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**REMEMBERING KOSOVARs DURING THE '90s; MODERN WAYS OF SHARING
COLLECTIVE MEMORIES**

MA Thesis

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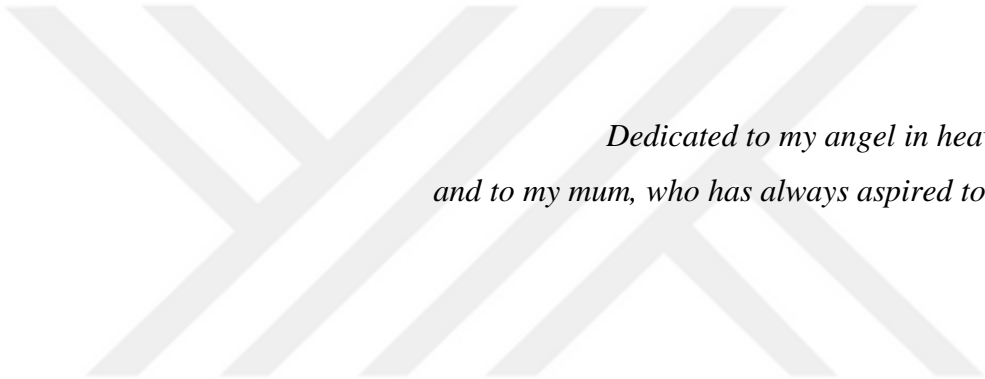
**90'LARDA KOSOVAR'S'I HATIRLAMAK; TOPLU ANILARI PAYLAŞMANIN
MODERN YOLLARI**

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

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İSTANBUL, 2022



*Dedicated to my angel in heaven- father,
and to my mum, who has always aspired to knowledge*

I always feared death. What do I mean by death? To me, someone that leaves a mark, a footprint that people will remember him/her about, is not dead, though physically might leave earth. You are entirely dead if you did not leave behind something to be remembered. That is why I was interested in memories and still am. That is why when I had the chance, I left behind projects for my city, I might be dead one day, but the history and people's memories will keep me alive.

Personal story

"One of the most critical projects for the city where I was born and raised, Vushtrri, was the construction or renovation of the Cultural Center "Hasan Prishtina." As the head of the Department of Culture in this city, I had every right to send to the assembly the proposal for an alternative (either reconstruction or renovation) and to make the allocation of funds. Since it was an object that would remain in the city for decades, I decided to listen to the citizens what thought. From 2014 to the end of 2016, I held consecutive meetings and gatherings. Citizens were divided into two groups, one part claiming that the center has of no value to be preserved, so they proposed demolishing and building a completely new one, and the other group claiming that the building has a collective memory and needed to be renovated, and by no means to fall. In those moments, I was at a crossroads, so I decided to hold meetings with different interest groups, starting from artistic groups, elderlies, architects, different groups of citizens, young people, etc. Some individuals criticized me at that time, that if I had made the decision myself and not asked the citizens at all, this facility would have already been completed. However, it was not that I lacked the courage because I had faced various challenges, which I came up with during my tenure, but they did not understand exactly where my point was. I have always been an idealist that the leader should be there for his/her citizen, that such democratic practice should be implemented, and the citizen should be asked about decisions that are directly related to them, even though they chose us, and we had the right of decision making, my principle was that for any significant project, I would seek the opinion of the citizen. After three years of research, endless meetings, and public hearings, I concluded that the part with which citizens felt the spiritual connection was the hall where the performances were given. All the memories were related to "the first appearance on stage," "on these boards of this theater I grew up," "the first show I saw," and such descriptions from the collective memory. In consultation with the project manager and experts, I asked to be notified in writing if the hall could be detached from the

building in front to be preserved and the front demolished. After receiving the confirmation, I held the last meeting where I told the citizens that this is the solution we offer as a Municipality, especially as the Director. Of course, this solution was also criticized by some, but those who were directly related to this object embraced this idea and appreciated that the hall escaped demolition, more than that their memories survived. This project that spent three full years of my life has already been completed and is open for the citizens.

I know, if I would decide for the first solution to complete demolition, I would make the fatal mistake of my life, and I would not be able to forgive myself, because with it I would destroy the memory of the citizens of Vushtrri, which today is among the most complex elements of spiritual heritage. Therefore, even though it cost time, listening to the citizens was the right decision that pushed me to a satisfactory final result. "



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I am lucky!

I call myself lucky to be surrounded by people I love. I am lucky I met people from whom I learned a lot. As beautiful as they were, these two years of study were also full of challenges for me. All these ups and downs made them special. Sometimes you have to fall down to learn the importance of highs. You have to pass through health challenges to learn how important health is. To be more thankful for what you have while you have!

I had a chance to learn a lot these years, and undoubtedly, during this time, my path to knowledge has been illuminated by professors I want to thank, Abdulhamid Kirmizi, Canan Balan, Ebru Kaylap, and Ferhat Kentel.

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Without the support of my family, I would not have been able to study and dedicate myself one hundred percent to studying. I thank my three heroes, my brothers Ibrahim, Jusuf, and Musa, for their endless support on this journey, as well as my sisters and all the other members of my lovely family.

Special thanks to my husband Sinan who was always by my side, supporting and giving me extra motivation to continue on the journey I had started.

Last but not least is my mother, who raised us with great sacrifices. It is her that instilled in me the idea of the importance of schooling from an early age, supported me endlessly, and motivated me.

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During the two years of study, my brother Musa Rama ensured me to have all the necessary

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Thank you!



ABSTRACT

War as the most tragic traumatic event that affects not only the victims but also current and future generations affected Kosovars within the last century. What makes Kosovar's trauma unbearable is not only being possessed by the past moment but also being trapped by its repetition. Remembering, and representing trauma are crucial components of witnessing in order to comprehend their speechless moments and unbearable pain. Trauma studies indicate that trauma can have meaning when it is shared, and that art is the best way that can be used to help that, because of its potential to transform the viewer into the position of being a witness and opening a space for empathetic identification that leads to acknowledging it by many others encountering with the painful moment, which leads to reconciliation.

This thesis addresses the representation of trauma, as a reflective process, which was done by Kosovars through mediating traumatic past into artistic pieces, like movies, paintings, and poetries, or through sites of memory, like museums, memorials, holy places, rituals, and commemorations. It analyses some of the exhibitions that represented 90's like "The City is Everywhere" by Eliza Hoxha, "Family Album" by Alban Muja, biopics like "Ferdonija," "Icon's tear," and photographs and murals like "Billaca 99". The objective of Kosovar's mission, sharing collective memories, is to prevent the perpetrator's attempts to hide their crimes. Making these painful moments of them public, invite people for witnessing, empathy, and as well as being recognized as an important part of cultural memory and thus the identity of the members of that society.

Keywords: *Collective memory, trauma, remembering, 90's period, Kosovars*

OZET

Savaş en trajik travmatik olan olay sadece kurbanları değil şimdiki ve gelecek nesilleri de etkileyen, son yüzyılda Kosovalıları da etkilemiştir. Kosovalı'ların yaşadığı travmayı dayanılmaz kılan sadece geçmiş anın esiri olmak değil, aynı zamanda tekrarının da tuzağına düşmek. Travmayı hatırlamak ve temsil etmek, onların suskun anlarını ve dayanılmaz acılarını anlamak için tanıklığın çok önemli bileşenleridir. Travma çalışmaları, travmanın paylaşıldığında anlam kazanabileceğini gösteriyor, izleyiciyi tanık konumuna dönüştürme ve empatik özdeşleşmeye alan açma, acı anla karşılaşan birçok kişinin bunu kabul etmesine, uzlaşmaya yol açma potansiyeline sahip olması nedeniyle sanatın buna yardımcı olmak için kullanılabilecek en iyi yol olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bu tez, Kosovalı'lar tarafından travmatik geçmişi filmler, resimler ve şiirler gibi sanatsal parçalara ya da müzeler, anıtlar, kutsal yerler, ritüeller ve anma törenleri gibi hafıza alanları aracılığıyla aracılık ederek yapılan bir yansıtma süreci olarak travmanın temsilini ele almaktadır.

Eliza Hoxha'dan "The City is Everywhere," Alban Muja'dan "Family Album," "Ferdonija" gibi biyografik filmler, "Icon's gözyaşı" ve "Billaca 99" fotoğraf ve duvar resimleri gibi 90'ları temsil eden bazı sergileri analiz ediyor. Kolektif hatıraları paylaşan Kosovalılar misyonunun amacı, failin; suçlarını gizlemeye çalışır.

Bu acı anların halka duyurulması, insanları tanıklık etmeye, empati kurmaya ve aynı zamanda o toplumun üyelerinin kültürel belleğinin ve dolayısıyla kimliğinin önemli bir parçası olarak tanınmaya davet ediyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kolektif hafıza, travma, hatırlama, 90'lar dönemi, Kosovalılar*

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INTRODUCTION

Connerton states that "modernity has a particular problem with forgetting," and that as a result, people are constantly accepting a mindset that promotes cultural amnesia (2009, p. 1). Long-standing habits that formerly provided comfortable ties between past and present have faded or have been shattered. The emphasis on the present moment has become particularly overwhelming in modern cultural discourse, whereas the past has failed to be a maintaining source for determining our collective identity. As a result of this process, the conceptions of historical time have been transformed, if not impoverished. According to Connerton, the current trend is not coincidental. The power that encourages collective forgetfulness is profoundly rooted in capitalism's actions, but its logic has only just become obvious. Connerton argues that our tendency to forget a past that no longer speaks directly to us, unfortunately, sparked attention among scholars on what our ancestors were so focused on remembering. During the late twentieth century, the fading of the past's enduring presence prompted a critical investigation into the nature and significance of collective memory. He asserts. "We live in a forgetful, post-mnemonic culture" (2009, p. 146). In this era of forgetful modernity, cultural and collective memory is becoming more and more crucial. With special emphasis on the social trauma and dealing with the painful moments of the past.

This study addresses the times of pain and sorrow related to the 90s Kosovar war. It focuses on the ways in which this social trauma is represented and discusses its role in collective memory. Recalling traumatic events of that period, for individuals and the community means reliving those painful moments in a way. For a nation that has gone through terror, it is so important to show the world what it has been through, especially when the oppressor does not accept the guilt and damages that it caused them. That is the reason why Kosovars started to give a voice to their pain, and a reason behind this thesis which is to discuss the role of work of art in encountering with the unspeakable moments of trauma and rewriting the history of the traumatic time by building empathy.

There is a universal agreement in trauma studies that remembering, and representation is critical component of witnessing to comprehend speechless moments and unbearable grief. In this study Chapter 1 focuses on describing features of individual and social trauma. If the traumatic experience is suppressed, it turns into a wound that causes unending anguish and refusal to heal. Trauma creates "unspeakable moments" which cannot be transferred to social

memory. People who have experienced traumatizing events can only begin to heal by sharing their experiences or with the help of artists representing the social or individual trauma transforming them into artistic works. Therefore, sites of remembering such as monuments, museums, movies, sanctuaries, rituals, and commemorations help make the trauma more recognizable and sayable, and through remembering it and talking about its aid in the formation of a new communal identity that is known as the "routinization of trauma." (Violi, 2017, p. 52).

Chapter 2 discusses ways of remembering, like sites of memory, which are areas where groups of people engage in public interaction to display "a collective shared knowledge... of the past, on which a group's feeling of unity and uniqueness is built," attract the curiosity of memory researchers (Assmann, 1995, p. 130-31). The community that visits these locations takes on prior meanings connected to the event and adds new ones. Their role is crucial to the upkeep and preservation of memorials. In addition, Seyla Benhabib (1996, p. 92) states that "the stories we make about ourselves and the world we share with others reveal who we are" and that identity is fundamentally constituted by narratives. Therefore, past, and current narratives—such as those about the trauma individuals have experienced—are essential parts of the collective memory and identity.

Another dilemma is whether an individual traumatic event may be translated into cultural or collective memory. Chapter 3 focuses on the basic purpose of remembering the past through a framework of collective memory, which is to preserve a group's current self-image. As Sontag explains it (2003, p. 86), collective memory is "a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story about how it happened," and is therefore not so much about memory as it is about a story of socially shared suffering concurred on by a group and acknowledged by a public. What does it signify to talk about collective trauma, and how is it different from talking about individual trauma? Although some social processes, such as suppression, rejection, and screen memories, may be observed on an individual basis, their effects are different. Individual trauma, though crucial in the genesis of collective trauma, is not key, nor are denial, rejection, and working through as in individual psychology (Alexander, 2012, p. 3). "The threat to collective rather than individual identity that defines the suffering at stake," writes Jeffrey Alexander (p. 2). According to his social theory of trauma, "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectively feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and

irrevocable ways" (p. 6). In addition to personal trauma theories, memories regarded as traumatic "because these phenomena are believed to have abruptly and harmfully affected collective identity," rather than "because of their actual harm or objective abruptness" (p. 14). Collective traumas are socioculturally generated, according to the belief that circumstances are not intrinsically traumatic. Even though a terrible incident occurred, Alexander describes it as a "trauma process," one that is "subject to whirling spirals of signification, fierce power contests, simplistic binaries, subtle stories, fickle audiences, and counter-narrations" (2012, p. 98). The trauma process addresses the problems concerning who caused the suffering to whom, as well as a moral duty, punishments, reimbursement, recovery, and measures needed to prevent it from happening again. As a social process dedicated to collective memory and meaning making, the trauma process bridges the gap between what has happened and how it is represented.

As a metaphor, cultural trauma can draw awareness to the previously unnoticed pain of a particular sociocultural group. Though social pain cannot be erased, gaining knowledge into sociocultural processes and structures through a social theory of trauma may give a space where victims, spectators, and perpetrators can gain the necessary distance to prevent the most heinous consequences (Alexander, 2012, p. 5). Collective memory includes what is chosen to be remembered and what will be forgotten by communities.

According to Kaplan as will be discussed in chapters one and two, trauma should be shown because it puts the viewer in the place of being a witness, setting up a space for empathic identification... an identification that allows the spectator to join into the victim's experience through a work's narration (Kaplan and Ban, 2008, p.10). Two things make trauma substantial, in Kaplan's opinion: first, "telling the story of the trauma may achieve a working through for the victim, however limited or weak," and second, "telling the trauma permits an empathetic sharing that moves both tellers (traumatized) and receiver (vicariously traumatized) forward" (Kaplan, 2005, p. 37). Kaplan supports for "representation of trauma in a way that leads to reconciliation" since doing so makes it easier to heal trauma and helps feel empathy that leads to the masses or receiver realizing it. The objective is to overcome a difficult past to fully experience the present, to not stay fixed on trauma, and that the current generation must learn how to deal with trauma from the past, despite the fact that a haunted past is typically connected to a terrible experience. "Haunting produces spectres and changes our perception of time, including how we distinguish the past, present, and future" (Gordon, 2008, p. xvi). However, witnessing the trauma comes with challenges, which is finding a balance between objectivity and sensitivity to prevent appropriating other people's trauma. To

remedy this, LaCapra suggests that the researcher, whom he refers to as a "secondary witness," seek a narrative "middle voice" to fill in the gaps that they make, and a method of "empathic unsettlement" in creating the story. "Empathic unsettlement" refers to the process of materials encouraging a sense of traumatic experiences by working through, putting readers/viewers in an empathetic condition that indicates rational detachment (2001, p. 78). Regardless of the fact that empathetic unsettlement might generate "secondary trauma" for interviewers and observers that interact with witnesses, LaCapra argues it is unreasonable to assume that everyone who is at least one step away from a witness suffers from "secondary trauma" (2001, p. 102). LaCapra has also argued that art can let a secondary witness cope with trauma in a "muted" way (2001, p. 22).

To summarize art is seen as a way that builds an empathy through which the unrecognized trauma that leads to unsettlement can be recognized and give a chance to healing.

The critical question that this project seeks to answer is: "How did Kosovars shared their collective memories of the '90s, and why is sharing them through art so important?"

The answer to the main question or hypothesis will be provided by identifying and analyzing some of the exhibitions, biopics, museums, theatrical dramas, and memorials that Kosovars dedicated to memories of that period. This study aims to document and commemorate the memory by creating evidence for future generations by answering this question. The main question is being helped through the objectives of this thesis, which consists of researching projects, exhibitions, museums, memorials, and biographical films that represent the '90s period, then explaining the importance of keeping those memories alive and sharing them in modern forms of expression that is through artistic ways.

To answer these questions, there were used and analyzed the secondary data, starting from researching historical books that present the history of Kosova during that period to analyzing artistic pieces such as biopics, photographs, murals, museums, and other forms of materializing collective memory. Some of the primary data were ensured through personal visits paid to memorials that represent the memories of the '90s.

Though there were some attempts to write books representing the memories of Kosovars, so less was done on theocratizing them and analyzing them more broadly. So, this project might be considered an attempt to fill the gap in previous works by combining different case studies discussed in this thesis, supporting them with theories.

Before discussing theories let's go back to historical and political background of 90's. Yugoslavia was formed after the end of the First World War (1918) and consisted of the following countries: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia with Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Northern Macedonia (Znanaja, 1970, p. 294).

After World War II, communist forces led by Josip Broz Tito¹ came to power. Despite solid efforts to equalize and balance all the peoples living in this state, there were still political and economic inconsistencies and inequalities between the republics and territories that made up the former Yugoslavia. As a result, Slavs dominated this country and other non-Slavic minorities, especially Albanian Kosovars, were mistreated. They had the most challenging position because they were not recognized as a nation, and all their national rights were denied. As a result, they were considered a national minority, although they were the third-largest population in the former Yugoslavia.

After the approval of the 1974 Constitution, the rights of Kosovars improved, although not all the requests submitted by them were approved. Indeed, the Serbs disagreed with this advancement of the political rights of the Albanian Kosovars (Qosja, 1994). Therefore, in various forms, through media propaganda, they tried to falsify the history of Albanian Kosovars in general and Kosovo in particular (Rizaj, 2005).

Tito, the prominent figure in post-1945 Yugoslavia, died in 1980. A year later, in 1981, Albanian Kosovars rose to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with the situation in Kosovo, demanding that Kosovo should have been recognized as a republic. Dozens of demonstrators were killed, hundreds of Albanian Kosovars were injured, and thousands of participants were imprisoned. The force of Yugoslav tanks suppressed the demonstrations (Zenelaj, 2011). After 1981, an act of revenge and strict political control by the communist government began in all institutions of Kosovo.

Slobodan Milosevic's² rise to power in Serbia in 1986 made the situation in Kosovo even worse (Sciences Academy, 1999). He openly propagated Serbia's hegemonic intentions

¹ Tito, or Josip Broz, was a Yugoslav communist revolutionary and statesman who served from 1943 until his death in 1980.
– make sure you use the same font throughout

² Slobodan Milosevic, widely known as the “Butcher of the Balkans”, was the infamous leader of the former Yugoslavia. He rose to power as President of Serbia after calling for the revision of the Yugoslav Constitution of 1974, claiming that it marginalized Serbia and was the only option to end the Albanian movement in Kosovo. When he came to power in Serbia, he instituted a series of significant changes that restricted the power of the autonomous provinces. He was accused by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in connection with the conflicts in Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo during the bombing of Serbian military bases in Yugoslavia in 1999. Milosevic was found dead in his cell in Scheveningen, The Hague, on March 11, 2006. He had a heart attack, according to the autopsy.

in Kosovo and other parts of the former Yugoslavia. However, the main target was initially Kosovo and Vojvodina, as autonomous provinces that were part of Serbia and then the former Yugoslavia. At a large rally in Belgrade in late 1988, Milosevic said in front of some 300,000 Serbs: "Every nation has a love that warms its heart forever. For Serbia, that love is Kosovo" (Malcolm, 2011, p. 429).

Milosevic aimed to establish absolute Serbian power in Kosovo, as well as to design curricula that fit Serbian policy.

The Albanian Kosovars never agreed with these measures and with this situation. Naturally, therefore, they began to resist and oppose the violence installed in Kosovo in various forms.

In March 1989, Kosovo's autonomy was abolished, schools and universities for Kosovar students were gradually closed because they refused to work according to the curriculum offered by Milosevic's Serbian regime, which was utterly anti-Albanian (The Academy of Science and Arts of Kosovo, 2011).

In the early '90s, when the Yugoslav state was already disintegrating, Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina had declared independence (Malcolm, 2011, p. 437). From September 26 to 30th of 1991, Kosovo also held a statutory referendum to declare an independent state, in which Kosovars participated en masse and voted 87.99% in favor of Kosovo's independence from the former Yugoslavia (Krasniqi, 2009, p. 24). This referendum was held under severe circumstances of occupation. However, the will expressed in the referendum was not recognized by Serbia and other countries. Indeed, only Albania had recognized the decision of this referendum. On May 24, 1992, the first elections for the formation of the state institutions of Kosovo were held. Again, these elections were organized under the severe circumstances of the occupation. However, the elections resulted in the victory of the Kosovar party, where they chose their President³ (Krasniqi, 2009, p. 24).

Despite these events, and despite repeated calls for the Kosovo issue to be resolved in addition to the Bosnian and Croatian problems, this did not happen, and the International Community had not dealt with the Kosovo for several years.

The most challenging period for Albanian Kosovars was during the years 1989-1999. Nevertheless, the war would be the mark of a historical turn and the Happy End. Shkelzen Maliqaj, about the '90s, claimed:

³ The President of the Democratic League of Kosovo, Dr. Ibrahim Rugova, with an absolute majority of voters, was elected the first president of Kosovo.

"Everything seemed hopeless in the early '90s. Kosovo was violently stripped of its autonomy, and the Serbian regime undertook drastic measures to make life insufferable for the Albanian majority, if not impossible: 150,000 Kosovars were kicked out of their jobs, over 400,000 students and pupils were thrown out of their school facilities, Kosovo factories were 'integrated' with Serbia's, a term meant to hide the colossal plundering of Kosovo's production resources. Culture and sports were not spared either. For example, Serbia appropriated the archaeological treasury of the Museum of Kosovo by organizing an exhibition in Belgrade shortly before the war, while the 'borrowed' exhibitions have not been returned yet" (2018, p. 53).

Recalling those memories of how people lost their jobs and how their life changed at all, Shoshi claims "while on the cafeteria, a man would come at your table to offer and sell you cigarettes. Only some time ago, that man could have been working as an engineer at the shock absorber factory, a former head of unit at the wallpaper factory, or a former Police officer, or even a university professor. For those thousands of people who lost their job--their new job was selling cigarettes in the streets, working as waiters, or exchanging money or selling petrol oil" (Shoshi, 2018, p. 98).

Therefore, during the years 1989-1999, the Serbian government, in general, had established such an apartheid regime, which by the Historian Miftari (2021) were defined in several points:

1. The exclusion of Albanian Kosovar: pupils and students from school facilities and poisoning of thousands of them by the Serb community in March 1990; the exclusion of doctors from hospitals and health centers; police officers, judges, prosecutors, and administrative staff from their jobs
2. The prohibition of payment for Albanian Kosovar teachers; The prohibition of the only informative broadcast in Albanian language, TVP (Television of Prishtina) and Radio Prishtina
3. The occupation of Cultural Centers; The usurpation of libraries; The closure of the local communities.
4. The great exodus of Albanian Kosovars.
5. The construction of separate colonies, in different villages and cities of Kosovo, in order to bring Serbs from different parts of the former Yugoslavia to change the ethnic structure; the construction of orthodox religious buildings, as well as the erection of statues and monuments of Serbian historical personalities in the cities of Kosovo; the naming of the squares and streets of Albanian cities in Kosovo with Serbian history and cultural person names.

On the other hand, this decade had a parallel side as a narrative of survival and resistance. Under these difficult circumstances, Kosovars began to organize life in various ways to oppose this unbearable situation. As Maliqaj mentioned, "the Kosovar society did not submit to its fate. It was self-organized against violence by initially adopting nonviolent resistance. In the fields where it was possible, and there were a few, the work of autonomous institutions continued under claims of independence: political parties, the independent school system, the basic health services, small private enterprises (manufacturing, trade, services), newspapers and magazines in Albanian never went out of business. Neither did culture (art, theater, resistance music) and even the sports leagues, football, handball, basketball, boxing, etc., carried on with their activities. Despite the absence of normal conditions for activities, they improvised schools, classrooms, theater halls, sports grounds" (Maliqaj, 2018, p.53)

One of the first forms of resistance was the organization of home-school teaching. Even though violence and terror against Albanian Kosovars were increased, the teaching process continued despite lacking primary conditions for normal learning development. For a decade, Albanian Kosovar pupils, students, and teachers never give up. On the contrary, they continued the teaching process, albeit under challenging conditions, without receiving a monthly salary.

Albanian Kosovar landlords who gave their homes as schools to develop the learning process often faced physical and psychological violence from the Serbian government. Also, students and teachers had faced violence and terror exercised by the Serbian police and military apparatus installed in Kosovo.

Nevertheless, the determination, will, courage, and patriotism of the school and university staff made the teaching continue, and many pupils and students finished schooling in home schools.

Meanwhile, Serbian violence against Albanian Kosovars did not diminish. Certain groups of Kosovars did not agree to continue with only peaceful resistance. They demanded a gradual transition to active resistance and even war because Milosevic's regime did not listen to the demands of the Kosovars.

Under such circumstances, on October 1, 1997, a large protest was organized in Prishtina by students at the University of Prishtina, requesting the release of school buildings for Albanian Kosovar students. However, Serbian police used violence to disperse protesters (Krasniqi, 2009, p.24).

"Serbia provoked the frontal war in Kosovo, as it was impossible to find any compromise on the status of Kosovo that would respect the demographic reality and the will

of the majority in Kosovo. To Belgrade, almost any compromise was tantamount to capitulation, legitimization of the Albanian majority, and parallel institutions of the Republic of Kosovo. To prevent this, and aware that it cannot indefinitely keep Kosovo under occupation, Belgrade hoped the war would produce the ethnic engineering it had planned for Kosovo," mentioned Maliqaj (Hoxha, 2018, p. 57). Thus, on February 28, 1998, in Kosovo's villages, Likoshan and Qirez, Serbian military and police forces massacred dozens of Albanian Kosovar civilians (Thaqi, 2017, p. 123). Meanwhile, on March 5th, 6th, and 7th, 1998, in Prekaz, the commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Adem Jashari⁴, was surrounded by the Serbian army at his home with his entire family, where he had started the resistance against the Serbian occupation apparatus in Kosovo. For three days, the Jashari family fought heroically against the Serbian occupiers until Commander Adem Jashari, and all of them were killed (except for one girl who survived)⁵ (Thaqi, 2017, p. 134).

This event shocked the international media. In fact, since then, Kosovo has entered a new and final phase of liberation from Serbia. As the ranks of the Kosovo Liberation Army were expanding, the international community had intensified its efforts to resolve the Kosovo issue. However, on the other hand, the network of Kosovar women had organized a protest march to Drenica to help families forcibly displaced from their homes. These women carried with them bread and other food items, as a symbol that in Drenica, there was poverty and lack of food.

The war was unequal. However, the will of Albanian Kosovars to be liberated was unbreakable. Meanwhile, in different parts of Kosovo, various massacres of civilian Albanian Kosovars were taking place. One of the massacres that provoked a tremendous international reaction was in the village of Recak on January 15, 1999. The OSCE Representative in Kosovo, William Walker, considers this massacre a crime against humanity (Science and

⁴ Since 1991, Adem Jashari took part in operations against Serbian police before moving to Albania for military training. He was arrested in 1993 and freed at the request of the Albanian Army before returning to Kosovo, where he continued to attack the Yugoslav establishment. A Yugoslav court found him guilty of terrorism in his absence in July 1997. Serbian police attacked Jashari's residence in Prekaz in March 1998 after many unsuccessful efforts to arrest or murder him. 51 members of Jashari's family were killed in the fight that occurred, including Adem Jashari, his wife, brother, kids, all other family members and neighbors.

⁵ Serbs attacked Jashari's home until they believed everybody was dead. They entered the Jashari residence after the bombing ended to ensure that everyone had been murdered. Besarta Jashari, eleven years old at that time, pretended to be dead. She spent the night and the next day alone, surrounded by her dead family, as Serb bombs were dropped once more. She is the only survivor of that attack.

Arts Academy, 2011, p. 248-249). The international community was shocked, and they forced Milosevic to sit down to talk and resolve Kosovo's issue.

Thus, was organized the Rambouillet Conference in France, which began in February and lasted until mid-March 1999. As a result, the final agreement on the provisional settlement of the Kosovo issue was signed by the Kosovo side, but the Serbian side did not sign. As a result of the non-signing, on March 24, 1999, the US-led Western military alliance began bombing the Serbian army.

In this situation, a large-scale cleansing of Kosovo had begun, forcing almost a million Kosovars to be deported mainly to Albania and Macedonia (Krasniqi, 2009, p. 40). The infamous train traveling to Macedonia carried thousands of Kosovars in order to cleanse Kosovo ethnically. Meanwhile, during March - June 1999, when NATO was bombing, hundreds of massacres of Kosovo civilians were carried out as a sign of revenge against NATO.

The Kosovo Liberation Army was fighting as much as it could because it did not have enough weapons, as did the invading Serbian regime of Milosevic, which had inherited almost all the military weapons of the former Yugoslavia. As Maliqaj claims, "The legacy of the 1998-1999 war is tragic: 15.000 dead, several times more wounded, about 20.000 victims of sexual violence, mass graves of Kosovars everywhere, even under the Serbian Army Airport in Batajnica near Belgrade. The principal victims were civilians: children, the elderly, and women. 120.000 houses were destroyed and burned to the ground; whole villages were left in ruins. The NATO attacks on targets in Serbia, March-June 1999 were used as a pretext for the revenge of the "final solution" type: nearly one million Albanians were expelled to neighboring countries" (Hoxha, 2018, p.53)

Faced with such a situation, where Milosevic was being blamed internationally, he was forced to resign. On June 3, 1999, an agreement was signed in Kumanovo between the Serbian and NATO sides to withdraw the entire Serbian army and police from Kosovo. At the same time, in addition to the entry of NATO forces into Kosovo and the withdrawal of Serbian forces, the mass return of Kosovars to their land had begun. This massive return had taken the media and the international community by surprise (Krasniqi, 2009, p.40).

Sabrina P. Ramet in her book "Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991," has written extensively on nationalism and its role in Balkans. She focuses on how nationalism and federalism evolved in Yugoslavia from the 1960s and how it contributed to the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the subsequent wars, such as the Bosnian and Kosovo Wars. These two wars, in the eyes of people who are not so familiar with the ethnic

nationalities of Balkans might look the same, but those cannot be compared. The main components that distinguished the nationalities within Yugoslavia were language, religion, and, to some extent, history (Urdal, 2001). Serbo-Croatian was the official language of Yugoslavia and was spoken by Croats (mostly Catholics), Serbs (predominantly Orthodox), Montenegrins and ethnic Muslims (Dyrstad, 2012). Ethnic Muslims, referred to as Bosniaks today, made up the majority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, declared themselves ethnic Muslims in the sense of nationality (Urdal, 2001). Hence, the main differentiation among Croats, Serbs, and ethnic Muslims was religion (Urdal, 2001). Additionally, in the early years following World War II, Muslims were either Serbs or Croats who practiced a different religion (Ramet, 2006, p. 285). Albanians formed the majority in the province of Kosovo, even though they were predominantly Muslims, their main difference from other nationalities was the history and the fact that they were the only group that did not talk a Slavic language. Relations between ethnic groups in Yugoslavia were generally cordial before the outbreak of conflict (Massey, Hodson, & Sekulic, 2006), but the extent of connectivity among groups differed regionally. Kosovo was the main exception, as both Serbs but mostly Albanians reported violence and harassment. Kosovo was incorporated to the Kingdom of Serbia in 1913, against the will of the Albanian majority, and Albanians were neglected in political positions (Ramet, 2008). With high illiteracy rates and a lack of basic infrastructure, this region was the poorest in Yugoslavia (Ramet, 2006, p. 296). Kosovo's circumstances differ significantly from that of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Pre-war ethno-nationalism was strong, and people were mobilized along ethnic lines long before the war began (Dyrstad, 2012). Ethnic nationalism emphasizes the significance of common identity, language, religion, historical memory, and/or kinship in the construction and maintenance of the nation (Schrock-Jacobson, 2012). It prohibits anyone who lacks the proper cultural, linguistic, religious, and/or ethnic characteristics (Smith 2004, 41-42; J. Snyder 2000, p. 70). A country may be ethnically nationalist if it privileges one culture, language, religion, and/or ethnicity using laws, educational opportunities, economic contracts, patronage, and/or other mechanisms. In terms of Kosovo the war was based typically on ethnic nationalist reasons, based on differentiations and on facts mentioned on the historical part, while Bosnians had the same Slavic roots and language, but the differentiation was based on religion. That is the reason why this thesis didn't stop on comparing Kosovo with other Balkan countries who faced war, like Bosnia. This thesis also did not mention the oppressors name over and over again, thought is known, because the idea is not to stop on blaming, the idea of this thesis is remembering in order to stop happening again.

1. TRAUMA

The term 'trauma' originated in ancient Greek, meaning 'wound' (Leys, 2000). According to the recent medical and psychological literature, "the term trauma is understood as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (Caruth, 1996, p.3). Individual and collective traumas have one thing in common: they are both triggered by shock. The wounds that are inflicted are as much collective and social as they are individual. Individual and collective trauma may also be thought of as reinforcing one another, making the shock and sense of loss even more significant (Eyerman, 2013, p.43).

The experience of the trauma, according to Caruth, is "unclaimed," and is only felt via the ramifications of its repetition. She claims that trauma's pathology is primarily based on the nature of the experience or receipt "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event." (1995, p. 4-5). According to psychological theories, this might lead to a confused sense of identity formation, where "certain subject-positions may become especially prominent or even overwhelming, for example, those of victim or perpetrator ... wherein one is possessed by the past and tends to repeat it compulsively as if it were fully present" (LaCapra 1994:12). What makes trauma unbearable is not only being possessed by the past moment but also being trapped by its repetition.

Despite her belief in the "truth" of trauma, Caruth is opposed to attempting to heal it through therapy or narrativization because it may compromise its sacredness. Because "trauma... evoke[s] the difficult truth of a history that is constituted by the very incomprehensibility of its occurrence," the survivor's flashback memory reflects both "the truth of the event, and the truth of its incomprehensibility," generating a sacrilege dilemma wherein "talking it out" in order to effect healing would then end up losing the memory's specificity and accuracy, the "force of its affront to understanding," (153-4). This approach may appear to shut out the possibility of writing about traumatic experiences. It's also been criticized for veering too close to the traumatic sublime. In response to Caruth's work, Dominick LaCapra states that "it seems dangerously close to conflating absence (of absolute foundations and total meaning or knowledge) with loss and even sacralizing, or making sublime, the compulsive repetition of acting-out of a traumatic past," (2004, p. 121). Acting out, based on LaCapra's analysis, involves a person or society returning to a site (which is not usually a place) or trauma repeatedly, unable to cope with it. This is a compulsive habit that

prevents healing. Since "acting out" isn't really a kind of solution at all, but rather a repetitive activity, he suggests the other sort of engagement with history that is "working through," which entails a certain detachment from historical trauma that will allow the recovery, accepting, and political progress. While these two are not identical yet have considered them to be relevant in understanding the trauma.

Until the mid-2000s, when E. Ann Kaplan established a new approach to trauma that somewhat diverged from Caruth's prominent views, Caruth's theory of trauma largely dominated the main discourse in trauma studies. "Most theorists since Caruth have chosen the disassociation route for trauma analysis," writes Kaplan in her book *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005, p. 11). Many trauma researchers claimed that "trauma has to affect but no meaning" at a period when postmodernism and deconstruction were widespread in the arts and humanities (Kaplan, 2005, p. 11). Kaplan, on the other hand, believes that trauma can have meaning when is shared, "survivors choose a meaningful discourse to share the experience of the traumatic event" (Kaplan, 2005). Thus different ways of representation of trauma can make those speechless moments find "a meaningful discourse" so that their experience can find a voice.

1.1. Representation of trauma

Representing trauma can be in various artistic ways, such as through movies, through a painting related to that traumatic moment, writing a book, or dedicating poetry to it. Even though a theoretician like Theodor Adorno at first didn't agree that a traumatic event can be represented through artistic ways, as he proclaimed (in 1962) that: "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," yet, later he corrected this well-known statement, declaring:

I have no wish to soften the saying that to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric... Yet this suffering, what Hegel called consciousness of adversity, also demands the continued existence of art while it prohibits it; it is now virtually art alone that suffering can still find its own voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it. (Adorno and Rolf, 2003, p. 313)

To put it differently, it is difficult yet essential to reflect on catastrophic events; Adorno believes that art is the best way that can be used to do that. This issue of the apparently "unrepresentable and unimaginable nature of personal and collective trauma has permeated trauma studies since its inception" (Bisschoff and Stefanie, 2013, p. 4).

In trauma studies, there appears to be a universal understanding that remembering, and representation is very important and key aspects of witnessing in a way to understand speechless moments and unbearable pain. Ann Kaplan also supports the need for representation, arguing that if we dismiss trauma as unrepresentable, we risk putting it "into the mystified circle of the occult, something untouchable and unreachable" (Kaplan and Ban, 2008, p.8). According to Kaplan, trauma must be represented since it has the potential to "transform the viewer into the position of being a witness, opening up a space for empathetic identification... an identification which allows the spectator to enter into the victim's experience through a work's narration" (Kaplan and Ban, 2008, p.10).

The significance of trauma, according to Kaplan, is two-fold: "the telling of the story of trauma may achieve a working through for the victim, however limited or weak" and "the telling of trauma permits an empathetic sharing that moves both teller (traumatized) and receiver (vicariously traumatized) forward" (Kaplan, 2005, p. 37). That makes it possible to cure a trauma and by sharing, helps experience empathy that leads to acknowledging it by masses or receiver; as a result, Kaplan advocates for the "representing of trauma in a way that leads to reconciliation" (Bisschoff and Stefanie, 2013, p. 11). Thus, representations of trauma, as a reflective process, use imagination to connect the past with the present.

Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas (2007) argue that many visual works might really empower agency in the portrayal and interpretation of historical trauma (Guerin and Hallas, 2007, p. 3). Yet, Guerin and Hallas illustrate how, following the revelation of Allied forces' pictures of liberated Nazi camps, there was widespread skepticism of images' capacity to convey victims' trauma. As a result, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was a move away from visual images of grief, with researchers, filmmakers, and authors rejecting an effort to portray the Holocaust's vast crimes. During this period, the Eichmann trial in 1961 prompted a major change in focus back to individual testimonials rather than portrayals of collective trauma. Scholars returned to the subject of representation in the 1980s and 1990s, focusing on the importance of "language, art, and literature in the memorialization of the Holocaust" (Guerin and Hallas, 2007, p. 7). Oral and written testimony of witnesses became the only way to tell their stories because they did not have any other chance to depict their experiences. As victims they couldn't take photographs to witness what happened, most of them were generated by perpetrators that are why photographs of that time were not considered.

Guerin and Hallas disputed that "scholars have paid more attention to the written and spoken word as the most appropriate communicative forms for bearing witness to and remembering the suffering of the traumatized subject" (2007). They argue that this favor of

the written word over the visual image originates from the "iconoclasm" that runs through Western philosophy's past and indeed most literature on trauma, memory, and representation—that is, should be suspicious of the "veracity of the image" (2007). Guerin and Hallas link this fear of the image's power to represent trauma back to images shot by Allied soldiers of freed Nazi camps. Many believe that those pictures "transgressed the integrity of the human subject" and did not witness the trauma that people went through in the camps (Guerin and Hallas, 2007, p. 4). The freedom photographs appear to have sparked considerable skepticism about pictures "capture ethically the magnitude of the suffering of trauma victims" (Guerin and Hallas, 2007, p. 6). Gary Weissman claims in his book *Fantasies of Witnessing* (2004) that people's ongoing reason for learning about the Holocaust arises from a wanting to remain closer to its horror—a desire he refers to as the "fantasy of witnessing." Despite these efforts, Weissman believes that only individuals who lived through the camps can truly understand what it was like to be humiliated and what was torture. Primo Levi mentioned in his book words left by Jean Amery an Austrian philosopher, tortured at Auschwitz.

“Anyone who has been tortured remains tortured. . . . Anyone who has suffered torture never again will be able to be at ease in the world, the abomination of the annihilation is never extinguished. Faith in humanity, already cracked by the first slap in the face, then demolished by torture, is never acquired again.” (Levi, 1989, p. 15).

On the other hand, Julia Kristeva, a philosopher, believes that "binding affect to words in a public space" is necessary for working with trauma and the anguish that comes with being "othered." She particularly claims that "it is through imaginative interpretation that we can bind words and affects and heal wounds" (1995, p. 207).

The traumatic memory becomes a wound, a site of endless suffering and resistance to recovery if kept untold. Only by sharing traumatic memories, by mediating them into artistic pieces, can help traumatized people work through them. So, sites of memory, like museums, memorials, movies, holy places, rituals, and commemorations, contribute to the recognizability and sayability of the trauma.

1.2. Witnessing and Remembering Trauma

The difficulty with the traumatic events is that as victims died or survivors are speechless about the event, it is problematic to understand what really has happened in the way victims experienced it. As Caruth described it as an “unclaimed experience”, victims and survivors of the event need witnesses in any sense to be understood in the present. Witnessing is an important part of sharing memories, particularly traumatic events. This section will cover the significance of establishing a community that witnesses, as Kattago claimed “past experiences are narrated by witnesses, written into texts, carved into memorials and displayed in museums. Voices of the past reverberate in the stories and actions of the next generation.” (2020, p.15)

Geert Gooskens emphasizes in his observations on the image of the witness that “witnesses are living traces of the things that they have experienced” (2010, p. 155) and ‘through the witness, we are not only looking for information on an event, but we are also rather looking for contact with this event’ (2010, p. 154). People who have witnessed an important historical event in the context of having seen, heard, or participated, are known as witnesses of the past, “witnesses of the past have ‘been there’ and their bodies are – visibly or invisibly – marked by the events that they witnessed” (Jong, 2018, p. 32).

‘Martyrs’ is the Greek word for witness. Reflections on the Holocaust’s actions of witnessing and presenting evidence sometimes include another witness figure: the Martyr (Derrida 2000; Peters 2001; Agamben 2002; Margalit 2002; Assmann 2006). The martyr witness to a truth cannot directly prove their conviction. While the spoken word is the medium of the historical witness, death is the medium of the martyr’s testimony, as the martyr is both victim and witness. She or he is not only a bystander but a victim of violence. As Aleida Assmann points out, the martyr needs a second party to witness and attest to her or his martyrdom (2006, p. 88). The martyr’s death would be worthless without this secondary witness who interprets the martyr’s death as martyrdom. As a result, there are always two witnesses in a martyrdom: the martyr, who testifies to her or his conviction by dying; and the secondary witness, who witnesses the martyr’s death by telling his/her story. The Holocaust victims’ suffering has frequently been portrayed as martyrdom: both the victims’ deaths and the survivors’ survival have been assigned political, or educational significance.

Witnessing, and sharing his experiences with others, was an absolute necessity for Primo Levi in *Survival in Auschwitz* ‘The need to tell our story to “the rest”, to make “the

rest” participate in it, had taken on for us, before our liberation and after, the character of an immediate and violent impulse’ (1996, p. 9).

Another type of witnessing is video testimony. As Joanne Weiner Rudof notes, it was originally used by the partners of the Fortunoff Archive, who used the term 'testimony' instead of the phrase 'interview'

Right from the beginning, it was clear that the existing vocabulary was not suited to describe the process. The use of words like ‘interview’ and ‘interviewer’ would have generated a wrong impression. The founders, looking well ahead, decided on the concept of testimony in order to express more clearly the dimensions of the process (2009, p. 59-60).

The term 'testimony' conveys the idea that the Holocaust survivors included in the videos not only narrating their personal memories but more than that are also testifying of the past of millions of people. Most video testimonials of Holocaust survivors are also 'testimonial videos,' according to Geoffrey Hartman of the Fortunoff Archive, "the testimonies are also given in the name of the family members and, more generally, the millions who were murdered” (1996, p. 140). So, the participant in the video testimony is in a way a witness to history. The basic role of the historical witness is to educate. The educational role of witnesses to history can thus serve a variety of purposes as Jong explained: it can be intellectual, offering the public with information they didn't have before the interaction; it can be affective, causing them to react emotionally in ways they haven't before; it can be an end in itself, allowing the audience to learn historical details they didn't know before; and it can be a means to an end, such as when this historical knowledge is used to solve a problem (2018, p. 37).

The moral responsibility to testify comes with survival. Even though death might have been pointless, surviving could not have been such, for any reason. Citing Avishai Margalit (2002, p. 147), Aleida Assmann considers Holocaust survivors as "moral witnesses." The moral witness, according to Assmann, has traits with the martyr, and the "historical witness.” The moral witness has a truth-seeking goal, the purpose of this mission is to prevent the perpetrators' attempts to hide their crimes. Moral witnesses, like martyrs, portray the crimes of which they have been victims. But contrary to martyrs, they witness not because of their death but because of their survival. The moral witness testifies to "bad per se," as he has personally experienced it (Assmann, 2006, p. 88). She claims that the moral witness unites the traits of the martyr and those of the secondary witness to the martyr or the historical witness in herself or himself (Assmann, 2006, p.88). The moral witness

performatively establishes a moral community by his or her testimony. This moral community then continues a conversation that began in the courtroom during the criminal's trials. Providing testimony is thus a moral requirement, according to Assmann 'Forgetting protects the perpetrators and weakens the victims, which is why remembering in the form of giving testimony has become an ethical obligation and a form of retroactive resistance' (2006, p. 91).

Witnesses to the past can become witnesses to history when they testify about their memories in a public and their addressees are purposely drawn from beyond their community of relatives and friends. Discussions in different TV programs, biopics, TV documentaries, media articles, autobiographies, museums, and more, are all places where the testimony of historical witnesses may be publicly revealed. We're all witnesses to the past, seeing and experiencing events, only a few might remain witnesses to history: the few who testify in front of an audience (Jong, 2018, p. 38)

'Never again' was one of the key themes that Holocaust and Second World War exhibitions, museums, memorials, and documentaries intended to communicate in order to establish a moral community and prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

1.2.1. Haunting memories

The past remains painfully present and does not go away, traumatic experience does indeed have a 'different time conception' (Lorenz, 2010, p. 83). Time may appear to freeze or stop for those who have unrecognized historical wounds, they feel trapped or as if they are reliving a horrific experience. Indeed, past wounds haunt the present precisely because they are not recognized, but rather silenced. In the same way that ghosts may haunt a person but especially spaces, traumatic memories follow them time after time. There has been a lot of writing on trauma and the inability to move forward from it, that is why ghostly hauntings and trauma are considered strongly connected, though they are not the same.

Derrida argues against remaining in a traumatic past. The point is to recognize the unexpected ways that the past leaves its traces on the present. Derrida's attention to ghosts and the spectral presence of the past points towards a fusing of time whereby the past invades the present. By addressing past injustices, possibilities emerge for reparations and reconciliation, as well as for new beginnings in the future (Kattago, 2020, p. 30).

“Spectres blur or fuse past and present” (Kattago, 2020, p. 46), in a disconnected way, ghosts convey fragments of the past into the present. Ghosts may cause the time to seem to freeze or glitch as a result of their apparition. The goal is to get over a painful past in order to live completely in the present, not to remain fixated on trauma. Although a haunted past is frequently linked to a traumatic experience, Derrida contends that it is the current generation that must learn to cope with ghosts from the past. “Haunting raises specters, and it alters the experience of being in time, the way we separate the past, the present, and the future” (Gordon, 2008, p. xvi). The figure of the ghost is central to Derrida's hauntology “that which haunts like a ghost and, by way of this haunting, demands justice, or at least a response” (Blanco and Peeren, 2013, p. 9). Ghosts, according to Derrida, can make demands on humans, similarly, their haunting presence is related to historical ruptures that may be reconciled in the present. Derrida is an outspoken opponent of clinging to a traumatic past. The goal is to recognize how the past left its imprint on the present in unforeseen ways.

The time of the ‘learning to live,’ a time without tutelary present, would amount to this, to which the exordium is leading us: to learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts. To live otherwise, and better. No, not better, but more justly. But with them. (Derrida 1994: xviii)

Chakrabarty, on the other hand, emphasizes the significance of acknowledging the presence of "historical wounds" that have gone unnoticed and unheard. Historical wounds are brought into the present by demanding that individuals recognize injustices perpetrated in the past, “Historical wounds are not the same as historical truths, but the latter constitute a condition of possibility for the former” (Chakrabarty, 2007, p. 77). By confronting historical injustices, opportunities for reconciliation and healing, as well as new beginnings in the future, arise. While appealing to lived experience, the historian's responsibility is augmented or even supplanted by that of the witness, who demands awareness of injustice in narrating his or her historical experience.

2. WAYS OF REMEMBERING THE TRAUMATIC PAST

Most people find it meaningful to pay tributes to those who perished in mass killings during the war. Although each individual dies alone, death because of war leads to a shared yearning to comprehend and give meaning to a loss, as Koselleck says. ‘Every dying person dies alone. But organized mass killing leads to commonalities and to differences in how survivors work through the experience and remember the war’ (2018, p. 216). The act of remembering together is known as commemoration. As indicated by Siobhan Kattago (2020, p. 8), “commemoration, as a way of remembering together at a memorial or museum, distills the complexity of the past into symbols and narrative, thus creating a slower sacred time that is open to reflection.” Sodaro, on the other hand, claims that:

Much more than a memorial or a museum, its multidimensionality is evidence of a new approach to remembering and dealing with the negative past coming out of the pervasive political regret of the day. Remembering is no longer simply about the victims, though this is central; today, remembering past violence strives to activate that memory to build a community around democratic ideals that run counter to the persecutions and oppressions of the past, intending to prevent future violence and victimization (Sodaro, 2018, p. 35).

It's also conceivable that commemoration may act as a caution for the future, as a “drive for justice” (Derrida, 1997, p. 130). Humans have always sought methods to remember and commemorate individuals who have passed away throughout their history. The need to strike a balance between remembrance and attempts to preserve and chronicle what happened, as well as the hurry and devotion with which it has been done, is new. According to Jeffrey Blustein, there is a “duty of justice” (Blustein, 2015, p. 75), that is, the ongoing moral need to remember the dead is matched with remembrance, to preserve the past in order to shape the present and future.

We interact and come face to face with a depiction of the past when we visit a memorial or monument. A memorial might be a place of reflection or an inconspicuous component of the national environment. Memorials and museums purposefully slow the flow of time so that visitors can discover points of reflection here between past and present. A rather slowdown of regular time allows for reflection on previous events, the dead, and the intergenerational link.

2.1. Museums

Museums are places where memory is condensed and congealed. They are designed to elicit emotional, affective, and empathic reactions in addition to memory and reasoning in the form of historical understanding; this is a vast mission for memorial museums because they deal with the most sensitive topics. Sodaro (2018) claimed that memorial museums have three main functions:

First, the role as a mechanism of truth-telling about history and preserving the past; second, their 'memorial' function, which is to serve as a space of healing and repair; in this, they are a form of symbolic reparation that seeks to give acknowledgment to the victims and serve as a solemn space of mourning and remembrance in the effort to help heal and repair a community and the final function embodies what is most new and unique about these museums and is the very reason that this hybrid form has emerged: they are intended to morally educate visitors to internalize an ethic of 'never again' (p.162-163).

Therefore, memorial museums serve as a witness of the past and preserve the truth as a record of what happened in a way to prevent future genocide, violence, and abuses. "The museum as a cultural and educational form in society is charged, at least in part, with this function of preserving the past and its physical remains" (Sodaro, 2018, p.164). Documents, photographs, films, and artifacts are materials that remain of the past and serve as proof of what happened, especially when dealing with violence, human rights abuses, and genocide. In this scheme, "musealization functions like a neutron bomb: all life will have been drained from the planet, but the museum still stands, not as a ruin, but as a memorial" (Huysen, 1995, p. 30). Memorials and museums are infused with sacred time and serve as 'modern cathedrals,' as Jay Winter (2012) proposes. This is the reason behind Auschwitz and other memorial museums related to World War II, or in the case of Kosovo the reason behind Ferdonijas house-museum.

2.2. Memorials

The attempt to memorialize is related to the desire to commemorate. For that reason, humans found ways to remember and honor those who have died.

"The earliest Holocaust memorials were makeshift markers erected in the camps and on the sites of massacres and battles by the prisoners and survivors who wished to remember those who had perished and by the American, Soviet, and British soldiers who liberated the camps and wished to remember their comrades who were killed in the brutal war" (Young, 1993, p. 49).

These wooden obelisks, stone monuments, and handcrafted plaques were the earliest attempts to commemorate the victims before the Holocaust was officially recognized as such and far before its full impact was realized. Along with the need to remember, there was also an intent to preserve and document the injustices. The goal was the same back then as it is now, to "cultivate the memory and promote historical education . . . particularly by means of commemorating the victims, preserving the relics and documenting the history of the concentration camp at Majdanek and the death camp in Bełżec" (Sodaro, 2018, p. 32). In the case of Kosovo, many memorials were built to keep the memories alive, to show the public statement of what the past has been as Hodgkin and Radstone assert, "memorials and museums represent public statements about what the past has been, and how the present should acknowledge it" (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, p. 12).

2.3. Photographs

Photographic images freeze or fix that moment when taken, as John Berger claims, "the camera, unlike the human eye, can fix the appearance of the event, it removes its appearance from the flow of appearances and preserves it" (2009, p. 54).

Thus, Barthes believes that photos provide evidence and truth. 'Photography offers an immediate presence to the world – a co-presence; but this presence is not only of a political order (Barthes, 1981, p. 113), it is also a metaphysical order' (2009, p. 84). This documentary component of photography attests to the fact that something happened. The photographs may, in fact, outlast the existence of a person or a location. 'Every photograph is a certificate of presence,' says Barthes (2009, p. 87). Photographs of people and places that no longer exist conjure the ethereal presence of persons who are no longer present.

The photograph proves that someone or something existed in the past. 'The photograph does not necessarily say what is no longer, but only and for certain what has been' (Barthes, 2009, p. 85). Moreover, photography is a type of magical process for Barthes, which freezes time and generates a new form of trance-like presence. So, different from

previous ways of remembering, photographs reflect exactly that moment, freezing it and flashing back it in time.

Thus, memories are continually in alternation. When memories are mediated by photos or 'memory objects,' they gain additional levels of complexity. Photographs, in this view, generate a multiplicity of interpretations in the present rather than evoking a 'pure' recollection of the event (Jackson, 2020). Kuhn explained how photos to aid in the formation of such meanings,

Every photograph contains a range of possible meanings, from those relating to cultural conventions of image production to those that have to do with the social and cultural contexts in which the image has been produced and is being used. I find that these meanings seldom yield themselves fully to a surface reading (Kuhn, 2000, p. 183).

Being aware of the variety of interpretations an image might create is an essential part of critical memory practice. Therefore, photographs can be interpreted as "restless images" that are constantly "changing meaning and moving forward" (Sturken, 1999, p. 194).

Images are more than mere transmitters of a person's memories of previous experiences; they assist in creating realities. Photographic pictures may provide the impression of fixing particular moments, but they do not present a 'pure' representation of these events. Marianne Hirsch suggests that "Photographs are fragments of stories, never stories in themselves" (Hirsch 1997, p. 83). The importance of photographs related to memories, especially cultural memory, was pointed out by cultural theorist Annette Kuhn. Kuhn suggests that "a photograph is a form of evidence, but not in a directly mimetic sense of mirroring the real or even in a self-evidential relationship between itself and what the photograph may show" (Kuhn, 2002, p.13). Thus, the formation of memory, both personal and collective, is intimately connected to photography as a medium, so it should not be forgotten the importance that photographs have in the active participation of spectators by making sense; meanings and accordingly remembering. The act of remembering, according to Sontag, is an ethical act that ties us to prior generations, 'remembering *is* an ethical act, has ethical value in and of itself. Memory is, achingly, the only relation we can have with the dead' (Sontag, 2003, p. 115). Photographs, as Sontag put it, provide 'an ethics of seeing' (2003, p. 3). Moreover, photographs play already the same role as words, as Ricoeur called the "narrative function," both are texts that can tell a story, including a story as complicated as that of one's life (Ricoeur, 1981, p. 277). Annette Kuhn (1995, p. 13) explained that memory relies on "the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility

of the image.” The need for photographs as mediated memories is related to the fact that people have been reliant on various material objects to preserve and facilitate their remembering of the past, more than that to testify the truth through them "See with your own eyes! It happened, and it looked like this" (Bounia and Lambert, 2013, p. 184).

2.4. Biopics

Biopics or biographical pictures is the term used to refer to films representing or commemorating the lives of people from the past or the present. Their role was crucial when representing the trauma and postwar memories. "Commemorative cultures are always based on identity-building contents—contents traditionally transmitted and consolidated," said Moser (2018, p. 52), "naturally, cultures of memory are never totally homogeneous; however, a commonplace of experience and expectation connects people and creates collective memories" she continues. Today, broadcasting corporations, filmmakers, and funding organizations cultivate an extended visual memory and create a long-term effect on commemorative culture. Various studies demonstrate that biographical films or biopics elicit more attention than biographies presented in written form. However, there also should be a distinction between documentary films and biographical pictures. The first one is related to historical facts in a non-emotional manner, while the second one is related more to memories and emotions, "while most documentary films attempt to describe the outbreak of the war in a non-emotional manner, biographical films are more concerned with expressing emotions and capturing moods" (Plantinga, 2009). Thus, one important strength of biopics is to enable viewers to build up empathy with the victims.

The next chapter will introduce the historical background of the '90s to clarify how the situation led to the explosion (war), and the main events that occurred. The following three chapters explain how Kosovars manifested and materialized those memories in different ways through exhibits, photographs, biopics, theatrical dramas, and memorials. The need to confront these haunting memories, these traumatic events, to deal with the cultural wound by translating them through imaginative interpretations, such as art, exhibits, and memorials, was a common practice within Kosovar's memories of the '90s period.

3. CULTURAL MEMORY

Memory is often associated with recalling events from the past. Memory allows people to learn from their previous experiences and adapt what they've learned about current situations. It is an important aspect of one's identity. Many types of research about memory have been conducted in different fields such as cognitive psychology, cultural studies, neuroscience, philosophy, literary studies, history, and more. That is why memory is recognized "within a kind of multidimensional space" (Sutton, Harris, Barnier, 2010, p. 221).

Memories can change over time. The human brain works in the way that it reconstructs stories through the process of remembering. Nora pointed out very precisely what is being remembered? Where he said that remembering, in a sense, is memory itself (Nora, 1989, p. 16). These two phenomena are related to each other; they coexist. Remembering is an interactive process of interpretation and reinterpretation of the past, while the memory is called "secondary-revision" by Annette Kuhn (Kuhn, 1995), which negotiates ongoingly with the past, present, and the future. She presented the notion of "memory work" to better explain the mechanism of remembering. Kuhn explained how she understands the memory work, and she claims, "an active practice of remembering which takes an inquiring attitude towards the past and the activity of its (re)construction through memory" (Kuhn, 1995, p. 157). Kuhn's concept of memory work emphasizes the connection between remembering as an act of interpretation as well as active "research" into past events and the objects of the past, such as photos.

Memory does not solely cover the individual but as a social being, the culture and society s/he lives in. Memory encompasses our social way being in the form of collective memory which is defined as "recollections of a shared past "that are retained by members of a group, large or small, that experienced it" (Schuman and Scott 1989:361–62). In fact, Seyla Benhabib (1996:92) writes "who we are is revealed in the narratives we tell ourselves and of our world shared with others. Narrativity is a constitutive part of identity." Therefore, narratives of our past for example the trauma that people experienced, and narratives of the present are crucial components of collective memory and identity.

On the other hand, the process through which the passage of time accelerates our contemporary culture's forgetting is crowned by media. Reality is dematerialized by the media, which breaks the relationship between individual memory and collective memory. We become spectators, vicariously witnesses to the current pageant rather than active

participants. Media increasingly promotes the creation of information while also establishing digital archives from which material may be accessed at any time. With so much information readily available on the internet, the value of a long memory as a personal trait appears to be diminishing. The search for knowledge that incorporates solid analytical judgment into facts suffers as a result. Connerton's consideration of the elimination of spaces that sustain collective identity complements his analysis of how the speeding of time contributes to cultural forgetfulness (2009). As Connerton concludes "Our world is hypermnesic in many of its cultural manifestations, and post-mnemonic in the structures of the political economy. The cultural symptoms of hypermnesia are caused by a political-economic system which systemically generates a post-mnemonic culture – a modernity which forgets" (2009, p. 147). This in turn raises the role of ways of remembering the traumatic past through cultural memory for current and also future generations.

Researchers of memory are intrigued by sites of memory, which are defined as places where groups of people participate in public engagement to demonstrate "a collective shared knowledge... of the past, on which a group's sense of unity and individuality is based" (Assmann, 1995, p. 130-31). The community that attends such sites acquires previous meanings associated with the event while also adding new ones. Their work is essential for the display and maintenance of memorial places. Sites of memory lose their original force as such groupings separate or fade, and they may go away permanently. As a result, researchers are more fascinated by recollection as a societal activity rather than memory as a person's ability to recall or reimagine the past.

It is not clear why some memories maintain over time while some change. The theoretician Jan Assmann provides the answer to this question by making a differentiation between "communicative memory" and "cultural memory." The first one refers "primarily to everyday actions, interactions, and communications between members of a group" (Assmann, 1995, p. 126); that is why it is characterized as "formlessness, willfulness and disorganization" (Assmann, 1995, p.127). On the other hand, cultural memory is more organized as "a collective experience crystallized, whose meaning when touched upon, may suddenly become accessible again across millennia" (Assmann, 1995, p.126). Cultural memory, according to Assmann (2008, p. 110), is "a type of institution," implying that it is "exteriorized, objectified, and stored away in symbolic forms," which is why it obtains a sort of fixity allowing the memories resist the effect of time. Cultural memory can be crystallized and remain through objects such as photographs, museums, biopics, and memorials. Even though this type of memory is fixed and objectified in symbolic form, it does not mean that

the meaning related to that object will also be fixed. Assmann (2008) pointed out that cultural memory is a conduit for multiple interpretations and perceptions. Even though cultural objects such as memorials are categorized as fixed, cultural memory is continually in a transition, interpreted, and reinterpreted depending on the circumstances and context in which it exists. So, cultural memory can be understood as a form of collective memory shared by a group of individuals. Objects like museums and historical monuments are commonly used to preserve cultural memory. Cultural memory is the longest-lasting kind of memory and may survive for thousands of years.

Related to the wartime experiences of her parents, Marianne Hirsch raises some important questions wondering why she could recall certain moments from her parents' wartime experiences in such detail yet only have a few clear memories of her childhood, she continues asking why could she define the pre-World War I Czernowitz and interwar Cernauti streets, residences, and schools where they grew up, the spot where they evaded eviction, the knock on the door in the dark of night, the house in the ghetto in which they waited for deportation waivers-all scenes and spaces that took place before my birth-when she had lost the textures, smells, and tastes of such urban and personal spots in Bucharest where she spent her childhood. Hirsch explained how long it took her to identify these symptoms "the magnitude of my parents' recollections and the ways in which I felt crowded out by them." (2012, p.4). These moments from their past, in fact, were composed "of dreams and nighttime fears for, as a child, it was at night, particularly, that I imagined myself into the lives they were passing down to me, no doubt without realizing it" (Hirsch, 2012, p.4).

Furthermore, Hirsch suggests the term "postmemory" to describe the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch, 2012, p.5), she continues "postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch, 2012, p.5). Thus, without even experiencing such traumatic events, as an important component of past narratives and consequently identity, can be recalled with the help of imagination.

Cultural memory performs a significant role in crystallizing shared memories, giving a sense of the past, as well as the ideals and conventions of the group to which people belong. It also establishes a collective identity as well as a way of transmitting that identity to new members. Remembrances of past trauma experienced by groups of victims may be the most

profound types of cultural memory. Cultural memory's key purpose is not to dwell on the past, either happy or tragic. Instead, it is to utilize what you've learned from past failures to prevent repeating the same mistakes time after time, this is referred to as "remembering forward" by Aleida Assman, an English professor who has researched memory theory since the 1960s. Cultural memory allows nations to remain, individuals to adjust to their cultures, and cultures to respond to different circumstances by preserving remnants of what has happened previously.

Cultural memory is the longest-lasting kind of memory and may survive for thousands of years. Cultural artifacts like museums and historical monuments are commonly used to preserve cultural memory. Literature, films, visual culture, monuments, ceremonies, and other symbols are often used to transfer along cultural memory from one generation to the next. The importance of sites of memory, cultural objects, and artifacts, such as photographs, museums, biopics, and memorials, will be discussed below in the next chapter.

4. DISCUSSION OF WORKS OF ARTS REPRESENTING KOSOVAR'S MEMORIES OF 90S

While researching publications about Kosovar's memories during the 90s, I found many writings dedicated to them, some of which I will give a brief review, so to provide an idea of what has been done until now in this field.

Academics and feminist activists Linda Gusia, Nita Luci, Laura Pollozhani and Stephanie Schwandner-Silvers published an article *Fragments on Heroes, Artists and Interventions: Challenging Gender Ideology and Provoking Active Citizenship through the Arts in Kosovo*, where they discussed the artistic project *Thinking of You* of Alketa Xhafa Mripa. Authors in this article were more focused on the position of women after the war, and how the history and narratives were occupied by male figures “in commemorations of war-time struggle, the role of women is largely side lined, and instead the narrative is constructed around male figures, enforcing a patriarchal society where (ethnic Albanian) men can practice their citizenship, confirmed through their ostensible ownership of the public space” (Gusia, et al, 2020, p.10-11). They criticized the language that was used in the parliament and hesitation of politicians to take steps to support sexual violated women during wartime when voices were raised in 2012, while discussing some artistic interventions and protests that were done by feminists during that time they claim that “since then fighting stigma has become the focus of awareness raising campaigns by several CSOs, especially those providing support to survivors” (Gusia, et al, 2020, p. 21). An artistic work which was in the main focus in this article as mentioned above was *Thinking of you*, which was dedicated to survivors of war-time sexual violence. This installation was staged in the football stadium of Prishtina, where thousands of dresses were hung on clotheslines. For this installation, dresses were collected from donations all over Kosovo, the author of the project claimed the idea behind this project “the women to feel the solidarity of the nation coming together and create a calming act of letting go of the stigma surrounding wartime sexual violence” (Xhafa-Mripa, 2017). The process of collecting dresses had an impact on society as authors explained “in the context of refusal, or even denial, to collectively speak or accept sexual violence as part of the experience of war, donating a skirt or dress to the installation was experienced as an act of solidarity that broke the silence and made recognition possible” (Gucia, et al, 2020, p. 23), while claiming that artistic interventions should not be seen as provocations, but rather as inspiration for critical thinking.

Many publications discussed the war-time sexual violence, like *Authors of their own transitional justice: survivors of wartime sexual violence* and *Seeking Justice for Wartime Sexual Violence in Kosovo: Voices and Silence of Women* by Anna Di Lellio. In these articles the Author discussed mostly about the history of how the topic of sexual violence during war-time was shot down for more than a decade. Same as Gusia et al, she discussed the domination of male figures in *Seeking for Justice for Wartime Sexual Violence in Kosovo*:

public space was filled by the memory of a liberation war fought by a few male heroes who had rescued the nation not only from foreign oppression, but also from the shame of acquiescence and victimization. There was no room left for women—not even for women veteran fighters” (2016, p. 11).

In *Authors of their own* she discussed how this topic was brought into table by women and how they “have been the authors of their own transitional justice” (Di Lellio, 2021 p.105). Mentioning some of the conferences that were held to discuss about this topic, like the Women’s Peace Coalition Conference in 2007, she emphasis the importance of empathy, when the confrontation between Kosovar and Serbian happen, as Di Lellio wrote “at the same conference, these activists (Serbian) publicly apologized to the Albanian participants on behalf of their state: it was a momentous event that disrupted the meeting” (Di Lellio and McCurn, 2013, p. 129–130). She continues “no longer could anyone hear the speaker talk, ‘Albanian women were crying. Serbian women were crying. It was such a touching moment’. The event was televised, and Lola’s mother, who was watching from home, cried too. She felt that because those women showed “empathy towards the victims of war” (Di Lellio, 2021, p. 95).

Same as Gusia et al, Di Lellio discussed the project “Thinking of you” where dresses were hanged on clotheslines in the stadium of Pristina, dedicated to survivors of sexual violence during the war, thought the silence of women for more than a decade to Di Lellio is strategic choice rather than due to unrecognized trauma “the silence that ensued did not mean inaction for the women’s rights movement. Silence should be seen in this context as a strategic choice” (Di Lellio, 2021 p.100).

The project Thinking of You caught the attention of one of the foremost scholars in the field of memory, gender, and trauma Marianne Hirsch, as she claimed:

Something important is being exchanged as Kosovo citizens come together in the acts of epidermal touch and connection staged in this project. The transmission of traumatic memory occurs across class, gender and generation, across space and time. As dresses are moved from the closet to the

football stadium, trauma is dislodged from the confines of individual bodies and families. A painful past is brought into the present socially through gesture, touch and affect, and also through the digital acts of transfer on YouTube. And with this greater acknowledgement and dissemination something is transformed (2017, p. 61).

A perspective on cultural diplomacy, and a critique that state stood after artists to transmit a diplomatic message through their art was problematized by Murati and Schwandner-Sievers while discussing Kosovo's participation at the Venice biennale in the chapter of *An exercise in legitimacy: Kosovo's participation at the Venice biennale*. They discussed some of installations since Kosova could participate for the first time in 2013, in 55th Venice Biennale, when was represented by Petrit Halilaj. Authors explained how the project looked like:

Entering the Kosovo pavilion, the visitor encountered tree trunks to form a cave-like, dark shelter, creating a nest-like structure elevated above the floor, with a pathway carved through the middle. The visitor could step in and move through this oversized 'nest', surrounded by the scent of earth and the sounds of two real-life canaries hopping among the twigs. For this piece, the artist, Halilaj, had transported original soil and branches from his hometown Runik, to Venice (2021, p.85).

As the curator for this work, Katrin Rhomberg, explained:

Petrit Halilaj's artistic practice is deeply rooted in a constant search of what reality is and how reality might be represented through art. His memories of a rural childhood, his personal experience of war, destruction, exodus and displacement are the very basis of his reflections on life and the human condition. (E-flux 2012, s. p.)

In 2015, at the 56th Venice Biennale, Kosovo was represented by Flaka Haliti, with the exhibition 'Speculating on the Blue', which it took "a point of departure the fenced-off United Nations building in Prishtina. Metal barriers, sat on a blue ground and steeped in blue light, are a reference to the obstacles which any borders pose for people, nations, mobility and democracy" (Murati and Schwandner-Sievers, 2021, p.89).

They continue discussing 2017 Biennale, when Kosovo's exhibition was titled 'Lost and Found' dedicated to more than 1600 persons missing from Kosovo war, and was done by the artist Sislej Xhafa, where a wooden phone with a sign 'lost' was shown, as authors continue discussing the details that were published by Venice insider:

The telephone never rings [which] refers to the families who are waiting to receive a phone call with news about their missing relative. The wooden pallets and the plastic wrap allude to the movement of people across the globe. At the opening days of the exhibition, a telall – a town crier figure – periodically announced the names of the missing. (2017)

The final Kosovar artist they discussed, is Alban Muja, in the 58th Venice Biennale of 2019. For the Biennale, he also chose to present a theme dealing with Kosovo's painful past. The authors support their idea that all artists that represented Kosovo in Biennale keen to portray state's diplomatic mission, "repeatedly, Muja expressed his sense of responsibility to the people of Kosovo and of representing the country" (Murati and Schwandner-Sievers, 2021, p.95).

Thought this chapter is more like a critique that state stood after artists to transmit a diplomatic message through their art, authors try to give an excuse at the end as they claim that firstly "it should be remembered that, every successful form of representing one's nation on an international stage, not just in the case of Kosovo, becomes a site where people express their inward and outward group tendencies" and secondly that "the Venice Biennale, itself, embodies the tension between cosmopolitan and national identity negotiations: the artists are expected to represent a global act whereas, in fact, they represent a nation-state" (Murati and Schwandner-Sievers, 2021, p. 101). As a conclusion the philosopher Boris Buden asserted that "it doesn't make any sense to sniff out nationalism among the works of contemporary art, presented for instance at the Venice Biennial. It is the Venice Biennial itself, its very paradigm of (national) presentation of art, which is the best example of contemporary nationalism today" (Buden, 2007, 17).

As discussed above most of writings were dedicated to actions done for sexual-violence and artistic installations as a voice raised to this issue, while the representation in Venice Biennale was treated in political context. Less was written about any exhibition dedicated to Kosovar's memories of 90's, that is why in this chapter I choose to discuss "The City is Everywhere" by Eliza Hoxha, that took place at Venice Biennale in 2018, I will continue discussing the story of Ferdonije, a mother who lost four sons and husband during

the war (some of them are still missing), I will continue analyzing postmemories while discussing about “Family Album” of Muja, this chapter will be closed with the discussion about exile and artistic works dedicated to it.

4.1. The City Is Everywhere

One of the artistic installations that represented Kosovo in the 16th Venice Biennale on 2018, that I chose to talk about, is “The City is Everywhere” done by the artist and architect professor Eliza Hoxha, who is dedicated to Kosovo’s memories.

4.1.1. The background of the idea

As mentioned in the chapter above, the '90s under the Milosevic regime in Kosovo were the most challenging years for ethnic Albanians. Even under such circumstances, Albanians found ways to develop life, thought parallel one as Hertzberger would explain; "we as humans are in close relationship with our built environment and having the freedom and possibility to adapt it to our needs is one of the ways to achieve also our fulfilment" (Hertzberger, 2000).

Kosovar Albanians were organized and started to collect 3% income tax from their community and Albanian Diaspora to develop a system of education, culture, and healthcare. As Maliqaj mentioned,

"When a large wave of Kosovars moved to the West in the '90s, and the Diaspora reached almost half a million, the survival of the clans and the Kosovo society, in general, was ensured... The '90s saw the rise of the so-called 3 percent central fund, dedicated to financing parallel institutions in Kosovo and the Government of Kosovo in exile. The fund was established through self-declared contributions amounting to 3 percent of the revenues of Kosovo entrepreneurs, shopkeepers and traders, as well as from the diaspora" (2018, p. 57).

Banned to be used public spaces; they used private houses for activities such schools, hospitals donated by citizens. Hoxha claimed that during that period the city centre was not a space that could be used by everyone anymore, "the entire Albanian community shrank into private houses. The house became a school, a restaurant, a promotional activity space, an office, an art gallery, a hospital, and a home at the same time" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 25). Thus, the city life merged into the city's periphery, not in the squares or public spaces as it used to be.

The community was divided into two, Albanians that moved to suburbs and Serbs that had the chance to use public spaces even though less than 10% of the population. Squares were used by Albanians only when they were protesting and raising their voices against the system and government.

Under repression, using private space as public made the house a metaphor for the city, which in turn became a net of heterotopic spaces, neither here nor there, existing parallelly with the institutions and public spaces as delineated by the Milošević regime. Every house provided a mirror image of the city. They could be seen as places where things found their ground and stability at a time of uncertainty, violence, and instability in Kosovo (Hoxha, 2018, p.25).

As stated by Nora "memory takes root in the concrete, spaces, gestures, images, and objects" (1989, p.9); Llonçari and Gjinolli revoked the memories of that time,

I had not walked through the main street for quite some time. Everyone avoided it. I would only cross it when there was no other alternative. The main street had long been the heart of the city. Almost everyone had their own favourite spot, a tree or a kiosk. Generation after generation, it was there where individuals and groups had their signatures. Thus, the identity of the centre had taken shape, as individuals shaped their personalities in the city" (Llonçari, 2018, p. 61)

While Gjinolli continues telling how they found other city paths to move because they could not use same ones they did until then:

"we no longer used the paths we used to walk on our daily routine, no longer had coffee in the cafés and restaurants we used to. We had to come--up with other places, invent our new landmarks and places of gathering, where members of the other community would not come. New coffee places were opened by Albanians, providing the new city spaces with hang-out places. However, this was a refuge from the daily policing of the city" (2018, p. 92).

Not only the public spaces were banned for Albanians in Kosovo of that time, but also the Albanian tv programs broadcasting was banned. Choiceless but not hopeless, they found a way to be in touch with the world through satellite antennas.

Deprived of media outlets and information in the Albanian language, Albanian families bought satellite dishes. One could pin down with precision the apartments that belonged to Albanians, and that was simply because of the

satellite dishes, the white circle-looking satellites would hang in their balconies. Very soon, the urban landscape turned into a garden of white mushrooms. For Albanians, the city was everywhere where these satellite dishes hung, and private houses were open to the public, but not the city in itself (Hoxha, 2018, p.25).

Based on these elements of how life was conducted in the '90s, Eliza Hoxha created the concept of how to represent Kosova in 16th Architecture Biennale of Venice in 2018. The city is everywhere, as she would call it, had these main elements were also mentioned in the book published the same year; the house, "the Pavilion is a house always in the making; unfinished because it acquires new public functions. The house is compensation for the public space that is lacking. The house has twofold functions, while the interior has the appearance of the room and it is used as one, it is also a public institution, "the mirror" the inside space is surrounded by mirrors to create an effect of extended space and openness as a metaphor of psychological freedom, but not the physical one as such since the mirror is yet a physical barrier and juxtaposition, you are there, but you are not there, you are free inside but still occupied, "the satellite." The ceiling is clouded by satellites, a metaphor of gloomy days where we found light, nourishing our souls with otherworldly information coming from these dishes. Our minds were free, and our heads were satellites, "the carpet" has been and still is one of the central elements of the Kosovo Albanian dwelling; the living room is structured and organized around the carpet. The Pavilion interiorizes exteriority, and to do this, and it is not a matter of chance that it uses the carpet. "The carpet is placed in the Pavilion to bring home-like warmth, thereby representing the gathering space of our homes" (2018, p. 29) claimed Hoxha.

These four elements will be discussed in detail in the following pages.

4.1.2. The Carpet; Making Unhomely Experiences Homely

"Do you take your shoes off when you enter a home?"

I do.

I took my shoes off also when I entered school."

(Hoxha, 2018, p. 26)



Picture 1. The Carpet in The City is Everywhere. Source: Photo by Francesco Galli courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia.

The floor of "The city is everywhere" was covered by the carpet, as it is seen in Picture 1, that is the sign of the home-like warmth of Albanian living rooms and represents the gathering space of their houses. As Hoxha said, "the carpet is placed in the Pavilion to bring home-like warmth, thereby representing the entire city inside the mirror-box" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 37). The carpet symbol gives the feeling of home and warmth; in the Kosovar tradition, all house rooms are paved. The carpet symbolizes living within a house because uninhabited houses do not leave the carpets lying on the floor, they usually fold them.

To design this carpet, long research on a field was conducted to identify all the locations of the houses that served during the '90s as schools and university spaces. As Hoxha mentioned,

the carpet itself is a mental map of the city of Pristina in the '90s. The map brings forward the spatial distribution of the schools-houses in the city's periphery as a contribution of Kosovo Albanians towards the education of ten generations expelled from the regular education system. Thus, the whole city became an education campus in itself and the house a compensation for the city (2018, p. 37).

The dual map represented in this map, as it is seen in Picture 2, on black lines and dots, shows the official public sphere. In contrast, the red dots and lines show peripheral Albanian spaces such as private schools

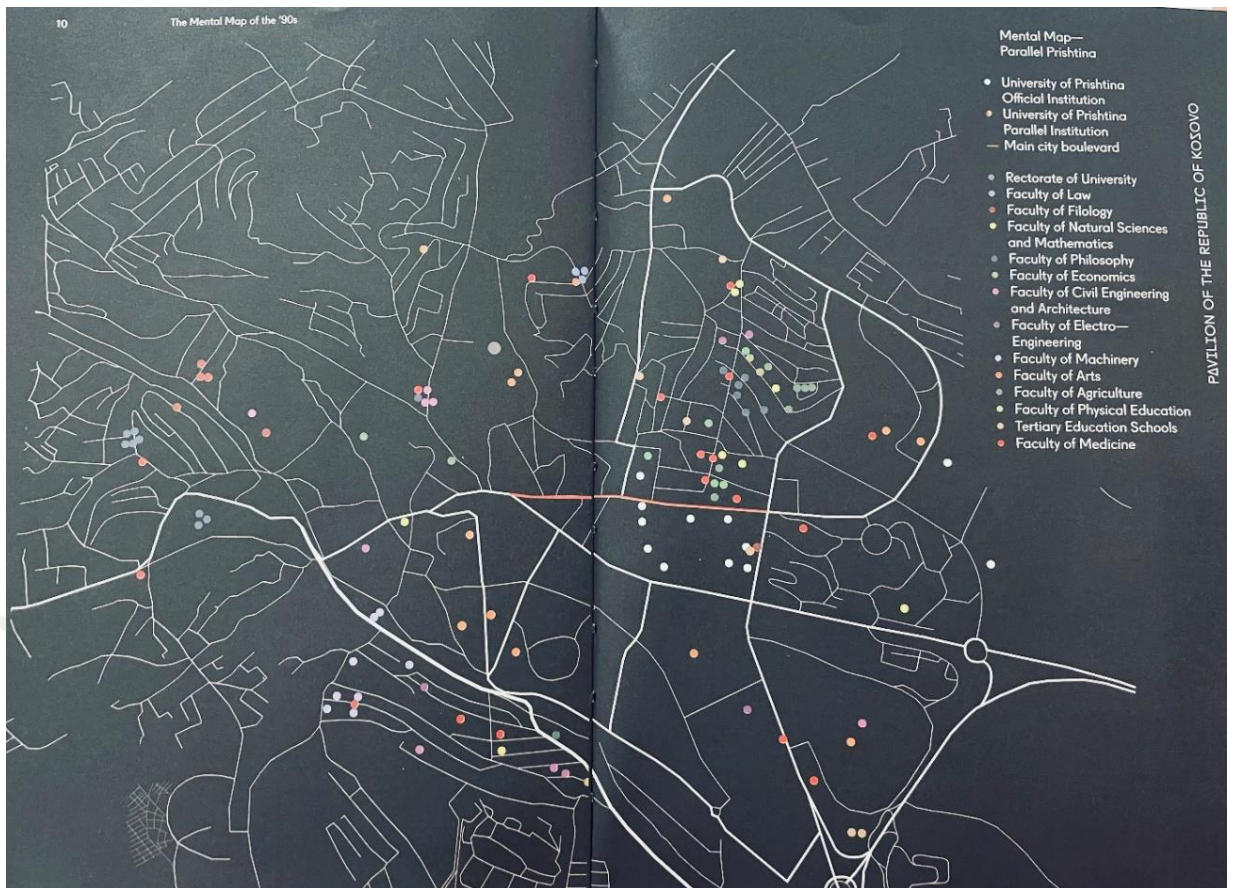
The black lines and dots in the core area of the city represent the official public sphere, while all the red dots around the city centre and in the peripheral Albanian neighbourhoods of the city represent private houses turned into schools (Hoxha, 2018, p. 37).



Picture 2. Spatial distribution of university official institutions (black) and parallel system institutions (red) during the '90s in Prishtina. Source: Hoxha, E. (2018). The city is Everywhere. p. 40-41

The detailed list of parallel faculties and their location within the city of Prishtina is seen in another picture included in the book, as attached below as Picture 3. Hoxha said that:

if we were to look at the mental map of the Parallel Prishtina of those years, we see the entire city as a University Campus spread through the residential areas in which the separation between the public and the private had been suspended (2018, p. 232).



Picture 3. Mental Map- Parallel Prishtina. Source: Hoxha, E. (2018). *The city is Everywhere*. p. 46-47.

This carpet was weaved in a traditional technique by a group of women from a village in the Has region called Gjonaj.

4.1.3. The mirror

"As part of this generation, I experienced the '90s as a broken and fragmented mirror, unclear and disfigured images with many shortages. Multiple truths scattered across the periphery, too much uncertainty and insecurity and suspended dreams, which today need to be brought together to solve the mosaic and understand the importance of each particle that constitutes the whole."

(Hoxha, 2018, p. 231)



Picture 4. Mirrors on The City is Everywehre. Drawing by Kosovo Pavilion at Venice Biennale 2018. Source: <https://www.archipanic.com/city-is-everywhere-kosovo-venice-2018/>

The room of The City is Everywhere surrounded by mirrors. When entered, it gave the impression of being a vast area, yet it was only a 16m² studio, as it is seen in the Picture 4. As a metaphor for psychological freedom, mirrors gave an illusion of expanded space and openness, but not real freedom, because the mirror is a physical barrier and juxtaposition, as Hoxha explained the idea "you are there, but you are not there. You are free inside but still occupied" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 29). Thus, she mentioned that

The mirror of the '90s may provide some answers. However, of course, they come as different images of reality and imagination from the safe havens of the time. However, there is also a common denominator to be found, since in the Mirror of the '90s, individual faces were less important compared to the emerging collective desire represented ubiquitously in the form of activism, solidarity, and love for each other, for the country and the wanted free space (Hoxha, 2018, p. 231).

The mirror explains the best figuratively how Kosovo of the '90s was out of public spaces while the ethnic Albanian society found ways to build their own space in the suburbs.

As Lefebvre in *The Production of space* claims, "space is exactly what determines who we are as people and to change our life, we must first change space" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 190). However, to Kosovars, this change came to their lives in the '90s, in the form of exclusion from public space.



Picture 5. The feeling of a big space in The City is Everywhere: Kosovo Pavilion at Venice Biennale 2018 – Source: photo by @tait_fritz via IG.

Though it may appear utopian to some, such spatial compensation by Albanians banned from public life in the '90s was done basically by heterotopic solutions serving as survival spaces apart from the political systems of the period, explains Hoxha. At the same time, she makes a parallelization with Foucault's ideas, as he emphasizes how these "places-non-places," or such heterotopic spaces, mitigate the consequences of authority because of his intense attention to knowledge. Power and its spatial implications (Foucault, 1967). Such locations, he claims, may be found in various cultures as a type of functional utopia, as places where the real and unreal are faced, embodied, discussed, and represented while being contested or upended at the same time. This is precisely how can be understood the '90s

Parallel Pristina. The time when houses were opened up and offered to combine the public by merging, reshaping, shrinking, or even erasing the borderline in between private and the public, the closed and the open, the intimate and the transparent, as Hoxha explained even better "you are at school, but you are not in a school; you are in a house, but it is more than just a house, a kind of a mixed experience, which according to Foucault can be interpreted through the Mirror" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 232).

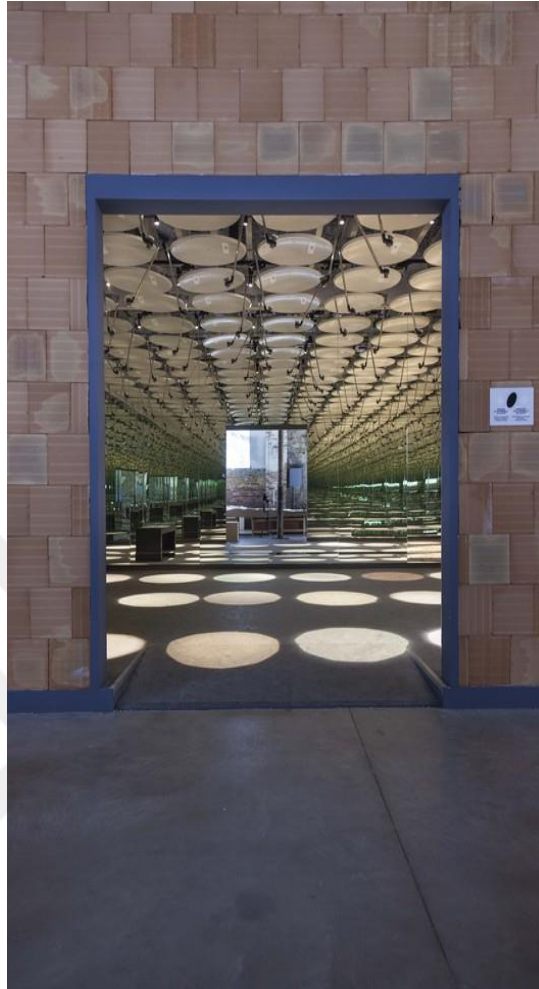
The mirror is, after all, a utopia since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror" (Foucault, 1967).

In the article Kosovo's Reflection in the Mirror, Eliza Hoxha claimed that "this is how we survived. We were akin to shadows roaming the city, coming to life by taking shape and becoming visible only in the small rooms that had absorbed tiny bits of the city, and provided the imaginary freedom that allowed us to survive as a society in abnormal political, economic, and cultural conditions" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 232).

The mirror of The City is Everywhere symbolizing the desire, love, ambition, solidarity, suffering, and dreams that Kosovars had, "free space starts with you! You just have to open your heart and set your mind free" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 235)

4.1.4. The House

"The house became the city and the city one big family." (Hoxha, 2018, p. 29)



Picture 6. The house in The City is Everywhere. Source: <https://www.archdaily.com/901614/the-cityiseverywhere-the-kosovo-pavilion-at-the-2018-venice-biennale>.

The Pavilion, as it is seen in the Picture 6, symbolizes the house in the making, "the Pavilion is a house always in the making; unfinished because it acquires new public functions. The house is compensation for the public space that is lacking. The house has twofold functions, and while the interior has the appearance of the room and it is used as one, it is also a public institution" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 29).

Kosovars realized that a certain degree of social life could be conducted out in private places that might be exposed to the public in order to envision a degree of freedom, and this motivated them to think that a degree of freedom is attainable. As Gjinolli mentioned; "although limited in size, the architecture as private space shifted its use for public life, providing dignity to citizens under the apartheid conditions. What happened was the shifting of the social life which, instead in public, took place in the private spaces " (2018, p. 90). Thus, ordinary homes turned to places for education, cafés and restaurants became spaces for

performing arts and culture. Houses, although not being intended for that purpose, became places where individuals might imagine social life.

4.1.5. Satellites

"Satellites are a metaphor of gloomy days where we found light, nourishing our souls with otherworldly information coming from those discs. Our mind was free, and our heads were satellites."

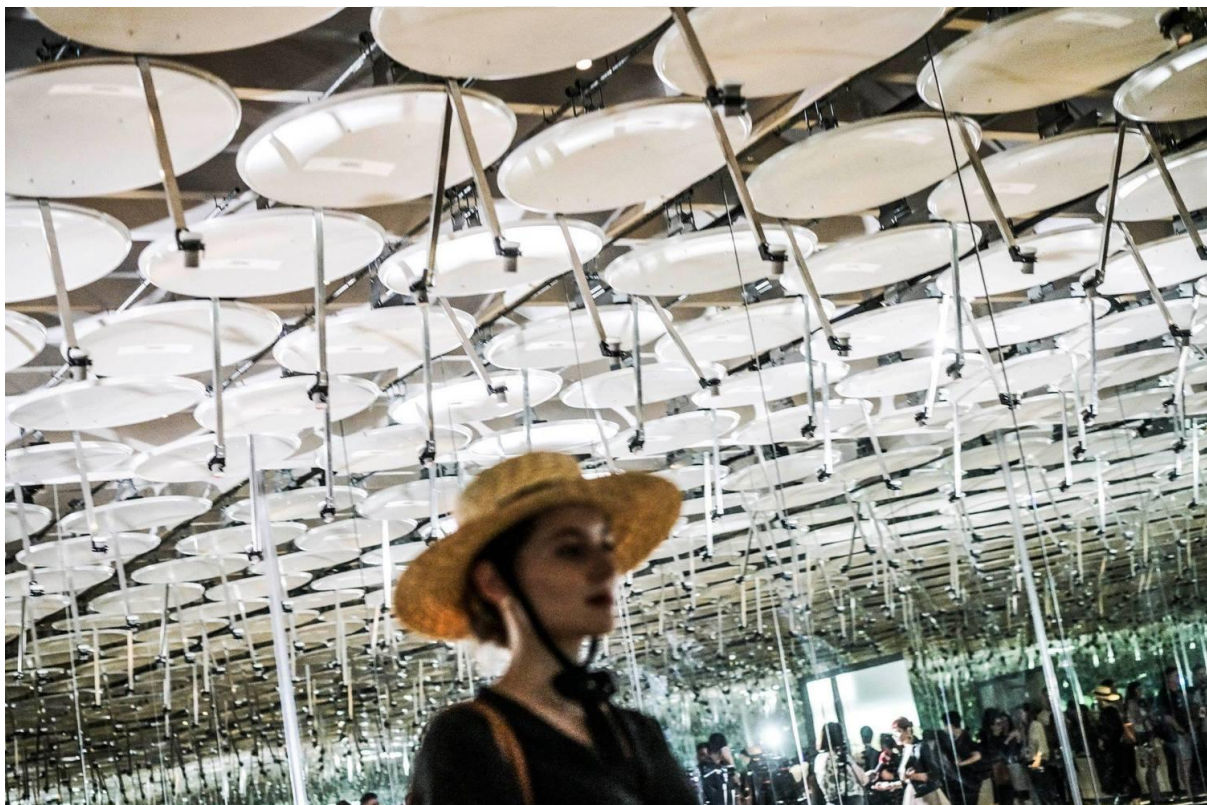
E. Hoxha⁶



Picture 7. Albanian flats. Source: Eliza Hoxha (Hoxha, 2018; image 107).

⁶ An article published in <https://www.archdaily.com/901614/the-cityiseverywhere-the-kosovo-pavilion-at-the-2018-venice-biennale>

In the absence of Albanian television channels, the lack of freedom of movement to cross state borders to see what is happening globally made the ethnic Albanians who lived in Kosovo to find a way through satellite antennas to see the outside world. It was very easy to identify the home or apartment of an Albanian at that time, simply had to search for the satellite hanging on the balcony or roof of the house, as seen in Picture 7. As Maliqi mentioned, "as the regime banned television and radio stations in Albanian, hundreds of thousands of satellite antennas mushroomed across the roofs of houses and shops across Kosovo, thus meeting the basic information and entertainment needs. Several Albanian language programs would be remotely broadcast to Kosovo via satellite. Satellite dishes completely replaced the terrestrial broadcasts and impact of Serbian TV stations, which were no longer followed" (Maliqi, 2018, p. 55), Hoxha on the other hand, mentioned, "deprived of domestic media and information, each Albanian family had bought a satellite dish, turning the city into a 'white mushroom garden.' One could easily distinguish Albanian flats against the city's skyline" (Hoxha, 2006).



Picture 8. *The Ceiling of The City is Everywhere*. Source: Jetmir Idrizi, <https://www.archdaily.com/901614/the-cityiseverywhere-the-kosovo-pavilion-at-the-2018-venice-biennale>.

The reason that the ceiling of the small room in *The City is Everywhere* was covered by satellites, as it is seen in Picture 8, is precisely this one, the history, and the memory that satellite holds as the collective and cultural memory of Kosovars during the '90s, "the ceiling

is clouded by satellites, a metaphor of gloomy days where we found light, nourishing our souls with otherworldly information coming from these dishes. Our minds were free, and our heads were satellites" (Hoxha, 2018, p. 29). Thus, satellites made it possible to watch Albanian channels, "satellites gave us the possibility, for the very first time, to watch the world beyond the three Serbian TV channels" (Demi, 2016). Albanian Kosovars used to film a two-hour program that was transmitted once a week through Albanian channels. "Once a week, Kosovo newscasts and field recordings were sent to Albania for the two-hour program. The satellite offered Kosovo Albanians the opportunity to see and be seen" (Hoxha, 2018a, p.104). Videotapes were another replacement for Albanians' lack of cultural programs, in addition to MTV, VIVA, EURONEWS, BBC, CNN, and other Television stations. "On the other hand, from the rock music that was embraced by the young generation of the time singing with nostalgia for the love of Kosovo, other musical genres delved on highly engaging topics, addressing concerns over the circumstances of the time, when peaceful resistance began to fade, and the background echoed with voices about the creation of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA)" (Hoxha, 2018a, p. 104).

"The city is Everywhere" induced an emphatic experience to spectators. The feeling of being trapped not only in space but also in time gave the sense of flashback memories not lived personally, but empathically felt like it occurred same to them. This project attempted to show how Albanian Kosovars lived and organized life in that "non-connected" time, how Kosovars found a way to get in touch with the world and know what was happening around them. Jehona Shyti, the commissioner of the Pavilion of the Republic of Kosova, pointed out that "bringing the subject of resistance of Albanians during the 1990s at the Venice Biennale represents an important momentum in sharing with the whole world the unusual story of a freedom-loving and deeply aware society that transformed private space into public spaces to accommodate the denied public sphere for Kosovo Albanians at that time" (Shyti, 2018, p. 23).

4.2. Ferdonija

The story that Kosovars are embodied with, is the story of Ferdonija, to whom were dedicated books, biographical movies and her house was announced a museum. The famous image of a mother called Ferdonija, when she prepared a dinner table as if she was expecting her husband and four sons to come creates a ghostly / unhomely (unheimlich) presence created by the missing of close ones during the war of Kosovo. Though they are not available, their ghosts will always be there. That same table once was so familiar and homely for her, but is so uncanny or unhomely today, as Freud would state “the uncanny is that species of the frightening that goes back to what was once well known and had long been familiar. How this can be - under what conditions the familiar can become uncanny and frightening” (2003, p. 124).



Picture 9. Ferdonija waiting for the husband and four sons to come. Source: <https://www.koha.net/arberi/192852/te-jetosh-me-dhimbjen/> visited on 02.10.2021.

For six years, this woman set the table at lunchtime with six dishes, one for herself and five for them. Hoping they would come. The Picture 9 shows one of those moments while she was hoping and waiting them for lunch. In 2005, when the bodies of her two

children were found, she removed two plates from the table, but her heart realized that the others would not return to her, and from that day on, she did not set the table.

"When the bodies of Artan and Edmond were found in 2005, after returning from the funeral, she removed two plates from the table. The next day the table is without two plates. However, the lunch of shadows no longer continues. She removes the other three plates because she understands that Halimi, Armendi, and Ardiani could not come without them..."

(Apolloni, 2020, p.101).

4.2.1. The whole story

The story of so-called "Niobe" by Apolloni (2020), or "Ferdonija" is well known within Kosovars. We have seen documentaries, movies, they have read books and articles about her. Yet, everywhere the story is told the same way as it was told once more in the book 'Nje fije shprese, nje fije shkrepe' (A strand of hope, a strand of fire).

The morning of March 27, 1999 was bitter. Ferdonija, her husband (Halimi), their four sons Artan, Armend, Ardian, Edmond, two daughters-in-law, and fifteen guests were in the house. As in times of war, there were twenty-three persons, eleven men, and twelve women, in the house that day. Ferdonija says that around 11:00 in the morning, Serbs wearing police uniforms (two of whom she mentioned by names; Vuk Mirkovic and Dragan Rakic) came and took them all out. The house owner, Halimi, was forced to introduce to each of them by name who they were. However, the sky started to shed its tears, probably because it knew what would happen and made the police officers leave. At that moment, says Ferdonija, we thought we had escaped, and we all breathed freely until at three o'clock in the afternoon, the Serbian paramilitaries reappeared. This time they were asking for each other's IDs to verify them. They left everyone in the rain for an hour until they returned and asked for food and drinks. Ferdonija was ordered to make them coffee, and while she was climbing the stairs, she let out a sigh which was heard by one of the police officers, and he told her not to be afraid that they had come to protect them, but the mother felt that that day was horrible. The police stayed at their house eating and drinking until five o'clock in the afternoon when they started calling all the men by name: Fatos Jetishi, Shpend Jetishi, Skender Dylhasi, Murteza Dylhasi, Shpëtim Ymeraga, Vegim; than Ferdonijas husband and sons: Halim, Artan, Armend, Ardian and Edmond. When they called Edmond's name, no one answered because Ferdonija's little boy had fallen asleep. They ordered Ferdonija to wake him up.

Based on the number of men, they had a missing ID card, that of Edmond, but Ferdonija announced that he did not possess one because he had turned fourteen years old a few weeks ago. Ferdonija tells how they raided them, stole all the gold that the women had, collected their money, and took their men so that they would never return. She says that the police came in masks and forced the women to leave the house, telling them to go to Albania. However, some other police officers had stopped them on the way, so they ended up in their city, but in another house, not daring to return to their house. She had gone to the police station to ask about her sons and husband, but the police had ridiculed her, telling her they were safe. The hope that they would return was sustained until 2005, when the remains of two children, Artan and Edmond, were returned.

4.2.2. Biopic-documentary "Ferdonija"

The biopic-documentary called "Ferdonija" represents the life of a mother who mourns the loss of her whole family, four sons, and a husband in the war in Kosovo 1998-1999. Unfortunately, she does not know where their bones are or if they are still alive. There have been twenty-one years since the war ended, and she has no further news for her husband and two sons. After six years, Serbia returned the bones of the other two sons. To me, this woman is a symbol of suffering, a mother who waits in tears for her sons and husband, where for Dritan Dragusha she should be compared to mythical gods,

"only the mythical gods can project such universal suffering, and it was not the gods, the parks, or the moors, who brought tragedy to her, but the people: such a drama, which for the stage has the heart of a woman who lost her family, is played at every moment, now and forever. It is not that the gods invented such a fate for her; no, it was the people who put the fire of suffering and misery in this woman"

(Apolloni, 2020, p. 77).



Picture 10. The random life. Source: Bajri, G. and Dauti. Sh. (2019). Ferdonija [screenshot from the movie]. Kosova Cinematography Center. Prishtine. Sequence :00;32. Link: <https://video.gjirafa.com/ferdonija>.

The biopic starts by showing the random life of Ferdonija, uncolored, unsettled, monotonous, one of those moments is seen in the Picture 10. She does not say a word, and the tick-tock of the clock in the background gives the impression of waiting. The sound of tv news that she always listens to, shows that her hope never dies, she still waits for any information of her beloved ones. The movie is black and white, just like her life that lost its colors. The routine she has is sleeping, waking up to eat something, taking pills, joining a protest for "the missing people" whenever possible, and returning to her position again. Gazmend Bajri explained that he directed this movie very randomly without any scenario or plan.

"Hm, I just left the camera there. She stayed; she did not need to act. That is, it. I told her: do what you want or do not do anything. I did it as a private video. There is no improvisation or acting. Just real life. Just real. "

(Apolloni, 2020, p.77)

The movie portrays 24 hours in the life of this woman. Her life has a rhythm that is diametrically opposed to that of the society to which she belongs.

"As Kosovar society runs towards the future, Ferdonija digs into the past because there is her life, there are happy days. Whereas the present for 20 years is pain, expectation, loneliness. She waits and waits. Moreover, while she waits, everything happens inside her, and nothing outside of her. The relationship with life depends on fate. Someone enjoys it, and someone endures it. So, she sits and cries."

(Apolloni, 2020, p.78).

Her story is compared to the one of mythical persona called Niobe⁷. Ag Apolloni adopted the story of Niobe into the Story of Ferdonije, where he claims,

"in Kosovo this myth can be told as a fairy tale, changing only the numbers. Once upon a time, there was a woman who lived happily with her husband. The birth of children compounded the happiness. She gave birth to four sons. She also had a wedding for the first two. She was delighted. Her joy touched the sky. From happiness, she wanted the time to stop because nothing could be more beautiful than this! However, the sky became jealous of her happiness, so it got dark and started to rain. Six years later, only two sons returned on the nylon bags. The brides returned to their homes crying, and the mother, in great pain, turned to stone. Strong as a rock waiting for her husband and other children. The tale says that the rock still cries. But wait! The tale cannot be so terrible and must not end like this. They must return. The end should be happy"

(2020, p. 79).

"As the mourning stone of Greek myth. Niobe tears are the most famous tears of all time and all over the world. Her pain was great, so were the endless tears" (Apolloni, 2020, p.78).

⁷ Niobe was mentioned by Ovid and Sapho. She was a friend of Zeuses lover Leto. She had fourteen children, seven sons and seven doughters, while Leto even though being a lover of a god, had only two children, a son and a daughter. One day she mentioned to Leto that see, I am an earther and my husband is an earther and we have fourteen children while you have only two and being Gods lover. Leto became jealous and told the story to her two children, they took arrows and went out. Leto's son killed Niobes seven sons, while her daughter killed Niobes seven doughters. Niobe started crying and mourning that much for her children that god (Zeus) turned her in a stone. Eventhough a stone, she still cried the tears of pain. Today the stone on Mount Sipil is called the Wailing Rock

Nevertheless, what differs Niobe from Ferdonije is the causer of the pain, as Dritan explains, "It is not that the gods invented such a fate for her, no, it was the people who put the fire of suffering and misery in this woman" (Apolloni, 2020, p. 77).



Picture 11. Listening to her story. Source: Bajri, G. and Dauti. Sh. (2019). *Ferdonija* [screenshot from the movie]. Kosova Cinematography Center. Prishtine. Sequence :13:36. link: <https://video.gjirafa.com/ferdonija>.

The story of the night when Serbs took her sons and husband is told indirectly in this biopic. Another woman reads to her the declaration she gave as a witness, while she listens in tears, as it is seen in this scene of the biopic in the Picture 11. Then, these women discuss



Picture 12. Watching videotapes. Source: Bajri, G. and Dauti. Sh. (2019). *Ferdonija* [screenshot from the movie]. Kosova Cinematography Center. Prishtine. Sequence :20:15. Link: <https://video.gjirafa.com/ferdonija>.

their loss; each of them, in tears, tell their stories of what happened to them in the period of war. However, in another documentary movie that will be discussed later in this chapter, called "Ikona e Loteve" (Tear's Icon) of Ilir Kabashi, Ferdonija talks more.

In another scene, is represented what Apolloni mentioned in his book, "digging in the past", she plays the filmed videotape of her son's marriage to remember the joy she had but no longer has. As it is seen in the Picture 12, both of her sons Artan and Armend got married at the same day on June 20, 1998. She watches the happiness, the joy as she wants to go back in time and relive that moment once more.

The movie ends as it is seen in Picture 13, representing the end of her daily life, and her end that will come one day, while she is talking to the empty grave of her husband, telling him some personal things about his brothers and that she is keeping her word. Finally, she gives him the news that the government decided to turn the house into a museum, and that in one way or another, his dream became true because "you always loved guests, from now on guests will not stop coming into our house, and I will be there to wait for them,"⁸ said Ferdonija.



Picture 13. Visiting empty graves. Source: Bajri, G. and Dauti. Sh. (2019). *Ferdonija* [screenshot from the movie]. Kosova Cinematography Center. Prishtine. Sequence :24:29. <https://video.gjirafa.com/ferdonija>

What this biopic is characterized is it's spontaneous, as the director claimed,

⁸ Ferdonija is telling her husband that, next to the grave that has its name but not his bones because he remains missing.

"If she went upstairs, he would go after her and follow her ritual on camera. If she told him that she had left a meeting with her brother's wife, Nesrete, at the Mothers' Calls association, he would go after her. If she wanted to go to the cemetery, he would escort her there and keep her as far away as possible with a camera so that she could talk about what she wanted and how she wanted with the graves. In a way, the director of the film was her. It contained only one directing rule: there are no rules" (Apolloni, 2020, p. 87).



Picture 14. *Protesting for the missing people.* Source: Bajri, G. and Dauti, Sh. (2019). *Ferdonija* [screenshot from the movie]. Kosova Cinematography Center. Prishtine. Sequence :05:00. <https://video.gjirafa.com/ferdonija>.

For two years, the director almost lived with Ferdonija, filming more than thirty hours of her daily life. After editing with his colleague Shkurte Dauti, they brought the video into half an hour. Apolloni mentioned in his book also the idea of the name of this biopic, and it was simple as that "as he was not weary of the rules of directing, he was not tired either for the title: *Ferdonije*. With this title he seemed to have said: this is Ferdonija's film, about Ferdonija, by Ferdonija" (Apolloni, 2020, p. 87).

This biopic or documentary movie was presented on May 30, 2019, at a festival called "Miredita, Dober Dan"⁹ in Belgrade, and while outside Serb people were protesting against showing this biopic in this festival, there were Serb spectators that felt it, for example, Jelena, where she claimed "the documentary aroused my emotion because I am a mother and I

⁹ Meaning hello in both languages, Albanian and Serbian.

understand very well the suffering that this woman has. Every mother feels pain, and this has nothing to do with nationalism or ethnicity" (Apolloni, 2020, p. 88).

Even though Jelena and Ferdonija come from two countries that have been fighting for centuries, they have something in common. Both are mothers, and while Ferdonija is the one who feels the pain, Jelena is the one who embodies that pain; as Apolloni said,

"the pain is human, not national, it has nothing to do with nationalism, so the spectators coexisted with the factor. Thus, without simulated situations, without constructed scenes, the film touches the audience which in terms of nationality is the same as the cause of the tragedy, but in terms of humanity is different" (2020, p. 89)

4.2.3. Tears Icon



Picture 15. Tears' Icon. Source: Kabashi, I. (2005). Film Documentary "Tears' Icon." Frame Production. Prishtine. Sequence 00:41

As mentioned earlier, many articles have been written for Ferdonije, and her story was seen many times on television. Another documentary film that was realized about her story in 2005 is called 'Tears Icon,' done by Ilir Kabashi. When the director of this film was asked why this topic, he answered,

"This question has been asked to me by many people. The answer is the same. I have not lost anyone in the family; no one has ordered me or paid me

for it. However, I have felt the pain of these people of ours, and I wanted to do something for them. So, it is the identification with the afflicted that motivates us to do something for her. If only one film, which could then influence the public, thanks to who's co-suffering the film Tears Icon was also awarded the public prize, in addition to the jury prize" (Apolloni, 2020, p. 80).

Compared to the biopic 'Ferdonija' in 'Tears Icon,' Ferdonija talks more and tells her story and their sons and husbands herself. Although other crucial personalities talk in this documentary film, the focus will be on what Ferdonija says and does.



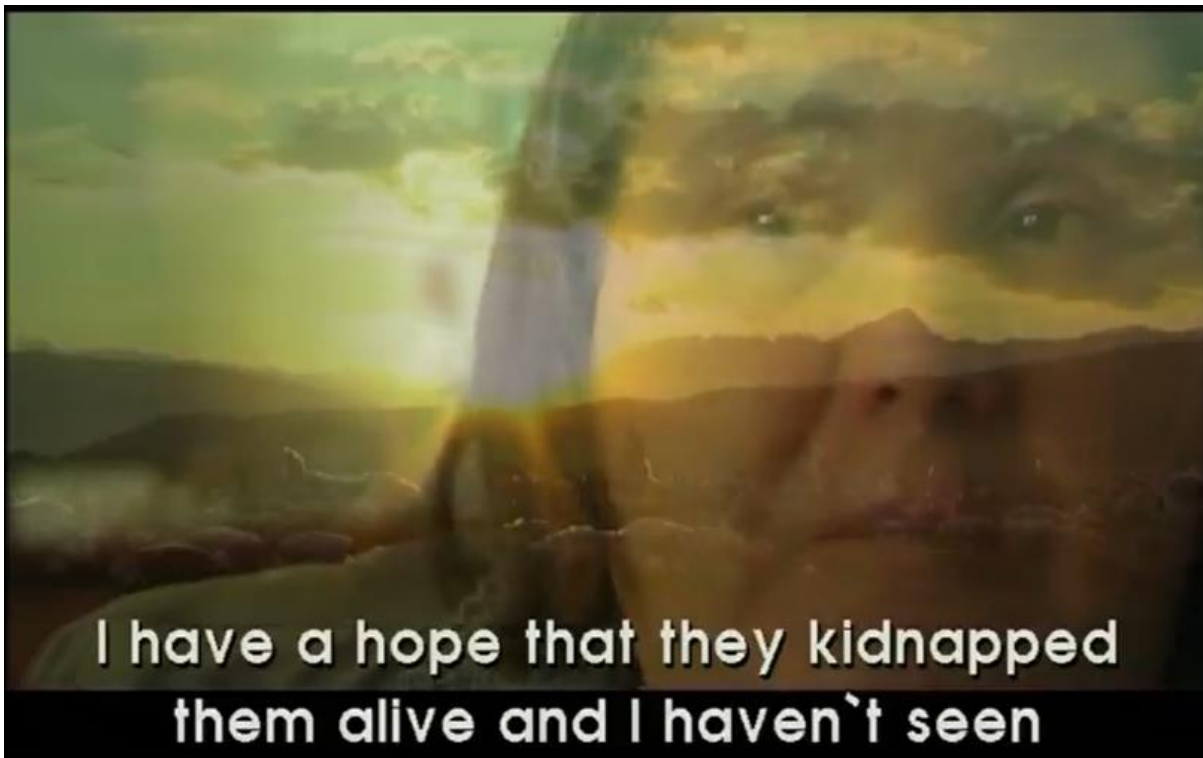
Picture 16. The intro of the movie Tears' Icon. Source: Kabashi, I. (2005). Film Documentary "Tears' Icon." Frame Production. Prishtine. Sequence 00:36.



Picture 17. Protesting makes her happy. Source: Kabashi, I. (2005). Film Documentary "Tears' Icon." Frame Production. Prishtine. Sequence 19:38.

The movie starts with her, cleaning their shoes and saying good morning to each of them by name just as they were somewhere alive, as it is seen in the Picture 16. Then a sequence of her crying, while watching the window to see if they are coming, appears. Then, as mentioned in 'Tears Icon,' Ferdonija tells the whole story of what happened on that day and talks about her husband, a very good man, a hard worker who loved his job, and how they understood each other for everything. Then starts talking about the characteristics of each son. Artan was a handsome man who always liked to be dressed differently from others, then Armend; she says he liked studying history so much. The third son, Ardiani, finished three years of high school, while the youngest one, Edmond, liked karate. In sixth grade, he took the white belt, and then in seventh grade, he got the yellow one. She then talks to their pictures on the wall and tells them she hopes she will be alive when they come. Ferdonija tells how she discussed with her husband's uncle and how his wife told her they might be working in Serbia and probably will come after three months. Three months seemed so much for her, but she would never imagine going six years, and they would not return home.

Though the happy days ended for years, Ferdonija feels happy when they go on protests because she and other mothers feel like they are doing something for their sons and beloved ones, raising their voices, wanting them to come back home, as it is seen in the Picture 17 on a sequence of a documentary.



Picture 18. Hope for their returnment. Source: Kabashi, I. (2005). Film Documentary "Tears' Icon." Frame Production. Prishtine. Sequence 30:25.

She waters the flowers they planted together and takes care of everything they left, hoping that they will come as the film ends, while Ferdonija, with a sky on the background, as it is seen in Picture 18, is saying, "They took them alive, I expect them to return home alive."

When talking about the importance of sharing memories through biopics or, in this case, through a documentary film, the director of Tears Icon said that "I wanted to tell 'how a person who loses everything, finds the strength to 'live and testify. ' Evidence is essential" (Apolloni, 2020, p. 82).

Fredonija is a symbol of a woman who waits and takes a mission to share her story, to tell what happened to her never to happen again, anywhere in the world. She was never tired of repeating that story for anyone who wanted to hear it, as Apolloni said,

"She is not an actress, but fate has assigned her a role: the role of the woman who waits. Her home is her theater, where she has been playing the role of Niobe in her monodrama for twenty years, which has already been seen by thousands of spectators: journalists, reporters, politicians, translators, writers, actors, directors, camera operators, photographers, historians, athletes,

relatives, citizens from all different countries and associations. She confesses, she experiences the same tragedy for different people. In the end, everyone wants to be photographed with her: the president, the prime minister, the ministers, the mayors, the artists, and leave as if after the show, some emotionally affected, some drowning in tears..."

(2020, p. 83)

She preserved the house as it was in 1999 and did not change a thing,

"Today, going to her house is like going back in time. Anxious over the years, she is sheltered in the tower of her memories. Years passed: one, two, three. fifty ... twenty. However, she has decided to count in the country since 1999. Precisely, from March 27" (Apolloni, 2020, p.106).

Her house was declared a museum in 2016 and was included in the list of monuments and sites signed by the Minister of Culture as "The house of Qerkezi Family-historical Museum of 99" with database number 4199 (Cultural Heritage List, 2016).

4.2.4. Accepting biopics

When it is about a written biography, people are judgmental, but when it is about biopics, they accept it as it is, even those who complain about it do not act or do anything about it according to Joshua Clover, "everyone complains about biopics, but no one does anything about them" (Clover, 2009).

To answer this question, one should search within the film theories and biology of the brain. What happens to the brain when people watch a biographical movie that they do not judge? One film theoretician, Joseph Anderson, discussed about this issue in his book *The Reality of Illusion*. He gives a different approach to cognitive film theory, discovering the biological organization of the brain and the modulations and changes that take place in it while perceiving. Anderson tries to explain the differentiated ideas about illusory or reality through the Necker Cube visual illusion. When you stare at the wireframe model of a cube for a while, the cube seems to flip its orientation between two possible interpretations of the picture. He then relates this to film viewing, stating that:

"It is not a matter of being in a semi-hypnotic state in a darkened theatre. It is not a matter of suspending disbelief. It is not a matter of being 'positioned' as a spectator or 'sutured' into a text, and it has nothing to do with

dreaming. It is instead our perceptual system alternating between two incompatible sets of information (a three-dimensional world or a flat screen with shadows on it)" (Anderson, 1997, p. 48)

Luckily the human brain is so complex at generating ideas and information that they are processed through several modules of the brain to react to visual input. "The visual system sees, the cortex interprets" (Pisters, 2006), said film theoretician Patricia Pisters. So, there is always the possibility of illusion, in which "the system follows its internal structures but arrives at a percept that is an error if compared to physical reality" (Anderson, 1997, p.20).

To conclude, the film in general and biopic viewing is an illusion but triggers the activation of information within the neo-cortex, allowing people to see, understand, learn from, and interpret visual information. "The workings of perception of reality and illusory perception of reality (like cinema) are quite similar," said Pisters (2006).

To further support this argument and this phenomenon that demonstrated the similarity between the perception of reality and the perception of the film, there should be referred the biology of the brain and the phenomenon so-called "mirror-neuron."

"Mirror neurons are fired when we do something, but the same neurons are also fired when we see (or hear) somebody doing something. Furthermore, there is no difference between seeing someone in reality or seeing someone on film for the brain. Something we see touches areas in the brain that imitate the perceived actions or feelings. This means that images should not be considered as representations of an objective reality, but that images have an internal power that creates certain effects in the brain," said Pister referring to Deleuze's theories (2006).

4.3. Family Album

4.3.1. The background of the idea of Family Album

Family Album was a project of Alban Muja, presented in Venice Biennale Arte in 2019 in Italy. The central theme after this idea is related to stories of young children who experienced the war, expressed in a very artistic way as Logar claims, "Muja's reflection is extremely pertinent; however, it should be emphasized that it does not address such problems as a whole but-as always in the context of his artistic practice in relation to the recent history of Kosovo" (Logar, 2019, p. 35). Even though Muja tried to keep his distance from projects related to war, he explained that the starting point of Family Album was the moment when he randomly saw a picture of him taken during the time he was a refugee in Albania;

"In my previous projects, I constantly tried to keep a certain distance from the experience of the war, or of what my family and I went through personally, choosing instead to focus on the consequences that followed in the aftermath of the war. Then, about three years ago, I was going through photographs of when I was a child, and I came across this one image of myself in the Hamallaj refugee camp in Albania" (Muja, 2019, p. 17).

It was the time he and all his family members finally met, after being separated in different refugee camps and what caught his curiosity to start working in the photographs was the undescribed happiness they had, as he claims, "what really surprised me, and what I find simultaneously interesting and paradoxical, is that in all these images I find myself-and not just myself but my cousins too-looking very happy" (Muja, 2019, p. 17). In the beginning, he thought to tell the story of his dad, how he got prisoned, but then realized that he was not sure yet to tell the story of his own. Aware of famous photographs of the period of war, thought forgotten for a while, he decided to take them as a case for his project;

"I did not want to portray my own story, and I was not even sure if I would know how to present it. I was trying to think in more general terms, and I knew these images already. Everybody in Kosovo knows them, but from a long time ago; in a certain sense, they have already acquired a forgotten status" (Muja, 2019, p.22).

He started his research from the photo of a father holding his children's photographs because he shared the same city with him and used to know him in person. However, instead

of choosing parents or grown-ups of that time to talk, he chose the children in a way to search for the postmemory or how the stories were transmitted to the young generation,

"I was contemplating whether to work directly with people who had experienced the war themselves, like this man, or whether I should focus on those who had been children at the time. I settled for the latter because although they have the same experience, they do not have the same memories. They have less hatred and anger installed in them, meaning they would narrate the story differently. Plus, I was interested in exploring how they might build on the narratives handed down from others" (Muja, 2019, p.22).

After Muja met them and heard their stories, he found out that the vocabulary was softer "They could narrate the same information as to their parents, but the temporal distance between them and these events softens their storytelling. Hatred and bitterness are not part of their vocabulary" (Muja, 2019, p.24). Muja mentioned that it was so important for him "to show how collective trauma and pain are processed and passed on to younger generations. What remains of the pain, and how is it articulated by the generations that have inherited these stories without directly experiencing them" (Muja, 2019, p. 26-27). Thought most of the time, such projects are seen as a political way of sharing memories, this was not the point that Muja wanted to achieve through his idea as he claims;

"it probably may seem political, but I do not see it in that light. For me, it is a deeply human project in which I try to eliminate as many superfluous details as possible in order to present a snippet of the reality of these youngsters" (Muja, 2019, p. 30).

The reason that this project is called The Family Album is that to all these protagonists, the photo that became famous in newspapers of that time is also the main photo of their family albums, reflecting a moment of their life when unconsciously they made a difference and without saying a word, said too much to the world, which became aware of the tragedy and suffering that Kosovars were passing through.

4.3.2. Behind the photographs

The peak of conflicts between Kosovo and Serbia lasted more than ten years, from 1990 to 1999. The displacement of the people resulting from these conflicts was reflected in media through journalists to help prevent the current humanitarian refugee crisis. For more than a century, the media and press have been reproducing "the pain of others" (Sontag, 2003, p.16), offering information on events that are constantly taking place somewhere, through images of violence and conflict, occupying the front pages of newspapers or as the breaking news in evening television reports (Logar, 2019, p. 36). Also, those photographs that Muja selected for his project took the front pages of newspapers and magazines worldwide and became symbols and eyewitnesses of the pain of Kosovar Albanians refugees in general and of the situation that these people were going through. As Luquet-Gad puts it,

"the portrait of one victim or another, one face or another, singularizes the individual to the utmost, who becomes the incarnation of the suffering of an entire group. An expressive image is an individualized image, even if the individual in question is not necessarily its subject. Images of migrants, children and women, the elderly, and heroic figures become symbols as they are circulated. Closer to our affections, they peel off their expressions and thrust them into the media sphere" (2019, p. 89).

Also, Gernsheim about the importance of photography claims, "photography is the only language understood in all places of the world and connecting nations and cultures. It reflects real life and events, allowing to share the hopes and despair of others, and provides data on social and political conditions. We are becoming eyewitnesses of humanity and inhumanity of man" (Gernsheim, 1969). But Muja's project may be regarded as an effort to "withdraw" (Logar, 2019, p. 35) from the spectacle-driven by social interactions between humans mediated by images (Debord, 1992, p. 4), instead focus on the photograph as a message that connects to every previous memory and present emotion. As Logar explained, "Family Album is the artist's attempt to solve or at least understand the problematics of the distance between the public and the pain of others represented in photography and film" (Logar, 2019, p.38). Laquet-Gad described the point of the project and three stories behind the photographs very precisely;

"they do not have the mission to make history; therefore, they do not do so. Their special stories are tangible because they are banal. Absurd and poetic,

just like life itself is. They do not meet, yet something connects them all the same.

Moreover, this 'something' is not so much their story, drama, or the presence of a sense of irreversibility. Throughout history, the story is not new. Neither is the posttraumatic element. However, what is new, what marks the appearance of new information and connects the characters of the project, deals with the global undertaking of a phase of planetary synchronization. Everything crystallizes in these images, broadcast live and uninterrupted over worldwide media" (2019, p.80).

Though all the Family Album project protagonists were children, and some of them were not there when the photograph was shot by reporters, in the videos that Muja filmed, they tell the story as if they were there. The memories that were transmitted to them are precisely what Hirsch calls postmemory, as she explains;

"postmemory describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right" (Hirsch, 2012, p.5).

she continues "postmemory's connection to the past is thus actually mediated not by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation" (Hirsch, 2012, p. 5).

Marianne Hirsch came across this notion after questioning so many of the personal experiences as she claims,

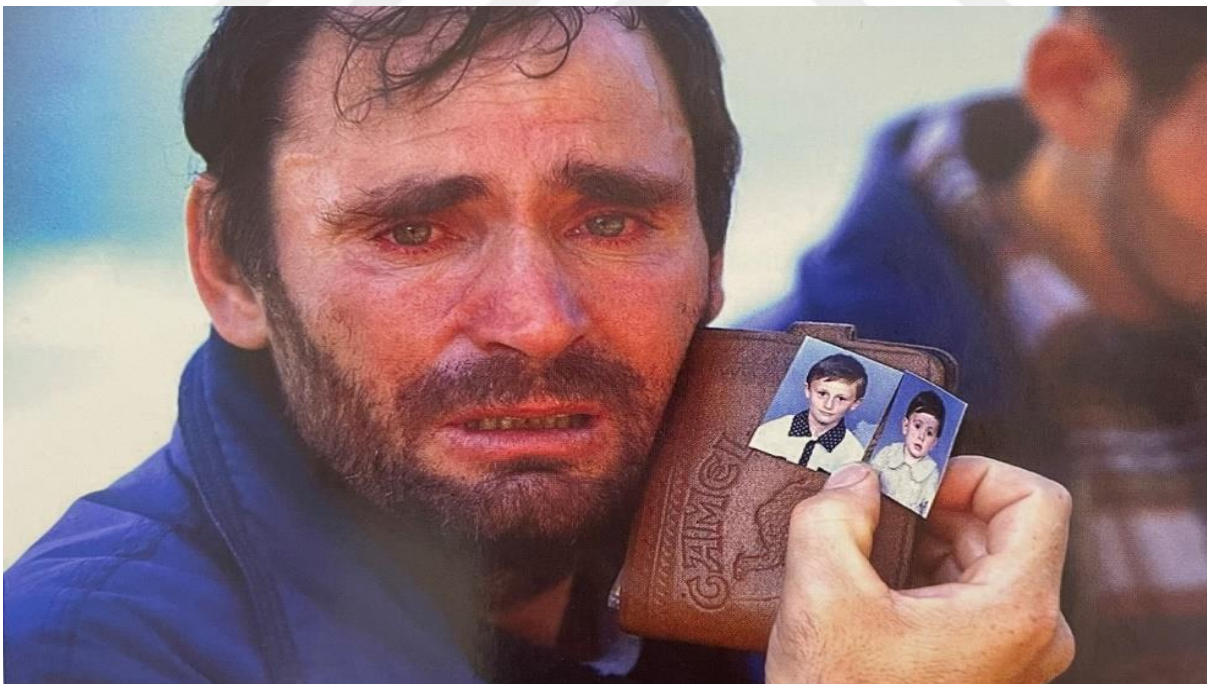
"Why could I recall particular moments from my parents' wartime lives in great detail and have only very few specific memories of my own childhood, I began to wonder? Why could I describe the streets, residences, and schools of pre-World War I Czernowitz and interwar Cernauti, where they grew up, the corner where they evaded deportation, the knock on the door in the middle of the night, the house in the ghetto where they waited for deportation waivers-all moments and sites that preceded my birth- when I had lost the textures, smells, and tastes of the urban and domestic spaces in Bucharest where I spent my own early life? It took a long time for me to recognize and to name these symptoms--the magnitude of my parents' recollections and the ways in which I felt crowded out by them. These moments from their past were the stuff of dreams

and nighttime fears for, as a child, it was at night, particularly, that I imagined myself into the lives they were passing down to me, no doubt without realizing it" (Hirsch, 2012, p.4).

The stories that all the protagonists told have such details that represent precisely what Hirsch experienced. Such examples are found when Jehona and Besim talk about the moment when Serbs punished their father in the cell when the water drops were dropping into his face while he was sitting on the chair where police tied him, or when Besa tells how a relative put her in the oven to warm her because she was freezing. Though in the book *Family Album* the notion "postmemory" was not used, the author's idea corresponds so much with it, searching how the stories were transmitted to children from their parents or family members and what they know about the stories behind those photographs.

4.3.3. The way that protagonists expressed their stories.

4.3.3.1. Besim and Jehona



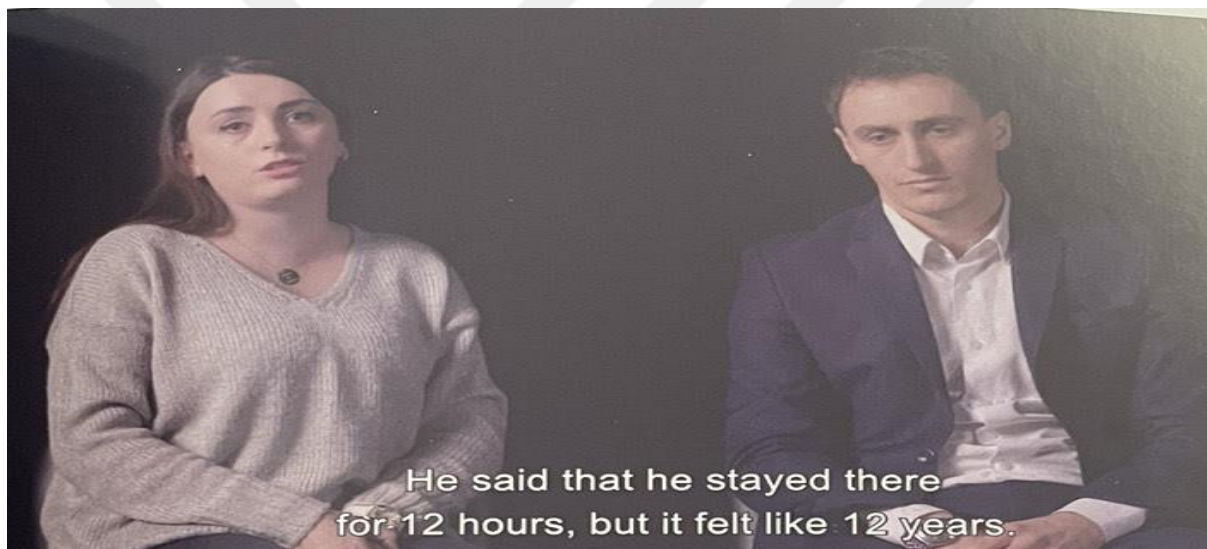
Picture 19. Xaja holding photos of Besim and Jehona. Source: Peter Turnley (1999) Kosovo-Albanian border.

The first story is about Besim and Jehona, two children (in the time of war) who became famous through the photograph that a news reporter shot to their dad holding their photos, as it is seen in the Picture 18. Besim tells that on April 16, Serb police arrested their

father next to the Mitrovica bus station, while the same day they put them in the caravan on the way to Drenica, how his family heard that he was imprisoned but were not sure in which prison as he claims,

"we were asking about dad's fate- where had he gone: to the prison in Smrekonicë, or the one in Pozarevac. Because the word on the street was that whoever went to Pozarevac would not come back alive, and whoever went to Smrekonicë could potentially be taken to Albania" (Muja, 2019, p. 110).

They did not hear a word from their father until the war ended. They thought that he was one of the missing people. Jehona, on the other hand, told that most of the stories they heard from their mother, because their father does not speak much, the only story they know from him is the one when he was imprisoned, as she explains,



Picture 20. Besim and Jehona. Source: Muja, A. (2019). *Family Album*. Video sequence, 14:00 min.

"When they were taken to the prison in Smrekonicë, he experienced something else. Close to the prison, there was a well and a bucket for water. He went to fetch some water for his personal needs. However, the bucket had a hole in the bottom of it. Having always lived in a village, our dad knew how to deal with it: he took off his shirt and placed it in the bucket and proceeded to fill it with water" (Muja, 2019).

Besim says that their dad was punished for that act, as it is seen in Picture 20 where Jehona ads,

"another thing dad told us about his time in prison was his experience in a notorious cell. They kept him inside hanging upside down, and occasionally,

a drop of water would drop on his face. He said that he stayed there for twelve hours, but it felt like twelve years" (Muja, 2019, p.111).

Besim talks in more detail about this moment "dad told us how in the room above, above his cell, there was a sink; there was a hole in the ceiling of his cell, and his chair was placed right where the water was dripping" (Muja, 2019). Their father survived because he was lucky to be in the prison of Smrekonica and was sent into the caravan to Albania. On the way, next to the Albanian border, he helped an old man, and police pulled him out of the caravan where they tortured him; as Besim claims;

"They pulled him from the caravan because he helped an old man. That was when this famous photograph was taken. That was where they tied dad up to a streetlamp. And all the prisoners were forced to hit him. If they did not hit hard, they were forced to do it again. When they left, when the others crossed the border, an American journalist asked; why has he been left behind? They told him that he had helped an older man who could not walk. So, the Serbian police forced us to torture him" (Muja, 2019, p. 111);

he adds, "you can see that dad's face in the photograph is a bit red because of the boiling water the police threw in his face" (Muja, 2019).

It was that moment when their dad held up their photos next to his face, and the American journalist became curious about what happened to that man and took a photo. Jehona tells about the answer that her dad gave to the soldiers when they asked why he suffered so much to save these two pictures, "For you, they may be nothing, but for me, they are my whole world. I do not know whether they are alive. At least I have these photos, and I will keep them forever" (Muja, 2019, p. 111).

Besim continues telling the story of his dad, how he was sent to Albanian hospital and was well treated for more than a month, how they had separated them in Montenegro while their father was in Albania, and how they understood that their father was alive when he met some journalists while he was sunburned and they talked to him, but instead replaying he called his mom, "I called mom, and she explained to them the events of the war, how we had been separated, and how we did not know about our father's fate" he claims telling that, "they knew about the photograph that had been taken, and they knew that dad was alive. However, dad did not know whether we were alive until he came back from Albania after the war", he continues,

"When he returned, we were living in Tavnik, Mitrovice, in a rented house. When I saw dad- I was the first to see him, and the moment I saw him at

the door was one of the biggest joys of my life- I could hardly recognize him. Because of all the weight he had lost, I did not understand who he was at first. The moment he saw me, he fainted. We did not even manage to approach one another. I told mom- Dad is here!" (Muja, 2019, p. 112).

Then they talk about the moment they realized about the photograph that was spread all around newspapers; as Jehona mentions,

"As far as I can remember, during the demonstrations in Mitrovica in 2004. Besim, being a very lively kid, went out to go to the demonstrations. However, along the way, Besim saw a red Opel Vectra with a photo of dad inside the back window. At that moment, the journalist who had taken dad's photograph, as well as a translator, was inside the vehicle. Besim noticed the photograph and stopped the car. They were driving around Mitrovica looking for us" (Muja, 2019, p. 113).

Besim explains that moment furthermore;

"When I saw the photograph in that car, it was a very special feeling for me, because I saw myself and dad. When I found out why that picture had been taken, I was very sad, because it was a result of the cruelty that dad had suffered for those two photos" (Muja, 2019).

Jehona ends up storytelling how much important is this photo to their family, though it is shot in an, unlike situation,

"This photo is special in our family, in our albums. It is one of our most loved photos. Although it was taken in severe conditions and circumstances, it is still one of our favorites. We are very proud to have such a father who experienced such cruelty for these photos. We will always be proud" (Muja, 2019, p. 113).

4.3.3.2. Agim

Another photograph that became so famous at that time was the photo of a little boy crossing the barbed wire fence as it is seen in Picture 20. That little child is Agim and is one of the targeted persons that Muja talked about and filmed his postmemory to become part of the Family Album.



Picture 21. The photo of Agim. Source: Carol Guzy.1999, Kukës, Albania. Photo courtesy of Getty Images.

Agim starts his storytelling that "Today, when I see news about refugees around the world, I get goosebumps because I know that in 1999, my family also experienced what today's refugees around the world are going through" (Muja, 2019, p. 124). Then he explains that they named him Agim after his uncle that passed away and how much they family loved him because of this name. He continues telling the story of the war,

"when the war started, when the situation started to get worse in Prizren, in March and April 1999, Serbian soldiers would come to our houses and ask for food and other things. They were looking for men. Our mothers would say, - our men have gone abroad, but our men had fled to other neighborhoods where it was a bit safer until the soldiers would leave, and then all the men would come back home" (Muja, 2019).

Agim tells the story in detail, how they attempted many times to cross the border but were pulled back from Serbs, how their Serb neighbor used to ask them for 500

Deutschmarks (very much money compared to the standard of living) per family to get them past the border,

"Ten of us got into a car. It was our family and my other uncle's family- namely, the family of the son of my father's uncle. We set off on the road close to the village of Thur. There, the Serbs would stop us and take our cigarettes. We did this trip multiple times, ten of us in a car heading towards the border. And when they sent us back, this same neighbor would give us back the money" (Muja, 2019, p. 124).

He tells how his mom prepared so much food so to be prepared for the way, but they pulled them back, not letting go, until April 23 when they finally let them cross the border



Picture 22. Agim, Source:Muja, A. (2019) Family Album. Video, 7:15 min.

"when they let us cross the border, my family together with 80-90% of the population of Prizren left, it was then, on April 23, that the border was opened. At the border, they took our documents and threw them away, as they did with our license plates" (Muja, 2019).

Agim talks about those moments just like those could have been his own memories, though he was a very little child at that time to remember himself. He tells how they hardly entered the camp because there was no place inside and how a friend of his uncle, who was a journalist, helped them. He continues telling the moment when his grandparents arrived at the camp after three days they were not allowed to enter, but as he had their son's name and they loved him even more, for this reason, they asked to give him to love and hug him

"When grandparents came, my family and I met them at the barbed wire fence. My grandma and grandpa just wanted to hug me, but they would not let them inside- there were already so many people, they were not allowed to enter. Before going in, my grandparents wanted to take me and hug me because I had their son's name, and they loved me. I was the most special one in the family" (Muja, 2019, p. 125);

he continues telling the moment when the photograph was shot,

"The moment my grandparents approached the barbed wire fence to hug me, as they were holding me up to lift me over to the other side of the fence, photo reporters came and took a photograph. That was the moment when this well-known image was taken, at the place where my grandparents were waiting to hug me" (Muja, 2019).

In that picture, Agim explains that there were hands of his dad's cousin and his wife holding him up to pass to his grandparents, who were waiting to hold him on the other side of the fence. He tells about the moment his family learned about the photograph, "the journalist came to visit us here in Prizren in 2002, which is when we discovered that the image was really famous" (Muja, 2019, p. 125). After that time, his parents constantly talked to him about that moment and that story, which to him was not that interesting until one day when they were traveling in Albania, and they saw his picture on a billboard, "once we were going altogether to Albania and we saw my picture on a billboard. We stopped off; we were really surprised" (Muja, 2019, p. 126).

4.3.3.3. Besa

The third story is the one that became the most famous. This image, as seen in Picture 22, became a synonym of a refugee. A mural representing the Kosovar refugees of 1999 in Bllaca near the cross border to Macedonia has this picture as a theme. There was also a theatrical drama dedicated to this massive displacement of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, called "Bryma e Vdekjes"¹⁰ which will be discussed next chapter.



Picture 23. Besa and her mother. Source: Damir Sagoli. 1999, Blace, Kosovo-North Macedonia border. Photo courtesy of Reuters.

Same as other protagonists of Family Album, Besa, who was only six months old, tells the story behind the picture,

"on March 8, 1999, there was the offensive in the village of Ivaje. Serbian forces rounded up the people and separated the men and women. The men were taken to the police station, where they were kept for two hours, while the women were kept at the culture center. After the intervention of the OSCE, the men were freed, and so were the women" (Muja, 2019, p.100).

¹⁰ In English, "The Frost of Death". This drama was written by Milazim Krasniqi, directed by Burbuqe Berisha and the choreography by Sinan Kajtazi

She and her mom did not see her father for about three months and had no idea where he was. She tells how they were forced to move from a village to another, from a house to a house trying to survive the war,

"it was very cold with rain and snow. My mother joined our neighbors. They say that the caravan was very long. There were around 7,000 people. Before we got to the village of Bllacè, my mother stopped off at her family house. There were many other refugees there. And then, from the cold, I stopped moving. My mother thought I had died from the cold, and she fainted. Then a relative of mine covered me tightly with a blanket and put me on the stove for a few seconds. And when she took me out, I started crying. All the refugees there applauded with joy" (Muja, 2019).

The way that Besa tells the story is precisely what Marianne Hirsch explained, of telling the stories as their own memories, though those stories were told from their parents. Besa continues telling how they walked for more than twenty-four hours before reaching Bllaca, "there were 30,000 other refugees there in severe conditions. There were older people, women, and children. There was no other food than gurabia, which was also my food, because they last longer without going bad" (Muja, 2019, p. 100). She continues saying that there were so many journalists, and it was that moment when they took a picture of her



Picture 24. Besa. Source: Muja, A. (2019). *Familv Album*. Video, 6:50 min.

mother and her "they were taking pictures of refugees in severe conditions, they took pictures of my mother and me, as she was breastfeeding me. Then the journalists wanted to uncover my face, but my mother was exhausted, she ignored their request" (Muja, 2019, p. 101).

Besa says that it was so cold that her mom put one of her diapers (the traditional one) over her head. She tells about the moment when she understood about the photograph,

"the first time I understood the picture was when a group of journalists came to interview me when I was in the third grade. That was when I understood the picture's meaning and that I am the girl with the mother in that world-famous picture. In the picture, I am seen covered with a white blanket. I still have that blanket to this day. I keep it; it is something special to me because a story was told through it. It is the only thing from my childhood that I still have today" (Muja, 2019).

4.3.4. Supporting the idea of postmemory furthermore

These three stories have the sadness within and the traumatic memory behind them. These stories were transmitted from one generation to another, from parents to their children that is why they are considered postmemories as Marianne Hirsch explains furthermore what postmemory contains within itself "postmemory is not a movement, method, or idea; I see it, rather, as a structure of inter-and transgenerational return of traumatic knowledge and embodied experience" (Hirsch, 2012, p.6). She continues that "it is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike posttraumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove. I realize that my description of this structure of inter-and transgenerational transfer of trauma raises as many questions as it answers" (Hirsch, 2012). Then Hirsch raises some questions;

Why insist on the term "memory" to describe these transactions? If post-memory is not limited to the intimate embodied space of the family, how, by what mechanisms, does it extend to more distant, adoptive witnesses or affiliative contemporaries? Why is postmemory particular to traumatic recall: cannot happy or otherwise transformative historical moments be transmitted across generations with the ambivalent intensity characterizing postmemory? What aesthetic and institutional structures, what tropes and technologies best mediate the psychology of postmemory, the continuities, and discontinuities between generations, the gaps in knowledge, the fears and terrors that ensue in the aftermath of trauma?

Moreover, why have visual media, and photography come to play such an important role here?" (Hirsch, 2012, p. 6).

The last question of this quotation of Hirsch is related to Muja's attempt to search how the stories were transmitted. However, Logar adds another point of Muja's project, that was searching how the people will accept these stories, claiming that "with Family Album, Muja encompasses a view that establishes a tension between a particular moment that took place twenty years ago and the moment the spectator confronts the intimate confessions of the people involved" (Logar, 2019, p. 47). Therefore in Venice Biennale, Muja did not directly represent the photographs, but the stories behind them to see the reaction of people and increase the curiosity within them to search for those pictures.

4.4. Bllaca 99

4.4.1. The memorial center and the theatrical drama "The Frost of Death."

The memorial dedicated to the most significant exodus that ethnic Albanians faced in Kosovo is called Bllaca 99, as it is seen in the Picture 25. During April-May 1999, more than 440 thousand Kosovars evicted from their houses were brought to this place. As it is written next to the mosaic,



Picture 25. The mural of Bllaca 99. Source: Author's own photograph.

"From the Serbian genocide over 1 million Albanians were deported from Kosovo, 440.000 men, women, elders, and children in the cold weather of April 10, 1999, passed right in this place between the border of Kosovo and North Macedonia. Through the Blace Camp, here was sealed the suffering and the personification of displacement of Albanians that have taken place throughout the century. This is 'the wall of remembrance' of all Albanians for the experienced exodus"

(Jahja Lluka, Association for the return of displaced Albanians from its own land).

This humanitarian cleansing came as an act of revenge after the NATO attacks Serbia; as Maliqaj claims, "the NATO attacks on targets in Serbia, March-June 1999 were used as a pretext for the revenge of the 'final solution' type: nearly one million Albanians were evicted to neighboring countries" (Maliqaj, 2018, p.53).



Picture 26. The train in Bllaca 99 memorial center. Source: Author's own photograph.

As mentioned, more than 440 thousand Kosovars were forced to get into the train that brought them all to this village between Kosovo and North Macedonia. Thus, the images, as seen in picture 25 and 26, of the village of Bllaca which is located on the border with

Macedonia, had become synonymous with the Serbian genocide against Kosovars. Thus, the world media named it: Kosovar-Albanian Golgotha¹¹ of the late twentieth century.

As is seen in the Picture 24, the photograph that became the symbol of Billaca 99 is the one discussed in the Family Album, of Besa and her mother. In addition, a mural, was dedicated to this tragedy next to the infamous train, as a symbol of suffering and pain, more than that as a materialized story never to happen again. The attempt to memorialize is related to the desire to commemorate. As Sodaro explains,

"much more than a memorial or a museum, its multidimensionality is evidence of a new approach to remembering and dealing with the negative past coming out of the pervasive political regret of the day. Remembering is no longer simply about the victims, though this is central; today, remembering past violence strives to activate that memory to build a community around democratic ideals that run counter to the persecutions and oppressions of the past, intending to prevent future violence and victimization" (Sodaro, 2018, p. 35).

Same opinion share Hodgkin and Radstone, "memorials and museums represent public statements about what the past has been, and how the present should acknowledge it" (Hodgkin and Radstone 2003, p. 12).

It took almost twenty years for Kosovars to wake up and start dedicating sites to their memories, more than that to share memory through artistic ways such as exhibitions, movies, biopics, and dramas. Another dedication to this tragedy is the theatrical drama "The Frost of Death," written by Milazim Krasniqi. After experiencing this tragedy, Krasniqi wrote this drama to remember and represent the trauma and the suffering of those days. Young wrote about the importance of remembering;

"remembering is no longer simply about the victims, though this is central; today, remembering past violence strives to activate that memory to build a community around democratic ideals that run counter to the persecutions and oppressions of the past, with the goal of preventing future violence and victimization" (1993, p.35).

¹¹ Leo Freundlich used this term in a document he wrote about the tragedies of Albanians in Kosovo. According to him, around 25 thousand Albanians were massacred in total. In addition, the document describes the methods of ethnic cleansing that were used to expel Albanians from their territories, such as North Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia. Those reports were confirmed by International Commission to Inquire into the Causes and Conduct of the Balkan Wars.

Sometimes remembering implies experiencing again. Trauma is an example of this. As the leading role of this drama, Teuta Krasniqi claimed in an interview for RTV 21,

"in that period I was 16 years old, I do remember that time. While rehearsing and playing the role, all of us that were part of this event in that time, in a way we experienced the trauma again, because all the memories came back" (RTV 21, 2019; min: 7:34).

Thus, memory plays a crucial role in healing trauma. However, the challenge is not how to forget negative memories but rather how to recall them without suffering. Ann Kaplan claims,

"I show the increasing importance of 'translating' trauma – that is of finding ways to making meaning out of, and to communicate...Trauma can never be 'healed'...but if the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through in the process of its being 'translated' via art." (2005, p. 19).

This show or drama is an example of what Kaplan claimed, trauma and memory were translated into art. As Milazim Krasniqi, the author of "The Frost of Death" in an interview given for a local TV, claimed, "we are living in the era when these hunting memories can be better expressed through artistic ways, such art, literature, drama, music, painting, etc." (KTV, 2019; minute 02:40).



Picture 27. Last part from the drama "The frost of death". Source: Video of KTV, minute: 02:48. Link: <https://www.koha.net/kulture/155853/bryma-e-vdekjes-jepet-premiere-ne-tkk/>

This drama, organized in nine parts or acts, presents a story of families brought to Bllaca. The sufferings for a piece of bread, the suffering for a place to sleep, the coldness that took some of their lives, such as the case of a little girl that was freezing and died. The mise and scenes of this drama perfectly reflected the story of Bllaca. The scene looked muddy; there were the tents and fireplaces where people were trying to warm themselves, the fog, the terrific night, and the choreographies of the troupes in the background fulfilled, even more, the play, making it look like it was real. To those that experienced this event, it brought back memories of the past that, in a way, made them re-experience again.

The drama ends while the son (who was demented) who was constantly blaming himself why he did not go to fight as a soldier to help Kosovo, get shot dead, and his father (Adem as the leading role) telling him that;

"We have been beaten and evicted from our homes, but we have not submitted to them. We have not asked them to save our lives. We, too, are freedom fighters. The Lord has praised those who migrate for not accepting captivity and deception, son. We are a strong race. We are stronger than stone. All the trains of the world, if they collect them and start them on this road, have it in vain. We will return to our land again" (Krasniqi, 2019, p. 30-31).

So, after the war, almost all the ethnic Albanians that were evicted from their land came back to Kosovo and returned home.

CONCLUSION

“To be traumatized is to be possessed by an image or an event” claimed Caruth (1994, p.5) while explaining the unclaimed experience of trauma. La Capra, in another hand, asserts that victims of trauma are being “possessed by the past” (1994, p.12). While being possessed, victims of trauma are also trapped by its repetition. If the traumatic memory is suppressed, it turns into a wound that causes unending suffering and resistance to healing. For people who have unrecognized historical wounds, feel trapped, or are reliving a horrific experience, time may seem to freeze or stop. The reason why past traumas haunt the present is that they are silenced rather than recognized. Traumatic memories pursue them endlessly, just like ghosts may haunt spaces as Derrida claimed.

People who have experienced traumatizing events can only begin to deal with them by sharing their experiences and transforming them into artistic works. Sites of memory, such as memorials, movies, sacred places, rituals, and commemorations, enable people to remember and express their suffering.

In trauma studies, there seems to be a consensus that remembering, and representation are crucial components of witnessing and a method to comprehend indescribable pain and speechless experiences. Theoreticians like La Capra and Kaplan proposed to give a voice to trauma and to make that speechless moment find meaning through sharing it and working through, which would lead to recovery and acceptance. The importance of acknowledging the existence of "historical wounds" that have gone unrecognized and unheard is emphasized by Chakrabarty, “historical wounds are not the same as historical truths, but the latter constitute a condition of possibility for the former” (Chakrabarty, 2007, p. 77).

Kaplan also claimed that trauma must be represented because of its potential to open a space for empathic identification by transforming the viewer into the position of being a witness and its significance is two-fold “the telling of the story of trauma may achieve a working through for the victim, however limited or weak” and “the telling of trauma permits an empathetic sharing that moves both tellers (traumatized) and receiver (vicariously traumatized) forward” (Kaplan, 2005, p. 37). Sharing trauma leads to acknowledging it through empathy, which also leads to reconciliation.

Witnessing is an important part of sharing memories, particularly traumatic events. Theoreticians agree that sharing traumatic events through art is the best way “it is now virtually art alone that suffering can still find its voice, consolation, without immediately being betrayed by it. (Adorno and Rolf, 2003, p. 313). It is only through witnessing those

moments created by a work of art which make spectators/viewers experience so that they can think and/or speak about those moments. In that sense, they become the voice of those speechless moments.

This study addressed the times of pain and sorrow related to the 90s Kosovar war. It focused on how this social trauma was represented and discussed its role in collective memory. How Kosovars started to give a voice to their pain and discussed the role of work of art in encountering the unspeakable moments of trauma and rewriting the history of the traumatic time by building empathy.

Starting from the Kosovo pavilion in Venice where it was presented *The City is Everywhere* and the idea of displaying that period in an utterly artistic way through the installations. "Memory takes root in the concrete, spaces, gestures, images, and objects... memory is absolute..." (Nora, 1989; p.9), so all four elements of this pavilion had a meaning themselves, representing memories. Such is the carpet where the parallel map of Prishtina was presented. In addition, the existing institutions of the city that were banned to Kosovars were marked with black dots, while the homes of Kosovo Albanians turned into parallel institutions on the outskirts of the city were marked with red dots.

The other element was the mirror which created the feeling of a large space, while the room was only 16m², as a reflective element of that period when Albanians were oppressed but tried to create a utopia to believe that reality was different.

Finally, the ceiling of *The City is Everywhere* is covered with satellite antennas, which became the only way of connecting to the world at the time when Serbs banned the broadcasting of Albanian-language programs for Kosovars. Through the satellites on balconies and rooftops, it was easy to identify from a distance which was the house of the Albanian, just had to watch if there was a satellite or not.

Individuals can become representatives of the whole group. Thus, for Kosovars, the pain and disappearance of loved ones are embodied in the character named Ferdonija. The artistic projects discussed in this topic are the two biographical films of Fedonija, parallelly with them the book dedicated to her. As a suffering mother who lost her entire family, including her husband and four sons, she is still waiting for other bodies that have not yet returned. She is waiting for them and still hopes that maybe someday they will come back home. This woman set the table for herself and her four sons and her husband every day at lunchtime, hoping they would return. This rite was interrupted when her hopes were dashed, and two of her sons' remains returned. Ferdonija symbolizes the suffering mother who lost her sons and her husband, and her mission became sharing those memories. She never got

tired of telling her story, the memories, and the trauma she went through. Several studies have found that documentaries having a biographical background elicit more attention. Personal access appears to attract the audience more (Neitzel, 2009; p. 224). However, that is not the only reason Ferdonija's biopic gained attention: her story and pain overcame even national hatred, and no matter where they came from, people claimed that they felt this story; they felt this mother's pain.

Even today, her house is just like it was twenty-one years ago. Nothing had changed, nor even her son's and husband's shoes on shelves and clothes on wardrobes. Because of the memories, it contains, her house was declared a memorial museum by the Kosovo government. Memorial museums are one of the tools that cultural memory uses to express itself. These museums are intended to evoke emotional, affective, and empathetic responses, along with memory and reasoning in the form of historical understanding; this is a significant purpose for memorial museums because they deal with the most sensitive topics. The house of Ferdonija is filled with memories, pain, and broken dreams, more than that is filled with truthiness' that should be shared. Sodaro explained the role of Memorial Museums,

"first the role as a mechanism of truth-telling about the history and preserving the past; second, their 'memorial' function, which is to serve as a space of healing and repair; in this, they are a form of symbolic reparation that seeks to give acknowledgment to the victims and serve as a solemn space of mourning and remembrance in the effort to help heal and repair a community and the final function embodies what is most new and unique about these museums and is the very reason that this hybrid form has emerged: they are intended to morally educate visitors to internalize an ethic of 'never again' (2018, p.162-163).

This "never again" as Sodaro claimed, became Ferdonija's mission, and Kosovars mission in general. That is why they recently started to reflect on the trauma, pain, and hunted memories they have been through. That is the main reason behind the desire to share them.

Annette Kuhn, a cultural theorist, has highlighted the importance of photographs concerning memories, particularly cultural memory. According to Kuhn, "a photograph is a form of evidence, but not in a directly mimetic sense of mirroring the real or even in a self-evidential relationship between itself and what the photograph may show" (Kuhn, 2002; p.13).

Another project discussed in this thesis is the Family Album, where Besim and Jehona, Agim, and Besa, are proud of their photos shot during a very difficult period when they were forced to leave their homes in Kosovo and live as refugees in neighboring countries. The reason they are proud is that those photographs became a voice of Kosovo in international media. Their photos conquered the world newspapers and became a symbol for refugees of Kosovo. They shared their family stories, memories, and postmemories about those photographs, and they became part of the commemorative culture by sharing. The images of Besim and Jehona, which their father carried near to his face after the Serbs separated him from his two children and wife, became a symbol of how Serbs wanted to split Kosovar families at the time, in addition to exiling them.

Another photograph that became part of the reflection of the collective memory is the photo of Besa with her mother as they moved into the village of Bllace, expelled from their homes. Nearly 440,000 refugees were brought to this village by the infamous train that today is part of the memorial along with the mural where the picture of Besa with his mother. This memorial center has the main goal to remember and never forget this bitter event to prevent future genocides; as Sodaro claims;

"remembering is no longer simply about the victims, though this is central; today, remembering past violence strives to activate that memory to build a community around democratic ideals that run counter to the persecutions and oppressions of the past, intending to prevent future violence and victimization" (Sodaro, 2018; p. 35).

The Same opinion about memorials share Hodgkin and Radstone, "memorials and museums represent public statements about what the past has been, and how the present should acknowledge it" (Hodgkin&Radstone 2003; p. 12)

Another project discussed is the theatrical drama "The Frost of Death," written by the professor who had experienced Bllaca himself, which is also dedicated to this phenomenon of expulsion. This drama describes the suffering, fear, hunger, cold, and desire to rise and resist until the final expulsion from Kosovo to northern Macedonia. The drama ends while saying that no matter what, they would return home one day.

Kosovars found modern ways to materialize their bitter memories, to confess the trauma they went through. The best way they found to do this, was by recalling them through artistic forms, which are always more acceptable. Kaplan agreed that art could be the best choice to translate trauma into,

"I show the increasing importance of 'translating' trauma – that is of finding ways to making meaning out of, and to communicate...Trauma can never be 'healed'...but if the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through in the process of its being 'translated' via art." (Kaplan, 2005; p. 19).

That is the reason why this thesis addresses Kosovar's memories of the 90s through works of art that were dedicated to that period. Writing in historical terms about the '90s and the war, any word and fact thrown would be disputed. That is because Kosovo and Serbia, as neighboring countries that are still in the process of reconciling, have different historical books. However, very briefly, the facts from this period were included in a way to create the idea of what had happened in the historical and political aspects.

The idea of confessing their memories is also related to the need to testify about the trauma they went through in the hope that it would never happen again. This bears a resemblance to the idea of the Holocaust, and this is the reason behind Auschwitz and other memorial museums related to World War II. "The museum as a cultural and educational form in society is charged, at least in part, with this function of preserving the past and its physical remains" (Sodaro, 2018; p.164). Documents, photographs, films, and artifacts are materials that remain of the past and serve as proof of what happened, especially when dealing with violence, human rights abuses, and genocide.

"Along with the need to remember, there was also an intent to preserve and document evidence of the injustices. The goal was the same back then as it is now, to "cultivate the memory and promote historical education . . . particularly through commemorating the victims, preserving the relics and documenting the history of the concentration camp at Majdanek and the death camp in Bełżec" (Sodaro, 2018; p. 32).

'Never again' was one of the key themes that Holocaust and Second World War exhibitions, museums, memorials, and documentaries intended to communicate in order to establish a moral community and prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

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