Transcultural Memory: Remembering War Trauma beyond National Boundaries

A Study of Memory of Nanjing Massacre
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I, (Diandian, GUO) hereby declare that this thesis, entitled “Transcultural Memory: Remembering War Trauma beyond National Boundaries- A Study of Memory of Nanjing Massacre”, submitted as partial requirement for the MA Programme Euroculture, is my own original work and expressed in my own words. Any use made within this text of works of other authors in any form (e.g. ideas, figures, texts, tables, etc.) are properly acknowledged in the text as well as in the bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

Human societies are not free of memories, especially that of wars, conflicts and other traumatic events in the past decades. Those memories are repeatedly articulated and re-articulated so as to stay live in a community, as a reminder of the past, a warning for the present and a guidance for the future. In today’s globalizing world, this can no longer be done in isolation in the traditional vacuum of nation states. Memory of the Holocaust is a prominent example of how memories of traumatic events, popularized or not, travels beyond the immediate parties involved and known, acknowledged, and even to some degree, identified with, among a global audience as a benchmark event within a specific historical narrative.

Yet the Holocaust memory is not the only one of its kind to travel transculturally, or attempt to do so. The second decade of the 21st Century saw new efforts in China to reinforce the memory of Nanjing Massacre, the wholesale killing, luting and raping committed by Japanese troops during their occupation of then Chinese capital in 1937. There is expended and systematic archive building, social education, and promotion in the international community. A most articulate among these efforts is the establishment of a National Commemoration Day.

This is not China’s first attempt to uphold the memory of Nanjing Massacre to a higher level of community. The beginning of 1980s and the mid-1990s both witnessed a cluster of institutional attempts to bring the issue on agenda. What marks the recent trend in Nanjing memory is its explicit appeal not only to the domestic or its immediate other party, Japan, but also to the international community in general.

In the international community, collective memory and commemoration is more readily related to the Holocaust, as Pierre Nora remarks “whoever says memory, says Shoah”\(^1\). The Holocaust has become a paradigmatic case for the relation between

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memory and modernity\textsuperscript{2} that frames the form, narrative and ethics of contemporary mnemonic practices. While this paradigm is neither static nor homogeneous and is constantly renegotiated, it remains nonetheless a reference for any mnemonic practices of sufferings today that intend to travel beyond the immediacy of the national. Indeed, such intention is almost sure to be present. Memory in itself is a certain preservation of what is gone; and it is only continuous investment of meaning, through enabling memory’s travelling across time and space, that keeps memory alive\textsuperscript{3}.

The transculturality of mnemonic practices designates both the existing circulation of memory representations on global level and the need for any collective memory to travel, to communicate with and beyond its immediate boundaries. This is the context in which Nanjing Massacre is re-articulated. While already embedded with local and national significance, the globalizing context requires an active engagement with global ones. This study will trace the process through which Nanjing Massacre is developed in its transculturality, namely how the memory is re-constructed beyond local and global.

Following the transcultural construction of memory comes another question: will transcultural memory, like national memories, contribute to a closely-bounded global community? Reception (especially by the West) of memory of Nanjing Massacre, and of WWII remembrance in East Asia in general indicates that claims to humanity and peace, though possible for transnational acknowledgement (particularly by international institutions such as UNESCO and USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide research), does not necessarily lead to a memory community of humanity. This observation will be a persistent concern of this research. Why it is the case will be briefly addressed, but will not be the central question.

\textsuperscript{2} Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, ‘Memory Unbound The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory’, \textit{European Journal of Social Theory} 5, no. 1 (1 February 2002): 87–106,

\textsuperscript{3} Astrid Erll, ‘Travelling Memory’, \textit{Parallax} 17, no. 4 (November 2011): 5.
This thesis will first trace memory boom in recent decades, and the academic efforts to study collective memory as a cultural phenomenon, with focus on the meaning making and meaning transmission process within memory community. Secondly comes a discussion on recent trends in the field to study memory as a transcultural phenomenon or a transcultural attempt. A brief outline of literature on memory of the Holocaust will be given as a reference case for transcultural memories of traumatic experience. Afterwards, the historical construction of Nanjing memory will be addressed. The construction will cover the immediate post-war era, the communist era (1949-1979), the reform and opening up era (1979-2000) and the 21st century, where attempts for transcultural articulation of the memory can be detected. To what extent the transcultural meaning of Nanjing Massacre is acknowledged globally is addressed. The thesis then come to a conclusion.

1.1 Research Question and Research Design

Why cultural memories of traumatic experiences have the potential to be diffused globally? And how does this transculturality of memory inform mnemonic practices? Above all, there are memory and mnemonic practices whose symbols and meanings are globally accessible, even globally recognised; transculturality also designates the possibility of certain cultural memories to go through the process of meaning transmission beyond boarders; meanwhile, in an age of internal heterogeneity and global interconnectedness, there is the need for cultural memories to travel outside its immediate cultural community to ensure vitality, and subsequently persistence of the community.

While transculturality is a potential of cultural memory, in what way, under what condition and to what extent can this potential be practiced and realized? To answer this question, this project analyses the recent re-articulation of Nanjing Massacre in China which displays both local and global intentions. A series of questions will be subsequently addressed around this mnemonic practice, including
1) Why Nanjing Massacre, or memories of any other traumatic experience, are transculturally articulated;
2) How is the memory articulated to be transcultural, concerning a) narratives or meaning making; b) community definition realized through the previous process;
3) To what extent is transculturality of memory of Nanjing Massacre realized in the sense of building community? Despite the conditions mentioned above, what can be the hindrance to a transcultural memory community?

1.2 Data and Analysis
To understand the dynamics of transculturality concerning the mnemonic practice of Nanjing Massacre, it is essential to identify both what is considered global and what has been developed in the local.

For transculturality of memory in practice, both academic writings and empirical practices will be examined, primarily surrounding the remembrance of the Holocaust as a prominent example of transcultural memory. In academia, sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider’s work among others attempts to identify the globally circulating symbols and meanings of memory and to theorize a contemporary paradigm for the relation of past and modernity. Meanwhile, facilitated by media technology, empirical practices of remembrance, for example broadcasted commemoration events, internet archives and aesthetic documents, offer extra rigour into the global and globalizing practice of remembering. This study examine some most influential and mature memory practices surrounding the Holocaust, including International Holocaust Remembrance Day of UN and of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, as well as the anniversaries of Liberation at Auschwitz Birkenau. Meanwhile, trends in popular culture, art and debates surrounding the topic will also be a reference so as to outline main features of transcultural mnemonic practices.

How memory of Nanjing Massacre has been constructed throughout history will be examined. In China, the state-initiated construction of Nanjing Memory started in
the early 1980s. The year 1982 marked a turning point for Nanjing Memory as the state, prompted by exposure to increasing foreign influence, realized the importance of a national history. Later in mid-1990s, accessibility to Nanjing Memory to the public was further facilitated. In 1996, the government decided to sound sirens on 13th Dec as a public reminder of the atrocity. 1982 and 1996 and the years in vicinity, therefore, mark two crucial periods of the making of Nanjing memory. For both periods, the memory is largely articulated and communicated from the local to the national, thus focusing almost inclusively on domestic audience. Documents and other forms of information of the massacre produced during those periods will be examined to identify the symbols and meanings thereto attached.

To understand the transcultural attempts of mnemonic practice of Nanjing Massacre, the online website of The Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders4 will be the primary location for examination. The online website of the memorial serves as an information pool where various initiatives for the articulation of the memory and numerous archives and resources are gathered, providing a gateway to acquiring relevant data. In 2014, shortly before the observation of the first National Memorial Day, an online memorial site was affiliated to the memorial hall official website, which is available in Chinese, English, Russian, French, Japanese, Korean and German. For representations of Nanjing memory in history, media archives (primarily People’s Daily) and documentations are consulted.

Discourse analysis is conducted to the data to study the construction of ethical meaning and community definition in cultural memory. These perspectives will be studied in the light of mnemonic practices of the Holocaust to discern their respective influence on the realization of transculturality. Meanwhile, the social and political context in which transcultural articulation of memory is situated is also examined so as to explore whether transcultural memory necessarily leads to a transcultural community of solidarity.

2 MAPPING CULTURAL MEMORY STUDIES

2.1 THE MEMORY BOOM

2.1.1 Increasing Relevance of Memory

American historian Jay Winter labels our age as the “generation of memory”, and Contemporary historical study is witnessing a “memory boom”⁵. Apart from the emergence of eminent scholars like Pierre Nora and Jan and Aleida Assmann, there is also increasing institutionalization and canonization of the field of memory studies⁶.

Outside academia, practices of remembering on collective level are also emerging. The last two decades of the 20th century witnessed the establishment of truth commissions in numerous countries including Argentina, South Africa, Romania and Canada to address past cases of human rights abuse⁷. Memories of the genocide in Rwanda, and that of the Armenia have become familiar topics on media.

Remembering past is no longer only organized on local level, but also internationally. UNESCO launched the project Memory of the World in 1992, to facilitate preservation of and access to world documentary heritage, as well as raising worldwide awareness of the existence and significance of such heritage⁸. In 2005, the UN General Assembly passed the resolution to establish International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Moreover, the concern of memory extent from distant history to more recent events. Immediately after 9/11, discussion of a memorial began; a decade later, such memorial was established. More recently, in the aftermath of Charlie Hebdo and the Paris Attack in November 2015, there were widespread attempts to

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inscribe the events in collective memory through media, despite the relative lacking of physical sites of remembrance.

2.1.2 Remembering as a Social Matter: Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora

The concept of collective memory is often traced back to Maurice Halbwachs, to his phenomenal work Les Cadres Sociaux de la Memoire (1925), or On Collective Memory (1992) as Lewis Coser titled his English translation.

Halbwachs criticized the psychological approach to memory of his day that treats memory and remembrance as an individual matter. Instead, Halbwachs argues that individuals do not remember in a vacuum. They rely on other human agencies within the specific group context they are situated in, and draw on that context to remember or recreate the past\(^9\). Therefore there is an organized character to collective memory in the sense that it is defined by social interaction. This socially organized construction of collective memory is what Halbwachs calls the “frameworks of collective memory”.

Halbwachs also touched upon the relation between history and memory, especially that of the (dis)continuity of the past. Halbwachs’ understanding of collective memory is dominantly presentist, as conceptions of the past are reproduced in mental images to solve present problems. Thus collective memory is “essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present”\(^{10}\). In other words, memory preserves the past with re-interpretation and representation. This processed version of the past renders discursive continuity to the present, despite of actual discontinuities in history.

To conclude, Halbwachs’ major legacy to memory studies is his approach to memory as social construction. Collective remembering involves interaction among individuals and between individual and community. As memory is a constructed


\(^{10}\) Ibid., 34.
meaning of the past under certain social structures, it also bears implications to the persistence of a society.

Another prominent figure in the study of collective memory is Pierre Nora, who proposed the concept *Les Lieux de Memoire*. The concept was originally developed in Nora’s lectures at *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociaux* in Paris, where he attempted an understanding of temporally defined identity in France from a symbolic approach instead of the traditional thematic or chronological approach. The initial idea later developed into a canon of nine volumes, where Nora went beyond the selection and symbolic analysing of objects, and engaged in philosophical and theoretical contemplations of the phenomena of collective memory and remembrance.

Nora distinguishes between the actual, physical space (*milieu de memoire*) of the past and a constructed, commemorative space of the past (*lieu de memoire*). It is the loss of the former that resolved in the crystallization of memory in the latter. The current age, an “age of commemoration”, is marked by societies and groups’ obsessions with materialization of the past through creating *lieux de memoire*. Such obsession is paradoxical: the more significance attached to memory and remembering, the more it reveals its own erosion.

Here, Nora echoed Halbwachs’ perception of the discontinuity in time. Memory becomes a compensation for the lack of continuity in temporal experience. Memory no longer serves as an independent variable together with the future on a continuous spectrum of temporality; rather, temporal experience has become fractured, disturbed and full of uncertainty. Memory is like snake’s skin, shed and left behind, only evoked as a promise of alleged continuity to make up for the actual lack of it.

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Nora’s philosophical discussion addresses the question of why memory is significant to the maintenance of societies. Remembering, especially in the form of materializing the past, is an attempt to compensate the lack of actual temporal continuity with symbolic continuity, either through objects, or through images and language. Empirically, Nora’s work is also an exemplary semiotics study of memory with its attention to process of meaning construction. Although Nora’s empirical observation derives primarily from France, his theory of *lieux de mémoire* is applied to studies of other regions.

2.1.3 **Collective Memory: Mediated Past and Narrative Continuity**

Despite the fact that Halbwachs approaches memory as a sociologist and Nora as a historian, there are common grounds where their conceptualizations converge. One is their emphasis on the medial role of symbols, either material or non-material in collective memory. Marked by the loss of immediacy towards the event, memory requires mediation to bridge the distance between past and present. For Halbwachs, this mediation takes the form of a social framework; for Nora, this is the *lieux de mémoire* with its material presence and symbolic connotations. It is this inherent symbolic nature of collective memory and the inevitable demand for mediation that is developed and nourished by later scholars, led by Jan and Aleida Assmann, into the notion of cultural memory.

Another common ground for Nora and Halbwachs is their linking of memory with the construction and endurance of community. As humans are exceedingly aware of the discontinuity and uncertainty of their temporal experience, it becomes necessary to seek an “alleged continuity” in narrative and discourse through recounting the past in a specific way. Memory, thus, provides the continuity required for the enduring being of a group.

Before proceeding, however, it is necessary to briefly clarify the terms applied by far: memory, remembrance and remembering. Neither Halbwachs nor Nora
suggest their subject of analysis to be naturalistic, static object. Collective memory has to “take place”, instead of simply being there. Under such concern, remembering might serve as a better term to incorporate the non-static feature. This point is put forward by Susannah Radstone and Katherine Hodgkin in their edited volume *Contested Past: Politics of Memory*, and by Wertsch who favoured collective remembering as it refers to a site of contestation than a body of structured knowledge\textsuperscript{14}. However, both authors also resolve to the use of collective memory, given that the term is “so widely used that it is next to impossible to avoid”\textsuperscript{15}. In the following text, for reason of consistency, this article will adopt the term memory to designate the dynamic process of meaning making of the past without neglecting its non-static feature.

2.2 CULTURAL MEMORY

2.2.1 Concept of Cultural Memory

Memory’s social function of representing or mediating the past lead scholars of collective memory to a more specific term- cultural memory. Building on Halbwachs’ legacies, German historian Jan Assmann further distinguishes collective memory into communitive memory- memory that is transmitted by individuals in a social role- and cultural memory, memory that a group “makes” for themselves through a set of external reminders\textsuperscript{16}. These reminders are culturally encoded and are subsequently decoded in certain cultural settings. In his contribution in *Cultural Memory Studies an

\textsuperscript{14} Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, eds., *Memory in Mind and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).


International and Interdisciplinary Handbook\textsuperscript{17}, Jan Assmann defined cultural memory as

…a kind of institution…exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms that, unlike the sounds of words or the sight of gestures, are stable and situation-transcendent: they may be transferred from one situation to another and transmitted from one generation to another.

Assmann’s definition emphasizes the role of collective remembering as “anchoring” the past against the fluidity of time. His idea echoes Nora’s “materialization” of the past, only that not only tangible material, but also other forms of cultural symbols, can capture the past in a somehow fixed form. The “culture” (\textit{Kultur}) in cultural memory is a symbolically coded “world of meaning”. Embedded in either monuments, scriptures or texts, these cultural symbols mediate a past with certain meanings. Cultural memory thus becomes a repertoire from which certain elements are selected to create a standardized, collectively accepted, and narratively continuous “self-image” that serves to construct group identity\textsuperscript{18}.

Apart from historians, scholars in fields of sociology or literature studies also attempt to define cultural memory that are not too distinct from Jan Assman. Jeffrey Olick, from a sociological point of view, defines collective memory as:

…a wide variety of mnemonic products and practices, often quite different from one another… (including) rituals, books, statues, presentations, speeches, images, pictures, records, historical studies, surveys, etc. (as well as) reminiscence, recall, representation, commemoration, celebration, regret, renunciation, disavowal, denial, rationalization, excuse, acknowledgement, and many others…\textsuperscript{19}

In a systematic volume on the topic \textit{Cultural Memory an International and Interdisciplinary Handbook}, German scholar on literature studies, Astrid Erll, adopts an umbrella definition for cultural memory as "the interplay of present and past in


\textsuperscript{18} Harth, The Invention of Erinnerung, in ibid., 85.

socio-cultural contexts”, so as not only to encompass the various forms of collective remembering, but also diverse scholarly approaches to the issue.

2.2.2 Cultural Memory as a Process

This process of selection and intentional representation of the past becomes more visible when Aleida Assmann proposes two forms of cultural memory: the canon and the archive. The repertoire of cultural memory is indefinite, and representation can always cover only a scarce portion. The portion that is represented, the canon, serves as the active working memory in a society that defines and supports the cultural identity of a group. The remaining portions, the archive, becomes the reference memory that provides counterbalance against the reductive and restrictive drive of working memory.

Aleida Assmann’s distinction highlights the process through which certain part of the past is activated. The distinction between canon and archive depends on in what form, at what place, and towards what group is the "past" reserved. However, this formal distinction becomes more ambiguous in the face of mediatization. Assmann herself also acknowledged the mutual-transferability of the two forms. A ready example is the well-practiced attempts by museums, archives and other traditional record keeping institutes (cultural institutes for Assmann) to not only make the archived documents available online, but also make them more accessible to a general public. Through various means of re-presentation- photographing, editing, hypertextualizing- the formerly inactive archive gains more activity. While these activated archives still cannot be equalized with Assmann's canon that is expressed through and towards the public, they are less "dead" and "silent" as they use to be. It might, therefore, be more feasible to view the distinction between canon and archive not as formal, but as functional. Active memory is thus material of the past endowed

21 Assmann, *Canon and Archive*, in Erll, Nünning, and Young, *Cultural Memory Studies*, 106.
with meaning that is present-oriented; inactive memory remains material towards which no specific meaning is yet explicitly attached.

Cultural memory as such becomes a process of inactivation of a certain selection of material of the past. To treat memory as a selective meaning making process entails the presence of an agent, the social and cultural context of selection, the meaning making process itself, the product, as well as potential contestations concerning the previous aspects.

2.2.3  Cultural Memory as a Metaphor

To talk about cultural memory is, predominantly, to talk about the active and visible section of the past, as well as the process through which the formerly inactive and invisible is selected and made visible. By clarifying that cultural memory is a process other than a static existence, it is logical to continue with another feature of cultural memory, or any other mention of collective memory.

Memory, applied to a level beyond the biological individual, is used as a metaphor. Memory on the collective level bears no equivalence to the individual neurotic process of cognition; nor is it a mere accumulation of individual neurological processes. It is still a process of cognition, of meaning making, but through symbolic instead of neurotic agents. The past is mediated, and its meaning is contingent to the symbols and materials selected for its representation. In this line, there has been much research on cultural memory which examine its semiotics, or making of its meaning.

Secondly, memory on the collective level is a metaphor in that it is not a "natural" process. What is remembered in the community is always limited; forgetting, either intentional or unintentional, seems to be the dominant. Literature

23 Erll, Nünning, and Young, Cultural Memory Studies, 4.
scholar Ann Rigney introduces Foucault's “principle of scarcity” to demonstrate how memory, or remembrance, is a tip-of-the-iceberg phenomenon when it comes to treatment of the past. While the past tends to be forgotten in community, the process through which cultural memory emerges becomes reliant on agents and intention. This feature distinguishes cultural memory from individual memory, as the latter is considered natural in the sense one cannot "not to think of an elephant". Related to the intentional feature of cultural memory is the selection process discussed above. The intentional selection further justifies an approach to cultural memory as mediated and communicative process, which aims to discover the symbolic order through which meaning is generated and the social-cultural context of this order that defines not only the "shape" of the memory, but also its very existence.

Hence the study of cultural memory concerns not only the potential discrepancy between representation and lived experience, but also the social constructions and media conditions under which a group establish its past-present connection. The process of remembering are often taken as conducted within a specific group, usually the nation. Thus when it comes to the realization of the intentional and selective process, memory studies have been attached to what Beck terms “methodological nationalism”. When addressing questions such as who defines memory and for whose interest memory serves, nation states has been a unit for analysis in many fields of related research, from the representation(s) of collective memory, to

26 This is a metaphor used by American cognitive linguist George Lakoff in his 2004 book Don’t Think of an Elephant. The metaphor is used to argue that human cognitive (or rather, mnemonic, as in this context) mechanism works in an unconscious way, as conscious denial of a thought does not eliminate the existence of the thought. In fact, any attempt to “not to remember” something will only lead to more definite memory.
James Edward Young, Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988).
memory and history\textsuperscript{29}, memory and identity\textsuperscript{30}, memory and power\textsuperscript{31}, to name just a few.

2.3 CULTURAL MEMORY: THE SEMIOTIC AS WELL AS THE POLITICAL

Cultural memory entails two dimensions. The semiotic dimension refers to organizations and representations of meaning, which focus primarily on the text; the political dimension, on the other hand, deals with the institutions and mechanisms that initiate, coordinate or prevent the meaning making process. The two dimensions together serve to fulfil the social function of cultural memory, namely the establishment and maintenance of a community.

2.3.1 Semiotics

The semiotics of cultural memory concerns the meaning construction process through symbols and symbolic orders\textsuperscript{32}. Its aim is to identify the meaning, and re-construct the meaning-making process. Barry Schwartz’s study on American memory of Abraham Lincoln, James Wertsch’s study on Russian memory of the Second World War and Jan Assmann’s study of cultural memory in Ancient Egypt\textsuperscript{33} are just a few examples of researches in the field.

\textsuperscript{29} Geoffrey Cubitt, \textit{History and Memory} (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2007).

\textsuperscript{30} Ben Wellings and Shanti Sumartojo, \textit{Nation, Memory and Great War Commemoration: Mobilizing the Past in Europe, Australia and New Zealand}, Cultural Memories (Oxford: Peter Lang AG, 2014).


\textsuperscript{32} This study will focus primarily on language and text as the tool for meaning construction. For semiotics studies of Nanjing memory that approach from image, sounds and other forms of media, refer to Jing Yang, ‘Rewriting the Chinese National Epic in an Age of Global Consumerism: City of Life and Death and The Flowers of War’, \textit{New Global Studies} 8, no. 3 (1 January 2014) or Jeff Kingston, Nanjing Massacre Memorial: Renovating War Memory in Nanjing and Tokyo, \textit{The Asian-Pacific Journal} 6, Issue 8 (August 2008).


Semiotic studies of cultural memory is never purely textual; and there are two major approaches for semiotics of memory to speak to social framework. One is that semiotics of memory informs the society it situates in; the other examines how social context translate into semiotics of memory.

American sociologist Barry Schwartz, for example, argues for the first option, that semiotics approach to memory is one of memory as social frames instead of social frames of memory, as Halbwachs proposed. To study the signs, symbols, denotations, significations and communications of cultural memory is to reveal how the semiotics of memory is framing the meaning of past experience in the present both visually and verbally. The workings of cultural memory of the Holocaust through time, for example, well demonstrates how changing representations have social implications.

Another American scholar James Wertsch, whose research is very much in the same line, is an advocate of the second approach. Wertsch introduces the concept narrative template, an agreed-upon symbolic arrangement that serves as a meta-narrative. This narrative template, seen as a second order distinct from the first order semiotics of memory (for example, the Abraham Lincoln statue or a newspaper drawing of the former president), explains why one certain historical happening can have contrasting memory representations in different contexts. The victim-heroic action template in the Soviet Union results in a distinct memory narrative of Normandy in Russia than in the United States. Many chronological study of Holocaust representation also follow this line.

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Thus the semiotics deconstructs and reconstructs a piece of memory “text”. But semiotics is not merely about appearances, but about the meaning making process and the agencies involved as well\(^3^9\). The latter is the concern of the politics of memory.

### 2.3.2 Politics

The politics of memory shifts attention from the text of cultural memory to that of the social institutes and mechanisms for its production. This includes questions of who selects what to remember, in what fashion and for whom. In the edited volume *Contested Pasts: the Politics of Memory*, Hodgkin and Radstone plainly state the political of cultural memory: a hegemonic representation of the past embedded in certain presuppositions, and is liable to contestation from non-dominant groups. This politics of memory does not so much concern what happened in the past as it concerns “who or what is entitled to speak for the past”\(^4^0\).

The contestation over representativeness of memory is particularly explicit concerning war memories, where conflicting parties are involved. Roper, Dawson and Ashplant examines the widening public interest in war memories and commemorations. Attributing this interest to the high profile commemorations of war, the claims for recognitions from victim groups, and the end of the Cold War which changed the polarizing spheres of influence, the authors to the volume selected a variety of cases to examine how particular cultural memories struggled to be established as dominant during the period. Wellings and Sumartojo focus on cultural memory of the First World War in Europe and the South Pacific (New Zealand and Australia), examining the continuities and tensions concerning national commemoration of the event\(^4^1\). While grand-narratives of war are gradually


dissolving, state’s role increasingly shifts from the dominant cultural memory agent to a mediator between individual and collective remembering.

In some cases, political claim to cultural memories serves to create new forms of bindings and redefine a community. European and American memories of the Second World War serve to extend their wartime alliances to one of memory in post-war era.42 This memory has also been significant in the shaping of post-war European nations and European integration.43 Being able to voice a piece of cultural memory, therefore, is being able to articulate a specific form of group identification, and the very articulation itself becomes an act of marking boundaries to communities of memory.44

2.3.3 Community of Memory

Cultural memory relies on text to convey its meanings; it also relies on social institutes and mechanisms for the execution of meaning construction. These two process together fulfil cultural memory’s social function: the definition of community and its form of identification.

In his well-known philosophical reflections on ethics of memoryi, Israeli philosopher Avishai Margalit defines community of memory as the space within which collective memory is created and maintained. The goal of a memory community is to keep certain memory, crucial to the persistence of the community, alive.45

Individual’s identification towards a memory community is a reciprocal one. Apart from claiming “right” to certain memories as “mine” or “ours”, members to the

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Helena Goncalves da Silva et al., Conflict, Memory Transfers and the Reshaping of Europe (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).
Karin Tilmans, Frank van Vree, and Jay Winter, Performing the Past: Memory, History, and Identity in Modern Europe (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010)
community also bear ethical responsibilities, which is to maintain the community’s strong bond to its (certain) past. These responsibilities is binding. Although members are not required to remember all, but within the division of labour to remembering, they are required to remember part of the memory. Within the community, individual experiences through time are considered connected among group members, and can be integrated into a certain meta-narrative of group history.

Nation is probably the most popular community of memory for memory scholars. Margalit refers to nation, along with families and religious groups, as a “natural community of memory”, a persisting group within which memory works have been done. The nation has been a popular site of research for memory scholars in recent years. Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de Memoire* is a comprehensive examination of French memory sites which have served French national sentiments. Jan Assman, whose expertise is in Egyptology, also conducts study within a defined national boundary. Comparative approach to Holocaust memory studies takes Germany, the United States, Israel and Poland as distinct cases where representations of the Holocaust vary according to local context. When alternative narratives are involved, the nation often serves as an umbrella entity within which different groups have different claims or as a basic unit of narrative that encounter each other.

48 For scholarship that address nation as a basic unit of collective memory, see: Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009).
Recent years, an emerging arena for cultural memory, the global, has received much attention. There have been instances where memories travelled from the cultural, often defined by nation, to the transcultural.\textsuperscript{49}

### 3.1.1 Transcultural Memory: Definition

Although Margalit refers to the nation as a natural community of memory, he also acknowledged the social-constructed nature of such community. No doubt, institutional support for transmission of a piece of memory and socio-cultural acceptance of its meaning has often been more probable within national defines. Yet given cultural memory’s reliance on textual representation and mediation, theoretically the boundary of a traveling meaning of memory is indefinite, as long as cultural encoding and decoding is not a strictly nation-specific process.

The mediation of memories through symbols and other forms of materialization provides the ground for defining transcultural memory. Dirk Moses, in defining the feasibility of studying in a globalized and transnational- or, rather, transcultural-mode, argues that,

\begin{quote}
\ldots the very constitution of local memories, especially those pertaining to war and occupation, are shot through with references to other cultures and nations, and not only of oppressive ones. Traumatic memory is necessarily analogical: we did not just suffer; we suffered like this or that, or we suffered more than or differently from them. Even claims to unique suffering are implicitly comparative, that is, transcultural.\textsuperscript{50}
\end{quote}

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\textsuperscript{50} Moses & Rothberg, A Dialogue on the Ethics and Politics of Transcultural Memory, in Lucy Bond and Jessica Rapson, \textit{The Transcultural Turn Interrogating Memory between and beyond Borders} (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 29.
\end{flushright}
This symbolic references to other instances of sufferings reveals a new challenge for memory and remembrance in the globalizing era. The meaning attached to memory shall not only recognize, but also be recognizable to similar experiences51.

Therefore the connectedness and connectibility of memory is the subject of study for transcultural memory, as Crownshaw highlights the dialogical nature of transcultural memory which “is interested in what happens when memory, so inherently dynamic, crosses cultural borders, enters into dialogue with other memories similarly mobilised, when it is freed from the identitarian claims of group ownership and used…..prosthetically, by others not so identified when… it becomes a boon or screen to other memories, therefore multidirectional”52.

3.1.2 Transcultural, Transnational or Cosmopolitan

Study of connectivity and connectibility of cultural memory are also conducted under other terms such as transnational or cosmopolitan memory. Transnational memory explicitly accepts the nation as cultural container, but challenges the view of it being exclusive and self-evident. The cultural production of memories, while always situated in national frameworks, is at the same time multi-layered, multi-sited and multi-directional, thus having the potential to transcend national borders53.

Sociologists Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider use the term cosmopolitan memory to refer to a global memory paradigm prominently informed by the highly-abstracted symbolic meanings of the Holocaust. Within this paradigm, the abstract “evil” the Holocaust represents becomes dominant globally; meanwhile, remembering negative pasts is closely linked to the course of modernity54.

Cosmopolitan memories, like cosmopolitanism in other fields, however, can appear to be idealistic. On the one hand, the term cosmopolitan implies the subject to

be static and existing. While the Holocaust can be considered as *de facto* cosmopolitan memory, the term does not leave much room to explore transcultural memories in the making. On the other hand, cosmopolitan memory presupposes a cosmopolitan community, or at least the feasibility of it, which, when exploring other instances of transcultural memory, is questionable.

**3.1.3 Research Approaches to Transcultural Memory**

The concept of transcultural memory contributes to the field not through newly-discovered subjects of study (new pieces of memory, new memory sites, etc.), nor so much through renovation in methodology. Instead, transcultural memory is a “research perspective”, a “focus of attention” directed as mnemonic practices that transcends traditional cultural borders and unfolds across and beyond cultures.55

In fact, academic interest in cultural memory came from very diverse disciplines from the very beginning: psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud), history (Pierre Nora), sociology (Maurice Halbwachs), and more recently, literary studies, cultural studies and media studies. This multi-disciplinary engagement has granted memory studies much rigor. Especially the sociological, cultural and literal methodological tradition will continue to shape transcultural memory studies, relating memory studies to broader questions such as how allegiance and identification is re-arranged in the globalizing era.

Michael Rothberg defines three foci of researches under the transcultural perspective: 1) theoretical definitions of actually existing transcultural and transnational connections; 2) the ethical and political problems that attend the circulation of memories; 3) the possibilities for counter-narratives and new forms of solidarity that sometimes emerge when practices of remembrance are recognized as implicated in each other.56

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56 Bond and Rapson, *The Transcultural Turn Interrogating Memory between and beyond Borders*, 31–33.
The second and third foci addresses the “in-the-making” feature of transcultural memory and opens room to explore why formerly exclusive local memories are rearticulated transculturally. It also leaves space to account for the (lack of) realisation of new forms of solidarity. The following sections will first address “transculturality” of memory, namely the possibility of a transcultural dynamic of memory; it then engages in theoretically discuss the possibilities of new community and solidarity.

3.2 TRANSCULTURALITY OF MEMORY

This section develops three theoretical implications of transculturality of memory in line with the three domains of study proposed by Rothberg.

First, transculturality of memory refers to certain narrative and meaning promoted by an existing body of memories that have gained global communication and acknowledgement. A most prominent case of such repertoire is the Holocaust. The considerable investment into this specific memory since the 1960s as well as the atrocity and extremity of the event itself shapes the Holocaust as a paradigmatic case of suffering and an exemplary expression of modern evil57. Cultural memories of the Holocaust have triggered reflections on modernity as a meta-structure itself, for example its moral uncertainty58. Thus the role of cultural memory, especially of traumatic experience, is defined in relation to meta-processes of humanity. With globalization and the development of media, this symbolic repertoire and social framework of memory is made available to parts of the world not immediately affected by the Holocaust, becoming a transcultural reference point for memories of similar nature.

Transculturality is also the possibility for cultural memories of certain types to transcend national borders. This possibility exists in at least three layers. First, the knowledge of the memory is recorded in other cultural group or international institutions. Second, the memory is also in circulation in discourses of various

57 Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaid, Human Rights and Memory, Essays on Human Rights (University Park, Pa: The @Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2010).
cultures and societies to some degree, instead of remaining inactive in the archive. Third, encoded meaning can be decoded by a transcultural audience. This means that the encoding process should avoid overly cultural-specific codes and attempt to appeal to “common grounds”.

Generally, negative moments of a group are more likely to transcend group borders than confirmative ones. Cultural memories of group genesis, for example, may be recorded as knowledge by other groups. But due to the high level identification it requires, such memories are less likely to be active among other groups. That France represents itself with a rooster, for example, is a fact known to many in China; but few will identify with its connection with French national pride. On the contrary, memories of inhumane experiences that creates group bond based on negativity seem more liable to be transcultural. Pain and suffering, especially physical ones, are more likely to generate sympathy than pride or other imagined sense of belonging.

In fact, memories of tragic events go transcultural with much shorter delay today, thanks to the internet. One can think of events such as Charlie Hebdo attack, the 3-year-old refugee boy Aylan dying on the beach, or the Paris attack in November 2015. Memories of the events were soon materialized and transmitted world-wide: on social media, Je suis Charlie appeared in different languages to show solidarity; Aylan’s photo swept through Chinese media and gained great sympathy; shortly after the Paris attack, millions of Facebook users, French or not, adopted the French-flag filter to their profile photos. Why cultural memories of traumatic experiences are more likely to be transcultural will be further discussed in the next section.

Thirdly, transculturality refers to a need for cultural memories to go beyond borders. By nature, social dissemination is an inherent part of cultural memory for it to be meaningful. To promote formally-local memories to the global is a requirement of engaging in global communications. Meanwhile, meanings of cultural memory is multi-layered instead of monolithic. Transcultural articulation by no means
exterminates its meaning to the local or individual. An example of the multiple layers of meaning is flashbulb memory\textsuperscript{59} where people remember the socially-encoded narrative of an event, but also the personal details surrounding his hearing the narrative. So it is true to the national. The liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, for example, is commemorated in Poland with a strong national tone, which is not completely shadowed by the global relevance of the Holocaust\textsuperscript{60}

Narrating memories across border is also a requirement of modernity. With the acceleration of history\textsuperscript{61}, the seemingly faster pace of time in modern world, the past erodes easily, and needs to be constantly revived to maintain the continuity that sustains a group. This is particularly true in the uncertainty of (post)modernity\textsuperscript{62}, where the future becomes highly uncertain, and its unfolding with continuity relies on consistency through the past and the present. Through “travelling”, meaning the constant refreshing and reviving of memory, such consistency is ensured.

3.3 A TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY COMMUNITY?

Despite the semiotic potentials for memory to be transcultural, however, whether such potential leads to a transcultural memory community similar to that of the national remains in question.

The political agent that promotes transcultural memory seems to affect how such articulation is received internationally. Re-addressing past injustice within the nation after regime change (mostly from “authoritarian” regimes to democratic ones\textsuperscript{63}), or

\textsuperscript{60} See Polish President Andrzej Duda’s speech at the 71\textsuperscript{st} commemoration of liberation of Auschwitz. The balance of the national and the global are also constantly shifting. While the 71\textsuperscript{st} commemoration displays a stronger national tone, it is less so for the 70\textsuperscript{th}, which is quite international without special focus on Poland, as the latter is more significant and attracts greater international attention.
\textsuperscript{62} Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust, 2.
\textsuperscript{63} For an example, see: Michael H. Bernhard and Jan Kubik, eds., Twenty Years after Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2014).
the self-reflexive national memories\textsuperscript{64}, has been positively received as it relates memory to democratization. Barack Obama mentioned Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing as a difficult yet inevitable war time decision during his recent visit to Japan. Despite intense remembering at local level, the lack of an official apology from America to Japan for excessive loss of civilian lives was not much problematized outside Japan. Under the “peace” discourse, traumas in a formerly “enemy” country does not seem likely to gain similar status as “human suffering” as the massive death of “ally” or innocent folks.

It is true that the community of memory is static and its boundary is liable to transformation. Margalit argued that remembering is not only an act of confirming an existing community, but also a constant-renegotiation of community boundaries. The modern spread of media and internet has even created cultural memories that do not necessarily have a restricted national origin\textsuperscript{65}. Meanwhile, such a dynamic memory community is by no means homogeneous. Based on the physical and emotional distances from the event, the community becomes a spectrum that range from centre to periphery. While the centre and the periphery construct different degrees of identification and attachment with the event, they can nonetheless agree upon some of the core meanings of the cultural memory.

But the porousness of border and the heterogeneity of community affiliation do not necessarily entail a transcultural memory community, or a community of humanity. Here, one could turn to international relations which offers different conceptions of the nature of global structure. In classics such as \textit{The Prince} by Machiavelli, the international arena is anarchic, and states play with the “jungle rule”;


\textsuperscript{65} For example, digital/virtual space can also constitute a memory community. See: Joanne Garde-Hansen, ed., \textit{Save as ... Digital Memories} (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).
promoters of constructivism such as Alexander Wendt\textsuperscript{66} emphasizes international society where norms are constructed via interaction; Niklas Luhmann’s system theory also emphasizes the social dimension, but with specific attention to communication as defining the function of system.

Either from an anarchical view or a social one, there is the hindrance to formation of a global community analytical to the nation, be it a result of system/structure of or agents/actors. For classical realists, above all, the “jungle rule” of international relations denies the possibility of universal solidarity. Even when there are common observation of certain norms and rules, these are predominantly defined by a hegemonic power. As self-help is the major motivation, those on the periphery of the power structure may identify with the hegemon for pragmatic reasons, while there is little chance for the hegemon to identify with any normative claims of the former.

Although for social theorists of international relations, norms are developed through interaction and communication, there is still the question of effectiveness. Luhmann, for example, explicitly stated in his essay on communication theory\textsuperscript{67}, that the communication defining international society does not necessarily include intention and wilful reception. Thus, although articulation of a message accounts for global interaction, it is not necessary for any other actors to respond. Meanwhile, there is also the question of credibility. Exchanging accounts of the past is not the sole form of interaction. Other interactions might form certain perceptions of credibility of an actor, which subsequently influences proceeding interactions. As actors do not always hold positive views of each other, solidarity in this case is precarious, or at least susceptible to previous perceptions.


From both theoretical vantage points, the agent of memory bears influence on the effective realization of transculturality. A powerful agent able to define norms and rules in international society, or able to influence preferences and agenda, may have its memory acknowledged more easily. For a less powerful agent, or that who is relatively dis-credited in previous interactions, finds its claim to memory less easy to communicate.

As long as agents are involved, the idea of transcultural memory (in its broadest sense) is, like Margalit argued, a doubtful one. At its most, transcultural memory is a communication act defined by Luhmann: meanings are articulated through some mutually perceptible symbols, but whether these meanings are received and responded to remains out of the picture.
4.1 **HOLOCAUST AS THE MEMORY OF ALL HUMAN**

If any memory can be tagged global, cosmopolitan or transcultural, the Holocaust will merit a place on the list.

Holocaust memory has not only become the paradigmatic representation of (Western) standard of human suffering\(^{68}\), but also establishes a model for how the past can be relevant to the present in modern times\(^{69}\). In the past years, representations of Holocaust memory have been endowed with abstract and universal messages, encouraging world-wide identification, thus making the memory not merely Jewish, German, or European. Transcultural memory of Holocaust has deepened contemporary sensitivity to social evil, and has provided a common language with which other similar memories are articulated. The transcultural dissemination of Holocaust memory is so present that three decades later, Pierre Nora’s statement can still stand: whoever says memory, says Shoah.

To trace the long and complex transcultural path of the Holocaust will be beyond the scope of this paper, and there has been an enormous body of literature on the topic. To demonstrate the semiotic and political influences of Holocaust as a transcultural memory, this section draws on the works of American sociologist David Levy and Israeli sociologist Natan Sznaider. In their recent work *Memory and the Holocaust in Global Age* (2006), they have provided a comprehensive account of how memory of the Holocaust has gone beyond the boundaries of its immediate parties and has become a global or cosmopolitan memory.


The two authors have clarified that to talk about cosmopolitan feature of the Holocaust is not talking about the historical event but its representation. One way to construct a transcultural memory is through abstraction in representation. For the Holocaust, its victims are not only the specific Jewish group, but also humanity in general that it represents; the perpetrators are not only the Nazi regime, but the concept of evil and inhumanity to which it is a symbol. Attaching abstract meanings to the Holocaust can be well observed in themes of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on UN agenda. In its ten years of history, the Remembrance Day has covered themes such as democracy, hope, courage, compassion, human dignity as well as life and survival. Some other themes address certain groups like women, children or rescuers. These themes goes beyond the specificity of concentration camps or anti-Semitism, the human subjects are involved no longer as Jews alone, but as men, women and children as well.

This process of abstracting concepts related to the Holocaust is defined by Levy and Szaider as the construction of structural trauma in contrast to historical trauma. The dissolution of this relationship (victimhood v.s. perpetrator) and the emergence of non-specific actors (i.e. the witness perspective) explain the transition from historical to structural trauma. Structural trauma is based on a history without subjects. Abstract structures (like modernity) are its main components. This comes at the Holocaust in terms of "structural trauma" removes it from the particular German-Jewish relationship, and rests it into the context of modernity. Accordingly, Germany can cease to be perceived as the exception to the standard path of European national development, instead becoming the exemplification of a common modernity…. Expressed in human rights regimes and the general condemnation of genocide. These abstracted concepts allows for universal identification with the Holocaust memory and its attached meanings apart from particular ones. While universal identification does not suggest the whole humanity as a memory community, it does imply that
individuals outside the immediate parties of the Holocaust can sympathize with its memory and acknowledge its attached meanings.

Memory of the Holocaust as a transcultural memory is both de-territorialized and institutionalized. De-territorialisation refers to the fact that representations of Holocaust memory are circulation beyond places directly linked to either the event or its parties. The rise of media technology as well as popular representations of the Holocaust facilitates this process. The 1993 American film Schindler’s List, for example, was screened in more than 20 countries, including non-Western countries such as Peru, Argentina and South Korea. The film has become a time-long classic in popular representations of the Holocaust. So is the diary of Anne Frank. Since its first publication, the story of Anne Frank has been made available in 70 languages to over 60 countries in the world, with more than 30 million copies sold. Apart from representations, commemoration of the Holocaust in physical forms are also dispersed in multiple places. An Auschwitz-Birkenau museum map shows that commemoration activities for the 70th anniversary of Auschwitz liberation were held in more than 30 countries in all five continents. By institutionalization it is meant the emergence of international institutes that aims to promote the memory of Holocaust worldwide, the most well-known of which being the International Holocaust Remembrance Day established by the United Nations in 2006.

Holocaust memory as a paradigmatic case of transcultural memory informs other similar practices in two ways. On the one hand, there is increasing attention to the humanistic, the suffering of individuals; on the other hand, Holocaust memory directs remembering today to focus on to social evil and the precariousness and uncertainty of human progress. It has provided a common language in which to articulate other

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71 http://70.auschwitz.org/mapcreator/index.php (2016/5/30)
instances of sufferings\textsuperscript{73}; it has also defined a “model” piece of contemporary memory which functions as self-reflection of human societies.

In some other transculturally articulated memories one can detect the influence of Holocaust memory. The massacre in Rwanda and the Turkish massacre of Armenians are two examples of memory representations present in Europe recently. Although distinct from each other, these memories share a common feature: that they involve massive deprivation of lives caused by human instead of natural factors, and are shocking and uncomforting enough to be tagged “traumatic” or “inhumane”. And both memories are often represented through human sufferings, and their meanings connected to reflections of how society or societies arrange themselves. There has been attentions to memories of the traumatic and inhumane in other parts of the world, for example the resurging memories of comfort woman and other wartime atrocities in East Asia.

Why, then, do traumatic cultural memories see much attempts for transcultural or international dissemination?

4.2 WHY MEMORY OF TRAUMATIC EVENTS?

One of the reasons concerns the form of identification traumatic memory requires. Unlike memories of triumph and glory which requires a high degree of identification, those of sufferings has less demands on emotional devotion and shouldering of responsibilities. The recognition of the suffering of people beyond one’s immediate connections is conceptualized by Margalit as a memory community held by thin relations of respect\textsuperscript{74} and the acknowledgement that human suffering (introduced by human, more specifically) is a violation of such respect. Recent traumatic events that acquired recognition beyond their vicinities include 9/11, Charlie Hebdo, the Syrian refugee boy who died on the beach, the Paris Attack in the end of 2015… To the

\textsuperscript{73} Ebron, Slavery and Transnational Memory: the Making of New Public, in De Cesari and Rigney, \textit{Transnational Memory}, 147.

\textsuperscript{74} Avishai Margalit, \textit{The Ethics of Memory}, 3. Aufl (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), 37.
global audience, memory of these events are not merely stored knowledge, but a memory that generates emotional responses. Thus the suffering is not only known, but also known as not restricted to the American, the Syrian or the French. In these instances, identification does not endow much responsibility over people who wish to identify: sharing a picture, changing one’s Facebook profile or posting a phrase *Je Suis Charlie* in different languages already includes one in the temporary community of memory.

Another reason that memory of traumatic experience is more likely to realize its transculturality is that it allows for the self-reflection of the community it defines, which is made necessary under acceleration of history and the uncertainties of (post-)modernity. While Margalit hesitates on the ambition of the term community of humanity, traumatic memories do possess the potential to engage multiple national communities in reflecting upon the process of progress, of modernity, and of the morality of human activities as such.\(^7^5\). With the globalization process, not only are the positive and neutral aspects of modernization dispersed, but also its risks and uncertainties, involving (post)modern life in constant risk.\(^7^6\). Remembering traumatic experience is relevant in that it serves as a constant reminder of the ambiguity of development and modernization that, under the context of increasing global interconnectedness, can no longer be contained to a certain nation or people.

### 4.3 A TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY COMMUNITY OF HUMANITY?

It is true that the last century of globalization, the intensive human interactions introduces turmoil and suffering to many peoples. While globalisation polarises development of different countries, war and other human-made disasters appear to be a common experience under global connectivity.

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This is why today’s increasing global interconnectedness no longer concerns present and future interactions alone. It is also re-constructed in the past. Promoting transcultural memory of traumatic events is reflective of the present agenda of nations, yet meanwhile, it reversely presents an agenda in history that defines human experience in a specific way. Present day emphasis on the Holocaust memory does not only advocate a current agenda of peace, anti-discrimination and prevention of authoritarianism; it also presumes a specific past agenda, that the Holocaust is one of the most significant and defining events in the past decade, not only for Europe and America, but for the whole world.

By identifying an emblematic trauma in the past, humanity is connected by sharing a common “milestone” in their historical process. These milestones correspond to the need for self-reflection mentioned above. The past agenda of war and conflict, contrasting with the present agenda of peace and cooperation, create a meta-narrative of historical experience that is supposedly shared by all nations. For nations and other communities within the connected world today, articulating its own memory of human-induced trauma can at the same time establish connectedness in the past, thus enhancing possibility for identification and solidarity.

However, does a reconstructed connectedness in the past create a bonded global community? For this, one needs to be aware of the fact that such a meta-narrative is very much founded on a “Western”-perspective memory, be it the Holocaust and WW II (much represented as a Euro-American experience) or the cold war and the collapse of USSR. Global interactions in the past two centuries have also established a privileged position for the “West” (Europe and America). With this privileged- or even hegemonic, as realists in international relations would prefer to term it, the West is more likely to establish norms or define meanings in the international arena than any other actors. It is under such circumstances that the Holocaust memory, first promoted by the Americans and later Europeans, can be elevated to a “global” or “cosmopolitan” status.
Thus it takes more than the Holocaust memory to justify transcultural memory or its potential for creating a community of humanity. Will the same path apply to traumatic experience of other international actors? The next chapter examines the transcultural articulation of a non-Western memory of traumatic experience—memory of the Nanjing Massacre. While attempts to emphasise individual suffering and to abstract meaning of memory in connection to meta-processes of peace and modernity, the “national” still dominates the “transnational” when it comes to perception of Nanjing memory.
5.1 Nanjing Massacre and China in the Second World War

The reason for the attention to Nanjing Massacre in the past decades in China is complex. There have been concerns for diplomacy as well as domestic politics. But for a long time, memories of Nanjing Massacre were only revived when there was domestic need for solidarity and identification, or when there were fractures in Sino-Japanese relations. Since the 2010s, China has been more active in promoting Nanjing memory internationally. Although the domestic and foreign incentives still exist, especially the foreign one, there is no suggestion that the territorial or political conflicts between China and Japan are essentially different from their previous disagreements. Therefore, there must be concerns beyond bilateral relations for Nanjing Massacre to be communicated to the international audience.

As the Holocaust is to Europe, so is the Nanjing Massacre to China- both has been constructed as the symbolic trauma of the Second World War, and both has been held as a defining event in the historical process of their communities. Although the two might have been remembered differently, they are both remembered under the same significant event that defines geopolitics for the coming decades.

And China is trying to change its status as the “forgotten ally” of WW II in the meantime by celebrating victory anniversaries with increasing global profile. The 2015 parade for the 70th anniversary of victory invited a dozen international political leaders for the first time. This gesture suggests that what is celebrated is not only a Chinese victory, but Chinese contribution to the international victory of WW II.

To promote Nanjing memory is to imply China as both a co-victim of war and a co-victor of peace along with America and other European countries. And should the above discussion about transcultural memory of trauma holds reason, Nanjing memory as a memory of inhumanity would be able to obtain transcultural sympathy.

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Of course, transcultural communication of memory requires a series of discursive as well as institutional practices. The next section will trace the meaning construction of Nanjing Massacre in media (newspapers, publications, documentaries, films etc.), supported by examinations of institutional efforts.

5.2 Nanjing Memory From Local to National

Similar to the Holocaust, Nanjing Massacre didn't automatically or immediately stir large-scale, active mnemonic practices. Instead, memory of the massacre was first initiated at local level. On national level, it was not until the 1980s, after decades of silence, that the PRC government started claiming national significance to the memory.

In a recent publication *The Making of the Rape of Nanking: History and Memory in Japan, China and the United States*, Japanese historian Takashi Yoshida provides a comprehensive account of the historical path through which memory of Nanjing Massacre travels from local to national, and even internationalised. This process is discussed in four historical periods, namely 1) the Sino-Japanese war (1937-1945); 2) the civil war and cold war (1945-1971) 3) nationalization of the memory (1971-1989) and 4) popularization of the memory (1989-early 2010s)7879. Through these four periods, a brief historical account will be given to the cultural memory construction of Nanjing Massacre.

5.2.1 1937-1945: One Local Atrocity among Many Others

Nanjing Massacre refers to a series of rape, arson and murder committed by the Japanese military force during the first weeks of their occupation of the then Chinese capital city, Nanjing. The massacre is often marked as beginning on the 13th Dec


79 Published in 2006, Yoshida defines the last period for Nanjing memory as an open period that lasts to the day of his work. To distinguish from the period of transcultural articulation of Nanjing memory discussed later in the article, the early 2010s is used to distinguish the two periods.
when Japanese troop entered the city and continued on a large scale at least six weeks after the city was captured\textsuperscript{80}. Death was estimated to be over 200,000 according to the International Military Tribunal for the Far East\textsuperscript{81}.

Despite its seriousness, the Nanjing atrocity was only one among many incidences of war time crimes in various cities of China, including indiscriminate bombing, the chemical warfare in Manchuria and the sexual exploitation of women. In fact, the fall of the then capital of the Guomindang government was not the “representative” atrocity when appealing for international support. On 14\textsuperscript{th} Dec, one day after the fall of Nanjing, Chang Kai-Shek issued an announcement from Chong Qing, where the nationalist government had retreated to, stating that although Nanjing was lost, the government will keep resistance against Japanese troops. In the memoire of then Chinese delegate to League of Nations Wellington Koo, the fall of Nanjing and the subsequent atrocity did not feature as a diplomatic leverage; instead, Koo used the situation in Shanghai and Huabei district to lobby for international support\textsuperscript{82}. In his speech at Academy of Diplomacy, Paris, France on 17\textsuperscript{th} Dec, 1937, Koo made no mention of the fall of Nanjing, but cited Japan’s occupation of Chinese sovereign land to emphasize the direness of China’s situation:

In the five months since they (Japanese military force) launched their first attack at Loukouchiao, they have occupied (parts of China)… with a total population of 75 million and a total area of 1,014,000 sq.km approximately representing the combined size of Great Britain, Italy and Spain… The Japanese military operations in China today… equal to the size of Belgium, Holland and Denmark together\textsuperscript{83}.

\textsuperscript{80} Judgement International Military Tribunal for the Far East, 1946, p1018
\textsuperscript{81} http://werle.rewi.hu-berlin.de/tokio.pdf (2016/5/27)
\textsuperscript{82} Gu Weijun, Gu Weijun huiyi lu, Vol 3 [Memoire of Wellington Koo], Zhonghua shuju, 1985, p25-27
\textsuperscript{83} Wellington Koo’s speech from Gu Weijun eds, Gu Weijun waijiao yanjiang ji [Collection of Wellington Koo’s Diplomatic Speeches], Shanghai Lexicographical Publishing House, 2006, p160
At the League of Nations, Nanjing Massacre was listed as one among many Japanese war crimes without specific emphasis. The conference sessions of League of Nations during May and August 1938 documented two notes on Sino-Japanese Conflict. The May note featured mainly indiscriminative bombings\textsuperscript{84} while the August note focus about evidence of poisonous gas used in Yangtze area\textsuperscript{85}.

On 10\textsuperscript{th} May, Chinese delegate Wellington Koo made an official appeal to the League of Nations to call for member states’ attention to Japanese aggression in China. In the appeal, Koo mentioned “wanton slaughter of non-combatants by indiscriminate bombing of undefended towns and non-military centres” and cruel treatment of civilians as the ongoing suffering of Chinese people. While Nanjing Massacre falls under this category, the event itself was not mentioned; instead, the use of poisonous gas in Shantung was specified\textsuperscript{86}.

Although Nanjing Massacre was not emblematic of Chinese suffering under Japanese military invasion, memory of the atrocity was documented by locals. German businessman John Rabe, American commissioner Wilhelmina Vautrin and Chinese member of emergency committee at Ginling College Cheng Ruifang all kept diaries of the events in Nanjing during the massacre. While Rabe and Vautrin’s account were made available to international community at that time, Cheng’s diary was only recently re-discovered in the archive of Ginling College in 2005\textsuperscript{87}. All three figures worked in refugee shelters set up by international parties and their accounts

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provided first-hand material of the event. Australian journalist H.J. Timperley published *What War Means: The Japanese Terror in China* in 1938 in which he documented around 170 entries of foreign residents’ account of the Nanjing Massacre.

These initiatives to document the atrocity of the city provides a valuable resource that makes the future making of cultural memory possible. But in general, during Sino-Japanese war, Nanjing Massacre was more a local memory than a symbol for war-time suffering of the Chinese nation.

5.2.2 1945-1971: A Shadowed Memory

Immediately after the war when Guomindang reclaimed Nanjing, the government had made attempts to archive Nanjing Massacre both to keep a detailed record of the event and to issue compensation to victims. Apart from these attempts, however, there was no particular significance attached to the event. In fact, while China was engaged in domestic warfare and later in the cold-war division, memories of the wartime atrocities remained generally inactive during the period.

13th September 1945, the then mayor of Nanjing published a public announcement on official newspaper of Guomindang, *Central Daily News* (中央日报), encouraging Nanjing citizens to report loss of life and property by household during the massacre so as to reclaim compensation. December of the same year, the national government announced which call upon citizens to provide evidence of Nanjing Massacre for the military tribunal. June 1946, a special committee was organized by national government to collect testimonies from survivors and relatives of victims of Nanjing Massacre “in accordance with the evidence law of the military tribunal”. The reports from citizens (市民呈文) were then preserved in Nanjing Municipal Archives. During 1945 and 1947, Guomindang government held a military tribunal in Nanjing among other 12 cities for the conviction of four wartime criminals.
However, treatment of wartime atrocities was restrained to legal and administrative level. Soon, both Guomindang and the communist party were engaged in their current enemy instead of remembering the deeds of their past enemy⁸⁸.

When the communist party took over power in mainland China, Nanjing Massacre was even less discussed. Narrative of the war was focused on fostering an image of national pride and strength among people⁹⁰ instead of national suffering. In the 1950 edition of history textbook for elementary school, the period of the massacre was covered in one passive sentence “Nanjing was lost on December 13”. The 1956 history textbook for junior high school skipped Nanjing Massacre, focusing instead on the retreat of Guomindang government in the face of Japanese military advancing⁹⁰.

At local level, memory of Nanjing Massacre was preserved within the city, in line with official narratives of the historical period⁹¹. But on national level, the historical event was not actively remembered.

5.2.3 1971-1989: Nationalizing the Memory

In the early 1980s, state initiatives towards a narrative of Nanjing Massacre as national suffering and emblem of Japanese wartime crimes started to emerge.

Above all, local archival documents were assembled and published.

In face of the Japanese textbook controversy in 1982⁹², the Second Historical Archives of China, together with Nanjing Museum, organized an exhibition on Nanjing Massacre in 1983. Meanwhile, systematic work on existing documents commenced. In 1984, Editorial Committee of Historical Archives of Nanjing Massacre (南京大屠杀史料编辑委员会) was established in Nanjing. The committee conducted interviews and investigations among survivors and witnesses of the massacre, and published a collection of 104 testimonies in 1985, Historical

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⁹⁰ Ibid., 71.
⁹⁰ Jeffrey C. Alexander, Trauma: A Social Theory (Cambridge, UK ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2012), 122–123.
⁹² On June 26, 1982, Japanese Minister of Education requested revision in historical textbooks, including adopting “advancing into” instead of “invade” China. This action triggered violent social and diplomatic reactions from China.

This period also witnessed the establishment of public infrastructures for the promotion of war memory. In 1985, The Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders (侵华日军南京大屠杀纪念馆) was established in Nanjing. The memorial hall is not only a public museum but also a research institute that preserves memory of the massacre. In 1987, the Museum of the War of Chinese People’s Resistance against Japanese Aggression (中国人民抗日战争纪念馆) opened to the public in suburb Beijing, with focus on a heroic narrative of strength of the people and the nation.

Publishing books and establishing museums demonstrated state attention to memory of Nanjing Massacre. Along with increased attention to wartime memory in general, memory of Nanjing Massacre also received special attention and became an emblematic among other atrocities.

5.2.4 1989-early 2010s: Popularization of the Memory

During this period, popular accounts of Nanjing Massacre memory became increasingly available to the public.

In 1995 a film on Nanjing Massacre was released. Directed by Wu Ziniu, Don’t Cry, Nanjing tells a story of a Chinese doctor (Cheng Xian) and his Japanese wife (Rieko) who was in Nanjing during the massacre. The film evolves around the collapse of Cheng’s over optimistic expectations of the wartime situation. When Japanese military forces first started attacking Nanjing, Cheng decided to stay in the city but sent his wife to the safety zone. When the city was taken over, Cheng sought refuge in the safety zone also. However, safety zone was not safe either. Japanese troops raided the area and Cheng’s Japanese wife was killed. Although featuring a Japanese women with humane characteristics, the whole film emphasizes the brutality
Several films featuring the massacre came afterwards. Later in the same year, *Black Sun: The Nanjing Massacre* by Hong Kong director Tun Fei Mou was released, accounting for the event from the perspective of Japanese military. Another Hong Kong director Raymond To tells the story of massacre through the family tragedy of two sisters in the 2004 film *May & August*. *The Child of Huangshi* (2008) and *The Diary of Rabe* (2009) were two films that features foreign witnesses of the massacre. Two more recent films of Nanjing Massacre received even more popularity. The *City of Life and Death* (2009) by Lu Chuan was the award winner at both the 57th San Sebastian Film festival and Oslo Film Festival 2009. Zhang Yimou’s 2011 movie *Flowers of War* tells the story of strangers helping each other out during the atrocity. The film had the highest box-office income in mainland China in 2011, and was on screen in the United States.

Popular literature on Nanjing Massacre was also booming during this period. In 1991, the diaries of John Rabe and Wilhelmina Vautrin was discovered in the United States. Chinese versions of these dairies were published in 1997 and 2000 respectively. Meanwhile, *The Rape of Nanking* by American-Chinese Iris Chang\(^93\) attracted immediate attention in China and was translated into Chinese shortly after its publication in 1997.

The higher-profile commemoration of end of Sino-Japanese war also increased popularity of Nanjing Massacre memory as representation of national suffering. Jiang Zemin’s speech on occasion of the 50th anniversary of end of war and that of Hu Jintao on the 60th set the tone for the symbolic meaning of wartime suffering.

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\(^{93}\) As a journalist, Chang’s book, aiming at promoting awareness of the massacre, was not a strictly academic account of the event. But the strong expressions and emotions of her words drew much attention nonetheless.
represented by Nanjing Massacre. The war and its atrocities are constructed as reminder of the lesson and history which justifies a progressive narrative of the nation.

5.3 A NEW MEANING LAYER BEYOND LOCAL AND NATIONAL

What does Nanjing Massacre means to the local and the national, and why the event is selected to be remembered? These questions need to be addressed in the meaning construction of Nanjing memory in any period. While local, the meaning of Nanjing memory was often attached to specific places and life experiences on those places; on the national level, Nanjing memory has been articulated as national suffering in line with a larger narrative of war, that of heroic resistance and national progress. In the second decade of the 21st century however, a new layer of meaning is attached to Nanjing memory. The national progress tone is slightly down played; more emphasis is put on victimhood and suffering which can be generalized beyond the nation and draw analogy to other similar instances.

5.3.1 The Local and National Meaning Layers of Nanjing Memory

5.3.1.1 Local: a Place-Bond Suffering

Nanjing memory within the city and its vicinity has been strongly attached to places. This is particularly true to the accuracy and specificity of locations, architectures and other material places related to the event, as well as that of the victims.

In Historical Documents on Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, for example, evidence of mass killing is organized by spot, listing specific places like Yanzi Ji or Zhongshan Dock. The same is for citizen reports documented by Nanjing Municipal Archives. The reports are organized by the place of atrocity; for sporadic killings, accurate location is always recorded. Meanwhile, reporting citizens were required to provide details of their residency including their occupations, birth place, current address and exact time and place of the crime reported.
As the archive was constructed partly for compensation partly for military tribunal evidences, detail and accuracy in place was a necessary requirement. However, by specifying the physical place, these documents are also attached to local memory. To identify with the specific narrations, the places mentioned cannot be empty signifiers, but should be able to be related to physical space. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial Hall also demonstrate the place attachment. Not only is the hall constructed in Nanjing; it was also situated at Jiangdong Gate, a former spot of mass killing and mass burial.

5.3.1.2 National: Humiliation and Redemption

In the last two decades of the 20th century, cultural memory of Nanjing Massacre became active on the national level. On the one hand, Nanjing Massacre became highly relevant in light of the Japanese textbook controversy in 1982. On the other hand, the memory emerged under an increasingly prominent discourse of war that emphasizes heroic resistance and national progress, as the increasing attention to war memory during this period was mainly aimed to promote patriotism94.

The making of Nanjing memory then is centred on the concept of humiliation. The massacre as an emblem of Japanese wartime crimes is a humiliation to the nation. Redemption of such humiliation requires the perpetrator’s acknowledgement of its inferior moral stance in the incidents and the victims’ endeavour to make up for the humiliation and to ensure that it never happens again. Thus, what cultural memory of Nanjing Massacre meant during this period for the whole nation was two-fold: the national responsibility to preserve memory as evidence of both actual crime and moral inferiority of Japanese troops and the nation-wide identification with wartime suffering that supports a heroic and progressive national narrative.

Before 1982, Nanjing Massacre was only covered in around 20 articles in *People’s Daily* (人民日报), China’s official national newspaper, during more than three decades. In 1982 however, 42 articles were published during 3 months concerning the massacre. The series of discussion started with an article on 30th June 1982 which covered a planned revision of Japanese high school textbooks. The Nanjing Massacre was cited as an example of Japan’s effort to “relieve responsibility of war”,

… the publisher’s sample (said) “during occupation of Nanjing, Japanese military killed many Chinese soldiers and citizens, and conducted rape, lute and arson. The massacre in Nanjing received international condemnation. It is believed that more than 200,000 Chinese were killed”. But after revision (by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Science and Culture), the number of casualty was missing, so were “rape, lute, arson” and other brutal activities. The Nanjing Massacre was even described as “a result of fierce resistance from the Chinese military forces which caused significant lost to the Japanese military; Japanese soldiers killed many Chinese soldiers and citizens out of indignation.

During the year, a sequence of articles were published on *People’s Daily*, most of which were of the nature of evidence or condemnation. Witnesses’ narratives, art works, local historical archives and academic works were cited to confirm the authenticity of Nanjing Massacre. On 13th August an article was published under the title *No Tampering with History: a True Account of the Nanjing Massacre*. This was the first full-scale narrative of the event released by state media. The article gave a vivid account of deeds of Japanese soldiers in Nanjing and concluded that the criminal actions of Japanese army was consolidated in the military tribunal after war. Meanwhile, reports of condemnation of Japanese textbook revision covered various

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95 People’s Daily is the official newspaper of Chinese Communist Party. Most sources in the following text concerning discursive construction of Nanjing Memory is from People’s Daily. Being the party media and the official news source, text from People’s Daily can be considered as mainstream and representative of discourses surrounding Nanjing Massacre at certain periods.
parties, including victim citizens\textsuperscript{96}, student association\textsuperscript{97}, academics and law experts\textsuperscript{98}, international parties\textsuperscript{99} and Japanese society\textsuperscript{100}, suggesting the representativeness of the truth claim.

The intense evidence-providing and condemnation came to a halt in September, with Chinese vice minister of foreign affairs Wu Xueqian acknowledge Japan’s decision to tackle the textbook controversy as a “step forward”. In the next decade, \textit{People’s Daily} maintained steady annual coverage of the Nanjing Massacre. The majority of the articles report evidence from various sources to support official narrative of the massacre. State media coverage, combined with the publication of documents and the establishment of museums discussed in the previous chapter, conveyed the message that Nanjing Massacre was a epical memory of China’s wartime experience; a solitary national narrative was provided as a necessity against possible erosion or distortion of the memory, and “consolidation of historical facts” was essential to memory preservation.

Meanwhile, a commemoration discourse emerged in which memory of individual and collective suffering was supportive to the narrative of heroic resistance

\textsuperscript{96} The Massacre Haunts and the Scars Remain (大屠杀历历在目,幸存者伤疤仍在), \textit{People’s Daily} 8\textsuperscript{th} August 1982, \url{http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmrb/1982-08-05-4#603115} (2016/8/10)
Zou Aiguo, History Bears no Manipulation, \textit{People’s Daily}, 5\textsuperscript{th} August 1982, \url{http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmrb/1982-08-08-4#603364} (2016/8/10)
\textsuperscript{97} On a Grandiose and Just Student Movement (记一次伟大正义的学生运动), \textit{People’s Daily}, 5\textsuperscript{th} August 1982 and 8\textsuperscript{th} August 1982
\textsuperscript{98} Zhu Chengshan, Hong Kong Media Continues to Condemn Japanese Ministry of Educaton (香港一些报纸继续发表文章谴责文部省), \textit{People’s Daily}, 4\textsuperscript{th} August 1982, \url{http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmrb/1982-08-04-4#603024} (2016/8/10)
Media in South Eastern Asian Countries Suggest Japan should Reflex in Order not to Harm International Relations of the Region (东南亚一些国家报纸纷纷发表评论指出日本文部省歪曲侵朝史是对朝鲜人民的侮辱), \textit{People’s Daily}, 2\textsuperscript{nd} August 1982, \url{http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmrb/1982-08-02-6#602880} (2016/8/10)
\textsuperscript{100} Six Sino-Japan Friendship Associations Appeal for President Suzuki to Take Decision on Textbook Issue (日本六个日中友好团体联名致书铃木首相,要求政府就修改教科书问题早日作出决断), \textit{People’s Daily}, 6\textsuperscript{th} August 1982, \url{http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmrb/1982-08-06-6#604237} (2016/8/10)
in the past and national progress in the future. Shortly before the 40th anniversary of the end of Sino-Japanese War, the Nanjing Memorial Hall was opened to public in Nanjing city. On the ceremony, then major of Nanjing, Zhang Yaohua, referred to Nanjing Massacre as “the most brutal among all brutalities of Japanese military”, and stated the objective of the memorial hall as “to educate the present and later generations with blood-written lessons from history so that people will always remember the painful experience of invasion, slaughter and slavery, and endeavour for the rejuvenation of Chinese nation”\(^\text{101}\). Woxin Changdan\(^\text{102}\), to remember the bitterness of the past as a motivation for future progress- the tone of the commemoration resembled this story of an ancient Chinese king. That memory of suffering shall be preserved as both reminder and motive for future endeavours reoccurred constantly in the following years. For example, report of local commemoration of the 57th anniversary of the massacre in 1994 described as an event as reminder “to not forget national humiliation and to rejuvenate the Chinese nation”. In a conference organized on occasion of the 60th anniversary, the message of remembrance was similarly defined\(^\text{103}\).

Subject to the narrative of heroic resistance and national progress, the national significance of Nanjing Massacre was constructed as more than suffering; it was suffering that was more humiliating than painful. This perception of suffering as humiliation is elaborated in a recent publication *Never Forget National Humiliation* by Z. Wang, a scholar specifying on peace and conflict management in East Asia in

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102 Literally sleeping on sticks and tasting gall. This Chinese idiom referred to the story of Gou Jian, King of Yue in the later Spring and Autumn period. Gou Jian was captured and imprisoned under dire conditions in another kingdom. After regaining freedom, Gou Jian continued to sleep on sticks and taste a bitter gall hang from the roof every day. This reminder of past sufferings served to motivate Gou Jian and the King later conquered the land of his imprisonment.
103 Wu Kunsheng, Related People Commemorate 60th Anniversary of Nanjing Massacre (有关人士几年南京大屠杀惨案六十周年), http://www.ziliaoku.org/rmrb/1997-12-12-3#1063098 (2016/8/10)
Seton Hall University, the United States. In fact, reading war trauma as national humiliation which can subsequently stir patriotism in the public is not peculiar to China, but a common way of making meaning of memories among East Asian countries. According to Schwartz, the honour-shame memory model in Asia is different from the dignity-guilt model in Western Europe. The former requires a higher level of identification to institutions of the community since compensation, both material and moral, is only possible through these institutions.

During the 1990s, there has been some efforts to introduce Nanjing Massacre to an international audience. In 1995, *Black Sun: the Nanjing Massacre* was screened 5 times in New York; at the same time, a documentary *Mark* (痕) by a Germany-based young Chinese director was premiered in Koln. However, these could not be seen as transcultural attempts of Nanjing memory for two main reasons. On the one hand, both films were under the genre of documentary with the objective to claim historical authenticity and accuracy. Conveying a certain meaning of Nanjing Memory is not the explicit goal. On the other hand, both films did convey implicit meanings of the memory. But the meaning was still in line with the national narrative of wartime humiliation. Nanjing Massacre was presented as specific historical events taken place at specific time and place.

To sum up, during the 1980s and 1990s, what memory of Nanjing Massacre meant to China on the national level was constructed as two-fold: the responsibility to preserve a certain narrative of memory that claims to be authentic and a constant reminder of the shame and humiliation of war which serves to motivate national progress.

While this memory narrative persists to the 21st century, a new layer of meaning is added to Nanjing memory, one that is analogical to other instances of sufferings.

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5.3.2 Transcultural Meaning to Nanjing Memory: A Tragedy in Human History

The transcultural meaning of Nanjing Massacre situates the event not only in the history of China as a nation, but in the history of humanity, particularly the history of the Second World War.

In his speech for the first National Memorial Day on 13th Dec 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping referred to Nanjing Massacre as “one of the three catastrophes of human history”, the other two being the Holocaust of Jews and the atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Although juxtaposition of these three events is not a common practice internationally, drawing analogy between Nanjing Massacre and the Holocaust of Jews in Europe is not new. In The Rape of Nanking, a book by American-Chinese Iris Chang that stirred much international attention to the historical event, Chang had referred to the Nanjing atrocity as “the forgotten Holocaust”.

Nanjing is also deemed to share similar symbolic meanings with Auschwitz. Oushinet (欧洲时报), a France-based Chinese news media, published an article on 28th Feb, 2014, on occasion of the establishment of National Memorial Day, saying that,

The most famous (commemoration of WW2 victims around the world, especially in Europe) is the International Holocaust Memorial Day on 27th January to remember the liberation of Auschwitz…Germany’s actions and attitudes in these memorials reassure the world of its continuous repent… and help Germany regain international reputation… But there is no such “Auschwitz” in Asia. Is it because the Japanese atrocity was not severe enough? Definitely not. It is because Japan has never faced its past wrong-doings…

With the efforts of Jewish people, the word “Auschwitz” takes on meanings beyond its geography and historical event, becoming the symbol of racial distinction in modern civilization. It is endowed with human’s reflection of its self-made sufferings and a more profound understanding of human nature. The misfortune of Nanjing Massacre victims should take on a similar meaning…

Framing Nanjing Massacre as similar in nature to the Holocaust has dual implications. It has not only identifies Japanese militarism with Nazism, but also locates both within the same historical narrative. Nanjing Massacre is thus not merely relevant to Chinese historical narration; it is situated within narration of the Second World War and subsequently its present implications. By affiliating Nanjing to Auschwitz, the memory is rendered global relevance. This tone is also echoed in an article on Nanjing Daily (南京日报) on 13th Dec 2015 titled Nanjing Memory is Becoming World Memory:

The Anti-Japanese war is a great war of Chinese people against foreign invasion; it is also an important part of the anti-fascism war worldwide. 70 decades ago, while the smog of war enveloped China, Europe was also under the iron hoof of fascism. Memories of humiliation and victory and reflections about war and peace belong to all nations; it belongs to the human kind.

Not only is Nanjing Massacre narrated as one negative experience within human civilization; it is also narrated as foundational, bearing significance to future human activities. Tragic events in the past serves as a reminder of the potential devastation of human activities; its remembrance will thus facilitate the maintenance of peace in the connected future of all nations. Xi Jinping in his speech at the first National Memorial Day put forward this vision of a future-relevant remembrance of past lessons:

> Peace warms like sunshine, nourishes like raindrops. It is with sunshine and raindrops that everything grows. It is with peace and stability that human can better realize its dreams. Peace needs striving for; peace needs maintaining. Only when everyone cherish and preserve peace, only when everyone remembers the bitter lessons of war, can the hope of peace be realized.

This “never again” narrative had been present during the 1990s. However, by phrasing the massacre as an instance of “anti-human frenzy that breaches the base line of human immorality,” the “never again” entails more than never again humiliation

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for the nation, but never again a similar disruptive event to human history, as a

People’s Daily article argues,

Up until today, our world still witnesses constant violence and terror; there are still many who try to hide or modify the ideational origins of such violence and terror… as the direct bearer of Nanjing Memory… we should constantly remind human kind to learn from history and engage in self-reflection… and to promote a common understanding: oppose invasive wars, safeguard human dignity and preserve world peace.

Underlying the peace-promoting narrative is the emphasis on connectedness and commonality of human experience. While coverage of Nanjing Massacre in the 1980s and 1990s feature the survival and thriving of Chinese nation in its centre, the present narrative integrates the Chinese experience into that of the Second World War and modernity in general. For the past, the atrocity of Nanjing was not isolated, but one trauma among many under large-scale warfare and fascism. Meanwhile, if the paths of nations were already intertwined during the 1940s, they are even more so in the present and for the future. The lesson of Nanjing becomes more than a motivation for national development; it also advocates the “sincere cooperation of all nations in striving for long-term peace and co-prosperity in the future world” 108.

By narrating Nanjing Massacre as an instance of deviation in human civilization and by elevating its lesson from national progress to world peace, the memory of Nanjing sees a shift from historical memory to structural memory. This shift is not definitive or exclusive. Instead, the structural dimension becomes more explicit on top of a still strong historical dimension. In the 21st century, China’s attempts to articulate Nanjing memory still emphasizes the particularity of the event, which is demonstrated through elaborations of the specificities of historical “facts” of Nanjing Massacre. Meanwhile, the massacre is narrated as happening beyond Nanjing or China, or even the Second World War; it is symbolized as fault in the metaprocess of human civilization, more specifically, the process of modernization.

The structural memory of Nanjing Massacre redefines the community of memory. For historical memory, the community is more readily composed of victims, perpetrators and bystanders (here referring to witnesses of the event that are not directly targeted or whose interest is not directly affected). When a memory is narrated as structural, however, the community can be expanded within the defined structure. By defining such structure as one of peace and global development, Nanjing memory creates its own capacity to include a broader audience to its community.

5.4 COMMUNITY OF MEMORY AND FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION

After establishing the meaning layers of a piece of cultural memory, the ensuing question will be to whom is the memory meaningful? Narrating a transcultural meaning of Nanjing Massacre entails a re-marking of a previous memory community which was more exclusive. Certain narratives are more inclusive than others, thus enabling broader identification. On the one hand, victims, perpetrators and bystanders are included in the memory community by their direct experience of the event; on the other hand, the community is further expanded through including a larger group to whom the memory narrative is made meaningful. In the latter case, victimhood becomes a culturally celebrated status, a positive representation of humanity that stands for progress, peace and morality.

5.4.1 From Communist China to Chinese Nation

The community of Nanjing memory was not immediately defined as involving the whole nation. In fact the first mention of “Nanjing Massacre” by People’s Republic of China official media People’s Daily referred not to the wartime atrocity of Japan but to nationalist government’s repression of student protests in the city:

…from May to end of June (1947) (the Nationalist Government) brutally suppressed students’ and people’s movements against famine, civil war and oppression. The brutality started in Beijing and continued to Shanghai, Nanjing,
Kaifeng…… But even in the 25th May Nanjing massacre, students already started to take over weapons from Jiang’s army and attempted for heroic resistance\(^{109}\).

Until the 1960s, PRC’s scarce coverage of Nanjing Massacre defined the memory community as people within communist regime. The Communist Party of China was depicted as saviour of the nation, its people victim to “imperialism” in general, instead of Japanese militarism in specific. Such narratives often appear today as highly manipulated, an unreliable interpretation of the memory,

American imperialists pretended to “protect Chinese people” and sent them to the so-called refuge areas. As a result, these residents were sent to Xiaguan riverbank by Japanese invaders and collectively murdered without any trace of humanity… Now the American imperialists dare to openly revive Japanese militarism, presumptuously hoping for the resurrection of Japanese fascism. But China today is not like China in 1937! Like invaders in the Second World War, Japanese and American anti-revolutionary forces will not end up well\(^{110}\).

This discourse of Nanjing Massacre that serves the then metanarrative of class struggle halted in the 1960s. Two decades later in the 1980s, when the Nanjing Massacre appeared in official press again, its community shifted from an ideologically definition to a broader, more cultural definition. Instead of identifying with the revolutionary ideas of communist regime, reform and progress, identified with by the whole Chinese nation, both mainland and Taiwan, became the vantage point of community solidarity.

On occasion of the 40th anniversary of the end of Sino-Japanese War in 1985, high government official Peng Zhen gave a speech in Beijing that emphasizes the essentiality of whole-nation cooperation during the war. National independence and territorial integrity was defined as the “sacred mission” of the whole Chinese nation. Nationalist government’s contribution was acknowledged,

Some insightful and patriotic leaders and military officials of Guomindang made positive contributions through their special status. Under the dominant


trend that people of the whole nation is against surrender and division, the future of the nation surpass the personal interest of the obstinate minority. Whole-nation cooperation against invasion was preserved. This was the foundation of our victory. This is a lesson from history that should be always remembered by both Communist and Nationalist parties, and by all other parties and individuals actively involved in the resistance.111

People’s Daily also published an article to trace the anti-Japanese war in Taiwan, depicting Taiwan’s local attempt against occupation since 1995, and concluding that “the heart of Taiwan people is a Chinese heart”112. This integrative tone also appeared in the 50th anniversary speech by then President Jiang Zemin, who said that the resistance against Japanese invasion “is the symbol of the great solidarity of the Chinese Nation.”113

Therefore, instead of the post-war ideological and political divide, community of war memory was later expanded to include everyone involved in the war experience. The vantage point of solidarity within the community also shifted from loyalty to an ideology and a regime to identification with nation and national progress.

5.4.2  Re-Marking Community of Memory in the Transcultural Process

Articulation of cultural memory defines the community of memory as much as the latter shapes the former. For Nanjing Massacre, the transcultural memory process also involves redefinition of the memory community. On the one hand, individual survivors take up a more explicit role in historical narrative, providing specific memory accounts in addition to an overarching meaning; on the other hand, perpetrators and bystanders are increasingly involved in the community. Apart from providing credited evidence, perpetrators can also be depicted as a person of repentance, and the bystander active helpers. Through such depiction, perpetrators

and bystanders are integrated into the memory community through agreement on the humanist meaning of the memory.

5.4.2.1 Survivors: Back to Personal and Familial Victimhood

With the help of modern media technology, Nanjing memory is able to allot greater emphasis on individual testimonies. Apart from new editions and collections, individual testimonies are also disseminated through internet with multimodality. Meanwhile, family bond becomes the dominant tone of individual remembrance. The greater degree of authenticity of individual narration, the emphasis on family values, combined with multimodality of representation both allow a louder voice of survivors and facilitate identifications towards the memory within the memory community.

Collection of individual testimonies on Nanjing Massacre can be traced back to the citizen reports immediately after war. These reports, containing residence details and precise account of life and property loss by household, served primarily for compensation as well as evidence for the military tribunal. Since 1984, the newly established museum Nanjing Memorial Hall initiated a new attempt for testimony collection with greater emphasis on narration. In the next decade, the museum has collected 4176 pieces of testimonies. These testimonies first appeared on small scale in the 1985. Historical Sources of Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders edited by Nanjing Massacre archive special editorial committee (南京大屠杀史料编辑委员会) included 104 new testimonies; in Battle of Nanjing edited by Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (全国人民政治协商会议) included 4 individual testimonies.

In 2012, as survivors of the massacre are dying out, Nanjing Memorial Hall established an oral history group to start a new round of testimony preservation. New attempts to collect testimony will differ from previous ones from three perspectives: 1) from short-period investigation to long-period investigation, emphasizing personal history within social history; 2) from quantity to quality, focusing on specific survivors; 3) applying international standard of oral history so as to ensure quality of
the collection\textsuperscript{114}. Shortly afterwards, a new selection of 100 testimonies were published in three months from September 2014 to December 2014 on the official website of Nanjing Memorial Hall. Most testimonies include not only personal experience during the massacre, but also before and afterwards. All testimonies include visual support.

Meanwhile, international parties are also involved in the preservation of testimonies. In 2013, Nanjing Memorial Hall cooperated with USC Shoah Foundation in South Carolina, the United States for the production of video testimonies of 12 survivors of the massacre. These testimonies are then subtitled in English and published in the online archive of USC Shoah Foundation.

A shifting focus can be conceived through tracing narratives of testimonies. Narration of victimhood is more emphasizing on the individual sufferings. There are less dramatizing, either in the sense of elevating personal suffering as representative of national or collective ordeal or in the sense of discursively demonizing the perpetrators. Even heroic personal narratives are minimized, so as to stress the suffering. These change can be perceived in some testimonies that have been differently represented in the 1980s and in the 2010s.

By shifting towards a more individual victimhood, the “totalizing” narrative became less explicit. Individual experiences are less often elevated to “national suffering” or suffering of “Chinese people”. In the 1985 Battle of Nanjing, the testimony of Chen Degui was concluded with the statement, “up until today, the scars left from gun-hit by Japanese soldiers are still on my thighs and fingers. This is the criminal evidence of the Japanese massacre of Chinese people!” In the 2014 online version, however, this last statement was taken off, with the testimony ending with the victim’s narrow escape\textsuperscript{115}. In fact, among the newly-published 100 testimonies, few attempted to bring personal suffering to a collective level. Compared to practices in

\textsuperscript{114} Call for a New Preservation Round of Survivors Testimony (\textit{Xinhua News}, 11\textsuperscript{th} Sep 2014, \url{http://www.cngongji.cn/2014-09/11/c_126974921.htm} (2016/5/30))

\textsuperscript{115} \url{http://www.cngongji.cn/2014-09/27/c_127040606.htm} (2016/05/30) Translation by author.
the 1980s and 1990s where individual testimony was always embedded in and in support of collective narrative, testimonies are returning focus to the individual as the subject of suffering, instead of treating individual as an instance of national suffering.

Demonizing perpetrators is also becoming less common practice in the new testimonies while weight of the narrative falls on victim experience before and during the event. Compare the following two narratives of Jiang Genfu’s testimony published respectively in 1985 and 2014:

Father and Mother took me and my siblings separately and hid among the reeds. Because mother had no milk, the three-month old little brother couldn’t stop crying, and was heard by Japanese soldiers passing by. Following the cry, they found my mother, attempting to rape and humiliate her. My mother fought back with all her force. The inhumane Japanese, they went so far as wrestling little brother from Mother’s arms, threw him on the ground and killed him alive… another two days passed. The Japanese soldiers found my 11-year-old second sister in the reeds. They even attempted to rape and humiliate her. Second sister run fiercely, the soldiers followed without stop. She run near to what is the canal school today and was finally caught by the Japanese. Second sister resisted, swearing and kicking the soldiers. The humiliated and enraged soldier took out his knife and split second sister from the head into two. (1985)\(^{116}\)

To hide better, Father took two sisters, Mother took me and four other brothers, hid in the reeds separately, 100 meters apart so as to take care of each other. Because Mother has no milk, little brother was starving, crying for milk. At this moment, a dozen of Japanese soldiers were walking pass the dike. Following the cry, they found my Mother and took her away to rape. Mother resisted with little brother in her arms. The inhuman Japanese wrestling little brother from Mother’s arms, threw him forcefully to the ground. Mother rushed to the already dead little brother; Japanese soldiers shot Mother twice from the back and killed her… Another two days passed. Japanese soldiers came to the reeds again, saw my 11-year-old second sister and attempted to rape her. Second sister run away near today’s canal school and was caught by Japanese soldiers. Second sister swore

\(^{116}\) Note: testimony recorded in: 《侵华日军南京大屠杀档案》, 中国第二历史档案馆、南京市档案馆、“南京大屠杀”史料编辑委员会编辑，江苏古籍出版社出版，南京：1987 (Archive of Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, Second Historical Archive of China, Archive of Nanjing, Nanjing Massacre Archive Editorial Committee, Jiangsu Guji Publishing House (Now Phoenix Publishing House), Nanjing, 1987). Translation by author. The same applies to following testimonies of 1985. All italics are added by the author to highlight the changes in text.
and kicked the soldiers. One Japanese officer took out his knife and slit second sister from the head into two. (2014)¹¹⁷

Note that although some expressions of perpetrators persist (inhumane Japanese), value-embedded descriptions of either Japanese soldiers or their deeds are modified. Expressions suggesting the unexpectedness of cruelty, for example “went so far as to” or “even”, are either deleted or replaced with more mutual adverbs. The use of “rape” instead of “rape and humiliate” also softened the demonizing tone. Meanwhile, narrative of the family’s escape was expanded, thus the general tone of the testimony is more focused on victim perspective.

In some instances, the heroic personal-narrative is also softened so as to highlight the traumatic and suffering. In its 1985 appearance, then 7-month-pregnant Li Xiuying’s testimony depicted her as a chaste and heroic woman, who “decided to resist with death because I would rather die than be humiliated”. She told her father, “If I was killed by the demons, you tell my husband and little brother, I was not humiliated, they will revenge me!” With some martial art learnt from her uncle, Li told how she took over a small knife and fought with the Japanese soldier attempting to rape her:

I knew a little (about his knife). When he didn’t notice, I quickly opened the knot, held the handle, and sprung up from the bed. Seeing this, the soldier was astonished, using all his force to stop me taking the knife out while trying to break my grasp on the handle. A battle of life and death thus begun. At the moment, my life was out of my concern… two enemies in the next room came in for the sound, the six or seven women they took thus managed to escape… I didn’t know where my strength was from… I had several knife cuts on my leg and face. Blood was whooshing out but I didn’t realize the pain. My hand on the knife handle was never loosened…

This detailed description of a heroic act is much briefer and less elaborate in its 2014 version:

I felt it (smashing my head against the wall) was useless. I learnt some martial art when I was little; I could fight with them… I saw a knife on his (Japanese soldier) waist… I took the knife when he tried to undo my buttons…Unable to

wrestle the knife, I resolved to teeth, biting the soldier and not releasing… another two Japanese in the next room… came for his help. I could not fight three with one, but I grasped the knife handle tightly…

While heroic narrative was in line was the dominant narrative in the 1980s and 1990s that emphasized national resistance and national revival, these elements became less explicit in the current narrative that stresses individual victimhood. Meanwhile, as most testimonies were collected from people who were still children at the time of the massacre, stories of personal heroism from Chinese was rare in the first place.

Apart from the re-focus on individual suffering, the loss of family also become a major tone in new testimonial narratives. Most testimonies published on official website of Nanjing Memorial Hall recall how family members were killed or went missing. Xia Shuqin, an active figure advocating for Japanese compensation to Nanjing survivors, gave a detailed account of how her family suffered\textsuperscript{118} for the USC Shoah Foundation. Supporting photographic evidence were provided from the records of John Rabe\textsuperscript{119}. Chen Deshou’s video testimony for the Foundation struck the family string even more. When talking about the finding of his father’s body weeks after his death, the survivor said with deep emotion:

\begin{quote}
Blood was still coming from the wound on his head, because he knew his blood relative was here. That’s why his blood was still flowing.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

Given consideration to the value attached to family bond within Chinese culture, the family-loss tone emphasized in testimonies can facilitate identification with those memories. As a victim, a nation is too broad and abstract to identify with and the individual too specific. The family provides a moderation between the two. Losing a family member or the total destruction of a family and subsequently commemorative ceremonies of such loss is a more common experience for many Chinese, thus more likely to generate identification. To give Nanjing memory a more

\begin{footnotes}
\item[118] https://sfi.usc.edu/video/shuqin-xia-nanjing-massacre (2016/5/30)
\item[120] https://sfi.usc.edu/video-clips?nid=10507 (2016/5/30)
\end{footnotes}
intimate familial tone, Nanjing Memorial Hall held two commemorative events in 2014. One event was to collect family letters wrote by victims to their perished family members, where survivors often wrote in the tone of sons or daughters to their parents and siblings. For the other, a public mourning was organized inside the Memorial Hall. Altars were set up according to traditions of family funeral where survivors and their off-springs could offer respect and commemoration to their ancestors as if in a family ceremony.

Both the re-focus on individual victimhood and the family-loss narrative in recent representations of survivor testimonies are attempts to bring the memory more intimate to other members of the memory community. With the help of technology, individual memories can be disseminated in multimodal forms to a larger audience, facilitating a horizontal identification within community members and shared cultural norms apart from a vertical identification with the nation or state institutions.

5.4.2.2 Shiro Azuma: the Victimized Perpetrator

Under PRC official discourse, the construction of perpetrator has always made the distinction between Japanese militarism and Japanese people. The demonized perpetrator of war did not include the Japanese nation as a whole; instead, the general Japanese public was depicted as a peace-loving people falling victim to the militarized political infrastructure of its own nation.

In 1953, during a meeting with Japanese liberal politician Oyama Ikuo, then Premier Zhou Enlai addressed Sino-Japanese relations for the first time after war, stating that “Japanese militarists’ foreign invasion not only brought huge suffering to Chinese and people of other Far East countries, but also engaged Japanese people in non-precedent catastrophe. I believe, the peace-loving Japanese people will remember this lesson from history… Chinese people hope Japanese people can see the rebirth and independence of their mother nation” 121… In the joint declaration of 1972 that

121 Zhou Enlai Warned Twice against Resurrection of Japanese Militarism
(周恩来两次警告日本军国主义复活)
signalled the normalization of Sino-Japanese diplomatic relations, the “friendship between Chinese and Japanese people” was once again emphasized\(^\text{122}\). During the 1982 textbook controversy, *People’s Daily* devoted considerable weight on initiatives from Japanese society to counter the government attempt to revise history\(^\text{123}\).

Not only are general Japanese public included in the community of memory through shared vision of peace. Former perpetrators can also be depicted as part of the community. Through victimization of “truth-speaking” perpetrators, the dichotomy of a history-denying Japanese political sector and a peace-and-justice-loving Japanese people is strengthened. The former perpetrator, subject to rejection and persecution of revisionist political forces for repenting war-time crimes, is integrated in the community of memory in its present and future dimension. The story of Shiro Azuma is an example of how former perpetrator is represented in an inclusive manner.

Shiro Azuma (1912-2006) was a soldier in the Japanese army during the Sino-Japanese war and was among the troops that occupied Nanjing in 1937. He kept diaries during 1937-1939 that recorded his military experience. These diaries include detailed account of the atrocity committed by Japanese soldiers in Nanjing. In 1987, Shiro Azuma published his diaries in Japanese as a confession to his wartime crimes. In 1987 and 1994, he visited Nanjing twice to pay repentance to victims of the Nanjing Massacre.

The diary’s publication was a controversial issue in Japan. March 1993, Shiro Azuma was sued by Koji Hashimoto (橋本光治). Shiro described a murder committed by Koji in his diary, where the latter “put a young Chinese man in a mail bag, tied the opening, poured gasoline over it and then lit it on fire”. Shiro was sued for the “lack of evidence” and “defamation of the plaintiff”. Shiro defended his diary as a valid account of Nanjing Massacre in front of Japanese Supreme Court in 1998.


\(^{123}\) Articles can be found in People’s Daily: 18th Aug, 26th Aug and 9th Sep, 1982
In 2000, his appeal was denied by the court and the diary’s account was denied of validity.

While Shiro Azuma caused much controversy in his own country, he received much sympathy in China. The former Japanese soldier was immediately depicted as a victim of Japanese revisionists who attempted to retort history. Being a symbol of “awakened” soldier, Shiro was appraised widely for his conscience. In 1998, with his personal consent, Shiro Azuma’s wartime diary was published in Chinese.

But Shiro Azuma was more than an additional source of testimony for the memory of Nanjing Massacre. He has been represented in a certain way that identifies him to the memory community, as one of “us” instead of one of “them”. This was particularly demonstrated through a range of coverage by People’s Daily on Shiro Azuma’s trial. 22nd January 2000, People’s Daily published a brief immediately after the Japanese Supreme Court decision, titled Japanese Supreme Court has Again Denied Shiro Azuma’s Appeal without Justification. 28th January, a roundtable conference was organized in Nanjing, participated by scholars and survivors, condemning the decision of Japanese Supreme Court, while appraising Shiro Azuma as the warrior of justice, whose “courage and spirit to preserve justice… made him the actual winner”.

5.4.2.3 John. D. Rabe: from Foreign Witness to the Good Man of Nanjing

For transcultural dissemination of Nanjing memory, the role of bystanders becomes highly significant. By bystanders it is meant those who immediately witness the event remembered but was neither the perpetrator nor directly-targeted victims. In Nanjing at 1937, there were a group of foreign residents who witnessed the Japanese occupation and kept record of what had happened. These records became a major

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archive source for the Nanjing Massacre. In the 70 years after the massacre, narratives of these bystanders also changed, from credible, third-party witnesses to humane helpers within a community that suffered collectively. By situating bystanders within the same suffering narrative, they are included within the community of memory.

At the time of occupation, foreign residents in Nanjing included diplomats, business persons, church personnel and others. Systematic first-hand testimonies by foreign residents of the Nanjing atrocity was discovered in recent years, including documents of American historian Miner Bates who was teaching at Ginling University, videos made by American priest John Magee and diaries of Wilhelmina Vautrin who was teaching at Ginling Women’s College. While these figures originally took the role of third-party testimony, for example John Magee who stood in the Far East Military Tribunal, their role as helpers are more emphasized. On occasion of the first national memorial, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated in his speech that “it is heart-warming that during the time of blood and suffering… many international friends took great risks to protect residents of Nanjing with all manners… their humanist spirit and courageous acts will never be forgotten”.

How John Rabe is narrated and represented in Chinese media is a good example of how an objective foreign witness become an involved citizen and humanist helper. John D. Rabe was a Hamburg-born businessman and was then representative of Siemens in Nanjing. In face of Japanese advancement, Rabe and other foreign residents at Nanjing initiated the International Committee for the Nanjing Safety Zone. The idea was to take advantage of protected status of diplomatic regions. Rabe’s safety zone provided shelter to roughly 250,000 Chinese refugees. Rabe went back to Germany February 1938 and brought his records of this period in Nanjing to Hamburg. The records had been under preservation of a family member

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until 1996, when Rabe’s granddaughter Mrs. Reinhardt approved of its publishing. In 1997, The Diary of Rabe (《拉贝日记》) was published in Chinese.

Attention to Rabe in China was first focused on the documentary significance of his records. When the documents first gained permission for publication, People’s Daily covered the issue with a series of five articles between 24th and 28th Dec 1996. These articles respectively addressed the life and career of John Rabe, his activities in Nanjing in 1937, selected witness accounts in his diary, how the documents gained consent for publishing and the documentary significance of Rabe’s diary. These series of articles appraised Rabe’s diary as the best preserved, largest in amount and most valuable historical resources among the testimonies of Nanjing Massacre. One article did address the Safety Zone, but the focus was on the “beast nature” of Japanese soldiers. In fact, Rabe was not so much depicted as a helper than as a helpless former Nazi member. The article emphasized on how Nanjing municipal government has been offering Rabe and his family nourishment and clothing on behalf of its residents, and on how Rabe expressed his gratitude for Chinese people, which helped him “regain the courage to presume life”. Several articles published in the following year on People’s Daily also emphasized the testimonial nature of Rabe’s diary instead of Rabe’s humanitarian actions in Nanjing.

Soon after the publication of Rabe’s diary, however, the German businessman began to occupy a much more intimate position in the cultural memory of Nanjing Massacre. April 1997, Rabe’s tomb stone was transported from Hamburg to Nanjing and positioned in the Nanjing Memorial Hall, integrating Rabe into Nanjing memory through monument of death. In a 2010 Berlin exhibition of Rabe’s life, Rabe was entitled the “good man of Nanjing”, acknowledging him more as a fellow resident.

sharing experience with Nanjing citizens than as a foreigner that happen to witness the event. Rabe’s place in Nanjing memory was further emphasized through a China-German co-produced film John Rabe in 2009. The film was screened among other popular representations of Nanjing Massacre, for example The Flowers of War, and was the only Nanjing-Massacre related film by far for which the Chinese authorities permitted engaging foreign producers. Meanwhile, Iris Chang’s reference of Rabe as Oscar Schindler of China became widely used in Chinese discourse, making analogy between Rabe’s role in Nanjing Massacre to that of Schindler in the Holocaust.

Indeed, representations of bystanders engaging in a traumatic experience emphasizes the commonality of the humanist values and peace-appeal advocated through the memories of Nanjing Massacre, as well as the Holocaust and other instances of sufferings. On occasion of the first National Memorial Day in 2015, the “international” friends were explicitly mentioned and appraised in the official speech by the Chinese President. The presence of relatives or representatives of foreign residents involved in the Nanjing Massacre at the memorial demonstrate the significant role they are allotted in the memory of Nanjing.

5.5 NATION STATE IN TRANSCULTURAL MEMORY

As was mentioned earlier, discussing transculturality of memory does not eliminate the dimension of the nation state, nor does it exclude the political. Who acts as the agent of memory that coordinate the mnemonic practices, and upon whose interest are the agents claiming to act, remain relevant to the question of whether transcultural memory entails a transcultural community of solidarity.

Collective memory has always been connected to group identity, especially that of the nation state. This is particularly true in Pierre Nora’s discussion of lieux de memoire. Through his volumes, Nora has demonstrated how cultural edifice, such as monuments and statues, can encompass stories, rituals and ideas, and how it becomes
the solidification of national past\textsuperscript{129}. Memories of past glories or heroic deeds serve to create a narrative that justifies nation formation and development as a natural historical course. Meanwhile, compared to negative moments such as defeat and incompetence, a positive moment such as victory or glory can better generate identification towards the nation. The various myths surrounding the building of nation states suggest how nation states needs to create such a memory of itself that justifies its presence. This is perhaps one of the reasons that days of victory are very much earlier celebrated than days of doom and suffering.

Intimately tied to national identity, the nation state has always been a dominant agent of memory. What is remembered, how is the memory represented and what meaning is made of it has often been orchestrated by the political apparatus of a nation state. This is also the case for Holocaust memory. Then German Chancellor Willy Brandt knelt down in front of the Warsaw Ghetto-Uprising monument during his 1970 visit as a gesture of national repentance. In Poland, commemorations of Auschwitz-Birkenau liberation are often led by speech from prominent political leaders, the newly elected president Andrzej Duda for the most recent 71\textsuperscript{st} anniversary.

Meanwhile, Nora also mentioned the democratization of cultural memories, that state no longer holds exclusive power over memory construction. For the Holocaust, this takes the form of emerging of individual and commercial representations. Thus multiple agents are involved in shaping Holocaust memory- the individual and private, as well as international institutions such as the United Nations. In fact, Holocaust as a transcultural memory is often remembered through other group categories such as women, children and artists, instead of through nation. Nation state being decentralized from Holocaust memory is an important feature of its transculturality.

However, the role of nation state persists. And it is here that, despite the transcultural promises offered by analysis of text and discourse, one should contemplate how practical is transcultural memory in the sense of community creation. As long as nation states persists in any mnemonic practices, its role in the practice will bear important implications on the extent to which the alleged meaning of memory is perceived as significant or authentic.

To what extent is a transcultural memory articulation acknowledged by the “trans” part of its audience, and to what extent its claim to community and solidarity is recognised is a question whose answer cannot ignore the role of state. Holocaust memory is almost a prototypical case of transcultural memory, not only because of the nastiness of the event itself, but also because that since the war, and especially since the end of Cold War, certain relevant parties to Holocaust memory (Western Europe and America) have had the resources and normative power to define “global” historical narratives.

That transcultural memory’s claim to meaning and solidarity depends upon a certain configuration of the international arena for its validity can be better understood when looking at cases of transcultural memory articulated by a non-Western agent,

China’s state attempts to promote Nanjing memory world-wide as a symbol of cruelty of war and a banner for future peace did gain some global recognition. The USC Shoah Foundation Center for Advanced Genocide Research, for example, has been collaborating with Nanjing Memorial Hall to preserve live stories of survivors of Nanjing Massacre, which is ranked among other instances of “global genocides” such as Holocaust and Armenia genocide by the centre. In 2015, UNESCO approved of China’s application to include Nanjing Massacre in its Memory of the World, a project with the objective of preserving heritages “belonging to all”.

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130 https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/nanjing (2016/8/11)
However, compared to news media, international institutions’ archiving and acknowledgment of “global” memory of Nanjing Massacre reach a relatively smaller audience. In media, foreign coverage of the “transcultural” attempt of Nanjing Massacre adopts a dominantly “national” frame of interpretation. Given that Nanjing Massacre is constantly drawn analogy with the Holocaust, the discrepancy between narration and perception can be traced to a highly centralized agent of memory and the representativeness of the agent’s narration.

Although some prominent international news media covered the first National Memorial Day in China, the commemoration is mostly framed as a diplomatic leverage for the tense Sino-Japanese relations. *The Economist* published an article on 12th Dec, 2014 sub-titled *New Memorial Days in China are a Sign of Frostiness with Japan*\(^\text{133}\), which presented the serial commemorations including victory day on 8th Sep as the result of tension over the Senkaku Islands. *Reuter*’s stance was less confrontational, arguing that Xi’s presence at National Memorial Day was “treading a fine line” of diplomatic relations, between “reminding Japan of what happened and not derailing the thaw in ties”. Apart from framing recent memorials as a diplomatic attempt for “national interest”, there were also doubts about the truthfulness of the narrative. In a BBC report on 13th Dec, 2014\(^\text{134}\), Japanese nationalists’ dispute over the number of the killed was mentioned\(^\text{135}\). *The Guardian* took a more doubtful tone, saying that “some respected foreign academics put the number lower” \(^\text{136}\) than the death toll officially announced by China. As for Nanjing Memory’s inclusion in Memory of the World, the event is predominantly framed as national-diplomatic-


\(^{135}\) Refer to Note 81 for academic works addressing the controversial number.

conflict, with much focus on Japan’s protest against inclusion of a “disputed” memory.

It is no denying that Nanjing memory, together with other war memories, are highly politicized in China— it is closely connected to national sentiments, national identification, legitimacy of the state, diplomatic concerns and many other political agenda. But politics of memory is no stranger to articulations of any cultural memories, including the Holocaust, since there always involves agents, the interest it represents and its alleged representativeness. Approaching from the agent of memory may shed light on the discrepancy between a transcultural narration of Nanjing memory in China and foreign interpretations that remains within national discourse.

For memory of the Nanjing Massacre, it is perhaps easier to answer the second question: for whose interest is the memory articulated? Immediately after the war, Nanjing municipality recorded the memory so that immediate victims could be compensated; during the 1940s and 1950s, Nanjing memory popped up several times in the communist regime, depicting a hand-joining of American imperialism and Japanese militarism, an external enemy that justifies and solidifies the domestic regime; the 1982 Japanese textbook controversy revived Nanjing memory to a large extent, and the traumatic memory was emphasized within the discursive frame of Sino-Japanese war, promoting national identification as well as reinforcing party/state legitimacy in the face of globalization; in the 1990s, Nanjing memory underwent further dissemination among the public as a source of patriotic education. By then, the articulation of Nanjing memory had predominantly been one that speak of national survival and national progress under the rule of a certain government.

139 Ibid., 154.
On the 50th anniversary of victory in Sino-Japanese war, then President of China Jiang Zemin’s speech paralleled war experience with the developing of the Communist Party, making an explicit demonstration that as war should be remembered for the sake of national surviving and thriving, this goal can be accomplished exclusively by a government led by the Communist Party. Meanwhile, there is an increased attention to the “nation” as a congregation of individuals. This change could already be perceived from the 40th anniversary of victory in Sino-Japanese War, where the official speech defined Sino-Japanese war as a whole-scale national resistance, where, not only army forces, but also Chinese people, made significant contributions. China defined by nation, or rather, by people sharing identification to Chinese culture in broad sense, instead merely by ideology or regime, was a clear message in the coming two decade-anniversary official speeches. This tactic allows for recognition of contribution of those who had retreated to Taiwan. Such narrative of war memory allegedly represents the interest of Chinese nation as the assembly of individuals fighting a war together, apart from as a political apparatus that had enabled victory.

Since the 21st century, there has been an attempt to promote Nanjing memory beyond national boundaries, and two trends can be perceived regarding for whose interest the massacre is remembered. On the one hand, commemorations in the past decade has a stronger individual tone than before. Individual testimonies are made more tangible through multi-model representations and online accessibility. The “Crying Wall” in Nanjing Memorial Hall inscribed only 3,000 victim names when first constructed in 1995, a representative of the victims in general. Since 2007,  

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however, the names has increased to more than 10,000, signifying an attempt to remember victims not as a represented group but more as individual lives. Activities such as family memorial is another demonstration of remembering for and as individuals. On the other hand, remembering Nanjing Massacre is also narrated as in the interest of human and humanity in general. Xi Jinping’s speech at the first National Memorial Day delivered at least two messages in this line: that remembering the lessons of war and tragedy is the prerequisite of peace, which is a common and persisting goal of all humans; and that China, as well as Chinese people, will be a guardian and promoter of world peace in the new age, and will work towards this goal along with the international community.

Thus both the attention to individuals and the concern for humanity in general is present in narratives of Nanjing memory, but such voices are never articulated without mediation of the state. On the discursive level, Nanjing Massacre is no longer remembered merely for the sake of a nation as an entity. However, this change is largely on the formal level instead of the structural level. The state is always behind individual voices. In other words, individual memories can barely be heard unless voiced through the mediation of the state. Compared to Holocaust survivors, the number of Nanjing Massacre survivors who speak up in public sphere is rare. Survivor Xia Shuqin’s court appeal to Nanjing local court against two Japanese right-wing scholars is probably the most known independent voice. Although political institutions have the resources to preserve and promote individual narratives, the strong presence of state makes it difficult to disentangle state interest from memory narrations. Instead, claims for regime justification and national interest remains the most visible meaning of Nanjing memory. The national progressive narrative persists and dominates, shadowing, and weakening to some extent, the transcultural meaning which is only recently attached.

143 Xi Jinping’s speech at first National Memorial Day, 13th Dec, 2014
Adding to this is a general perception of China through previous interactions. It is no uncommon perception among the West that China has a strong state and small society, and that history and memory has been used for domestic politics or diplomacy. This general perception can also contribute to hinder Nanjing memory being understood beyond the political. It will not be possible to go into detail to trace such “inertia” in understanding actions in international relations, but reading Nanjing memory as a purely political agenda is not incomprehensible when its articulation is closely linked to the state.

Meanwhile, Holocaust memory’s presence on the global scale also belittles other similar events to some extent. Although within Germany, Poland and other relevant countries, how to remember the Holocaust is increasingly being re-negotiated, Holocaust memory as a type still stands strongly as a particular case that bears universal meanings on progress, modernization and other historical processes of humanity. But this universal meaning also presumes a European, or Western, perspective on meta-processes such as modernization, which can ignore other parties that were also involved. Increasing global relevance of Nanjing Massacre relies on a broader acknowledging of WW2 as not exclusively European experience and not shaping post-war historical process of Europe alone. But rather, at least since WW2, a large part of the world had been connected and had been going through an inter-related historical process together.
There is an obsession with memory around the world in recent years, be it appear as “remembering” or “failing to remember”. Commemorations, museums and popular culture products depicting memories identified with by a certain community are numerous; in academia, meanwhile, studies of memory on collective level has boomed since the 1990s, with many big names emerging and the field itself developing into an increasingly multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional subject.

Among all forms of cultural memories, those representing traumas from war or conflict are highly present in societies, and are particularly interesting to scholars. These memories, discomforting as they might be, are constantly re-presented in public as a reminder and a lesson for the future of a community. While cultural memories are often connected to group culture, especially national culture, there is a trend that nations promote their own memory of suffering across its cultural boarders towards the world, expanding the lesson of war and conflict to a global community. Cultural memories are going transcultural.

Memory of the Holocaust is an exemplary case of transcultural memory. Popular representations of the Holocaust, for example films and autobiographies, are circulating in multiple countries; the United Nations institutionalized the memory by establishing an International Holocaust Remembrance Day alongside various national commemorations; scholars argue that Holocaust memory has been elevated to an emblem of human suffering and absolute evil, assigning a milestone position to it within meta historical processes such as modernity. But the Holocaust is not the only case where memory and its meaning is transferred beyond its original boundaries, defining an enlarged memory community. Memories of massacre in Rwanda, the Turkish massacre of Armenians and several truth committees that aims to address domestic extermination in older regimes has been advocating for, and has received, international attention. In Asia, memories of WW2 and Japanese invasion are also very much alive recently.
This is the environment under which China attempts to promote the memory of Nanjing Massacre to a global audience. After the post-war silence and nationalization since the 1980s, China is trying to re-articulate Nanjing memory as a memory with global resonance. This is not only through drawing analogy to the Holocaust, which was already popular with Iris Chang’s book. On the one hand, the meaning of Nanjing Massacre is re-defined as not only a force that drive national progress, but also a reminder that can promote world peace in the future. The diffused meaning leads to an enlarged memory community: apart from direct victims and Chinese nationals, repenting perpetrators and helping third parties are also included; China is situated in a broader discourse of WW2, and Chinese people the co-sufferers of their European and American counterparts. In fact, by promoting Nanjing memory internationally, China is also attempting to include itself in a global community marked by a shared war experience under modernization and globalization.

This case of transcultural articulation of memory from the non-West also brings into question claims made by scholars of Holocaust memory that transcultural memory contributes to a solidary transcultural community. Despite acknowledgement from international institutions such as UNESCO and USC Shoah Foundation, Nanjing memory remains, to a large extent, national diplomatic leverage in media discourse (especially in the West). As in the West, remembering is increasingly taken up by multiple social and cultural groups, the central role of nation state in memory articulation tend to be perceived as monolithic at best. Another reason that nation states are still haunting “transcultural” memory lies in the persisting pattern of international interaction. Up until today, state has been the focus point when it comes to discussing China in global context. The omnipresence of state in Nanjing memory tends to opt for interpretations of the memory as political agenda, thus blocking social or cultural possibilities. This is why in foreign media coverage, Nanjing memory tends to be framed as a diplomatic leverage for a tricky Sino-Japanese relations, instead of the shadow of a past atrocity that arose from global-scale warfare.
In an era of increasing global interconnectedness, establishing common links to the past is integrated in claiming commonness in the present and future. Globalization and modernization requires not only connectedness in the present, but also tracing connectedness in the past and anticipating connectedness in the future. Atrocities having taken place in all human communities within the past decades are surfacing today on a large scale, reminding people of the connectedness in all temporal dimensions. While many pieces of memories attempt to be transcultural, the universal lesson they claim to bear to all humanity does not necessarily bind humanity as a solidary community. It is not that certain atrocities were not grave enough, or certain memories less traumatic— the meaning of human-made atrocities need not depend on its scale. But rather, the existing memory of Holocaust is so strong that re-discovering memories in other parts of the world becomes more difficult.

Transcultural memory, especially that of painful experience in the past two centuries can be a way to increase recognition of a common past, to acknowledge the metaprocess of modernization and globalization is not exclusively European or Western, nor does it have a single narrative. In a way, various transcultural articulations of memory can be a re-negotiation of a dominant account of global history. But as long as the “global” is still much evolving around the “nation state”, questions of power relations and credibility remains a hindrance to a global memory community bonded by common experience of being human.
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**Primary Resources**

- The Second Historical Archives of China: [http://shac.net.cn/sy_59/](http://shac.net.cn/sy_59/)
- Nanjing Municipal Archives: [http://www.archivesnj.gov.cn/](http://www.archivesnj.gov.cn/)
- USC Shoa Foundation: [https://sfi.usc.edu/](https://sfi.usc.edu/)
The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme:  

70th Anniversary of Auschwitz Liberation:  
http://70.auschwitz.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=133&lang=en

Auschwitz Birkenau Memorial and Museum:  http://auschwitz.org/en/

People's Daily Image and Text Database:  http://58.68.146.102/rmrb/20160527/1


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