statuS Quaestionis
language text culture

Daniela Henke
Albert-Ludwigs-Universität i.Br.

# Commemorating the Unexperienced: The Strategical Function of Jean Améry's Memories in the Postmemorial Novel *Morbus Kitahara* by Christoph Ransmayr

Abstract

The article examines the novel *Morbus Kitahara* by Christoph Ransmayr from the viewpoint of the postmemorial dilemma: how to commemorate someone else's experiences that are relevant for one's own identity without appropriating them? The article argues that this novel shows an awareness for the sublime character and sanctity of Holocaust testimonies, while at the same time demonstrating strategies to solve the dilemma. Intertextuality, body narration and the usage of direct speech are the novel's three cornerstones that constitute an attentive manner of commemorating what was not directly experienced. The key reference point that the novel provides for postmemorial remembrance is its connection with Jean Améry's autobiographical and philosophical works.

## 1. Introduction

One of the challenges of postmemorial articulations – especially within the realm of fiction – is the matter of illegitimate usage of other subjects' experiences.[1] This applies in particular to Holocaust Commemoration. The question as to who is authorized to fictionalize Holocaust history and under which preconditions is still one of great relevance. On the other hand, there is a broad consensus that the Holocaust must remain a key part of our cultural memory (Assmann 2013, 12). Achieving this aim without others besides witnesses commemorating and transmitting it seems to be difficult. In what follows, I will read Christoph Ransmayr's 1995 novel *Morbus Kitahara* as a variation of a fictional postmemory utterance and analyze the novel's strategies for commemorating the unexperienced. Marianne Hirsch defines postmemory as a "relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those

[1] The notion that stories can be one's property that might be forbidden for others to fictionalize is prominently described and criticized by Norbert Gstrein (2004).

who came before" (2012, 5). More precisely, it is a relationship to historical events that is characterized by a "deep personal connection" (1997, 22). Against this background, the following impressions that Ransmayr describes, in an interview, as the start for writing his novel are to be considered as a 'postmemorial moment:'

> Ich bin an einem Ende des Traunsees zur Schule gegangen, und am anderen Ende war der Steinbruch von Ebensee, ein ehemaliges Außenlager von Mauthausen. [...] Das Thema war seit frühesten erzählerischen Zeiten für mich da und hat mich beschäftigt, bedroht. [...] Ich habe mit all dem gelebt – mit dem Steinbruch, mit allem, was dort geschehen ist. Das ist mir alles erzählt worden. (Löffler 1997, 213)

> I went to school at the edge of the lake *Traunsee*. On the other side there was the stone quarry of *Ebensee*, a former satellite camp of Mauthausen. [...] The topic has haunted me since my earliest days as a narrator. I have lived with all that – with the quarry and with everything that happened there. All of it was told to me. (my translation)

There lies a dilemma in the collision between this empathic involvement that might – and does – stimulate the desire to commemorate the unexperienced and its arguable illegitimacy. The fact that it is a descendant of the perpetrators' nation who has a postmemorial connection to the victims' experiences even increases this situation. It relates to a general unbalance in the field of Holocaust remembrance in the former perpetrators' countries such as Germany and Austria – an unbalance that lies in the tendency to identify with the victims rather than with the perpetrators (Jureit 2010, 19-45).[2] Ransmayr's novel shows three strategies to solve this dilemma of postmemory. These are based on testimonial memory, body philosophy, and textual representation.

The story of *Morbus Kitahara* is about the regressing civilization and society of a mountain village in a counterfactual historical scenery after World War II. The village is called 'Moor' and is located right next to a quarry and a lake called 'Blind Shore' that used to be a wartime concentration camp. The place described in the novel refers to Ebensee, which is mentioned by Ransmayr in the interview, albeit this reference works without any real name being used. The plot is based on the following idea: what would have happened if there had been no Marshall

[2] Admittedly, this tendency is nuanced differently in those two memory communities. Austria adhered to the self-perception as Hitler's first victim for a long time and this still influences its relationship to the past. Meanwhile, in Germany, approximately since the late 1960s, a culture of memory has arisen that is supported by political and societal institutions and is primarily oriented towards the Shoah. On the basis of many examples Ulrike Jureit (2010) points out that this victim-orientation permanently threatens to turn into a seemingly absolving identification with the victims.

Plan, but instead a plan of revenge condemning the perpetrators to return to preindustrial times? The idea is associated with the name of Henry Morgenthau, known as the finance minister under the Roosevelt administration who demanded (rather than actually elaborated) that revenge plan (Greiner 1995, 169-176). There are three main protagonists in the novel. The first one, Bering, the son of the local blacksmith, a veteran, represents the generation of the perpetrators' descendants. The same is true for the second protagonist, Lily, the daughter of an alleged war criminal, who went missing when a bunch of victims took revenge during the chaotic times after the war. Lily herself is a black-market operator, who does business with soldiers of the occupying forces as well as with the village population. The third main character is Ambras, a survivor of the concentration camp. After the war, Ambras is employed by the occupying forces as the administrator of the quarry and the village. Ambras is to be considered as a representative of the Holocaust victims and therefore a representative for those who had experienced what can hardly be commemorated by those who did not – even though "these experiences were transmitted to the latter so deeply and affectively as to *seem* to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch 2012, 5) – that is to say, to the postmemory generation that Ransmayr belongs to. Hence, I will focus on this character for the purpose of shedding light on postmemorial narrative strategies.

## 2. Intertextuality I. Adopting Jean Améry's Torture Experiences

One of the most expressive parts of the plot is the narration of Ambras being tortured. But instead of inventing this figure's suffering, the text adopts Jean Améry's memories of being tortured, which are the subject of his essay *Die Tortur* (in English: *Torture*) (Henke 2018, 240-245). Améry himself was an Austrian Jew who escaped to Belgium and joined the resistance movement there. He then was captured in 1943, tortured by the Gestapo, and eventually deported to Auschwitz. He survived and was liberated from Bergen-Belsen in 1945. In his texts, he deals primarily with these experiences and how they affected him as a human being. With regard to the torture he endured Améry writes:

> Im Bunker hing von der Gewölbedecke eine oben in einer Rolle laufende Kette, die am unteren Ende einen starken, geschwungenen Eisenhaken trug. Man führte mich an das Gerät. Der Haken griff in die Fessel, die hinter meinem Rücken meine Hände zusammenhielt. Dann zog man die Kette mit mir auf, bis ich etwa einen Meter über dem Boden hing. Man kann sich in solcher Stellung oder solcher Hängung an den hinterm Rücken gefesselten Händen eine sehr

kurze Weile mit Muskelkraft in der Halbschräge halten. [...] Das in einem einzigen, engbegrenzten Körperbereich, nämlich in den Schultergelenken, gesammelte Leben reagiert nicht, denn es erschöpft sich ganz und gar im Kraftaufwand. Nur kann dieser auch bei physisch kräftig konstituierten Leuten nicht lange währen. Was mich betrifft, so mußte ich ziemlich schnell aufgeben. Und nun gab es ein von meinem Körper bis zu dieser Stunde nicht vergessenes Krachen und Splittern in den Schultern. Die Kugeln sprangen aus den Pfannen. Das eigene Körpergewicht bewirkte Luxation, ich fiel ins Leere und hing nun an den ausgerenkten, von hinten hochgerissenen und über dem Kopf nunmehr verdreht geschlossenen Armen. Tortur, vom lateinischen torquere, verrenken: Welch ein etymologischer Anschauungsunterricht! [...] Aufheulend vor Schmerz ist der gewalthinfällige, auf keine Hilfe hoffende, zu keiner Notwehr befähigte Gefolterte nur noch Körper und sonst nichts mehr. (2002, 72-74)

In the bunker there hung from the vaulted ceiling a chain that above ran into a roll. At its bottom end it bore a heavy, broadly curved iron hook. I was led to the instrument. The hook gripped into the shackle that held my hands together behind my back. Then I was raised with the chain until I hung about a meter over the floor. In such a position, or rather, when hanging this way, with your hands behind your back, for a short time you can hold a half-oblique through muscular force. [...] All your life is gathered in a single, limited area of the body, the shoulder joints, and it does not react; for it exhausts itself completely in the expenditure of energy. But this cannot last long, even with people who have a strong physical constitution. As for me, I had to give up rather quickly. And now there was a crackling and splintering in my shoulders that my body has not forgotten until this hour. The balls spring from their sockets. My own body weight caused luxation; I fell into a void and now hung by my dislocated arms, which had been torn high from behind and were now twisted over my head. Torture, from Latin *torquere*, to twist. What visual instruction in etymology! [...] Frail in the face of violence, yelling out in pain, awaiting no help, capable of no resistance, the tortured person is only a body, and nothing else beside that. (1980, 32-33)

It is the same method of torture that was applied in Ambras' case in *Morbus Kitahara* as the following quotation shows.

'Wenn du einem Wächter in die Augen gesehen hast', hatte Ambras [...] gesagt [...], 'bloß in die Augen, verstehst du [...] das [...] und viel weniger konnte genügen, damit es *schaukeln!* hieß, *du meldest dich nach dem Appell.* Und dann hast du die Minuten zu zählen begonnen, bis sie dich endlich unter den Baum geschleift haben. Dort werden dir die Arme auf den Rücken gedreht und mit einem Strick gefesselt, und du beginnst wie die meisten vor dir und die meisten nach dir in einer solchen Not um Erbarmen zu schreien. Und dann reißen sie dich an diesem Strick hoch und schlagen auf dich ein, damit du pendelst – und du, du versuchst dich schreiend und um Himmelswillen und mit aller Kraft in irgendeiner Schräglage zu halten, damit um Himmelswillen nicht geschieht, was geschieht: Dein eigenes Körpergewicht zieht dir die gefesselten Arme hoch und immer höher, bis du mit deiner Kraft am Ende bist und dir dein furchtbares Gewicht die Arme von hinten über den Kopf reißt und die Kugeln aus den Pfannen deiner Schultergelenke springen. Das macht ein Geräusch, das du, wenn überhaupt,

nur aus der Metzgerei kennst, wenn der Schlachter einem Kadaver die Knochen auseinanderreißt oder ein Gelenk gegen seine Beugerichtung bricht, und das hört sich bei dir nicht viel anders an. Aber dieses Krachen und dieses Splittern hörst du ganz allein, denn alle anderen [...] hören nur dein Geheul. Du pendelst in einem Schmerz, von dem du niemals geglaubt hättest, daß man ihn empfinden kann, ohne zu sterben, und du heulst mit einer Stimme, von der du bis zu diesem Augenblick nichts gewußt hast, und niemals, niemals in deinem Leben wirst du deine Arme wieder so hoch über deinem Kopf haben wie in diesem Augenblick. [...].' (1998a, 174-175)

"If you looked a guard in the eye," Ambras had said [...] "just looked him in the eye, you understand... [...] all that and a great deal less could suffice for him to say, 'Swing! Report after roll call.' And then you began to count the minutes until they would finally drag you out under the tree. "Once there, they twist your arms behind your back and tie them with a rope, and, like most of those before you and most of those after you, you are in such anguish you start screaming for mercy. And then they pull you up by the rope and slap at you to start you swinging – and you, you scream and try with all your strength and for God's sake to hold yourself in some sort of slanted position, so that for God's sake it won't happen. But it happens – your own body weight steadily pulls your bound arms higher and higher, until you have no more strength and your own terrible weight yanks your arms up behind your head and rips the ball joints of your shoulders out of their sockets. The sound it makes is one that you know, if at all, only from the meat market, when the butcher rips the bones from a carcass or breaks a joint by bending it the wrong way – it doesn't sound all that different with you. Except you alone hear the cracking and splintering, because all the others – [...] all the others can hear only your howls. You dangle there in pain you would never have believed anyone could feel without dying, and you howl in a voice that until that moment you knew nothing about, and never, never in your life will your arms ever again be so high above your head as at that moment". (1998b, 140-141)

As the passages of the two texts show, Ransmayr's first strategy to solve the enunciated problem of postmemory is intertextuality. Not only is Amery's authentic report reproduced in detail, but Ambras, too, commits suicide at the end of the novel, just as Améry did after announcing and justifying it in his essay *Hand an sich legen* (1976); (English translation: *On Suicide: A Discourse on Voluntary Death,* 2005) (Henke 2018, 254-256). Only by intertextually referring to someone who is legitimized to commemorate because of his autobiographical experience of torture, and thus relating to this person's mental world, does Ransmayr justify the defeatist determination of his tortured figure to die. As Améry himself puts it,

Wer der Folter erlag, kann nicht mehr heimisch werden in der Welt. Die Schmach der Vernichtung läßt sich nicht austilgen. Das zum Teil schon mit dem ersten Schlag, in vollem Umfang aber schließlich in der Tortur eingestürzte Weltvertrauen wird nicht wiedergewonnen. Daß der Mitmensch als Gegenmensch erfahren wurde, bleibt als gestauter

Schrecken im Gefolterten liegen: Darüber blickt keiner hinaus in eine Welt, in der das Prinzip Hoffnung herrscht. Der gemartert wurde, ist waffenlos der Angst ausgeliefert. (2002, 85)

Whoever has succumbed to torture can no longer feel at home in the world. The shame of destruction cannot be erased. Trust in the world, which already collapsed in part at the first blow, but in the end, under torture, fully, will not be regained. That one's fellow man was experienced as the antiman remains in the tortured person as accumulated horror. It blocks the view into a world in which the principle of hope rules. One who was martyred is a defenseless prisoner of fear. (1980, 40)

According to Améry, suicide is a necessary or at least natural consequence. Suicide completes what torture began (Henke 2018, 255).

## 3. Intertextuality II. Améry's Body Philosophy as a Memory Concept

Furthermore, the novel reflects the body philosophy of Améry's thinking. This is – besides Améry's own experiences – fundamentally influenced by phenomenological philosophy. Phenomenological thinkers such as Maurice Merleau-Ponty reject the concept of dividing human beings into body and soul and think of them as unitary animate bodies instead (1974, 235). In German, the term *Körper*, meaning the material corpus, differs from *Leib,* which refers to the phenomenological idea of body. According to phenomenology, there is no differentiation between corporal and mental sensations. Experience is always a bodily process. And so is memory.

The body philosophy in question – its characteristic hue in Améry's work – results in two aspects. First, the understanding of body as an inseparable entity means that suffering such as torture is inerasable since it is inscribed in the body, "ineradicably burned into him" (Améry 1980, 34). From this perspective bodies are understood as a storage medium for memory and history. In *Morbus Kitahara* this notion is impressively conveyed through the "signs of torture on [...] [Ambras'] bare back, violet scarred stripes left by blows of clubs and strokes of whips received decades before" (1998b, 191). They must be interpreted as *leiblich* and thus as inseparably physical and mental scars. Second, Améry argues that torture is untellable since it is a corporal experience, and the borders of the body mark the borders to other subjects' experience. The borders of the tortured body thus mark the borders of how far torture can be communicated.

Der Schmerz war, der er war. Darüber hinaus ist nichts zu sagen. Gefühlsqualitäten sind so unvergleichbar wie unbeschreibbar. Sie markieren die Grenze sprachlichen

Mitteilungsvermögens. Wer seinen Körperschmerz mit-teilen wollte, wäre darauf gestellt, ihn zuzufügen und damit selbst zum Folterknecht zu werden. (Améry 2002, 74)

The pain was what it was. Beyond that there is nothing to say. Qualities of feeling are as incomparable as they are indescribable. They mark the limit of the capacity of language to communicate. If someone wanted to impart his physical pain, he would be forced to inflict it and thereby become a torturer himself. (Améry 1980, 33)

Ambras cannot get rid of his body. He is crippled, unable to hold his hands above his head (1998a, 173; 1998b, 139). Thus, he carries his memories with him wherever he goes in a physical, bodily sense. The wholeness of his being is focused on the past. He experiences flashbacks and imagines himself in the concentration camp again right before committing suicide (1998a, 430-43; 1998b, 348). The village community hates Ambras for his good standing with the occupying forces and for being living proof of their historical guilt. Their view on their own history and on their deprivations is incompatible with a survivor's reality. And even when Ambras does share his memories of being tortured, the interlocutor flees them right away. The scene of the dialogue in question takes place on a boat. Ambras and his assistant Bering are crossing the lake in order to help a ferryman repair his boat. Upon arrival, Bering, who is abnormally fascinated by machines as signs of progress in his regressive world, immediately gets to work. By watching him it seems to Ambras, the narrator supposes,

[...] daß [...] [Bering] eine beschädigte Mechanik noch eher zu rühren vermochte als ein beschädigtes Leben: Nach so vielen Reden, Flugblättern und Botschaften des großen Lyndon Porter Stellamour und nach unzähligen Buß- und Gedächtnisritualen in den Kaffs am See und an seinem Blinden Ufer hörte auch der erste und einzige unter den Männern von Moor, dem Ambras jemals vertraut hatte, immer noch lieber auf das Klopfen und Hämmern von Maschinen als auf den Wortlaut der Erinnerung. (1998a, 227)

that [Bering] was more likely to be touched by a defective machine than by a defective life. After so many speeches, flyers, and messages [...], after countless penitential and memorial rites in the backwater villages along the lake and on its Blind Shore, the first man, the only man among the men of Moor in whom Ambras had ever confided, still would rather listen to the pounding and hammering of engines than to the words of memory. (1998b, 182-183)

The irreversibility of inner and physical pain – to differentiate briefly, irrespectively of the phenomenological notion of *Leib*, for the sake of clarity – and the impossibility to share it, combine in a fatal way. Ambras cannot get rid of his body that is profoundly shaped by the extreme experience of torture and at the same time his bodily maimed (in the sense of *leiblich*) existence hinders him

to get in contact with others. This is exactly what inevitably leads Ambras to commit suicide in the end. There is no other way back to the present world for a *Leib* that has experienced near-death and a life doomed to be obsessed with history. By reflecting the author's phenomenological body philosophy on the story level, the novel supports intertextuality studies that assert the metonymic character of intertextual references. That means that referring to parts of other texts implies referring to their original contexts as well (Holthuis 1993, 95). By identifying the borders of communication with those of the bodies, the novel firstly affirms Améry's belief that extremely painful experiences such as torture are not comparable and consequently inexpressible by language. By assuming the implications of Améry's thinking to constitute the figure of 'Ambras' and his story, the intertextual setting of Ransmayr's novel secondly expresses exactly the complex set of problems mentioned in the beginning: the problems of postmemorial commemoration and of narrating the unexperienced. In this way the novel reflects on its own representational (im)possibilities and on the sublimity of authentic memories. And as a crucial highlight point, at the same time, intertextual references overcome the postmemorial dilemma, since they maintain the original voice and the original narration of the experience. So here, within the context of postmemory, a new function of intertextuality showcases. Moreover, by relying on repetition, intertextuality gives more weight to the original memory that is referred.

The German Slavist Renate Lachmann in her monograph *Gedächtnis und Literatur* (1990) (meaning: Memory and Literature) examines the connection between the functionalities of memory and intertextuality. She argues that commemorating is something that happens between texts (Lachmann 1990, 35). Referring to texts of the past means constituting a cultural memory that is nothing else than intertextually transmitted experience. Lachmann's results might be useful to sharpen the concept of postmemory in general – defined as keeping specific memories within the memory discourse by intertextually referring them and thus transmitting them. By this means postmemory participates in memory by referring its contents, passing them on and transforming them (Lachmann 1990, 36; 76). In this way both goals might be accomplished: the commemorating of the past by later generations and yet not touching anything tabooed such as intimate memories.

## 4. The Strategy of Body Narration

The novel's second postmemorial strategy is what may be called a 'method of body narration' as a result of the inherent body philosophy that was mentioned above. By this I mean a narrative style which is characterized by the representation of physical processes, physical movements and choreographies of action. In this sense, Steffen Röhrs states: "Der Ausdruck 'Körper erzählen' meint [...] nicht nur, dass *vom* Körper erzählt wird. Vielmehr scheint der Körper in der Literatur auch *selbst* erzählen zu können" (2016, 106).[3]

Based on the insight that on the one hand, bodily experience cannot be shared, but on the other hand, individuals are shaped by their experiences in a bodily sense, Ransmayr uses body narratives instead of illegitimately claiming and inventing unexperienced inner processes and mental states. Thereby those narrative approaches to the body create effects of authenticity (Röhrs 2016, 109-110).

The torture scene is one example of the narration of physical processes and moves, but there are plenty of body narratives to be found in the novel. Another example occurs in a passage of the text in which Bering is killing a looter. The scene is represented as a choreography of killing.

Jetzt hält er die Pistole in der Hand. Wie seltsam leicht, federleicht sie in diesem Augenblick ist. Bei seinen geheimen Spielen mit ihrer Mechanik war sie ihm stets schwer wie ein Hammer in der Faust gelegen. Vier Schritte, drei Schritte vor ihm, ganz dicht bei ihm wird der Verfolger im Licht seiner eigenen Sturmlampe sichtbar [...]. Der erste Schuß schlägt Bering den Arm hoch [...]. Das Krachen reißt an seinem Trommelfell, dringt ihm tief in den Kopf und schmerzt, wie noch kein Laut geschmerzt hat. Der Blitz des Mündungsfeuers erlischt, ist schon vor einer Ewigkeit erloschen, und immer noch sieht er das nachleuchtende Gesicht seines Feindes, den aufgerissenen Mund. Als dieses Gesicht blaß wird und auch zu erlöschen droht, will er es nicht ins Dunkel fortlassen – und drückt zum zweitenmal ab. Erst jetzt fällt der Waffe ihr altes Gewicht zu. Sein Arm sinkt nach unten. Zitternd steht er in der Nacht. (1998a, 57-58)

Now he has the pistol in his hand. How strangely light, light as a feather, it is at this moment. Whenever he secretly played with its mechanism, it always lay heavy as a hammer in his hand. Four steps, three steps in front of him, at very close range—his pursuer at last becomes visible in the light of his own hurricane lamp [...]. The first shot throws Bering's arm back [...]. The crack of the blast rips at his eardrums, thrusts deep into his head and hurts more than any sound has ever hurt. The flash at the end of the barrel has gone out, went out an eternity ago, but he

[3] 'The expression 'narrating bodies' not only means speaking of bodies. In fact, the body itself seems to speak in literature, too' (my translation).

can still see the reflected face of his foe, that mouth gaping wide, a speechless amazement. When the face turns pale and threatens to go out as well, he doesn't want to release it into the dark—and squeezes a second time. Only now does the weapon assume its old weight. His arm falls. He stands trembling in the night. (1998b, 44-45)

The whole scene is narrated as body experience. And yet this body narrative – not any kind of authorial narrating and evaluating discourse – tells us about the extremeness of the situation and its meaning: Bering, the son of a perpetrator, is losing his innocence and is moving from collective guilt to individual guilt. I therefore conclude that body narratives are functional to constitute meaning.

Narrating bodies as a method or rather as a strategy, can fit into a specific figuration of the triad of memory, body, and writing. Experienced history inscribes itself into the bodies in the form of memory (Assmann 2001, 201). Body narration transforms bodily stored experience into commemorative contents, which are now written down, within a postmemorial frame.

A frequent criticism of Ransmayr's works as a novelist concerns the constitution of his characters. These are said to be presented from an exceedingly distant perspective, which makes them 'cold,' much too literary or simply not psychologically deep enough for readers to identify with (e.g. Honold 1999, 256; Just 2006, 375-380). My argument is based on the results about the novel's intertextuality and the body discourse that is thereby incorporated. From that perspective, human beings are considered as equal to bodies, in the sense of the German word *Leib*. Conclusively, literary figures are to be represented as bodies. Or contrariwise, body narration is figure narration at its best. There is nothing more internal that is tellable than what the body is able to tell us. Consequently, body narration creates the biggest possible closeness. Since body action is describable, but – following Améry – physical feeling is not, the second strategy to solve the problem of illegitimate fictional representation of the unexperienced adds up to letting the bodies speak and giving a detailed narration of physical processes and movements.

## 5. Direct Speech Passages. Keeping Memory Untouched

Lastly, we go back to Ambras and the torture-scene. The passages that are taken from Améry's torture experiences are put into direct speech. Ambras, the figure who experienced such agony is telling his assistant about it orally. Compared to the novel as a whole, the borrowed experiences stand out. Not only do we find rather few instances of direct discourse, but those passages broaching the issue of

Ambras' experiences in the concentration camp are the only long passages in direct speech. As a result, the novel's third strategy of transgressing the possibilities of postmemory narrative is putting the unexperienced into direct speech. Choosing that form of representation contributes to maintaining the original memory. Moreover, by this means commemoration is firmly delegated to a fictional character, who represents subjects who did experience the narrated, just like Jean Améry. Thus, the novel avoids commemorating through the narrator's voice as the closest entity to the author. By keeping the narrator in the background at least within the passages in question, the author, who belongs to the generation of postmemory and for whom the content of commemoration is unknown territory, maintains an appropriate distance.

By means of these three strategies – intertextuality, body narration, and the use of direct speech – Ransmayr prevents using other subjects' experiences for his postmemorial fiction in a presumptuous and illegitimate manner, e.g. inventing and representing it from an alleged internal perspective. Nevertheless, the novel contributes to keeping the past or rather specific experiences of the past in discourse and in the collective memory. That is the positive outcome that postmemorial fiction, regardless of the author's biographical origins, can provide – despite the ethical difficulties it still implies.

## Bibliography

Améry, Jean. 2002 (1966). "Die Tortur." In *Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne. Bewältigungsversuche eines Überwältigten*. In *Werke in 9 Bänden*. edited by Irene Heidelberger-Leonhard. Vol. 2: Jenseits von Schuld und Sühne / Unmeisterliche Wanderjahre / Örtlichkeiten. edited by Gerhard Scheit, 55-85. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Améry, Jean. 2005 (1976). *Hand an sich legen. Diskurs über den Freitod*. In *Werke in 9 Bänden*. edited by Irene Heidelberger-Leonhard. Vol. 3: Über das Altern / Hand an sich legen. edited by Monique Boussart, 173-343. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Améry, Jean. 1980. "Torture." In *At the Mind's Limits. Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and its Realities*. Translated by Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld, 21-40. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Assmann, Jan. 2000. "Körper und Schrift als Gedächtnisspeicher. Vom kommunikativen zum kulturellen Gedächtnis." In *Speicher des Gedächtnisses*, edited by Moritz Csáky and Peter Stachel, part 1: *Absage an und Wiederherstellung von Vergangenheit, Kompensation von Geschichtsverlust*, 199-213. Wien: Passagen.

Assmann, Aleida. 2013. *Das Unbehagen in der Erinnerungskultur*. München: Beck.

Greiner, Bernd. 1995. *Die Morgenthau-Legende. Zur Geschichte eines umstrittenen Plans*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition.

Henke, Daniela. 2018. "Die Tortur. Jean Améry und der Körperdiskurs in Christoph Ransmayrs *Morbus Kitahara* (1995)." In *Körperbewegungen in (Nach-)Kriegszeiten. Zu künstlerisch-medialen Repräsentationsformen von der Frühen Neuzeit bis zur Gegenwart*. edited by Jonas Nesselhauf, Till Nitschmann and Steffen Röhrs, 239-258. Hannover: Wehrhahn.

Hirsch, Marianne. 1997. *Family Frames. Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Hirsch, Marianne. 2012. *The Generation of Postmemory. Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Holthuis, Susanne. 1993. *Intertextualität – Aspekte einer rezeptionsorientierten Konzeption*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg.

Honold, Alexander. 1999. "Die steinerne Schuld. Gebirge und Geschichte in Christoph Ransmayrs *Morbus Kitahara*". In *Sinn und Form*, 51, 2: 252-267. Berlin.

Jureit, Ulrike. 2010. "Opferidentifikation und Erlösungshoffnung. Beobachtungen im erinnerungspolitischen Rampenlicht". In *Gefühlte Opfer. Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, edited by Ulrike Jureit and Christian Schneider, 17-103. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.

Just, Peter (ed.). 2006. *Das Literarische Quartett. Gesamtausgabe aller 77 Sendungen von 1988 bis 2001*. Vol. 2: "May 03 1993 – August 14 1997." Berlin: Directmedia.

Lachmann, Renate. 1990. *Gedächtnis und Literatur. Intertextualität in der russischen Moderne.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Löffler, Sigrid. 1997. "'... das Thema hat mich bedroht'. Gespräch mit Sigrid Löffler über *Morbus Kitahara* (Dublin 1995)". In *Die Erfindung der Welt. Zum Werk von Christoph* Ransmayr. edited by Uwe Wittstock, 213-219. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1974 (1965). *Phänomenologie der Wahrnehmung*. Photomechanischer Nachdruck. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Ransmayr, Christoph. 1998a (1995). *Morbus Kitahara*. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer.

Ransmayr, Christoph. 1998b (1997). *The Dog King*. Translated by John E. Woods. London: Vintage.

Röhrs, Steffen. 2016. *Körper als Geschichte(n). Geschichtsreflexionen und Körperdarstellungen in der deutschsprachigen Erzählliteratur (1981-2012).* Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann.

Daniela Henke is Scientific Assistant and PhD Researcher at "Graduiertenkolleg 1767 Faktuales und Fiktionales Erzählen" in Freiburg i. Br. (Project: Experimental Narratives in Fictions about the Holocaust and Nazi Germany between the *Historikerstreit* and the Current

Strengthening of the Right-Wing Populism). After her graduation in German Studies and Philosophy at University of Freiburg in 2014, she was a Pre doc scholar at "a.r.t.e.s. Graduate School of Cologne." Furthermore, she taught courses at "Deutsches Seminar II – Neuere Deutsche Literatur" in Freiburg and gave several lectures in Germany and abroad. She is the author of several articles and a monograph on Ransmayrs novels (*Geschichte neu denken. Postmoderne Geschichtsphilosophie und Historiographie im Romanwerk Christoph Ransmayrs*, Marburg: Tectum 2016). She is also editor of a volume on memory studies (together with Tom Vanassche: *Co-memoration. Limits, Challenges, and Possibilities in Contemporary Shoah Remembrance*, Berlin: De Gruyter 2020).