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Commemorating the past: the discursive construction of official narratives about the 'Rebirth of the Second Austrian Republic'



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ABSTRACT This article analyses the discursive construction of collective and individual memories and the functions of commemorative events for the discursive construction of national identities through the example of Austrian post-war commemorative events. Thus, the various attempts to come to terms with the Nazi past in post-war Austria are illustrated in detail. The article will first summarize the socio-political contexts relating to the relevant post-war commemorative years in Austria (1988, 1995, 2005). Then we will consider sequences of a political speech by the then Austrian chancellor, Dr Wolfgang Schüssel, as one of many possible examples in 2005 which establishes a hegemonic stance towards the Nazi past. Finally, we will discuss our results and illustrate that, in addition to hegemonic discourses, competing narratives aim to provide different answers to the basic question 'how should one come to terms with traumatic pasts?' Our results are such that in the hegemonic narrative of Austrian history after 1945, the political event of the Declaration of Independence is represented metaphorically as a 'rebirth'; a metaphorical scenario which constructs a 'creation myth', and by this anthropomorphization suggests that 'newborn' Austria is to be perceived as innocent as a newborn child. On the other hand, the historical events before and after are placed in the cognitive frame of natural disasters or fateful events ('horror', 'nightmare', 'dark age') and a community of victims is discursively constructed comprising the victims of the Nazi terror as well as the soldiers waging the war of aggression. Discursive patterns apparent in this case study can, of course, be generalized to similar communicative events in many nation-states. The specific systematic and explicit linguistic/pragmatic and discourse-analytic methodology presented in this article lends itself to deconstruct official discourses which influence collective beliefs, opinions and ideologies.

KEY WORDS: *Austria, collective memory, commemorative events, community of victims, counter-discourse, critical discourse analysis*



Introduction

Mr President, Right Honourable Cardinal, President of the National Assembly! I have come to [...] for the initiation of our festive gathering and can put on record that the 27th of April 1945 was, first and foremost, a day of joy. It was the **birth hour of the Second Republic**. [...]

The 27th of April was, in Vienna [...] in any case, a spring day 60 years ago, in ten days the Second World War in Europe will have ended, ten days ago the big Austrian parties were founded. Their founders returned from concentration camps and detention, and together with other democrats created the Second Republic. The drama of this six-year war and the trauma of the National Socialist terror regime, however, throw sombre shadows onto the **cradle of this red-white-red rebirth, but the child** lives. In midst of ruins, need, hunger and desperation lives this small, new Austria, because on this day everyone looks ahead. The nightmare is over. But the horror was not over for everyone, and not every horror was over. The displacements continued, in all of Europe, especially in Central Europe over ten million people were displaced, lost their home, whole convoys of refugees were on the move looking for a new home. (Wolfgang Schüssel, speech 27 April 2005)¹

All societies have experienced traumatic events in their past, be it war and war crimes, revolution, torture, mass killing, rape, etc. Sometimes, taboos surround such events in the public sphere; usually, narratives are constructed which mystify the participation in war crimes or other crimes. Such narratives are (re)produced through films, documentaries, political speeches and schoolbooks; moreover, they are also transferred into the private spheres of families and peer-groups (see Anthonissen and Blommaert, 2006; Benke and Wodak, 2003a, 2003b; Ensink and Sauer, 2003; Heer et al., 2003/2007; Martin and Wodak, 2003; Rupnow, 2006; Wodak et al., 1994). Various groups in the respective society compete for *the one and only* narrative which should be hegemonic. The latter then also has a strong impact on the discursive construction of national identities (Le, 2006; Wodak et al., 1999) and draws on a whole range of collective and individual memories.

Collective memory, thus, cannot be equated with history, but is linked to it and has multiple effects on the future:

History defines us just as we define history. As our identities and cultures evolve over time, we tacitly reconstruct our histories. By the same token, these new collectively defined historical memories help to provide identities for succeeding generations. (Pennebaker and Banasik, 1997: 18)

In a study on Austrian commemorative events in 1988, we defined 'official commemoration' as:

the open publication of matters of historical consciousness, which can be supported by a consensus within the political field and among its principal actors. These official, consensual views of history are, however, also interrelated with those non-official sites (for example the media) that transmit their views of history to the public, or bring to light the views of the public . . . (Wodak et al., 1994: 11)

This quote summarizes our approach very succinctly: historical narratives are constantly discursively and visually (re)constructed, changing and shifting, due to contexts and diverse, often contradicting and conflicting, political interests. Hence, there is not *one* single past, nor *one* unique narrative; quite the contrary, many narratives which are informed by different interests are in conflict with each other for hegemonic status. They are produced in many public spheres, interact and are recontextualized through the media and in every day interactions (Bar-Tal, 1998; Le, 2006).

These narratives are also constitutive of imagined communities (Anderson, 1988), and thus of the discursive construction of national identities (Wodak et al., 1999). The founding myths and the reconstruction and imaginaries on which everyday recollections as well as collective experiences draw form a part of the official past of every nation-state. The construction of national identities always necessarily draws on narratives which relate the past, present and future in specific ways – a dimension which Denis Martin summarizes very succinctly:

To put it in a nutshell, the identity narrative channels political emotions so that they can fuel efforts to modify a balance of power; it transforms the perceptions of the past and of the present; it changes the organization of human groups and creates new ones; it alters cultures by emphasizing certain traits and skewing their meanings and logic. The identity narrative brings forth a new interpretation of the world in order to modify it. (Martin, 1995: 13)

We will come back to this theoretical framework later.

Our article investigates aspects of specific Austrian post-war commemorative events. Austria is a relevant case because constitutive myths were suddenly questioned in 1988 (50 years after the *Anschluss*) following the ‘Waldheim Affair’ (in 1986); this led to very controversial debates and to a de-tabooization of the Austrian position with regard to the Second World War, Austria’s claims of victim status and the denial of its participation in war crimes.

The occasion for the second significant commemorative year, 1995, was the 50th anniversary of the Second Republic. This comprised a large event in the ‘National Assembly’ – a joint session of both houses of the Austrian Parliament – on 27 April 1995. The same year saw the 40th anniversary of the signing of the Austrian State Treaty (15 May 1955) and the Austrian Declaration of Neutrality (26 October 1955). The focal point of the commemorative events was 27 April. By the way, the year 1996 marked 1000 years since the first mention of Austria in historical sources (996) – but it did not play an important role in the public discourse. These events were again controversial because the Nazi past had not yet been coped with in any rational and self-reflected way outside the academic community. Finally, 2005 marked a third significant commemorative year – 60 years since the end of the Second World War and 50 years since the signing of the State Treaty. The latter had made a democratic and free Second Austrian Republic possible (the allied forces left Austria after its declaration of neutrality in October 1955).

Of course, we will not be able to elaborate on all the various commemoration ceremonies and other events which took place in these three years. However, we

would like to illustrate the deep societal conflicts and struggles surrounding these dates and the various attempts to come to terms with the Nazi past in post-war Austria. Thus, we agree with Gronbeck (1998: 58) that collective memory is 'an evoking of a past to frame a present but also to conform that past to the present'.

Our article will very briefly summarize the socio-political context relating to these post-war commemorative years. In a second step, we will consider sequences of one political speech by the then Austrian chancellor,² Dr Wolfgang Schüssel, as one of many possible examples in 2005 which establishes a given hegemonic stance towards the Nazi past, the widespread participation in war crimes, and the eternal question of 'who the victims were'. We are aware, of course, that this discourse analysis can only provide small spotlights on the discursive construction of collective and individual memories and on the functions of commemorative events.

In our last section, we will discuss our results and illustrate the ongoing controversies which show that, in addition to hegemonic discourses, many competing narratives aim to provide different answers to the basic questions 'who was guilty/not guilty?' and 'how should one come to terms with traumatic pasts?'.

Our methodology draws on Critical Discourse Analysis, and more specifically on the Discourse-Historical Approach, and on the research of many historians and socio-psychologists on the concept of collective memory and identity politics (see Heer et al., 2003/2007; Reisigl and Wodak, 2001, for an overview).

Our main research question could thus be summarized as follows: how have hegemonic narratives constituting Austrian national identity influenced the commemorative events of 2005? How are they functionalized and which ends do they serve?

Furthermore, we assume that such commemorative years are – on the one hand – planned very carefully; on the other hand, the commemorative events are, it seems, systematically disrupted due to the many unresolved conflicts in Austrian society. Hence, we claim that – as long as the elites do not acknowledge the many conflicting perspectives and narratives and openly confront and discuss them, such disruptions will probably always occur and have to be viewed as a typical and systematic part of commemorative events, and not as exceptional and unique, unpredictable, 'accidents' – in Austria and elsewhere.

This latter hypothesis thus relates to research in other countries as well, for example to the infamous 'Jenninger Affair' 1988, in Germany, to academic debates on the uprising in Warsaw 1944 (Blommaert, 2005; Ensink and Sauer, 2003) or to the discussions about Japanese history books depicting the war with China (Barnard, 2003; Reisigl, 2007; Wodak et al., 1994; see later).

The Austrian context

POST-1945

In general, the moral problem of the guilt and responsibility of Austria, that is, the participation of its people in the National-Socialist state has not been adequately debated (see, inter alia, Brainin et al., 1993; Jaspers, 1946; Mitten, 2000), despite

the start of a wide-ranging reflection process after the so-called 'Waldheim Affair' in 1986 (see Mitten, 1992; Wodak et al., 1990). These questions have become part of Austrian scholarly debates and political discussions ever since (Botz and Sprengnagel, 1994; Rathkolb, 2005).

At the 'zero hour', the Second Austrian Republic's main concern, in contrast to Germany, was whether and how Austria's ruling elite could ideologically, constitutionally and politically do justice to the various demands it was faced with, demands that frequently arose from opposing values (see Mitten, 1997). The result was a self-image in which the so-called 'Jewish question' was not so much denied as it was concealed. There was 'silence'. Several critical studies (Knight, 1988; Rathkolb, 1988; Wagnleitner, 1984; Wodak, 2003) tend to attribute this lack of public debate (in comparison to Germany) about the 'Jewish question' to bare-faced cynicism or the remains of anti-Semitic hostility on behalf of the political elite.

The collapse of the Third Reich forced many in Austria, as well as in Germany, to confront the extent of the Nazis' crimes. Doubts, feelings of guilt and the need to justify or rationalize one's behaviour all encouraged the development of strategies for 'coming to terms with this past' (see for example, Wodak et al., 1994). The facts of the persecution were played down when not denied outright, while the victims of Nazi persecution were made out to be the causes of present woes.

Moreover, Austria's officially recognized status as the first victim of Hitlerite aggression provided many Austrians with a telling argument to deflect any responsibility that went beyond the commission of individual crimes. The search for a new national identity involved the validation of Austrian distinctiveness, which at the same time became a negation of all ties with the Nazi (that is to say, German) past. This in turn reinforced a specific definition of insiders and outsiders, of 'us' and 'them', of 'the others' on all levels of discourse (de Cillia et al., 1999).

However, if one considers the conditions (for example, the occupation, the lingering presence of anti-Semitic prejudices from the First Austrian Republic, the commitment to becoming a 'western democracy') within which a new Austrian identity, a new collective memory, or a public memory was to be constituted, one could hardly be surprised by the outcome. The 'Jewish question' ended up taking a subordinate place in Austria's official public memory about the Nazi period (Reisigl, 2004). Ultimately, this new policy, as described in detail by Walter Manoschek and Günther Sandner (2003) and Richard Mitten (1997, 2000), led to the creation of a new community of 'victims' in which the Jews occupied an insignificant place. In other words, they were just victims like everyone else, and the Nazi policy concerning the Jews was minimized or concealed. In the eyes of the political elite who constructed these new values and myths, the 'silence' about the Jews was as much a sign of moral conviction as of a moral deficit.

COPING WITH AND CONFRONTING THE NAZI-PAST

This silence was first broken during the 'Waldheim Affair' in 1986 and the commemorative year 1988 (Wodak et al., 1990, 1994). Since the beginning of the 1990s, Austrian politicians have been debating the question of Austrian responsibility, and, more recently, an exhibition about the crimes of the *Wehrmacht*

(Heer et al., 2003/2007; Manoschek, 1996; Wodak, 2006) has further contributed to the lifting of the taboo.

Austria became a democratic state in 1918 (First Republic), and had to survive the change from a large multi-ethnic and multi-cultural monarchy to a small state. Between 1938 and 1945 Austria was occupied by the Nazis and was part of the Third Reich. Since 1945, Austria has undergone many political and sociological changes: occupation by the Allied forces until 1955, the signing of the State Treaty in 1955, attaining the status of neutrality although clearly retaining a pro-western orientation, and the creation of a social-welfare society on the 'Swedish Model'. A big qualitative change occurred in 1989–90 when the 'Iron Curtain' fell and new immigrants entered the country (Matouschek et al., 1995).

Politics in Austria in 1994 were dominated by two events, both of which represented major breaks with the post-war era. In June, Austrians voted by an overwhelming 66.4 percent majority to join the European Union (EU). By October, however, the reigning euphoria among the governing parties (the Socialists and the People's Party) over the EU referendum had turned to despair as they contemplated the implications of their disastrous general election results. Both parties suffered massive losses (primarily to the rightwing party, FPÖ, a party similar to Le Pen's party in France), and although they formed a new coalition government, the SPÖ (Social-Democratic Party) and ÖVP (People's Party) no longer commanded the two-thirds majority necessary in parliament to pass constitutional laws. The year 1995 thus marked a second huge commemorative year during which many party-internal conflicts occurred, mostly surrounding the status of neutrality (Benke, 2003; Kovács and Wodak, 2003).

The two big parties that formed the government constructed a principally consensual narrative of history, but had markedly different views on one point: in their interpretation of Austrian neutrality. The Social Democrats (SPÖ) saw this as an essential part of Austrian identity, whereas the conservative People's Party (ÖVP) and President, closely aligned to the ÖVP, saw neutrality as more or less open to negotiation.³

The former leader of the opposition party FPÖ, Haider, tried to unpick this consensual narrative, by for example highlighting the foreign control over the events in the spring of 1945. He also discursively linked the 'so-called liberation' with the violations of the Red Army, and thus offset the worst National-Socialist crimes against those committed by the Soviet occupation forces. Furthermore, he denounced the prominent figurehead of the Second Republic, the first President Karl Renner, as an opportunist (see Wodak et al., 1998).

The election on 3 October 1999 resulted in 27 percent of the vote going to Haider's extreme right-wing populist Freedom Party. The grand coalition broke down, and a new coalition was founded between the People's Party and the Freedom Party on 4 February 2000 (Wodak and Pelinka, 2002). This was followed by an immediate reaction by the 14 other member states of the European Union (Kopeinig and Kotanko, 2000), the so-called 'sanctions' against the Austrian government were established which led to a new nationalistic wave in Austria.

An exit strategy was constructed through the report of the 'three wise men' which established that Austria was still to be assessed as a democratic country like all the other western states. Under this pressure, restitution towards survivors of forced labour and Jewish survivors was decided upon in January 2001, but the restitution towards the latter has so far only been partially implemented in 2006.

In 2005, the year we are concerned with in this article, there were three commemorative events: 60 years since the end of the Second World War; 50 years since the State Treaty of 1955; and 10 since the accession to the European Union. The specific context is summarized briefly later.

Theoretical considerations

COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL MEMORIES

Historical consciousness, according to Reinhart Koselleck (1989), arises from the polarity between 'experiential space' and 'horizon of expectation'. Experiential space is taken to mean the entire heritage of the past to which a person or a group has access, and horizon of expectation refers to the anticipation of a particular future that is full of wishes, and fears, plans and visions. The polarity of these two modes of being develops and is realized in the living present of a particular culture. The present, in this, is the mediation of the most recent past and the immediate future.

Culture means 'a historically handed-down system of meanings, with the assistance of which human beings pass on, maintain and further develop their knowledge of life and their attitude to life' (Geertz, 1987: 3). Historical consciousness is generated in continuous movement which, proceeding from the horizon of expectation, has an effect on the space of past experience and gains material from this encounter for the development of the meaning of the present as an action space.

At this point, we may then introduce the innovative model that was left, incomplete, by Maurice Halbwachs under the title *La mémoire collective*: this was only published posthumously in 1950. The fact that one does not remember alone but also uses the memories of others, and that one grows up surrounded by phenomena and gestures, sentences and images, architectures and landscapes that are full of strange pasts that preceded the subject, enabled Halbwachs to claim the existence of a collective memory: 'every individual memory is a viewpoint on the collective memory' (Halbwachs, 1967: 31). Ricoeur stresses the usefulness of this category to determine basic social facts and cultural processes, under the condition that it is not conceived as a strict analogy to the functioning and constitution of the individual memory but is used rather as an 'operational' concept. As the subject of collective memory one would then have to imagine – in Husserl's sense – 'higher order personalities': groups, tribes, nations. And they are not subjects in terms of their existence but in terms of 'attribution' (Ricoeur, 1997: 438). With this restriction, Ricoeur grants to the collective memory the

attributes of individual memory: it may have recollections that have access to some continuity and which can constitute an identity.

In this sense collective memory may be 'characterized as a collection of traces of the events that were important for the historical sequence of a particular group', equipped with the capability of 'bringing these common recollections back to life on the occasion of rites, festivals and public ceremonies' (Ricoeur, 1997: 439). In this collection of traces, as in the periodic making present of the past stored in it, there occurs something similar to the way in which individual memory works. As Halbwachs observed: 'at the moment when a group looks back on its past it probably feels that it has remained constant and becomes aware of the identity that it always preserved' (Halbwachs, 1967: 74).

Along this line of thinking, Zelizer (1998: 3) emphasizes that collective memories contribute to the definition of national identities as a creative and purposeful process that 'allow[s] for the fabrication, rearrangement, elaboration, and omission of details about the past, often pushing aside accuracy and authenticity so as to accommodate broader issues of identity formation, power and authority, and political affiliation' (see also Le, 2006).

Quite a few recent empirical investigations into the function and functioning of group memories of this nature illustrate the impact of '(re)constructing histories'.⁴ All of these investigations demonstrate the internal layering of collective memory, its mode of existence as a construct from very real group memories, and prove how these preserve their stability through the integration of positive recollections and the rejection of negative ones, and how they experience it as an identity. Angela Keppler has investigated the recollecting communication within modern families in Germany:

For families, it emerges that the same thing holds true in a limited framework as is true for cultures in a much more comprehensive space: without their own practice of recollecting their own past families could not guarantee any reliable version of their present. (Keppler, 2001: 56ff.)

In his research project on National Socialism and War in German family conversations, Harald Welzer demonstrated how through 'cumulative heroization' of one's own family members there arises a 'good history' that stabilizes a family, a narrative that claims to be an independent parallel cosmos alongside the publicly disseminated picture of National Socialism and the participation of the community in its crimes (Welzer, 2001: 72). Hannes Heer, using such varied material as readers' letters and entries in visitors' books, was able to show how some groups of former *Wehrmacht* soldiers either united fanatically in a community with their fallen comrades or else distinguished themselves as 'we decent ones' in contrast to the 'others' who were responsible for war crimes: the SS, the party bosses, the retrograde units, the partisans, the Anglo-American terror bombers (Heer, 2003).

THE DISCOURSE-ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE

Drawing on Fairclough's theory of interdiscursivity and intertextuality (Fairclough, 1995), we call what we discern in public discourse a 'colonization' (and monopolization) of the whole (or a good part) of this discourse of the past by

the 'victim-discourse' of the soldiers and civilians (see Benke and Wodak, 2003a, 2003b; Wodak, 2005, 2006). While a context-sensitive treatment of the past would lend itself, with particular instances of suffering foregrounded in particular contexts, coupled with an overall sensitivity to the duality of perpetrators and their specific victims, we observe an almost uniform discourse, appearing irrespective of context, in which everyone is lumped together in one large victim category, and in which, for example, the *Wehrmacht*-soldier and Austrian/German civilian is the prototypical victim. A ranking seems to take place: a ranking of 'who is the greater victim? Who has suffered more?' without contextualizing the events and asking 'who was a victim, when, where and why?'

Moreover, we claim that a second colonization is also taking place: not only are the victims lumped together into one quasi-homogeneous group; all the horror and destruction due to the war and war crimes are also placed into one category – everything was terrible, without differentiating between the events and who caused them. This allows for the deletion of perpetrators and the essentializing of events as being distinct from any agents or actors.

Linguistically, we study this colonization as a misfit between discourses, discourse topics, *topoi* and their context and functions, and as an 'interpenetration' of concepts from one discursive sphere into another. On a theoretical level, we thus expect that for the war generation – but even more for the other generations – 'knowledge', beliefs and opinions of the past are fragmented. Two or more systems of belief and understanding are co-present, cognitively and emotionally. On the one hand, the picture drawn from an individual's perspective, with his/her personal (experienced or narrated) experiences and exculpations, and on the other hand the 'grand, hegemonic narrative', which is taught in school and in scientific literature and which has found its way into public media and offers an explanation beyond the individual's grasp. Ideological dilemmas are thus to be frequently detected (Billig et al., 1988).

The second important linguistic concept employed in our discourse analysis is 'recontextualization': arguments, topics, narratives, events and appraisals change when transmitted from generation to generation, from one genre to another, from one public space to a different sphere, and so on. Arguments are decontextualized and recontextualized, and thus gain new meanings (see Iedema, 1997; Wodak and de Cillia, 2005). When analysing our texts, we thus also focus on recontextualization, which is one of the most important processes of text production, and we follow the life of *topoi* and arguments through different historical times, genres, contexts and audiences.

Commemorative year: year of thoughts 2005 (*'Gedankenjahr'*)

In the year 2005 there were, as previously mentioned, multiple commemorative events for Austrian politicians: 10 years of EU membership (1 January 2005 – celebrated on 14 January 2005 in the National Assembly as a so-called 'prelude' to the commemorative year); the resurrection ('re-birth') of the Second Republic

and the 60th anniversary of the Austrian Declaration of Independence (27 April 2005); 60 years since the surrender of the Nazi regime (8 May 2005), 50 years since the signing of the State Treaty (15 May 2005); 50 years of neutrality and the withdrawal of the occupying forces (26 October 2005).

However, the discursive construction of the past in the political discourse of the commemorative year 2005 focused, above all, on two events: the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence on 27 April (but not the end of the Second World War on 8 May) and the 50th anniversary of the signing of the State treaty on 15 May.

The following section consists of a paradigmatic analysis of a pivotal speech, given by Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel on 27 April 2005, looking specifically at how it officially discursively (re)constructs Austrian (and European) history. Due to space restrictions, we organize the analysis along the main argumentation strategies employed in this speech alongside with the macro-topics which structure the speech in this particular setting. Such an analysis allows understanding the main functions of this particular genre and its illocutionary force.

THE GENRE OF THE COMMEMORATIVE SPEECH

Before presenting and analysing our case study, we need to explore the overall genre of commemorative speeches. The genre necessarily determines some of the rhetorical figures and discursive strategies applied.

Classical rhetoric distinguishes three classes of oratory: the judicial (*genus iudiciale*), the deliberative (*genus deliberativum*) and the epideictic (*genus demonstrativum*). According to the classification scheme, judicial oratory is focused temporally on the past, and thematically on justice or injustice, and its function is to accuse or defend. Deliberative rhetoric is associated with the future, thematically with expediency or harmfulness, and functionally with exhorting or dissuading. Finally, epideictic oratory is linked to the present, thematically to honour and disgrace and functionally to praise or blame (see Plett, 1989). Commemorative speeches may be attributed to epideictic oratory in a broader sense. However, none of the three classes mentioned above occurs in pure form: a diversity of topics and temporal references usually results in the simultaneous presence of elements from all three oratorical categories within one and the same speech (on the close relationship between epideictic oratory and political speech, see Ottmers, 1996).

Commemorative speeches are normally delivered on public days of remembrance, which are usually associated with the 'magic of numbers' (Huter, 1994), and primarily serve to retrieve the past for the present. 'In many instances,' writes Anton Staudinger, 'this special aura of anniversaries tends to legitimate ways of dealing with the past, by selecting affirmative elements from the past which seem useful for justifying present interests' (Staudinger, 1994: 21). Commemorative addresses are often highly epideictic in nature, that is, they assign praise or blame to certain moments of a nation's past or present. However, epideictic oratory does not exclusively serve as vehicle for the linguistic self-presentation and self-promotion of the speakers, as has been assumed by many rhetoricians (for example, by Matuschek, 1994) it also has an 'educational' function, that is, it seeks to convey certain political values and beliefs to construct common characteristics

and identities and to create consensus and a spirit of community which in turn is intended to serve as a model for future political actions of the addressees (see Perelman, 1980). In addition, commemorative speeches contain deliberative elements and/or argumentative insertions. They sometimes even exhibit traces of judicial rhetoric, if a given speech is discussed or sought to justify problematic actions and events. This may be the case, for example, with the issue of guilt in reference to the Nazi past.

SOME DETAILS OF DISCOURSE-ANALYTICAL METHODOLOGY

When analysing the respective political speeches – apart from the theoretical concepts presented earlier, we first identified *macro-topics* (see Van Dijk, 2001). The macro-topics were used to investigate the overall rhetorical structure, due to the genre. We were also interested in discursive strategies of positive self-presentation and possible negative other-presentation, as well as strategies of constructing national identities (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001;⁵ Wodak et al., 1999), focusing primarily on the use of metaphors, the role of social actors, argumentative strategies, cohesive devices, and on transitivity, amongst other indicators.

By ‘strategy’ we generally mean:

a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices (including discursive practices) adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic aim. As far as the discursive strategies are concerned, that is to say, systematic ways of using language, we locate them at different levels of linguistic organization and complexity. (Wodak, 2004: 139)

We define *topoi* as ‘parts of argumentation that belong to the obligatory premises. They are content-related warrants or “conclusion rules” that connect the argument with the conclusion’ (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 74–5; also Kienpointner, 1992).

We also focused on the representation of ‘social actors’. Van Leeuwen (1996) offers an elaborate and powerful framework for analysing the representations of social actors in discourses – a hierarchically arranged set of abstract categories which are in part social and in part discursive. Agency is a sociological category which is not always realized by linguistic agency, argues Van Leeuwen. There is no one-to-one relation between social and linguistic categories – a lack of bi-uniqueness. We focus primarily on which social actors are represented (included) and on those which are excluded, and moreover on how concrete and abstract actors are realized. Both dimensions are salient because suppressed, absent or excluded agency usually indicates some problematic positioning of the speaker. Similarly, personal or general, concrete or abstract agencies, for example the use of personal or impersonal pronouns, point to degrees of identification.

Van Leeuwen lists linguistic features which are indicative of suppression or backgrounding of social actors; we will use some of these in our own analysis. The most common backgrounding features we found in the commemorative speeches are the use of nominalization and passive agent deletion.

Moreover, many rhetorical and argumentative strategies of identity construction can be summarized by focusing on one of the most foregrounded linguistic

devices: the use of metaphors. Metaphors define the conceptual and perceptual frames of the identity narratives constructed through the commemorative speeches.

Metaphor . . . is not a mere reflection of a pre-existing objective reality but a construction of reality, through a categorization entailing the selection of some features as critical and others as non-critical . . . metaphors can consciously be used to construct . . . reality. (Goatly, 1997: 5)

This crucial aspect of the use of metaphors – that is, discursively and cognitively constructing one’s own (or the national hegemonic) subjective realities – is present throughout the speeches. Moreover, the abundance of evaluative adjectives intensifies such metaphors and complements the cognitive, conceptual frames with emotions and values. Without being able to present all the details of the ongoing debate surrounding the theories about and analysis of metaphors, we would like to stress the function of conceptual frames, realized in metaphorical expressions, for the discursive construction of national identity through commemorative speeches.

Metaphors support the construction of specific ‘event models’, which serve to establish a coherent narrative. In this context, Musolff introduces the concept of ‘metaphor scenarios’ to grasp the attempt of (re)defining historical trajectories (2006). Semino (forthcoming), moreover, points to the intertextuality of metaphors in political discourse: metaphors are intertextually related to previous speeches and thus serve to link otherwise unrelated events.⁶

We can characterize a ‘scenario’ as a set of assumptions made by competent members of a discourse community about ‘typical’ aspects of a source situation; f. ex., its participants and their roles, the ‘dramatic’ storylines and outcomes, and conventional evaluations of whether they count as successful or unsuccessful, permissible or illegitimate, etc. These source-based assumptions are mapped onto the respective target concepts. (Musolff, 2006: 28)

Musolff continues:

these highly specific source scenarios [. . .] are ubiquitous and constitute an essential feature of metaphor use in public discourse registers. Scenarios appear to dominate public discourse not just in terms of overall frequency but also in that they help to shape the course of public debates and conceptualizations in the respective discourse communities. (p. 28)

Thus, such scenarios relate to collective experiences and assist in constructing coherent representations of the past. These cognitive theories and concepts, however, do not explain the mass-psychological, highly emotional, identificatory illocutionary force of such images. To be able to explain why specific narratives ‘succeed’ and others do not, a discourse-historical, interdisciplinary analysis necessarily includes many other contextual factors as well.⁷

Relating collective memories on a cognitive dimension with specific discursive strategies and their linguistic realizations could further be investigated through the concepts of ‘event’ and ‘context’ models (complementing Musolff’s approach):

Context models and event models are mental representations in episodic memory . . . in which people store their knowledge and opinions about episodes they experience or read/hear about. . . . Context models control the 'pragmatic' part of discourse and event models the 'semantic part'. (Van Dijk, 2001: 112)

By addressing certain topics or events which are thought to be part of common knowledge and collective experiences or memories, the speakers intentionally trigger hegemonic event and context models.

CHANCELLOR SCHÜSSEL'S SPEECH, 27 APRIL 2005

This speech was given on 27 April 2005 as part of a commemorative event in the Redoutensäle of the Hofburg in Vienna. The occasion was the 60th anniversary of the 'birth hour' of the Second Republic, in other words the date of the proclamation of a provisional Austrian state government around eight days before the end of the Second World War. This was recognized by the Soviet Union. The proclamation declared that the Austrian Republic was 'reconstituted' and that 'the *Anschluss* forced on the Austrian people in 1938' was 'null and void'.

The ceremony was prefaced by the premiere of a television documentary by esteemed journalist Hugo Portisch, about the establishment of the Republic. Aside from Chancellor Schüssel the speakers included President Heinz Fischer and the Governor of Burgenland, Hans Niessl, representing the federal governors, and also the distinguished actor Judith Holzmeister. The celebration contained musical interludes featuring works by Mozart, Anton von Webern and Ernst Křenek, and it was concluded with the national anthem. Austrians born on the 27 April 1945 were also invited to the ceremony, in a symbolic realization or literalization of the birth metaphor.

In the last third of Schüssel's speech, he claimed that:

perhaps it will be precisely in this year of thoughts, in this year of anniversaries, 2005, on the threshold of a new Europe, that the opportunity opens for us to view Austria and its history, the last century of its history, in its full context, to understand it, to discuss it, and in doing so probably also to discover a new homeland.

The summary, thus, of the speech explicitly draws the argumentative strategies together: 'the year of thoughts' is contextualized in a European context, on the one hand, in the beginning of the new century, on the other. 'The re-birth of Austria' seems to bridge past and future through its present. This (re)definition of relevance of Austria allows constructing a new founding myth for Austria and thus, of its national identity. This new identity is further labelled as 'homeland' (*Heimat*), a concept which was until recently quite negatively connotated because the National Socialists used this concept extensively. Hence Schüssel (and the conservative party for several years) attempt liberating Austria from the 'negative' (i.e. Nazi past), and redefine it even lexically by the use of specific terms (*topos of definition*). This passage is also a very good example of Koselleck's theoretical framework of experiential space and horizon of expectations (see above). Moreover, Schüssel constructs a large in-group ('us'), which could encompass the audience, all hearers and viewers, thus all Austrians, which are all involved in

'viewing, understanding and discovering' this 'new homeland'. Mental verbs lead to material verbs, the process of 'construction' is separated into small units which make up an activity.

The following analysis will show how this opportunity was realized, or in other words how the speaker sees this history, understands it, presents it and therefore formulates/constructs it anew throughout the whole speech.

The passage quoted at the beginning of this article shows marked elements of official historical interpretation: the year 1945 as birth hour of the Second Republic, as Austria's 'rebirth', the State Treaty as a birth certificate; the period following 1945 as a success story, for which the founding generation must be thanked; the period before remains vague and is – above all by linguistic-pragmatic and lexical means – elevated to the rank of a natural disaster (e.g. 'catastrophe'), in a (metaphorical) scenario as defined by Musolff (2006). This conceptual scenario (the 're-birth') frames the whole speech.

Birth, rebirth and birth hours – key conceptual metaphors of the commemorative discourse

The ostensible reason for the speech was the Austrian Declaration of Independence on 27 April 1945, which took place before the surrender of the Nazi regime on the 8 May 1945. This political event is apparently particularly conducive (and not just for this speaker⁸) to descriptions as a 'birth' or 'rebirth': the 27 April 'is the birth hour of the Second Republic' and later, 'The drama of this six-year war and the trauma of the National Socialist terror regime, however, throw sombre shadows onto the cradle of this red-white-red rebirth, but the child lives.' Later still, he speaks of 'the birth hour of a new, democratic Austria'.

The re-establishment of the Second Republic is expressed in the conceptual cognitive frame of a natural, biological event through the anthropomorphizing metaphor of birth and rebirth. A political entity thus becomes a child, and the 'founding fathers' of the Second Republic appear as parents, specifically the first President of the Second Republic, Dr Karl Renner, and the Chancellor at the time, Dr Leopold Figl. However, there are no mothers present or evoked which causes the metaphor to appear somewhat stilted.

The political actors who really made independence possible do not appear, they are absent, backgrounded and deleted: the allied forces who militarily defeated the Nazi regime, and forced its surrender a short time later, and in particular the Soviet Union and the Red Army, which suffered the worst losses. The main actors are 'the founders', returning from concentration camps, thus the opposition to Nazi rule, and 'other democrats'. Otherwise, the birth is constructed as 'drama' – a further metaphorical perspective which shifts the genre of the speech into a story, with a good ending ('the child lives' in spite of 'terror, sombre shadows, ruins, hunger, need and desperation'). The Nazi regime is labelled as nightmare, agents are deleted, and the Nazi regime is defined as a static subconscious phenomenon. Agents occur after the Nazi regime was over – 'displaced persons' and 'refugees' who are only depicted in passive roles. The re-birth is therefore constructed almost as a miracle (supported through the genre of a story) in spite of all most negative circumstances.

A look back

What do we see from the perspective of the 'birth hour', metaphorically speaking?

In the year 1945 a half-century of futile efforts, misplaced aims, misguided strategies and shamefully disappointed aspirations came to an end for Austria, and the proclamation of the Provisional State Government under Karl Renner thus became the birth hour of a new, democratic Austria, which in 60 years has become an unparalleled success story.

The historical events between 1900 and 1945 are only addressed in extremely vague terms, despite many salient events such as the First World War, the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the First Republic and the specifically Austrian form of fascism, the occupation by Nazi Germany and the Second World War. Abstract nouns from the semantic field of 'intentions' (efforts, aims, strategies, aspirations) belittle battles, murder, civil war and the Nazi regime. Apparently there are no actors; all the 'misdirected plans' seem to teleologically and argumentatively lead to the 'birth hour' by means of their sequential syntactic order, which is ultimately an argumentative fallacy. The strategy of agent-deletion is continued and is established as one of the main linguistic devices, reinforcing the 'birth miracle'. This argumentative strategy allows constructing a consensual narrative and creates a second semiotic reality, a myth, which mystifies the many struggles and also opposing narratives which exist about the *Anschluss* and the participation of many Austrians in the Nazi regime and in war crimes.

The audience might be astonished to find out that Austria was a country 'that actually resisted Hitler and Nazism longer than any other, but that many, too many, became guilty'. The historical facts, however, indicate that Nazi occupiers were welcomed by enthusiastic crowds during the so-called '*Anschluss*', and that a referendum in April 1938 showed 99.73 percent of Austrian residents to be in favour of the *Anschluss*, with a participation rate of 99.71 percent. Hence, the second relevant argumentative strategy consists in 'turning the tables', in 'victim-perpetrator reversal': although 'many became guilty', a vague quantifier, the specific syntactic construction implies that most 'resisted Hitler and Nazism'. In sum, relevant facts are dismissed, agents are deleted or only pointed to in vague quantifiers (*topos of numbers*), and a community of victims is discursively constructed which also 'actively resisted and opposed the Nazi regime'.

A look ahead

The period immediately following the 'rebirth' is at first described in stark terms, without explicitly naming the reason for the situation, the Nazi terror regime, in which Austrians had some considerable involvement.

[. . .] the child lives. In midst of ruins, need, hunger and desperation lives this small, new, Austria, because on this day everyone looks ahead. The nightmare is over.

The aim of the new republic – 'in the government declaration of Leopold Figl on 21 December 1945' is:

It shall be an Austria that is free and caring, new and revolutionary, renovated from the ground up, on no condition a repetition of 1933, nor of 1938.

It is striking that the declaration of a whole government becomes that of a single politician, who perhaps not coincidentally belonged to the same party as the then Chancellor Schüssel. Apart from President Renner, a second prominent actor is foregrounded. Many others are backgrounded, or not mentioned at all. This argumentative strategy – creating the relevant actors – is constitutive for the new narrative of national identity which is presented in this speech. After the miraculous birth, seemingly few prominent protagonists are positioned, and the many other agents as well as events are neglected. The story genre prevails.

This government is thus the beginning of the 60-year ‘unparalleled success story’ (see earlier). The entire second part of the speech is principally concerned with the period following the founding of the Second Republic. The 27 April 1945 is thereby (surprisingly) interpreted as the origin of European unification,

the deep-seated reason that we now have the good fortune to have lived in peace, freedom and wealth throughout the past 60 years. And therefore this new Europe is actually the fruit of the day of joy on 27 April 1945, and at the same time also a commitment for us Austrians.

Given the fact that Austria only joined the European Community (EC) in 1995, this is a bold reconstruction of the EC’s history, which was only founded after the Treaties of Rome were signed by Germany, France, Italy and the Benelux countries in 1957. In addition, there is a new set of conceptual metaphors: that of nightmares, as if awakening from a deep sleep. These metaphors call on the unconscious, whereby actors are deprived of their autonomy. Furthermore, this reformulation of Europe’s post-war history marks a third relevant argumentative strategy (*topos of definition*). Austria is constructed as a symbol of peace after the Second World War, and as a symbol for European history and development. In this way, Austria is assigned huge importance – which, according to other scholarship is certainly not the hegemonic view (see Judt, 2005). This strategy also serves the function of backgrounding any responsibility of Austrians as perpetrators during the Second World War.

The next pivotal point is the gratitude towards the ‘founder generation’, ‘those who gave us courage in the year 1945’, in which is embedded a form of moral legitimation that is replete with medical metaphors. Thus, a picture is constructed which sees the population almost as a patient who has to be cured, or at least treated preventatively.

Maybe we could follow the example of those who gave us courage in the year 1945. Maybe we sometimes need oral vaccinations against pessimism and faintheartedness or a little course of vitamins for hope and happiness. Optimism certainly could not hurt in those days.

This is now the second scenario presented throughout this speech: apart from the ‘birth metaphor’, we find the conceptual frame of ‘healing and immunization’; as if moral values could be induced technically (through ‘oral vaccinations’). Such a metaphorical scenario liberates agents of any free will – medicine takes over, not conscience.

'Solidarity' and 'feelings of togetherness' are supposedly the highly positive values which invite identification with this success story and which have produced the historically expanded 'we' of Austrians. Finally, there follows a plea against forgetting and the *topos of history as a teacher*, which has an established presence in commemorative speeches:

But we have a treasure that our forefathers and foremothers did not possess, experience. We are bound to it, we can't shirk our responsibilities. Let us stay vigilant from the beginning. That is what we want.

ANOTHER LOOK BACK: THEMATIZATION OF NAZISM, NAZI CRIMES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Let us look more closely at how the speech thematizes National Socialism and the culpability of Austria, or of Austrians, in a historical view from the perspective of 1945. First the Nazi regime, or the war it brought about, is referred to as a 'nightmare':

The nightmare is over. But the horror was not over for everyone, and not every horror was over. The displacements continued, in all of Europe, especially in Central Europe over ten million people were displaced, lost their home, whole convoys of refugees were on the move looking for a new home. War captivity for millions, rapes, looting, all this occurred. And the price of liberty was high. Hundreds of thousands of Austrians were wounded or dead, hundreds of thousands had to recognize their error, their terrible error, but in the end both were liberated: the victims and perpetrators.

For the speaker, the historical events referred to five times in the speech as 'horror' ('how could it come to this horror?') and as 'this dark age' affect not the victims of the Nazi terror, but the victims of the war of aggression, that is, those that waged it (as soldiers). In this passage the agent-deletion is particularly striking – there are no perpetrators: 'it continued with . . .', 'were displaced', 'have lost', 'all this occurred', 'were wounded or dead'. The agent of the liberation is also omitted – 'both were liberated'. By whom remains obscured. 'How could it come to this horror?' The speaker does not give us an answer to this question: what follows is a game of numbers that appears highly arbitrary. The groups of victims are constructed in such a way that it remains unclear who belongs to which group (were there not also Jews among the political prisoners?): moreover, related to agent-deletion, the passive voice prevails.

The victims of this horror must be named: 100,000 Austrians died in the concentration camps or in captivity, most of them Jews. Many had to lose their lives because of their political or religious convictions, also thousands of Roma, Sinti, ill and disabled people were murdered. 50,000 civilians were killed, 100,000 political prisoners lost years of their lives. 250,000 soldiers were killed, 250,000 came back from the war badly injured or mutilated, and in the following years 500,000 prisoners of war had to pay for this criminal war having been started.

According to Fritz Molden, almost seven percent of the Austrian population were victims of this dark age. And it appears to be an almost haunting parallel that the number of victims – around 400,000 Austrians – reflects the number of perpetrators – almost half a million Nazis and followers of the Hitler regime. And therefore it is clear

to me, and hopefully to us all, that anyone who seeks to trivialize the atrocities of the regime and to relativize the existence of camps, of gas chambers, does not fit into our institutional landscape.

Noteworthy here are, among other features, the lexical means used to refer to the deaths of victims: '100,000 Austrians **died** in the concentration camps or in captivity, **most of them Jews**'; many '**had to lose their lives**', Roma, Sinti, ill and disabled people '**were murdered**'. Civilians '**were killed**', political prisoners '**lost years of their lives**', soldiers '**were killed**' or 'came back from the war badly injured or mutilated', prisoners of war '**had to pay**' for the war, 7 percent of the Austrian population '**were victims of this dark age**'.

Only once is 'murder' explicitly mentioned. This verbal treatment of the crimes of National Socialism leads to a euphemization of the death of those murdered in the concentration camps. And the perpetrators are not named – passivization and agent-deletion make it possible to keep the originators of these crimes obscured, and reinforce the impression that the events were unavoidable and fated.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A 'COMMUNITY OF VICTIMS'

Apart from the fact that the numbers are hard to verify, one thing is particularly striking: the victims of the Nazi terror who were murdered in concentration camps are discursively placed on the same level as the soldiers who waged the war of aggression (*topos of equation*). A community of victims is thus constructed, within which all became victims of the 'nightmare'. This is furthered by the undifferentiated construction of historical events as 'horror', as a 'dark age', which could just as easily refer to the atrocities of war, the Nazi terror or the ejection of the 'German people' after 1945 (see earlier).

Only now are the 'perpetrators' named – 'almost half a million Nazis and followers of the Hitler regime' – but not in their function as perpetrators, but in a curious numerical juxtaposition ('reflection') with the victims. A community is thereby verbally constructed on an additional level, between the undifferentiated community of victims and the 'perpetrators'. The allusion to the denial of the crimes of the Nazi regime is incidentally directed at members of the political party with whose help the speaker formed his government, the FPÖ.⁹

EXCLUSION

If we ask which content and themes could have been thematized in connection with Austrian history in this event, and conversely which were excluded, it is noticeable that the occupation of Austria by Nazi Germany is only briefly alluded to, while there could have been a discussion around the central question of whether it was an 'occupation' or, to use the official term, an 'annexation' ('*Anschluss*'). After all, there was no resistance against Hitler's army, the '*Anschluss*' was endorsed by over 99 percent in a referendum, and the term '*Anschluss*' does suggest voluntariness. The fact that Austrians were considerably involved in Nazi crimes, that military resistance against the Nazi regime (e.g. by the Slovenian partisans) played a small role in Austria, but an important role in the classification of Austria as the first victim of the Nazi state in the Moscow Declaration of 1943,

is backgrounded. Foregrounding and backgrounding, agent-deletion and the absence of important facts thus construct the new official narrative of the 're-birth of the Second Republic'.

The persons and groups who were responsible are not named. Also, the expulsions from Austria are not mentioned, nor is the plundering campaign vis-a-vis the Jewish population, which was (and often still is) described with the euphemism 'Aryanization', from which countless Austrians profited, and from which some of their descendants still profit today.

It would have been possible and indeed advisable to thematize the discussion surrounding the 'victim thesis', in light of which the Austrian state saw itself as the first victim of National Socialism until the 1980s, and the 'perpetrator thesis', which foregrounds the participation of Austrians in Nazi crimes, and which has only been part of Austria's self-perception since the 'Waldheim affair' in the 1980s (see earlier).

This 'life-lie' (*Lebenslüge*) had lasting consequences for the victims of National Socialism: the Austrian state did nothing or little to bring back those who had been expelled from the country, the post-war governments knowingly disabled and prevented redress for crimes against victims of National Socialism and the restitution of stolen assets, all of which came to light thanks to an analysis of the minutes of the council of ministers by Robert Knight (Knight, 1988). Restitutions did not take place, or took place very late or too late – all this should have been discussed, as part of a retrospective construction of Austrian history, if the speaker had made good his promise to 'view Austria and its history, the last century of its history, in its full context, to understand it, to discuss it'. In this way, the new narrative serves several argumentative functions: not only is a quasi-story created, which constructs positive self-presentation; it also legitimizes the post-war behaviour and actions towards the Jewish victims of Nazi atrocities. No restitution seems necessary if all Austrians are redefined as victims in a general community of victims.

A national commemorative speech should reach the highest possible number of members of a nation, should create and affirm discursive togetherness and national identity – in this case, with the example of a historical narrative that includes as many people as possible and excludes no-one. From this point of view the mention of the excluded content would have certainly caused at the very least irritation amongst a part of the population.

SUMMARY

In the hegemonic narrative of Austrian history after 1945 presented here, and in its pre-history, initially the political event of the Declaration of Independence is represented metaphorically as a 'rebirth'; a metaphorical scenario which serves to represent Austria anthropomorphically and constructs a 'creation myth', contextualized in a quasi-story. A child, or even better a newborn child, is of course innocent. The metaphor thus carries an additional meaning – not only is Austria newly born, it is also innocent like a newborn child.

On the other hand, the historical events before and immediately following are placed in the fateful context of 'horror', 'nightmare' of a 'dark age'. The cognitive frame in which the historical events are embedded is that of natural disasters or fateful events,¹⁰ which thus represents political events as immutable by humans. This is also shown linguistically in the almost continuous agent deletion. Dehistoricization and depoliticization of historical events are the ultimate result, realized through the argumentative strategies and *topoi* presented above in our analysis.

The tendency towards the exclusion of the time of the National Socialist occupation (1938–45) is just as characteristic as the construction of a 'discursive stew', an undifferentiated 'horror' consisting of the Nazi period, war, austerity in the post-war period, and the displacements following the war. This corresponds to the discursive construction of an equally undifferentiated, an all-encompassing 'community of victims': all victims are thus to be evaluated equally, whether it is those murdered in the Nazi concentration camps, those killed in action in the Nazi war of aggression, the civilian bomb victims or those who were expelled from their homeland as a result of the war. When the Nazi period is mentioned, the 'disappearance of perpetrators' in a given section is significant.

Finally, all this makes a communal 'commemoration' possible, including the perpetrators and their children and grandchildren, the beneficiaries of the crimes of National Socialism. This is because the perpetrators are not named, and because in the end no one is responsible for the crimes, since the events are constructed, using argumentative fallacies, as apparently fateful and generally unavoidable natural disasters. The shift in genres thus combining the commemorative genre with a very simple story frame reinforces the dramatic illocutionary effect and constructs a new temporal and causal sequence of facts – a new secondary semi-otic reality, a myth, in the terms of Roland Barthes (1964). Moreover, moral legitimation (Van Leeuwen and Wodak, 1999) serves the strategy of victim-perpetrator reversal and negates any responsibility for participation in war crimes and in the active involvement in the Nazi regime.

Discussion and conclusions

This discourse analysis of one of the most relevant speeches of 2005, the speech of the Chancellor of the Second Republic, naturally serves as a case study of more general patterns of commemorative discourses and of the overall (often hybrid) genre.

The discursive construction of identity narratives which link the past with the present and the future necessarily involves a quasi-coherent, teleological argumentative sequence of events, which proposes explanatory devices for traumatic experiences and does not list the perpetrators – thus, such speeches construct consensus and do not alienate possible political opponents. In this way then, the official purpose of commemoration is ultimately adequately fulfilled.

The deletion of actors is also inherent in the colonization through the discourse of terror: everything was terror and horror; no differences are made between actors, causes and events. Abstract nouns depict the horror, depersonalized,

dehumanized and essentialized. Thus we find Austria and Austrians presented as a nation of victims and as a nation, innocent like a newborn baby, unaware of the overall destruction in the past.

Conceptually, typical metaphors find their way into such speeches and serve as guiding and quasi-explanatory devices for war crimes, for participation in an aggressive war and for the extermination of millions of Jews, Roma, disabled people, homosexuals and political opponents of the Nazi regime.

The images which are constructed through these metaphors and metaphorical scenarios suggest that there were either no perpetrators (there seem to have been unavoidable natural catastrophes) or that these perpetrators did not act consciously (but in a nightmare while asleep). Because of this, and because of agent-deletion throughout, nobody seems to have been involved in this traumatic past. The rebirth can be celebrated as the 'zero hour', without any necessary continuation to the past, during the Second World War or before the Second World War, although many of the important protagonists are survivors of the Second World War and often survivors of concentration camps. This rhetoric is not new. It is apparent in many school textbooks; it forms part of the collective memories of many Austrians, and is recontextualized as the hegemonic narrative in the media as well as throughout many events in 2005 (see Heer et al., 2003/2007). Other narratives and counter-discourses, of course, exist; however, they are not visible and rarely heard outside of the academic community or oppositional parties and groups. Only few of the official politicians from the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party mentioned perpetrators and attempted to present a more fragmented and conflicting picture. *Grosso modo*, the consensual construction of the identity narrative can be observed as having been the overriding aim and function of the commemorative events.

However, in spite of all these attempts and the careful and conscious planning, the commemorations of 2005 did not continue in a harmonious manner; salient disruptions occurred. Two members of Austria's Second Chamber (the *Bundesrat*), Siegfried Kampl and John Gudenus, both members of the Freedom Party, uttered revisionist remarks and even Holocaust denials during April and May 2005.¹¹ Hence, all official speeches on 15 May 2005 (the day of the commemoration of the State Treaty 1955) had to refer to the remarks by Gudenus and Kampl and distance themselves explicitly. Equating the Nazi war crimes with the post-war occupation by the Allied forces and denying the Holocaust, which is illegal in Austria, could not be euphemized or swept under the carpet. As both MPs at that time were members of the smaller coalition party in the government (of the FPÖ and its smaller branch the *Bündnis Zukunft Österreich*), this mentioning and distancing entailed possible conflicts in the government. The overall consensual tone had to be changed. Hence, the overall celebratory mode was disturbed.

These disruptions furthermore implied the explicit labelling of norms and taboos, and the construction of out-groups, consisting of Austrians who did not share the hegemonic narrative, in all the speeches which followed the utterances by Kampl and Gudenus. (And therefore it is clear to me, and hopefully to us all, that anyone who seeks to trivialize the atrocities of the regime and to relativize the

existence of camps, of gas chambers, does not fit into our institutional landscape', Schüssel, see earlier.) As Kampl was actually due to become president of the Second Chamber by the official procedures, a new constitutional amendment had to be passed in a very short time which made it possible to nominate somebody else. We have to neglect the details of these debates due to space considerations (see de Cillia and Wodak, 2006).

Similar disruptions also occurred in previous commemorations, for example in 1988, when huge debates about the construction of *the* significant new monument against fascism were ongoing (Wodak et al., 1994), or in Germany, when Philipp Jenninger did not distance himself from Nazi rhetoric and had to resign after a speech in the German *Bundestag*.

These results of our analysis take us back to our research questions and claims, formulated in the Introduction. As long as traumatic pasts are not explicitly confronted in differentiated ways which would allow for different readings – from various perspectives in non-euphemistic terms and in ways which contextualize perpetrators and victims, and as long as the 'silence' remains and is reinforced, unexpected (very embarrassing) disruptions will always occur. The past seems to creep up when least expected because skeletons do not remain in their closets.

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NOTES

1. Speech by Austrian Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel on the occasion of the commemorative ceremony on 27 April 2005 in the Hofburg, Vienna.
2. It is one of 30 speeches we collected for a research project, funded by the City of Vienna, about the discursive construction of 'Austrian Identity' in the commemorative year 2005.
3. However, at the end of the 1990s there was a shift in this trend, even in conservative circles, so that Austrian neutrality is less disputed now than it was 11 years ago.
4. On family memory: Keppler (2001), Welzer (2001); on one cohort of Nazi elite students: Schneider et al. (1996); on the Community of Experience of former *Wehrmacht* soldiers: Heer (2003), Manoschek (1996); on generations during and after the National Socialist era: Rosenthal (1994).
5. In Reisigl and Wodak (2001), the main linguistic units are defined and illustrated extensively. Thus, we refer to argumentation theory (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 1994) as well as to Functional Systemic Linguistics (Halliday, 1994) and to Theo van Leeuwen's Actor Analysis (Van Leeuwen, 1996).
6. Veronika Koller reminded us of the utterances of Jörg Haider in which he characterized the Austrian nation as an 'ideological misfit' (*ideologische Missgeburt*). As will be shown below, by emphasizing Austria's successful nation-building and 'rebirth', Wolfgang Schüssel necessarily distances himself from Haider's previous opinions (personal communication with Veronika Koller, 1 June 2006).

7. 'What kind of model of subjectivity must we invoke in order to account for the seductions of ideology: in short, how does identification work?' (Montgomery, 1999: 454). Stuart Hall also states a similar line of criticism: 'The transformation of ideologies is not an individual but a collective process; i.e. a collective practice. These processes work mostly subconsciously; they do not follow conscious goals' (Hall, 2000: 151).
8. The same metaphors can be found, for example, in a speech by President Heinz Fischer on 27 April 2005, and in his televised speech on 26 April 2005.
9. In the 'three wise men report' that was commissioned by the EU because of the FPÖ's participation in the government (see above), the following statement occurs (for example): '*High level officials of the FPÖ have over a long period of time used statements that can be interpreted to be xenophobic or even racist. The language used is seen by many observers to carry nationalist undertones, sometimes even undertones close to characteristic National Socialist expressions, or to trivialize the history of that period*', (Paragraph 88).
10. In other speeches at the beginning of the commemorative year the explicit comparison with the tsunami disaster served the same purpose.
11. John Gudenus stated the following on 25 April 2005: 'I think one needs to seriously debate this question and not just say, "you must answer yes or no". If we should, we will examine it. I am of this opinion and I always demand another examination [of the existence of gas chambers, the authors].' On 7 June 2005, he continued: 'Gas chambers existed, but not in the Third Reich. Rather [they existed] in Poland. That's what is written in school textbooks. I never said that I fundamentally doubt [the existence of] gas chambers.' When visiting Mauthausen, the most infamous concentration camp in Austria, Gudenus stated that the concentration camp inmates actually looked healthier than he himself, on the displayed pictures. Kampl equated the war crimes of the Nazis with the behaviour of the Allied forces after 1945, thus denying the aggressive war which was begun by Germany and implicitly also the Holocaust (see Public Lecture, 16 March 2006, Aston University, 'Some of Our Best Friends Are . . . But', by Ruth Wodak; Engel and Wodak, in press).


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