representation of a difficult past" (Meyers et al 2014: 5).

Boddice (2017: 11) states that "History remains focused, fundamentally, on understanding the human past, of which the emotions have been an important diachronic component both at the individual and relational level." Such emotional reactions, to artistic and non-artistic means of persuasion, "serve to *situate* subjects in relation to their world, orientating them towards its objects with degrees of proximity and urgency, sympathy and concern, aversion or hostility" (Martin 2014: 120). They help to "create the circumstances that invite the public to see and willingly reinterpret what it has seen many times in a new way, with new eyes" (Marcus 2002: 140).

Negotiating and contesting the commemoration of the Shoah in Sweden

A compelling example of the political nature of remembering and commemoration can be found in a recent debate between Hédi Fried, a well-known and outspoken Shoah-survivor who lives in Sweden, and Björn Söder, a Swedish politician of the far-right party Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna). In order to understand the debate, it is necessary to first give some contextual information about the shifting political landscape in Sweden. While in 2018 Sweden was rated the third "most democratic country" in the world according to the Economist's Democracy Index, in the same year the far-right party Sweden Democrats registered an unprecedented electoral success with an increase of 5% since the previous election. This result made it the third largest party in the Riksdag (the Swedish Parliament), after the Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party. Two years later, a poll conducted by the largest Swedish quality paper Dagens Nyheter in collaboration with the opinion research company IPSOS indicated that the popularity of the Sweden Democrats had increased even further, to 24% of Swedish voters. Founded in 1988, the party is a nationalconservative political formation with (1) clear anti-refugee sentiment as encoded in their aim to "stop receiving asylum seekers in Sweden and instead go for real aid for refugees" and "to enable more immigrants turning back to their native countries"; (2) an openly assimilationist agenda according to which migrants should "first do their duties" before "demanding their right", one duty being that of assimilating into Swedish culture and norms; and (3) a Swedish language-only policy that would entail the abolishment of state-financed mother-tongue instruction and the prohibition of speaking any other language but Swedish in school. It is important to state upfront that the party has Nazi roots (see Rydgren, 2006), as is testified to by photos of their members together with former SS-officers. And the party shows some awareness of these roots, though an article on their website distances the current political formation from its immature 'early years':

The road from founding to present day has not been completely straight. We have been eyed thoroughly and we have been in the wrong sometimes, not least in the early years. But we have matured, and we have learned from our experience (Sweden Democrats website https://sd.se/english/)

Rhetorically, this maturing process has entailed softening overtly Nazi edges in public speeches, thus making the party more palatable to a broader audience of conservative voters. That being said, party members have occasionally committed quite revealing "slips of the tongue" that disclosed underlying bigoted views. For example, in 2014, Björn Söder, who

was then party secretary and Second Deputy Chairperson of the Riksdag said in an interview with Dagens Nyheter that the Samis and the Jews are allowed to live in Sweden as a minority, but are actually not Swedish, they do not belong to the Swedish "nation". In saying so, Söder espoused an essentialising view of ethno-nationalist belonging, which can be summarised as follows: if you are Jewish, you belong to the "Jewish nation" (whatever that might mean) and you can be a Swedish citizen, but you will never be able to be part of the ethnic "Swedish nation". More recently, a similar ethno-nationalist perspective transpired in the reaction of another SD politician, Kent Ekeroth, to the deaths of Swedish citizens in the downing of flight PS472 by Iran. Ekeroth tweeted laughing emojis at the representation in a news report of two victims as "smålänningar" – i.e. from the Swedish region of Småland – when they had historically arrived there as unaccompanied refugee children. It has become typical for SD politicians to make pronouncements about who they believe can legitimately be considered "Swedish" or as belonging to a Swedish regional identity such as "smålänning". In this case, who is deserving of the symbolic investment of being mourned as a fellow citizen is delimited. Ekeroth constructs a hierarchy determining which deaths are mournable, and which are not (see Butler 2004 on mournability): the deaths of two refugee children may be met with laughter.

While the two young men were not deemed worth of Swedish national mournability, the party took a different stance on the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau organised by the *Parliamentary Network Memory of the Holocaust (Riksdagsnätverket Minnet av Förintelsen*). It should be noted that, since they entered the *Riksdag* in 2006, the Sweden Democrats have not taken active part in the arrangements of the yearly parliamentary memorial of the victims of the *Shoah*. However, this position changed in 2020 when Björn Söder was one of the organisers the event. Quite expectedly, the inclusion of a Sweden Democrat in the arrangement of the commemorative event immediately raised heated debate.

The most vocal response was voiced by Hédi Fried. In an op-ed article in *Dagens Nyheter,* which we reproduce nearly in its entirety Fried wrote:

Excerpt 1

Hitintills har inga bärare av samma ideologier som låg bakom Auschwitz medverkat, och ingen har ifrågasatt detta.

I år händer något nytt. De överlevande som förbereder sig för en dag då de i vänners krets kan minnas sina mördade nära och kära, måste också förbereda sig för att möta representanter avlade av samma ideologier som deras föräldrars mördare. Det som aldrig tidigare hade kunnat hända, händer nu. SD är rentvättat, dags för kramar.

Jag har goda vänner, barn till förövare, som jag gärna kramar. Människor i ett annat land som förstår att deras föräldrar bländades av en charmig populist. Men jag förstår inte hur Moder Svea har sjunkit så lågt att hon är beredd att krama dem som nu återuppväcker samma dödsbringande ideologier. Finns det inte plats för det kritiska tänkandet längre?

Okej. SD är inte antisemiter, det är islam de är emot. Kruxet är bara att de muslimska, arabisktalande invandrare som inte får finnas i Sverige, också är semiter. Och i obevakade ögonblick, vid anblick av judar, kläds ofta kretsens innersta tankar i ord: "Åk tillbaka till det land du kommer ifrån" eller till och med "Du får inte vara svensk medborgare", sagt till någon som lever här sedan flera generationer.

Det är normförskjutningens mörka stig vi vandrar. Jag har sett det komma, och ändå ville jag inte tro det. Och jag tror fortfarande inte att majoriteten av det svenska folket är bekväm med en sådan utveckling. Jag tror att majoriteten vill att deras barn ska växa upp i ett tolerant demokratiskt Sverige.

Det är känslan av déjà vu som gör mig så rädd. Som ung vuxen såg jag samma normförskjutning som jag ser nu. Vi klarade inte av att hejda den då, vilket ledde till de oförglömliga fasorna vi ska minnas den 27 januari.

Men denna gång, i stället för att bara minnas, låt oss hejda normförskjutningen i tid. I valet mellan tolerans och intolerans, låt oss välja rätt.

So far, no carriers of the same ideologies that lay behind Auschwitz have participated [in the yearly parliamentary commemoration of the victims of the *Shoah*], and no one has questioned this. This year something new is happening. The survivors who are preparing for a day during which, in the company of friends, they can remember their loved ones who have been murdered, must also prepare to face representatives of the same ideologies as their parents' murderers. What had never happened before is happening now. SD is washed clean, it's time for hugs.

I have good friends, children of perpetrators whom I happily hug. People in other countries who understand that their parents were dazzled by a charming populist. But I do not understand how Mother Svea has fallen so low that she is ready to hug those who are now resurrecting the same deadly ideologies. Is there no room for critical thinking anymore?

Okay. SD are not anti-Semitic, it is Islam they are against. The crux is that the Muslim, Arabic-speaking immigrants who are not allowed to be in Sweden are also Semites. And in unguarded moments, at the sight of Jews, the inner thoughts of the circle are often clad in the words: "Go back to the country you came from" or even "You cannot be a Swedish citizen", said to someone who has been living here for several generations.

It is the dark path of a normative shift we're walking on. It's the feeling of déjà vu that makes me so scared. As a young adult, I saw the same normative shift I see now. We couldn't stop it then, which led to the unforgettable horrors we will remember on January 27.

But this time, instead of just remembering, let's stop the normative shift just in time. In the choice between tolerance and intolerance, let us choose wisely. (*Dagens Nyheter* 2020a)

Bakhtin's notion of the chronotope can be useful to untangle the epideictic rhetoric employed by Fried about commemoration in the excerpt above. According to Bakhtin (1981: 84), a chronotope indicates "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships". Moreover, discourse analytical work operationalising the notion of the chronotope has demonstrated (see e.g. Blommaert and De Fina 2017) that spatio/temporal 'moorings' to the past, the present and the future are discursive devices through which identities are produced at the same time as norms are reiterated and contested. Because of its focus on the nexus points of time and space, the chronotope is particularly useful in order to illustrate analytically how memory is produced discursively. In the extract above, it is possible to distinguish a constellation of three spatio/temporal alignments: (1) the I-herenow (see also Baynham 2003), (2) the earlier/in Sweden, and (3) the then/in Germany.

To begin with the present moment, Fried questions the decision made by the Sweden Democrats to be part of the network that is at the helm of the organisation of the yearly commemoration of the Shoah in the Swedish parliament. Here it is possible to see how the problematic novelty of an event in the present is discursively realised with the help of two spatio-temporal 'moorings': first, the 'earlier/in Sweden' chronotope in which the Sweden Democrats did not use to take part in the parliamentary commemoration of the Shoah, and, related to this, the 'then/in Germany' chronotope that crystallises Nazi totalitarian ideology in the 1930s and 1940s, which, in turn, is linked to the present through an association to the Sweden Democrats. In this way, an affective and ideological chasm is set up between (1) the belief and norm system of the survivors, including Hédi Fried herself, their memory and right to mourn their loved ones in a supportive and empathetic environment, and (2) the totalitarian ideologies of the perpetrators of the Shoah and their contemporary embodiment in the representatives of the Sweden Democrats. From this perspective, any attempt to bridge the fundamental incompatibility between these two affective and ideological positions would ultimately lead to sanitising the Sweden Democrats and their views. Interestingly, Fried is prepared not to blame those in other countries who have realised their forefathers' fault in becoming enthralled to "a charming populist". In contrast, she takes a much stronger stance on contemporary Sweden, here represented through the patriotic personification 'Mother Svea', and its embracing of 'deadly ideologies' through democratic means. This critique reaches its peak with the rhetorical question: "Is there no room for critical thinking left?". As Fowler has noted, rhetorical questions produce "argumentative engagement with the imagined points of view of those referred to by the text, and those who read it" (Fowler 1991: 218). At an interpersonal level then, the rhetorical question asked by Fried seeks to establish argumentative engagement between the writer and imagined audiences around the absence of spaces for critical reflection in Sweden. Moreover, Voloshinov pointed out that rhetorical questions are "situated on the very boundary between authorial and reported speech" (1973: 137). In the case of the excerpt above, the reference to lack of critical thinking can be interpreted as an intertextual reference to Hannah Arendt's famous theorisation of evil as the inability to think critically, that is, "the inability to think from the standpoint of somebody else" (Arendt 1963: 49). Re-cast through such an intertextual

reference, Fried's rhetorical question could be rephrased as follows: Is there no room for understanding evil any longer?

It is at this juncture that a caveat is given, and another interesting parallel is built by Fried. It is not so much that the Sweden Democrats are anti-Jewish, they are anti-Muslim. However, with the help of the ethnic category "Semite", Fried levels out religious differences between Jews and Muslims, and brings them together under a common ethnic denominator. She goes on to suggest that similar exclusionary feelings are set off in SD hearts "at the sight of Jews" who might one day find themselves the target of SD's exclusionary definition of the nation's ethnic character.

The op-ed closes with another spatio-temporal 'mooring' through which the present becomes meaningful via the past: the norm shift in Nazi Germany that ultimately led to the *Shoah* is tied to a perceived shift in norms in contemporary Swedish society. And this is the foundation for Fried's call not simply to remember the horrors of the past but to actively stop societal changes in the present, in order to prevent the past from repeating in the future.

The Sweden Democrat Björn Söder replied in an interview in *Dagens Nyheter* saying:

Excerpt 2

– Jag har förstått att Hédi Fried [...] starkt ogillar Sverigedemokraterna. Jag har stor respekt för henne och det hon har gått igenom men jag tycker att det är tråkigt att hon gör partipolitik av det här, säger Björn Söder.

Han säger också att anledningen till att hans parti aldrig tidigare bett om att få vara med i nätverket beror på att de inte haft tillräckligt med riksdagsledamöter.

– Det är först nu som vi känner att vi är såpass många att vi har tid att engagera oss i den här typen av sidoverksamhet. Jag tycker att det är viktigt att visa upp att hela riksdagen står bakom det här, eftersom att det är en så viktig fråga, säger Björn Söder.

"I understand that Hédi Fried [...] strongly dislikes the Sweden Democrats. I have great respect for her and what she has gone through, but I think it is sad that she makes party politics of this" says Björn Söder.

He also says that the reason why his party has never asked to join the network before is because they did not have enough members of parliament.

"It is only now that we feel that we are so many that we have time to get involved in this type of side activity. I think it is important to show that the whole parliament is behind this, because it is such an important issue, says Björn Söder. (*Dagens Nyheter* 2020b)

Taking an even stronger position against Fried, the party leader Jimmie Åkesson commented in an interview with the TV channel TV4:

Excerpt 3

J. Å: Jag tycker att det är sorgligt att... hmm... jag känner inte Hédi Fried och

jag vet inte om hon tror på det eller om det är så att hon används av politiska intressen och säger sådana sakern hmm... men oavsett är det

uppenbart fel.

Journalisten: Kan du förstå hennes reaktion?

J. Å: Nej, jag kan inte förstå hennes reaktion eftersom den bygger på

felaktiga premisser. Björn Söder som är ju den som är med i denna kommitte kan vara riksdagens främsta Israel-vän [laughs] och jag tycker att om man har sådana farhågor som som till exempel Hédi Fried har då bör man prata med Björn Söder istället för att skriva i tidningen att han tycker saker som han förmodligen inte tycker eller att mitt parti gör det för den delen. Vi pratar med varandra alledels för lite

i det här samhället idag.

J. Å.: I think it is sad that... hmm... I do not know Hédi Fried and I do not

know if she believes in what she's saying or if it is just that she is being used for political interests, and says such things hmm... but anyway it is

obviously wrong.

Journalist: Can you understand her reaction?

J. Å.: No, I can't understand her reaction because it is based on wrong

assumptions. Björn Söder, who is a member of this [parliamentary] committee, is perhaps the foremost friend of Israel in the Swedish parliarment [laughs], and I think that if you have fears like Hédi Fried has, you should talk to Björn Söder instead of writing in the newspaper that he thinks things that he probably doesn't, or that my party does for that matter. We talk to each other too little in this society today.

We can see in these interviews how Fried's argumentative positions are countered by two key political figures among the Sweden Democrats, who subscribe to the view that collective memory can and should be apolitical and objective, and that those who politicise it may be dismissed out of hand. Rhetorically, such a standpoint is developed with the help of (1) a presupposition on what politics is and who has the right to speak on political matters, (2) the legitimation of the Sweden Democrats vis-à-vis the memorial event, and (3) the overt delegitimation of Fried's standpoint.

To begin with, politics is viewed here in the narrow sense of party politics. In light of this, Söder takes a normative position criticising Fried's stance as an encroachment on party politics, a business to which according to him only politicians are entitled. There are also some ideologically mixed messages when explaining why the party had not actively engaged in the commemoration of the *Shoah* in previous years. On the one hand, the memorial is described as having been a "side activity" and not a key priority for the party when their numbers were smaller. On the other hand, following the party's increased representation in

parliament, the commemoration in the present is portrayed as an "important event" that should be supported by the whole *Riksdag*. In other words, Söder seems to reveal that the importance of remembering the *Shoah* is directly proportional to the size of his party in parliament.

An even more disturbing discursive act of delegitimation is performed by Åkesson who suggests that Fried is ultimately a marionette manoeuvred by political parties who seek to discredit the Sweden Democrats. Observe in particular the affective qualifier "it's sad...", which in this specific context is a patronising discursive device suggesting that an old person like Fried is being used by others without her actively recognising it. When asked whether he can think from the standpoint of the Other, as Arendt would put it, Åkesson clearly demonstrates that he cannot. What is even more malicious is the argumentative move employed to justify his inability to understand Fried's reactions: the identity attribution to Björn Söder as the "foremost friend of Israel in the Swedish parliament". Such a discursive move draws on a wide-spread global discourse that conflates Israel with Jewishness. The interal logic of this discourse is as follows: if one is a "friend of Israel" one cannot possibly be "antisemitic", and vice versa, if one is "critical of Israel", one is necessarily "anti-Semitic". As several critical scholars have pointed out (see e.g. Butler 2012), Israel has over the years vied for the hegemony of Jewishness through the territorialisation of the image of the ultimate accomplishment of a fulfilling Jewish life. This has led to a problematic two-tiered identity category: (1) Israeli Jewish and (2) Diasporic Jewish identity (see also Milani, Levon and Glocer 2019). It has also led to a situation where affective and moral attachments to Israel have become the benchmark for assessing what counts as pro- and antisemitic. This has led to paradoxical situations in which, say, Hungary's Prime Minister, Viktor Orban utters overtly antisemitic utterances against the Jewish magnate George Soros, on the one hand, and yet is welcomed in Jerusalem by his Israeli peer Benjamin Netanyahu as a 'true friend of Israel'.

While in her op-ed Fried articulated a fundamental affective and ideological rift between the Sweden Democrats and the victims of the *Shoah*, and ultimately argued for a "refusal to engage" with the party, Åkesson in contrast bemoans the lack of dialogue and naively proposes that a private conversation with Söder, rather than a public debate in the columns of a national daily, is ultimately the best solution to resolve or even dissolve Fried's fears (see also Deumert, this volume about the political relevance of affect). What is perhaps most unsettling is how the leader of a party with Nazi roots discursively positions himself as the moral arbiter on the matter, telling a survivor of the *Shoah* what is right or wrong in the organization of an event aimed at commemorating the suffering she and other Jewish people experienced at the hand of Nazism.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have been inspired by Kramsch's recent call to re-cast "a humanistic sense of history" (Kramsch 2018: 114) in applied linguistics, a field that since its inception has aimed to study and intervene in "real-world problems" (Brumfit 1995). In our view, this historicising impetus can be sustained with a more thorough engagement with the burgeoning literature on memory and commemoration (see also Ben-Rafael & Shohamy 2016; Blackwood & MacAlister 2019). With the help of a recent example from a debate on the memorial of the

Shoah in Sweden, we illustrated how remembering and publicly commemorating the past in the present are not ideologically neutral processes, but give rise to political struggles which are discursively built on creating specific time/space 'moorings' (chronotopes), constructing particular identities as well as triggering specific affective elements. A historicising approach is more necessary than ever in Sweden, a context in which, as Foucault once stated,

A human is but a moving dot, obeying laws, patters and forms in the midst of a traffic that is more powerful and defeats him/her. In its calmness, Sweden reveals a brave new world where we discover that the human is no longer necessary (Foucault in Lindung, 1968)

If Foucault's sketch sounds somewhat dystopian, trust in authorities is often singled out as a 'typically Swedish' trait (see e.g. City of Gothenburg and the Country Administrative Board of Västra Götaland, 2018). While what is characteristic of a nation should always be taken with some caution, it is perhaps this faith in institutions, combined with a firm belief in the infallible character of their democratic order that a party with Nazi-roots is able to openly question humanistic values and slowly erode democracy from within. It's perhaps by unveiling the ideological nature of remembering and forgetting that applied linguistics can sustain its commitment as a socially relevant discipline.

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