

Performativity, Sensography and Music: Learning and teaching the “other” Holocaust at a Jewish Inn

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Abstract:

The article reflects on my teaching experiences and the increased difficulty of teaching notions such as biopolitics and death politics to anthropology students. Such notions sound quite abstract and difficult to grasp. Nevertheless, they are essential in understanding the Holocaust, the Nazis' mass production of death and the control of the human body and mind by this fascist-bureaucratic regime. Presenting the *Shoah* to anthropology students via lectures seems quite partial; apart from describing it from a macro-perspective, it would be more enlightening to introduce students to the sensual and bodily aspects of the topic. Thus, it would be easier to approach notions such as affect/affectivity and embodiment that lie at the centre of contemporary anthropological thinking. The anthropology of performance, theatre and drama could provide the anthropologist with experimental methods of teaching and learning and could be used as loci of reflection and critique. Such a performance may have a more significant impact on academic and non-academic audiences. Benssoussan Han, an old Jewish inn at the centre of Thessaloniki built at the end of the 19th century, seems the ideal place to combine learning and teaching through performance. Several experimental performances have taken place there in recent years. After presenting some of them, I will briefly discuss a teaching scenario, a performative experiment in progress. The proposed pedagogical scenario deals with dystopic memories emotional and sensual silences. It is an attempt to understand the “other” Holocaust, unquestionably the less studied aspects of this regime, including the music produced in the Terezin camp, and to reflect on notions of biopolitics and death politics. The project will be a joint one: bodies, movement, music, *logos* and a video projection about life in Terezin. As Dorita Hannah and others argue, it might prove an opportunity to 'make space speak' and for the audience to reflect and interact.

Keywords: Holocaust, performativity, music, embodiment and sensography

Introduction

The paper discusses the multi-layered relationship between anthropology and performance. I attempt to assess if teaching and learning anthropology can be enriched by engaging with performativity and representation. The story of the relationship between representation and anthropology is indeed long and, for the most, a “harmonious” one. Considering relevant studies, what I propose could be seen as a teaching scenario, a performative pedagogy, a working practice and an interdisciplinary process that can contribute to learning and teaching “alternative”, less studied histories of the Holocaust and thus unpack neglected theoretical issues. The main emphasis in my proposed scenario is the students' active involvement and representation of their understanding of this historical dystopia. So, on the one hand, students are perceived as agents of the educational process interacting and modifying it. On the other, multidisciplinary boundaries are crossed, leading to a “thick”, reflexive, self-engaging, multi-dimensional reading and understanding of the Shoah. The proposed educational scenario will take place at Benssoussan Han, an old Jewish Inn in Thessaloniki. An educational performance at this place could illuminate how to analyze and understand affect/affectivity and embodiment and to map several *sensographies*. Designing a performance there could broaden an understanding of the biopolitics and deathpolitics of the Holocaust, the resistances involved, and a means to narrate its sensual aspects. The proposed scenario might contribute to a more critical and reflexive understanding of this dark chapter of history, which is difficult to unpack in academic lectures. Music performativity will be the main channel for understanding and expressing this topic's heavy emotional and sensual baggage. An emotional-sensual engagement could produce more student-friendly knowledge, far from academic stereotypes and epistemological standards.

In what follows, I first briefly attempt an analysis of the city's Jewish past and, at the same time, a presentation of Benssoussan Han's past and present. I then focus on some important performances that have taken place there in the last few years. In the next section, I refer to theories of representation, performativity and the role of affectivity to provide a combined analysis of performativity and embodiment. The notion of 'embodied space' and the pivotal role of affect and senses are assessed. The term sensography is used to describe this combination of movement, music performativity, emotional attachments, and sensual appropriations of the proposed performance related to the Holocaust. In the end, I briefly outline the educational scenario proposed, a performative pedagogy in progress, which will take place in B. Han and will function in a multi-temporal and multi-sensorial educational context and as an attempt to unfold complex heritage, dystopic memories, materialities, bodies and sounds of the Shoah.

A Jewish Inn narrates the Jewish past of Thessaloniki

Walking in the streets of Thessaloniki, you reach the end of the city centre, the areas of upper and down Ladadika. Kato Ladadika is now full of bars and tavernas, with loud music and many tourists. Since 1994 this area was designated "a preserved/ traditional area" of the old centre. The fate of upper Ladadika has been quite different: left to dirt, decay and oblivion, certainly less alive, less noisy and away from the tourist gaze. It used to be full of food stores shops selling spices, and it was an area –mostly known as *Square of Commerce*- where Jews ran most shops. It would not be an overstatement to say that Thessaloniki was a Jewish city since there was a populous Jewish community for many centuries until the SWW (to be exact Jewish communities, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi).

Devin Naar (2016) has thoroughly analyzed how Jewish Salonica was a city in transition between the Ottoman Empire, which was gradually degrading and the making of modern Greece in the 19th century. As he notes, there are some substantial public efforts to remember the Jerusalem of the Balkans coming from the local municipal authorities, the University and many historians, so that it can be told the Jewish past and present in the city is a no longer taboo topic. However, the broader climate in the city is quite ambivalent, both promising and troubling (Naar, 2013). The non-hegemonic version of history, thus the non-homogenized national history, is to a great extent neglected and remembered only in private since only in the last decade has the Jewish past of the city been officially recognized.¹ And yet, the city "forgets": recently, the monument in memory of Thessalonikan Jews erected at the Aristotle University was vandalized and destroyed.²

During the 19th and the early 20th centuries, Thessalonican Jews belonged to the upper class and the poor (they were often peddlers in the port) and co-existed with Muslims, Christians and Armenians.

The Jews of Salonica ranged from major industrialists who established the city's flour mill, distillery, and brick and tobacco factories, to stevedores at the port, fisherman, tobacco laborers, bootblacks, lawyers, teachers, custom officials, seamstresses, rabbis, pumpkin seed sellers, lemonade vendors and halva makers (Naar, 2013: 8)

Benssoussan Han, a Jewish inn, was built by Samouel Benssoussan at the end of the 19th century in the *Square of Commerce* in the upper Ladadika, in Edessis 3 street. Initially, it was a traditional inn, with a central octagonal space and several rooms. This inn served as a hotel for merchants who wished to spend the night in the city. It survived many catastrophes, for example, the big fire of Thessaloniki in 1917. Since then, its uses have varied. In recent years it has hosted many alternative performances, combining the aroma and memory of the old city with modern artistic expressions. The audience moves freely around the inn's rooms as the performance evolves. There is a shop called *'Do not Forget about me'* in the basement, where antiques and old things are sold or rented out. In a way, B. H creates its own experienced space and time for the performers and the 'consumers' of a performance. As Stelios Dokouz, the artistic director of B. Han explained:

Once you enter B. Han you never come out the same person. When visitors ask me who owns this building, I tell them: "it is yours, you can do whatever you want in it. It stands here to inspire and serve your dreams".³

These words are part of the "presentation" and promotion of the place in the last couple of years. I remember that one of my early visits with my daughter to watch a performance rehearsal, Stelios talked to us with the very same words. My 17-year-old daughter was deeply emotionally attached to the place. However, in my experience, teenagers are more attracted to a modern lifestyle: the teen's post-Kardashian world is full of luxury and success. This building had an emotional and sensual impact on her which lasted some time, and Thessaloniki's multi-ethnic past was a recurrent theme in discussions with her friends. It should be noted that the old Jewish inn in Thessaloniki is not

considered a “cultural heritage” monument. Therefore, it is not protected by UNESCO as the other Roman and Byzantine remnants in the city. According to Sharon Macdonald (2009), this building could be seen as a “difficult heritage”, not as a traumatic, unsettling heritage but in the sense that it stands for a past which is to an extent even today ignored, neglected and forgotten by the hegemonic version of Greek history. As in the case of the architectural heritage of Nuremberg in Germany, complex heritage can be often problematic, shameful, troubling, contested, disputed, a kind of untidy narrative. What is important here is its public representation and creation and, of course, acceptance and appropriation:

Doing so highlights and unsettles cultural assumptions about the entanglements between identity and memory and past, present and future. It also raises questions about practices of selection, preservation, cultural comparison and witnessing (Macdonald, 2009: 1).

Bereither (2021) problematises the project *Yolocaust*, launched in early 2017 by Jewish-German photographer Shahak Shapira. Shapira edited digital self-representations taken at the Holocaust memorial in Berlin and put historical footage (e.g. dead bodies) from the concentration camps in the background. He then published these photos on a website. Despite the positive response to his photos, a holistic, anthropological reading of the *Yolocaust* reveals that the emotional and affective experiences of the young visitors may vary considerably from what is considered a “proper” response and a “respect” of the victims of the Holocaust. Another critical aspect relating to this selfie-culture is that people, especially young people, understand the past through bodies and feelings. Young people have diverse ways of engaging with the past and thus sharing their emotions. This realisation opens up new embodied understandings of the past articulated with anthropological sensitivities since emotions are not something we have but rather something we do.

Recently, OPEN Thessaloniki, an organisation responsible for introducing old city monuments to city dwellers, organises city walks to “meet” significant buildings and learn their past. B. Han inn is, of course, in the list of proposed loci; however, many Thessalonikians ignore its existence. It remains a historic building in a state of liminality, “betwixt and between”, situated at the crossroads of visibility and invisibility, social transparency and non-transparency. It is a remnant of a distant city past yet is not officially acknowledged. It stands as the living history of the city, the multi-ethnic city histories, the past brought into the present unfolding it in front of an audience.

Benssoussan Han is undoubtedly a nostalgic, multi-sensorial and multi-temporal experience: spices are still sold in the shops around and smells come out of the open windows. You can smell the city's past. Buildings and monuments function as a spatiotemporal process. They contain overlapping meanings and symbolisms, bringing the past into the present by proposing a lived version of the past and a remembrance of “forgotten” and neglected stories. There is a reciprocal relationship between affect and non-human agency and emotional energies. Navaro-Yashin (2009) has sensitively described spatial and material melancholia. She had used the metaphor of “ruination” when she analyzed her ethnographic material from her long-term fieldwork in Northern Cyprus. She tried to assess how it felt to live with the objects and within the ruins of a displaced community, the things that Greek-Cypriots left behind.

This object-oriented approach influenced by Actor Network Theory's object-centred philosophy draws from the affective turn in the human sciences. It is trans-paradigmatic and challenges the limitations of a logo-centric ethnography. In the case of abandoned Greek-Cypriot houses, loss, emptiness, mourning, melancholia, ambivalence, ruination prevail. However, at the same time, the objects that are left behind (houses, furniture, clothes, etc.) fall in re-appropriation since they help the Turkish-Cypriots, the new house owners, create domesticated geography eventually a new, meaningful life. Therefore, spatial melancholia can be analyzed as both de-constructive and constructive and a starting point for new emotional attachments.

The director and actress Varvara Doumanidou, who has been involved in many performances in the last years (*the Fear*, *the Girl in the house*, *the Exorcist* and others), described in an interview⁴ this personalized, affective relationship between performers and the inn:

It is a magical place with a unique energy, and I feel fascinated to be a part of it. I now feel a strong bond between us, a bond of mutual respect. It hurts when I see holes on the floor that were not there before. The audience often narrates how performances change the space, the atmosphere, the feeling. Sometimes, as they say, it is like entering a different place. Moreover, this is true. Benssoussan Han has a soul as all old houses do. And yet, its soul is still alive.

In November 2014 the dance group L. Reducta dance project performed in Benssoussan Han, *Prêt a porter*, *the Swan's Gap*. Five women, the black swans, tied together with a sealed tape, alongside a woman dressed as the white swan, performed the *Swan's Gap*: an embodied performance dealing with the eternal conflict between the power of

hegemony and the will for free expression. The dance performance represented the paradox of modernity viewed as a constant bodily game about the cruelty of time. It also referred to the emptiness of space and the interplay between the individual and the collective: the five female dancers wrapped with a sealed were struggling to move their bodies separately and escape the inescapable, collective burden. While in another room of the inn, the swan, the female dancer dressed in white, trapped in bounded space, was seen by the audience through the keyhole, also trying to move and escape isolation. The audience walked from room to room to watch the different dance stories closely and inevitably became a part of the performance. The idea and choreography belonged to Xantippe Papadopoulou. As she explained to me:

Two different stories meet in this performance: the story of mass production of the fashion industry and the classical ballet of the swan lake. In both stories, there is a kind of resistance. In the end, individuality is defeated, but the end is always a pessimistic one. There is always a tension between the Self and the Other, Us and Them. Time is cruel, and space is luminal. This is the modern paradox in the form of an imbalanced bodily game.⁵

Space is understood only via embodiment since space is lived and relational. The body has limits and capacities and inhabits space (Abrahamsson & Simpson, 2011). The body has temporal limits and, at the same time, creates temporalities and loads space with emotionalities. The body in space, thus the dimension of embodied space, brings together the body as a physical and biological entity, as lived experience and as the starting point of action and representation of the social world (Low, 2009). In the Swan's Gap example, space becomes embodied and meaningful. Embodied space brings into play varying temporalities: the past where the inn was built, the several small stories and historic episodes through which it lived together with the past of other performances in the same place and, of course, the present (or to be exact, the present life-stories) of the audience and the city's everyday life. The inn crosses affectivities, sensual understanding, temporalities, desires, fictions, realities and projections. It crosses individual and collective past and present, Self and Other.

Anthropology and representation: the story of a relationship

Erving Goffman is an important representative of the 1960s Chicago school of thought who used the theatrical framing of everyday life to argue that human interaction is stage-managed through social dramaturgy. For him, social drama is the critical theory that explains social life and human interactions: we are managing our identities to create desired impressions and acting out certain roles performing on stage and off-stage performances. Acting is an essential part of our lives, intimate or public.

For Victor Turner (1974), the study of thresholds and dramas in Ndembu society revealed latent conflicts. For him, social drama is the key to understanding and analyzing the opaqueness of social life. He theorized performance to elaborate on the concepts of liminality, reversal human action, and the betwixt and between situations. He referred to the liminal conditions where performativity is embodied, and acting is in excess. In the 70s, Balinese cockfighting was seen by Clifford Geertz (1973) as the traditional Balinese performative arena. Thick description revealed to the human psyche and explained the complexity of emotions involved: desire, hate, antagonism, passion, lust. Thus, the anthropology of performance interacts with the anthropology of experience in the realm of imagery. Through performances, anthropologists project images of Self and Other:

When we observe performances and physical constructions, we experience them as mental imagery. When we self-consciously monitor our own performances, we re-experience the imagery that we think they project to audiences. Thus, performances may weave complex webs of interaction and experience, all mediated through imagery (Ralmer and Jankowiak, 1996: 226).

This performative turn, almost a 'breakthrough into performance', made social scientists realize that performance and performativities uncover actual time conditions and bodily involvement. Additionally, they contribute to deeper cultural understanding (Beeman, 1993: 370). Performance material has been studied in several cultural settings suggesting that performance, rather than being a fixed category, could be seen as a work in process, always incomplete, self-reflective. It is understood as a trope, a practice and certainly a locus where several sciences meet, thus a *topos* of a creative epistemological and methodological dialogue and interchange. Anthropologists, sociologists, social psychologists, social historians, drama therapists, teachers, and of course, architects and artists have used performance and performativity to achieve reflexivity, engagement, critical evaluation, and active participation to render their work more explicit and open, so that it is easy to access by a wider audience. It is now acknowledged that performance epistemologies and methodologies are likely to enhance imagery, reflexivity, intersubjectivity, and emotionality. Thus, performativities can become the sensory medium for the evaluation of traumatic pasts.

Performativities, affectivities and embodied space

Performance has been suggested as a theoretical concern between artistic expression and social analysis, a method and practice that bridges the gap between theory and action links strictly bounded disciplines that cross epistemologies and deepen our understanding of space. Space is no longer an abstract, empty, timeless category but acquires meaning through embodiment. It becomes an embodied affective space. The performers and the audience create a sensorial and affective assemblage (Hamilakis, 2017), interact sensually and emotionally, and create synaesthetic experiences (Hodder 2016, Sutton 2010). The main concern is to map the different senses and emotional reactions and explore how diverse and interconnected senses can deepen our understanding, inspire critique and reflection, enhance human interaction and enact lived past experiences by linking the past to the present. Gary Palmer and W. Jankowiak (1996) argue that emotions and emotional effects are pervasive. The audience experiences cognition and emotionality as two sides of the same coin and register as performance imagery.

My critique is that although in social sciences - especially in social anthropology and human geography - notions of affectivity and the senses⁶ have been widely explored in recent years, the approach remains deeply logo-centric and thus emotionally detached and sensually “empty”. I believe that a less logo-centric approach and a more performative one can deepen students’ understanding and render social and historical knowledge less elitist, more approachable, participatory and democratic. In recent years interesting pedagogical analyses have appeared based on the Deleuzian dictum that becoming is the experience of the performing self. As such, embodied and performative pedagogy emphasising visual and bodily representation have been analysed as a renewed language for education that contributes to participatory democratic education (Grushka, 2010).

Several interesting performances can be used as alternative representations and sensual and emotional openings. Dorita Hannah discusses an event staged in the 2003 Prague Quadrennial known as the *Heart of PQ*:

Erected within the spectacular confines of Prague’s Industrial Palace and combining the arts of the exhibition, theatre and architecture. Its design emerged in collaboration with several artists from Russia, Kazakhstan, Japan, Britain, Canada, Samoa, S. Africa and the Netherlands... it sought to challenge, disrupt, and eliminate the borders that traditionally exist in theatre .so new relationships could be explored between the body and the built, between the viewer and the viewed, and between the designer and the director. It was predicated on the uncontainability of performance and the utilization of the sensory body as a performative contaminant (pp. 137).

Hannah describes it as an architectural sensorium, with five towers each assigned to the classic senses (tower of smell, touch, so on): the visitors could engage in many ways with the different senses involved, for example, taste, hear sounds, touch objects and smell things. Hannah, since 2002 and her collaborators have developed a dance-architecture project as a tentative space of encounter: space performativities are sites of “recovery” and ways to give voice to the unspeakable, respond to political events, combine theory and practice. Performances are suggested paths to put together fractured narratives of place, memory and buried traumatic pasts. Following a series of workshops, the first production was *Her Topia*, commissioned by the Isadora and Raymond Duncan Dance Research Centre in Athens, Greece (October 2005). The performance –characterized as a slow performance- combined ancient and modern images with the fluctuating temporalities of moving bodies. The audience moved between different spaces creating and consuming a fluctuating temporality: the dancer’s bodies were fragmented, multiplied and de-materialized via sounds, lights, video projections, mirrors. The performance was also projected out into the city of Athens. Thus, performativity escaped a bounded place and involved several unpredictable interactions with the cityscape creating other possibilities, intentionalities and emotional responses.

The “Other” Holocaust: music and musicians in the camps

Music performativity and *logos* about music have been at the centre of anthropological thinking and understanding of ours and other cultures. Paul Stoller (1989) has suggested using a sensory ethnography, meaning that sensual understanding has to be the core of the ethnographic process. In his influential *The Taste of Ethnographic Things*, he attempts to access the Songhay people of Mehanna and reconstructs ethnography via visions, sounds and tastes. For him, Songhay sorcery has its own sounds: sounds of ancestors, spirits, magicians, ceremonies. Music has a social life. Its consumption leads to sensing the social world, understanding multiple music temporalities, and enhancing communication and meaningful interpretation of the social world. The listener can be analyzed as a

symbolic consumer of music; talking about music brings together locational, categorical, associational, reflective, critical and evaluative understandings. What is suggested is to take sound seriously and enrich our given epistemologies sensually (Feld and Brenneis, 2004). Feld argues:

Music as a metaphorical expression of one symbolic order that is instantly and primarily feelingful, and speech about music as a metaphorical expression of another order that reflects secondary interpretive awareness, recognition or engagement (Feld, 1984: 16).

In the last few years, music has been studied as a performance which is a critical model and embodied method at the same time: music as performance and performance as music defines music in terms of action. As McRae (2015) argues:

Music is valued and categorised. People are organised by musical genres, specific musicians, and particular songs. Music marks and is marked by identities, cultures and bodies. Music is deployed culturally in the service of meanings and understandings, emotions and feelings, aesthetics and consumption (ibid, pp. 1).

Reflecting on my teaching experiences at the university, I recall the increased difficulty in teaching concepts such as biopolitics and deathpolitics to anthropology students. Such notions sound quite abstract to grasp. However, they are essential in understanding the Holocaust, the Nazi mass production of death, and the control of the human body and mind by this fascist-bureaucratic regime. So far, the Holocaust has been presented as a “wound”, a trauma challenging to unpack and analyse. Of course, serious attempts have been made both by theorists (Agamben 1998, Arendt 2006, Bauman, 1989) and also by survivors’ narratives (Primo-Levi 2003 [1947], Amery 2009 [1966]) in order to problematise and critically engage with this dystopia.

Nevertheless, it is still difficult and demanding to grasp this issue and analyse it in academic lectures. My main aim is not to present Shoah as a locus of passivity and death but rather to perceive it as a multi-layered phenomenon that involves resistances and fights at a personal and collective level. The music production in the camps and the music plays performed - especially at the camps of Auschwitz and Terezin - are two examples of music as a kind of language and form of resistance to the deathpolitics and the de-humanisation that the Nazis attempted. Although music and often singing were performed on command and there were orchestras performing concerts in the camp for fellow prisoners, singing, playing and composing music functioned as loci of death denial. Moreover, it was an effort to maintain human qualities in a context of constant humiliation and de-humanisation.

It is vital to analyse and critically engage with the musical aspects of life in the camps. This music can be seen to escape stereotypical notions of passivity and unwillingness to resist the generalised “zero-human” situation. It offers an opportunity to escape from the undifferentiated “grey mass” of imprisoned Jews in institutions of terror, inhumanity and destruction (Fackler, 2007). Music served as a means to escape mentally and survive practically. Musicians belonged to a “privileged” category of prisoners meaning that they had more food to beat hunger, more clothes and faced fewer physical punishments. However, they did not escape the fate of the others. All the children who sang the Brundibar opera at Terezin camp were sent to Auschwitz’s gas chambers after a while.

Two interesting examples of how music can be used as a channel for understanding and critically engaging with the Holocaust terror and the Nazi regime are Huether's thesis *Hearing the Holocaust: Music, Film, Aesthetics* (2016) and Stein's article “Music and Trauma in Polanski's *The Pianist*” (2002). Music is a path to map sensually and emotionally the “bare life”, life in the camps, life not worth living. In both works, there is the ongoing theme of the relationship between music and affect: trauma, sadness, desperation, pain are some of the feelings transmitted to the listener. Both works are personal accounts of physical, mental, psychological and moral humiliation and degradation. They use traumatic narratives and emphasise the pivotal role of music in raising a different voice and fighting back against the totalitarian, inhumane biopolitical programme of the fascist regime during WWII. Also, music can be a personal refuge, salvation, an imaginary place of escape, a promise and an image of return to “normal” life. Papamichos Chonakis (2018) argues that the persistent “Greek” identity in the Nazi camps was built through music: songs Greek, Sephardi or foreign had a tremendous symbolic value and singing them was reflecting a shared sense of identity, a belonging, a sense of being together and have something in common. Singing songs or playing instruments were acts of nostalgia but also comfort, sad performativity filled with imaginary projections and the desire to return home to the beloved city of Thessaloniki.

Performing dystopic memories: an educational scenario for teaching and understanding the “other” Holocaust

At the moment, I am reflectively engaging on the one hand with the memoirs of the Holocaust survivors. On the other hand, I am searching and listening to the music written and performed by composers imprisoned and killed in the death camps, such as Hans Krassa, Gideon Klein and Pavel Haas (found on Youtube) lived and died in Terezin. Furthermore, I am writing a text that brings together memoirs, poetry, and music. This educational canvas combines *logoi*, meaning the memories of those imprisoned with poetry and music produced during the Holocaust. In a way, this scenario attempts to grasp experientially dystopic memories' emotional and sensual silences. In the 1980s, similar pedagogical plays were used as educational frames, play scripts, and workshops to fully understand other cultures and rituals. In particular, at the University of Virginia, anthropology students were encouraged to adopt the actors' “inside view” and, through performances, to understand and make sense of the monographs and other written material available. Experimentation with the performance of ethnography was highly valued as a means of deepening understanding and adopting an insider's point of view. As Turner and Turner (1982) note, students were encouraged to read relevant literature and be given roles in key ritual performances. For example, they tried to bring off the Kwakiutl's Cannibal dance:

Students prepared the ceremonial space... they made props and improvised costumes and body decoration, including face-painting (Turner and Turner, 1982: 42)

I have used the term sensography, since the proposed scenario mobilizes different components and creates a kind of assemblage, a multi-temporal and multi-sensual interplay. The term sensography brings in mind the combination of choreography –indeed, bodies and movement are important and meaningful- and pays attention to the role of the senses, namely hearing, smelling, touching, seeing. Bodies and sensual properties intersect with emotionalities in understanding and appropriating the past. I argue that only through bodily and emotional involvement students can grasp complex histories, mobilize themselves, appropriate the past and make it their own. The analysis of emotional practices of young people at the Memorial of the murdered Jews in Berlin (Bareither, 2021) shares the view that we come to know the past through our bodies and feelings and what more that are different, often idiosyncratic, yet meaningful ways of relating to the past.

Several books and films draw from the Terezin case. Three case studies are explored and mobilized in my scenario: the story of Fania Fenelon, singer and musician in the women's orchestra in Auschwitz, material from life in Terezin camp, where most Jewish artists were imprisoned, and the story of the violinist of Auschwitz, Jacque Stroumssa, who was deported from Thessaloniki. Fania Fenelon's story is found in her autobiographical book and film *Playing for Time*. Stroumssa's life story was published as a memoir some years ago. The second phase of this pedagogical scenario is to work with the notion of embodied space, thus, to work out how all the above can be translated into music production movement, in other words, how the proposed educational scenario could be embodied. Several musicians are going to play the music production in the camps. A cellist and a violinist will play the musical works written by imprisoned composers. Therefore, music will be treated in multiple ways, both as performativity and as action releasing a multi-sensoriality. At this future stage, a collaboration with a choreographer is essential. Therefore, the project will be a multi-layered one: bodies, movement, music, logos (memoirs) and a video projection about life in Terezin.

The third phase includes students' participation and involvement: one or two visits to Benssoussan Han and regular workshops during my University classes on embodiment, materiality, non-materiality and music. So far, I have been teaching courses related to Holocaust memories and trauma. The idea is to engage students with the academic debates taught, explain my written scenario and encourage them to make suggestions on it and thus produce another collective scenario that could be performed in Benssoussan Han.

The final step of the project is presenting our collective work at the Jewish Inn. Both non-academic and academic audiences will be invited to watch and –hopefully- interact. To be more specific audience will be invited to interact with the students and become part of the presentation not as passive spectators but as active creators. Thus, they will be invited to make movements, gestures, and shout words that come into their minds related to the Holocaust. The ways that holocaust stories are individually perceived and felt will hopefully bring out that understanding traumatic histories can be individualistic, idiosyncratic, active. This on-stage performance will be taped and become visual material for future lectures at the university. Treated as an ethnographic case, this staged performativity aims to enhance students' active engagement with abstract and impersonal academic knowledge, encourage personal engagement and critical inquiry, bring together knowledge and action, cross bounded

epistemologies, promote reflexivity, emphasise collaboration and interaction, disseminate knowledge and open the academic world to the public. The *OTHER HOLOCAUST* performance aims to become an educational laboratory, a locus of experimentation and improvisation, leading to a multi-dimensional and multi-sensorial understanding of a “difficult” memory. In a way, representing the Holocaust stories in which music and bodies are involved can be used as powerful means to “consume” the other Holocaust, thus understanding this complex, traumatic and to an extent homogenised historical locus. Consuming the Holocaust, therefore, implies understanding it, uncovering people’s (either victims or survivors) life stories and challenging the hegemonic narrative of the imprisoned grey mass. The proposed pedagogical scenario will hopefully enhance students’ understanding and encourage them to search and represent, thus adopting an emic approach and inevitably a more active engagement with knowledge, less logocentric and less teacher-oriented. Due to the pandemic situation and the consequent closure of museums and other art places, Benssoussan Han has been closed since March 2019 (spring 2020). Lecturing at the university is only online, and thus, it is not possible to visit the place with my students and design *in situ* the performance. However, several discussions with my students help us problematise the topic, engage with the existing literature and reflect on how an interactive performance might work in the future. Hopefully, the end of this dystopic situation will enable the *in vivo* materialities and actual presence, both important for working this scenario in the future.

Conclusion: sensography as pedagogy

The representational journey analysed in this paper could be summarised in Allen Feldman’s words:

In a transnationalised world, the need to demarcate, through performance and iconography, disorderly political matter and spaces of death and violence from supposedly civil terrains of order discourse and rationality become a political ceremony (2004, 197).

Performative teaching and acting construct the re-lived memory and suffering of the other, thus making knowledge more democratic and approachable. This pedagogical approach suggests that multi-layered performativities can deepen our anthropological and historical understanding. They can be used as loci and case studies to be discussed and analysed to enrich and broaden anthropological teaching. The anthropology of performance, theatre and drama could provide the anthropologist with experimental teaching and learning methods and could be used as *topoi* (Foucault might say heterotopias) of reflection and critique. B.H seems the ideal place to combine learning and teaching through a performance that can reach both academic and non-academic audiences. The educational scenario proposed in this paper could be an opportunity to make space “meaningful” and make anthropology students engage with the Holocaust in a reflexive, critical way. Its adoption has the potential to lead to a reflexive understanding of a dystopic historical memory, one that is much more challenging to grasp in a lecture format. By facilitating connections, such performative experiences can also become a means of communicating and disseminating anthropological knowledge to a wider audience beyond academia.

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Notes

¹ On the past and present of the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, among others, see Mazower (2004), Molho (2001) and Kravva (2001, 2001b, 2008, 2010, 2011).

² The monument of the old Jewish cemetery at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki campus was brutally vandalized on 26th January 2019, one day before the official day for the memory of the victims of the Holocaust in the city. There was an immediate reaction from the citizens of Thessaloniki and part of the academic world. The mayor said that only “monsters” could have acted this way. For info, see the following site: <https://gr.euronews.com/2019/01/28/thessaloniki-dimartyria-gia-ton-vandalismo-tou-evraikou-mnimeioy-toy-aistoteleioy>

³ For the Benssoussan Han’s history see: <https://www.voria.gr/article/mpensousan-chan-to-paleotero-sozomeno-chani-tis-thessalonikis>

⁴ Varvara Dumanidou is an actress member of a theatre group called “theatre of the Other Time” (*Theatro tou Allote*). For more info on her performances: <https://www.thessalonikiartsandculture.gr/thessaloniki/oraioi-anthropoi/varvara-dumanidu-skinothetis-tou-alote/>

⁵ My interview with the choreographer Xanthippe Papadopoulou, January 2018.

⁶ In general, the post-1990s interest in emotions and affectivity in social sciences and humanities has been called the “affective turn”. As argued, it poses “some of the most innovative and productive theoretical and epistemological trends of the last two decades of the twentieth century: psychoanalytically informed theories of subjectivity and subversion, theories of the body and embodiment, poststructuralist feminist theory, the conversation of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory with political theory and critical analysis, the queer theorization of melancholy and trauma” (Athanasίου, Hantzaroula, Yannakopoulos, 2008: 5). This anti-essentialist experiment discusses the political and ethical appropriations and misappropriations of emotions. It leads to a new economy of emotions and affect, and an exploration of the complex arenas of emotionality and bodiliness.

⁷ Difficult memories are unspoken, invisible and often traumatic memories of forced displacement, violence and deathpolitics. Genocides and forced population exchanges are considered “dark”, difficult to access and assess memories precisely because of their heavy “heritage” and negative emotional baggage. For a recent discussion see Solomon E. and Apostolidou E. (2018).

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