Michel-André Horelt

Dramas of Reconciliation

A performance approach to the analysis of political apologies in international relations

Nomos
Dramas of Reconciliation

A performance approach to the analysis of political apologies in international relations

Nomos
Acknowledgements

This book is the product of a long and hard academic journey paved with several academic rites of passages on its way. It started with a fascinating radio show on rituals and symbols. While cleaning up the apartment in one of the several crisis moments of my early PhD project — desperately searching a presentable research puzzle at the time — I stumbled over this eye-opening perspective on the world as I carefully listened to the invited anthropologists speaking at the radio. Conscious that memory betrays us all, I perceive this to be the *déclic*, the initial moment in which this PhD project really began. From then on I screened the symbols that imbue politics and especially memory politics. But it took a long time until the idea took material shape. This is now the materialization of the thoughts, the hardships, and the enlightening moments on this winding road.

It is clear that I did not walk this road alone. I have to thank first and foremost my supervisors for their patience and assistance. I thank Christopher Daase for pointing via dry and targeted questions to the weaknesses of the work in process, while always encouraging continuing the path. I thank Berthold Rittberger for his analytic sharpness and his support he gave me to finalize this research project. A special thanks goes to Rainer Hülsse, with whom I share the passion for David Kertzers *Ritual, Politics & Power* — an inspiring masterpiece of political anthropology and spiritus rector of this book. I want to thank Tine Hanrieder, the best sparring partner ever, with whom I shared the manuscript of several parts of this book and who brought me through my thesis defense. And special thanks goes to Jan Tiedeman, who brought this work into its appropriate format. I want to thank also all the other participants of the Monday evening research colloquium of the chair of International Relations at the Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich. Amongst them: Judith Renner, Dieter Kerwer, Stefan Engert, Alexander Kruck, and Alexander Spencer and all the others.

But, the biggest thank you goes to my wife who always stood by me, who helped and supported me in the best possible ways throughout the years. Without you, this book would not exist. Thank you.
Preface

The phenomenon of political apologies for historic crimes has been increasingly discussed in international relations during the last few decades. Some scholars and observers have castigated these political apologies as empty political rituals. Others have been more enthusiastic and interpreted political apologies as meaningful reconciliation rituals, but they have failed so far to analyse the ritual itself. The ritual feature of political apologies is still a blind spot in the academic field today. This book addresses this lacuna and sheds light on the ritualistic features of political apologies. What renders these rites meaningful, what renders them void of meaning? What kinds of performances exert a performative power transforming the relationship between collective groups in post-conflict situations? Contrary to common approaches that locate the transformative power of apologies in correct wording, this book grounds the force of apologies in ritual performances. Based on discourse analytical studies this book lays down the technologies of how agents stage state apologies in public and how the various forms of apology performances create different apology events with different grades of success. Contrary to common approaches that either dissect or deconstruct the linguistic content of apologies to display either the strength or the shortcomings and thus the failure of apologies, this book decidedly focuses on social performance and symbolic gestures as an avenue of explaining why some apologies work, while others fail. As the book reveals, even vague apologies work due to other channels of communication, which are activated through the symbols enacted within bilateral rites of passage. This book thus demonstrates the value and scope of ceremonialism in apology performances.
Inhaltsverzeichnis

Pictures 15
Figures 17
Photogramms 19

I. Introduction 21
   1. From apologies to apology gestures 23
   2. Individual apologies 24
   3. Collective apologies 26
   4. “Successful” apologies 28
      4.1. Content 28
      4.2. Actors 30
      4.3. Context 32
   2. Lacunae in apology research 33
   3. Taking rituals seriously 38
   4. Rituals of apologies as liminal events 39
   5. “Successful” apology performances 43
   6. What renders apology performances successful? 44
   7. Epistemological considerations 45
      7.1. Case selection 48
      7.2. Phenomenological Methodology 49
   8. The chapters 50

II. The emergence, force, and types of apology rituals in international relations. 55
   1. Introduction 55
   2. Ritualized apologies – Where do they come from? 56
      2.1. Human rights 57
### 2.2. Globalized Holocaust memory

- 2.2. Globalized Holocaust memory 58

### 2.3. Rituals of transition in transitology

- 2.3. Rituals of transition in transitology 58

### 2.4. Apologies as historically incorporated practices

- 2.4. Apologies as historically incorporated practices 59

### 3. What do rituals do?

- 3. What do rituals do? 65
  - 3.1. Ritual as the creation of apartness 66
  - 3.2. Rituals as a communicative system 67
  - 3.3. Rituals as performative action 69

### 4. How do apology rituals transform?

- 4. How do apology rituals transform? 70
  - 4.1. Rituals of purification 71
  - 4.2. Apologies as settlement rites 72
  - 4.3. Apologies as liminal performances 73

### 5. What is “success” in ritualized apologies?

- 5. What is “success” in ritualized apologies? 76

### 6. Elements of apology performances

- 6. Elements of apology performances 78

### III. The Warsaw Kniefall

- 84
  - 1. Introduction 84
  - 2. The forefront 86
  - 3. The performance 88
  - 4. The liminal character of Brandt’s performance 95
    - 4.1. Suspended time – sacred time 96
    - 4.2. Status reversal 97
    - 4.3. Spontaneity and Virtuosity 99
  - 5. The closing 100
    - 5.1. The emotional impact 101
    - 5.2. The status transformation of the collectivity 102
    - 5.3. The biography of the protagonist 103
  - 6. Brandt’s Kniefall: the creation of a global icon 103
  - 7. Conclusion 108

### IV. Festivals of apology – The Australian and Canadian child removal apologies

- 110
  - 1. Australia 110
    - 1.1. Forefront 112
1.2. The procession
   1.2.1 The creation of an apology event 115
   1.2.2 The apology declaration 118
1.3. The closing 122
2. The Canadian apology
   2.1. The historic wrong 123
   2.2. The apology crisis 124
   2.3. The forefront 125
   2.4. The procession 126
   2.5. The Closing 129
3. Conclusion 130

V. Katyn N° 2 132
   1. The historical wrong 132
   2. Forefront 133
   3. The Procession 135
   4. The Closing 140
   5. Katyn No 2 143
   6. Conclusion 152

VI. A tour of reconciliation through the graveyards of former Yugoslavia 153
   1. Introduction 153
   2. The Yugoslav Wars 155
      2.1. Vukovar 155
      2.2. Srebrenica 156
      2.3. Ahmići 156
   3. The Apologies in 2010 157
      3.1. The Ahmići Apology 158
         3.1.1 The forefront 158
         3.1.2 The Procession 160
         3.1.3 The Closing 167
      3.2. The Vukovar apology 170
         3.2.1 The forefront 172
         3.2.2 The Procession 174
VII. “Bowing alone”: An analysis of failed Japanese apology presentations

1. Introduction 202
2. Politicized atonement in the early 1990s 204

3. The 2001 Seodaeum Prison Hall apology by Jonichiiro Koizumi 211
   3.1 The forefront phase 213
   3.2 The procession 214
   3.3 The closing 219

4. Conclusion 221

VIII. The Power of Rituals of Apologies 223

1. The ceremonial inventory of state apologies 226
   1.1 Forefront 226
   1.2 Procession 228
   1.3 Marking New Beginnings – Inaugurations 235
   1.4 The Actors: 235
   1.5 Closing 239

2. Conclusion – The significance of symbols all the way down 241
   2.1 Space matters 241
   2.2 Time matters 242
   2.3 Mise-en-scène matters 243
   2.4 Performance matters 244
   2.5 Actors matter 244
3. The force and limits of apologies as dramas of reconciliation  246
4. Ritual apologies as global rituals  247
5. The Limits of ceremonialism  249
6. Implications for further research  251
IX. Literature  253
Pictures

Picture 3.1: “Do you Remember?” 107

Picture 4.1: “Public screening and mass mobilization” 116

Picture 4.2: “inclusive spatial configuration of the apology ceremony“ 128

Picture 6.1 “Tadić at the Ovčara memorial” 176

Picture 6.2: “Tadić in Srebrenica on 11 July 2010” 194

Picture 7.1: Koizumi at National Cemetery for the fallen soldiers of the Korean War 215

Picture 7.2: “Koizumi at the Sodaemun Prison Hall memorial” 217
Figures

Figure 1.1: States of social Integration and Disintegration 44
Figure 2.1: Reading memory conflicts as social dramas 74
Figure 2.2: Characterizations of states of social Integration and Disintegration 78
Figure 2.3: Elements of apology performances 82
Photogramms

Photogramm 3.1: Official joint wreath deposing ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier 89

Photogramm 2: The Warsaw Kniefall 90

Photogramm 5.1 “Katyn – Official Wreath deposing ceremony” 137

Photogramm 5.2: “Putin, Tusk lay flowers at plane crash site near Smolensk“ 145

Photogramm 6.1: “Croatian Leader Apologizes for War-Time Crime” 162

Photogramm 6.2: “Boris Tadić arrives on the ferry Golubica“ 175

Photogramm 6.3: “Ovčara Protest” 178

Photogramm 6.4: “Crowded Ceremony in Potočari” 195
I. Introduction

‘Genuine apologies… may be taken as the symbolic foci of secular remedial rituals’
- Nicholas Tavuchis

‘A ritual apology is insincere and therefore meaningless’
- Alison Dundes Renteln

It has become fashionable in academic works devoted to the issue of state apologies to present an account of the innumerable instances in which political agents have delivered words of regret or apologies for historic crimes over the last twenty years. This introduction is no exception in this regard: Pope John Paul the Second apologized in 2000 for the mistreatment of Jews in the long history of Christianity, the French President Jacques Chirac 1995 for the complicit deportation of Jews under the Vichy regime during the Second World War, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair for the British role in aggravating the Irish famine in 1921 and the British Queen towards the Maori for the colonial crimes perpetrated in the name of the commonwealth. This snapshot reflects the fact that the phenomenon of state apologies has gained currency in the way nation states and other corporate actors address painful and conflictive memories in their international and domestic relations. The phenomenon of apologies has thus entered the global stage during the last two decades. By the same token the requests and delivery of apologies have subsequently been the onus of political contestations. Apologies are becoming increasingly politicized and even overshadow bilateral relations. “The problem of History” (Kristof 1998) with regard to the appropriate atonement of the Japanese government for Japanese War crimes or the Turkish—Armenian dispute with regard to the question of the Armenian Genocide are indicative here and representative of various other cases strained by memory conflicts. “Accounts, Excuses and Apologies” (Benoit 1995) are part of the inventory of how political actors address these delicate memorial con-

flicts in their domestic and international relations. The academia is split with regard to the reconciliatory potential of so-called collective apologies, hailing them on the one hand as meaningful reconciliatory devices or as empty rituals on the other void of meaning. The inflationary empirical record of this atonement practice has hence triggered the analytical interest of academia.

Several prisms have been deployed to analyze this subject. Scholars have questioned whether collective apologies are per se normatively warranted and under which conditions requests for apologies are legitimate (Jaspers [1946] 1960; Gilbert 2001; Thompson 2002, 2006). Some commentators have even ventured that the apology deliverances encountered over the last few decades represent normative progress and a promotion of international law with regard to state responsibility (Barkan 2000; Barkan/Karn 2006; Howard-Hassmann/Gibney 2008). More analytical sociological approaches have tried to delineate the distinctive character of state apologies compared to individual ones (Tavuchis 1991; Celermajer 2009). Further perspectives have taken the specific meaning of apologies into account. In this regard scholars have questioned the targeted group to which these performances presumably speak. Some commentators have interpreted the distinctive meaning of collective apologies to lie in its inwardly-focused reflexive force to ratify a normative change for the apologizing community (Celermajer 2009; Andrieu 2009). Others still have contested the possibility of genuine collective apologies and castigated these apology strategies as “abortive rituals”, which are purely outwardly-oriented image restoration strategies that mimic interpersonal apologies and are solely aimed at morally re-positioning the own group in international society, with no substantial value for reconciliation between the parties (Lübbe 2001; Ross 2008; Trouillot 2000). In contrast to these critics this book will demonstrate that apology rituals are indeed valuable; and it will do this by showing how apologies are actually performed empirically. This book does not constrain itself to pure description but demonstrates how collective apologies work as reconciliation events and how this is related to the ritualistic form of their presentation. By doing so it returns to a classic speech act communication perspective: When do apologies succeed in re-tying positive relations between groups in memorial conflicts? When do apologies as (speech) acts become felicitous?

The avenue for providing and identifying an answer to this question will deviate from the classical route. In order to answer the question of felicitous speech acts this book will literally bracket out the dominance of
speech and highlight the significance of non-verbal communication, and the ritualistic features and ceremonialism present in collective apologies. According to observers and academia apologies are ‘delivered’, ‘presented’, ‘enacted’, and ‘performed’. All these predicates explicitly denote the staged characteristic of apologies, in other words, that these kinds of remedial actions are acted out publicly by political actors. However, all too often scholars have neglected the theatricality and dramatic component that is translated through the manner in which apologies are perceived. This is exactly the entry point of this book. The approach presented here broadens the concept of speech to communicative behaviour that uses paralinguistic channels, non-verbal communication and sign activation through the enactment of symbols. In this regard this book takes on a different perspective to the analysis of collective apologies. The critical evaluation of the existing literature will demonstrate that the predominant approaches to understanding the potential power of apologies are either content driven, and as such predominantly focus on the rhetorical shape of the apology, or highlight contextual and sidelining policies that converge or undermine the apology act. However, they prevalently bypass the distinctive value of apologies and specifically neglect the ritual quality of public apologies. As this book will demonstrate, non-verbal gestures on symbolic sites in staged dramas of reconciliation count as well as meaningful acts of atonement. The Philosopher and Linguist John L. Austin coined the term of performative utterance to denote utterances that by their very utterance ‘do’ something (Austin 1962). Austin highlighted how speech may act in the social world. The argumentation of this book here will reverse the Austinian credo from ‘speech that acts’ to ‘action that speaks’.

1. From apologies to apology gestures

Speech acts, as Searle once put it, have the ‘mysterious’ power to change the world solely through the spoken word (Searle 1971; Austin 1962). So apologies, as speech acts, may change social relationships and foster reconciliation. How do apologies and especially group apologies accomplish this ‘mysterious’ change? In order to approach this question it is crucial to undertake a twofold differentiation: first to differentiate between the characteristics of apologies on the individual and collective level and secondly to separate analytically the characteristics of apologies on the one hand and conditions of their success on the other hand. To start we will consider
I. Introduction

The characteristics commonly associated with individual apologies and then proceed to the elements characterizing group or collective apologies before approaching the theories and factors put forward in academia that contribute to the success of apologies.

2. Individual apologies

First of all, apologies are expressions of something, more specifically, of regret for a harm done by someone. Apologies are expressive utterances that “allow a public hearing of the inner conversation” (Taft 2000: 1140) of an apologizing agent. According to Nicholas Tavuchis the centrepiece of an apology is the (1) “expression of sorrow and regret” (Tavuchis 1991: 23). So apologies make a state of mind explicit. Consequently, apologies are (2) public expressions and not private reflections.

With this explicitness of sorrow and regret comes a third (3) component of apologies: acknowledgement. According to Govier and Verwoerd the thrust and strength of apologies rest in the public acknowledgement of having perpetrated harm, having broken a rule (Govier/Verwoerd 2002: 67–82). Through acknowledgement, a formerly contested factual account is corroborated (Smith 2005: 476–477); this provides a common narrative leading to the harm officially being recognized and the harmed and offended person reaffirmed as a moral subject.

Closely related but subtly different is the question whether the (4) responsibility for wrongdoing is assumed. Otherwise, without assuming responsibility, one should correctly speak of excuses, clarifications, explanations or even justification and not of a moral pardon or apology (Austin 1975). Real apologies, so called “categorical” apologies, have to convey “the acceptance of causal responsibility rather than mere expression of sympathy” (Smith 2005: 477).

With the characteristics of regretting, acknowledging, and assuming responsibility comes a certain kind of openness and nakedness to which the apologizer exposes him or herself. This is less of a compositional element that characterizes the apology and more of an immediate effect of the overall apology deliverance in process of “remedial interchange” (Goffman 1971). Through the apology, the apologizer gives an account of her inner conversion, affirms responsibility and expresses sorrow to the victim for having perpetrated a moral breach. However, it is up to the discretion of the addressee, the former victim, to grant or withhold forgiveness. The
apologizer can only beg for forgiveness. An apology thus symbolizes the reversal of power relations (Lazare 2004: 52). The former perpetrator can only passively ask for something that lies in the will of the former victim. This last element has been highlighted by Ervin Goffman, who states that apologies have to represent a certain kind of *vulnerability* of the apologizer (Goffman 1971: 138–140, see also Tavuchis 1991: 20, 27; Carl Schneider 2000: 265–280).

The term “apology” thus refers to an essentially relational phenomenon. As Aaron Lazare underlined, apologies are characterized by the “encounter between two parties in which one party, the offender, acknowledges responsibility for an offense or grievance and expresses regret or remorse to a second party, the aggrieved” (Lazare 2004: 23). This book will mainly draw on this relational conceptualization with one important restriction: the elements identified above are not assumed to be the necessary criteria that discriminate apologies from other remedial actions. The basis of this study is a broad definition of apology that allows for the incorporation of verbal utterances and gestures that run under different subcategories such as “accounts”, “excuses”, “statements of regret”, “expressions of atonement”, “the expression of pardon” and “asking for forgiveness”. Several of these subcategories bypass or circumvent the explicit acknowledgement of a wrongdoing, the detailed enumeration of a crime and the unequivocal acknowledgement of responsibility. There are several “apology strategies” (Meier 1998) at work empirically that belong to the broader cosmos of remedial (speech) interaction. Thus, the definition is held deliberately broad – not for the sake of blurring analytical concepts, but in order to hint at other dimensions that surmount the fine-grained dissection of the linguistic approaches to apologies. As the book will demonstrate, we encounter apologies that are fraudulent in their linguistic shape, but highly meaningful due to the context in which these fraudulent apologies are presented and the way they are performed. Thus the focus of the linguistic content does not tell the complete story. Form counts as much as content in the creation of powerful apologies.

Therefore we can broadly conceptualize “apologies as illocutionary events denoting to an addressee the repentance of a speaking subject” (Trouillot 2000: 174). And importantly, this “denoting” is not necessarily linguistic; it can also take the form of symbolic non-verbal behaviour. Until now we have deciphered apologies in the interpersonal mode; but apologies are issued by different types of actors, and via different communicative channels. “Each party may be a person or a larger group such as a...
family, a business, an ethnic group, a race, or a nation. The apology may be private or public, written or verbal, and even, at times, nonverbal” (Lazare 2004: 23). Let us now turn to the question of how collective apologies differ and the kind of analytical and practical problems they reveal.

3. Collective apologies

As Tavuchis points out, group apologies are not personal apologies written large (Tavuchis 1991: 98–101; Celermajer 2009: 6–7). To equate interpersonal apologies with group or collective apologies would be sociologically misleading since it unduly transposes processes from the individual level to the collective level. Group processes are more than the mere aggregation of individual processes. Social facts have a sui generis status, meaning that they are “emergent entities with characteristics that set them apart from individuals functioning as sovereign actors” (Tavuchis 1991: 99).

This said, it is still necessary to critically evaluate the transfer of characteristics of interpersonal apologies to group apologies and to scrutinize the implications these different characteristics have on the modus of presentation of the apology.

“An apology by a government actor to a group within the nation… necessarily involves different social relationships than an apology offered by one individual to another, or even to a group” (Minow 2003: 115-116). In contrast to individual apologies, collective apologies face the problem of representation and social power. A collective apology, to be successfully conveyed as such, needs to be emitted by those political actors who are institutionally and symbolically authorized to do so, those who are “endowed with the skeptron” as Pierre Bourdieu stated (Bourdieu 1995: 109). Therefore, to be representative of the whole group of ‘apologizers’, an apology on a group level needs the credence of that group’s highest representatives (Pitkin 1972). Thus apologies must be presented by the highest authorities of a political community in order to be perceived as being offered by the whole group (Lazare 2004: 177, 204). Consequently, as for every ritual ceremony, it is important to specify who is entitled to do what,

---

3 On the issue of social facts and the differentiation between the individual and collective level see also Gilbert 2001, Gilbert 2006 and Olick 2007a.
and who has the role to authoritatively speak for the specific collective group. As Austin already noted in his discussion on potential infelicities in the presentation of speech acts – discussed as misapplications of specific ritual rules – the ‘failure’ occurs because an improper person who ‘has not the capacity to perform it’ performed the speech act and thus made the action void (Austin 1962: 23–24). We see that the question of what constitutes a collective apology and what makes an apology successful is intermingled here. We will come back to the issue of authority to perform a collective apology when discussing the criteria that render apology rituals felicitous.

Tavuchis argues that “[t]he major structural requirement and ultimate task of collective apologetic speech is to put things on record. And what goes on record… does not necessarily express sorrow” (Tavuchis 1991: 109). For Tavuchis, public collective apologies would be overburdened and sociologically misconceived if they were to express sorrow and remorse, categories that are considered as individual in his analysis. What makes this definition attractive and at first sight pleasing is its parsimony and the way it bypasses the question of sincerity.

To respond to the question of what characterizes collective apologies in their content, we may say: nothing in essence. Empirically, collective apologies do not have any substantial necessary features. Their content can be defined by the form of pure sign-based communication. Non-verbal gestures may be interpreted as apologies as will be further demonstrated in the analysis of the Kniefall by the German Chancellor Willy Brandt in Chapter 3. In the discussion above, apology events were conceived as “denoting to an addressee the repentance of a speaking subject”, where the speaking subject is a metaphorical one. Non-verbal actions may also “speak”. We are thus in the spectre of “family resemblances” (Wittgenstein 2003) when dealing with the characterization of essential elements partaking to collective apologies. Condensed sequences of various verbal as well as bodily actions – symbolic gestures on symbolic sites on symbolic dates – may also count empirically as apologies. It could be countered that these putative apologies are not apologies in a pure sense, that they are sometimes fraudulent and the characterization of them as apologies is a categorical mistake. Indeed they do not fit the ideal criteria of apologies set out above. However, as they are perceived as collective apologies and bear the potential to exert their apologetic work, i.e. count and accomplish their performative force, this book will legitimately invoke the category of apology to describe these instances. I thus follow the “postmodern trend…
where... the apology is considered to be primarily ‘a judgement made about someone’s linguistic performance’ rather than a specific set of semantic properties” (Grainger/Harris 2007: 3) that defines them internally. In toto we can say that collective apologies are an entity of social performances performed by a political agent, that is, externally identified as attempts to atone a past; and that can assume different “linguistic and paralinguistic forms” (Grainger/Harris 2007: 2). The grounding definition of apologies in this book thus shifts the analytical angle from apologies comprising a fixed set of a priori postulated essential features to apology gestures that empirically count as such a posteriori. Thus, we can characterize collective apologies as public actions performed by representative political bodies recognized as expressing remorse for the victimization of another group.

4. “Successful” apologies

Pertinent to the phenomenon of apologies in international relations is the question of when they transform relationships. When do collective apologies lead to reconciliation? In order to answer this question, approaches stemming from different academic branches, social psychology, politeness studies, sociological approaches and approaches that belong to the domain of normatively-oriented Transitional Justice studies provide various explanations and sum up different factors leading to successful apologies. The next section extracts the criteria put forward by these different branches and systematizes the criteria in three categories: Approaches underscoring the significance of the content (4.1), the actors (4.2) and the role of the apology performance’s context (4.3).

4.1. Content

Approaches to apologies that follow linguistic studies have evaluated the transformative power of apologies with reference to the formulae used in apology presentations. These formulae of apologies should ideally comprise of the (i) admission of historical responsibility, (ii) the factual description of the crimes in question, (iii) the public condemnation of these wrongs, (iv) an expression of sorrow or regret for the crimes and (v) a demand for forgiveness (Löwenheim 2009).
A whole plethora of studies are devoted to the question of how different formulations bypass the admission of moral responsibility for state crimes within apology presentations by state leaders, by presenting mere excuses, justifications or only partial admissions of responsibility (O’Neill 1999: 185; Benoit 1995: 76–77; Kampf 2009). Scholars have scrutinized the rhetorical and discursive tropes that enable actors to both outwardly and inwardly minimize and externalize collective responsibility within the apology deliverance and have thus focalized the wording and rhetorical shape of the apology presentations especially in cases where apologies have been highly contested due to their rhetorical structure (Augoustinos et al. 2002; Mok/Tokunaga 2009; Yamazaki 2006). Scholars focusing the rhetorical content of the apology act have analysed the “quality or the content of the speech” (Celermajer 2009: 252) with regard to the question of how clear the wrongdoers’ collective agency can be flagged out via the wording. Does the apology invoke a collective “we”, a “plural subject” (Gilbert 2001) that clearly conveys the admission of collective responsibility for the crimes by the representative body delivering the apology? “Expression of regret… must place the collective subject as a protagonist in the drama of violations, not on the sidelines”, writes Daniele Celermajer (Celermajer 2009: 253; see also Govier/Verwoerd 2002; Coicaud/Jönsson 2008: 85). Only apologies that comprise the unequivocal admission of responsibility should be classified as “real” apologies and subsequently as successful apologies. The admission of responsibility is perceived to be “crucial” or the “main issue” in apology deliverances (Löwenheim 2009: 538, 554).

Researchers from rhetorical studies tend to sideline the criteria of assuming collective responsibility for a crime and also assume that the more the apology declaration presents a (ii) factual description of the crimes and by the same token (iii) condemns these crimes, the more the apology exerts forcefulness. Since a detailed descriptive account of the crimes would not suffice, it is argued that this account needs a public moral evaluation that qualifies these crimes as normatively wrong, coupled with the admission of responsibility described above. The more “comprehensive” the “inventory of the normative failure” (Celermajer 2009: 252) is laid out, and the deeper the apologizing agent publicly digs into the historical account and places its own community at the origin of the unfolding of the crimes, the more the apology gains substance and credibility (Gibney/Roxstrom 2001: 929; Smith 2008: 167–173). Hence “[t]he precise written statement of the apology for the public record is essential to public apolo-
“gries” (Lazare 2004: 40). Declarations officially sanctioning the victims’ discourse are said to delegitimize potential prevalent narrations of denial or justification and thus would help signal an identical and normative change enabling the reemergence of trust between the parties (Lind 2008: 11). Via the accreditation of this factual account, addressees of the apology see themselves comforted and no longer regarded as objects by the former aggressors. Instead, they are respected as subjects with legitimate requests and their own history.

In order to be successful apologies (iv) must verbally apologize. This means the admission of responsibility; the enumeration and condemnation of the crime will not suffice and needs to be flanked by another central component: The “explicit and performative expression of apology” (Celermajer 2009: 254). Elite Olshtain and Liora Weinbach termed this “compulsory” component the “ilocutionary force indicating device (IFID)” (Harris et al. 2006: 721). This device assumes the form of a socially standardized phonetic utterance, a “token”, that indicates an apologizing state, in the double sense of the word: ‘We are sorry’ or ‘we apologize’. As long as this performative utterance is not qualified, as long as the apology is presented as a “categorical admission” (Celermajer 2009: 254), the overall apology presentation gains its deepest forcefulness. So-called humble and complete verbal apologies must convey repentance via these utterances and should lastly ask the addressees for forgiveness, in order to be a rhetorically complete “genuine apology” (Löwenheim 2009: 537). The analysis of the content presented here refers to the question of what has to be said in apology processes. The next section addresses the question: by whom?

4.2. Actors

Successful apologies are not only reliant on the quality of the content, but also on the authority of the speaking actor who represents the apologizing community. “Representation has special significance for collective apologies. Who speaks for the nation? What gives authority to the apology?” (Yamazaki 2006: 18). In order to work, apologies need not only to be delivered by agents having the representative authority to speak for the community, but also to be delivered in this collective capacity (Celermajer 2009: 256). Unofficial or even explicit private statements by state leaders are prone to be rejected as invalid collective apologies. They are conceptu-
ally equivalent to “one-to-many” apologies and not “many to many” (Tavuchis 1991); they lack the crucial criterion of having been officially stated in the name of a community. The actor acts in a private capacity and not in its official role and thus does not qualify for political representation “as a substantive acting for others” (Pitkin 1972: 209), i.e. its political community.

Other scholars who underscore the role of actors presenting the apology have also emphasized the role of audience reception for the successful accomplishment of apologies. They widened the spectre of relevant actors in the apology delivery process. Perceiving audiences as an “active participant in… apology process[es]” they ventured that a “successful apology requires an audience that is willing to accept the apology” (Yamazaki 2006: 21). This broader conceptualization of potentially involved actors is indeed warranted and indicated, since several studies on public apologies are fixed on the role of the presenter of apologies and commonly sideline the specific role of the audience. The relevance of audience reception is contested in the scholarship, specifically with regard to the question if granting forgiveness by the recipients of a collective apology necessarily round up the apology process. Are apology presentations necessarily dyadic or rather monadic? While Nicholas Tavuchis emphasized the dyadic nature of apologies and thus perceived the successful completion of an apology to be attained in the way it accomplishes “the remedial and reparative work” (Tavuchis 1991: 111) between two parties, Daniele Celermajer explicitly renounced this dyadic view and emphasized that granting forgiveness is neither a necessary component for the successful completion of the apology act nor empirically encountered in all apologies. “[I]n not one of the actual apologies that have been given was the rhetorical request for forgiveness accompanied by an expectation of actual forgiveness” (Celermajer 2009: 59).

In contrast to the evaluation by Daniele Celermajer the book demonstrates that the accomplishment of successful apologies is inherently dyadic: the addressees of an apology crucially complete the apology process by publicly evaluating the apology act. This does not mean that the addressees of collective apologies publicly grant forgiveness. Following Jacques Derrida and others, I also perceive the category of forgiveness to be faultily invoked with regard to collective apologies (Derrida 2001; La Caze 2000). However, forgiving in collective apology processes assumes other less strict forms and formulae. Addressees of apologies partake in the apology processes not by granting forgiveness, but through reactions.
that can be conceptualized as subcategories of forgiveness. The explicit valuation of the apology act as a “turning point”, “ground-breaking gesture” or other formulation indicates the transformative power of the apology act and thus the positive uptake of an apology. Thus, this study will demonstrate that if one conceives the reactions of the addressees of the apology in less categorical terms beneath the ideal type of forgiveness, the apology process is indeed characterized by dyadic communication and not a self-referential soliloquy in which the addressees merely provide the foil for other targets. This book thus demonstrates that bracketing out the addressees from the apology process is errant conceptually as well as empirically: (1) conceptually, since positive reception by the addressee necessarily defines a successful completion of the apologetic act in international relations if we analyse the positive accommodation of conflictive bilateral relations. “Without receptivity, the apology falls on deaf ears” (Yamazaki 2006: 21). However, if one views the meaning of the apology as lying elsewhere, not in remedial work but in the performative reformulation of the identity or the strategic “face work” of the agent aimed at third parties, then successful apologies may indeed be conceptualized without the reactions of the addressees. (2) Empirically this book delineates how apology performances even instigate ‘anticipated reactions’ at the forefront of the scheduled apology event and that these ‘reactions’ positively accredit the act in advance. These ‘anticipated reactions’ are features related to the ceremonial and ritual unfolding of apologies and are instigated in the forefront of bilaterally-staged reconciliatory events (Dayan/Katz 1992, 1995). Thus responses are presented in expectation of the unfolding of apology rituals. Reactions and audience reception hence crucially characterize the apology process and define the felicity or infelicity of the apology performance. Celermajer argues that “responses” by addressed groups are secondary and at best “on the near side of the apology” and “take place independent[ly] of the ritual itself” (Celermajer 2009: 60). This book will demonstrate that this is not the case for apology rituals.

4.3. Context

According to several studies the success of apologies is corroborated by policy instruments adjoined to the apology act and deployed in the contextual political process. Apologies have to be backed by “post apology engagements” (Wohl et al. 2011) in order to be perceived as sincere. As a
crucial sidelining instrument the literature recurrently identifies the necessary component of granting reparations (Barkan 2000; Minow 2003) in order to substantiate the apology act and to underscore its sincerity. Apologizers have to deliver. Presented apologies that are contradicted by countering political steps are said to misfire. The argument put forward is that apologies are metaphorically said “to open the books” and reparations “to close them” (Nobles 2008: 139). It is only via other confirming sideling steps, the active engagement on related fields in memory politics, that the apology performance gains credibility and sincerity (Löwenheim 2009: 538). Apologies and reparations create a tandem in a broader “mosaic of recognition” (Barkan 2000: XIX). Reparations are said to reflect the sincerity of an apologizing act by underpinning the costliness of the act. “The higher the cost, the better” (Long/Brecke 2003: 20) is the argumentation. For many scholars the value of reparations lies in the fact that “actions speak louder than words” (Yamazaki 2006: 21) and these actions are associated with so-called concrete political and pecuniary measures. Scholars that highlight the importance of these sideling macro policy developments tend to lose sight for the micro-political effects that are coupled with the enactment of apology performances as such. The specific value and meaning of the apology presentation itself is dissolved in this broader “mosaic of recognition” that captures commonly the analytical interest of the scholarship. However, it is worth looking at the micro-political effects that are engendered with the enactments of apology rites themselves.

2. Lacunae in apology research

In accordance to the three conceptual categories of content, actors, and context the ritual perspective brings other significant elements to the forefront of the apology process in each of these categories. With regard to (i) content, the ritual perspective broadens the spectrum of communicative devices to signs and non-verbal gestures performed corporeally in apology presentations. It expanses the spectre from what is explicitly said to what and how things are done in apologies. Conventional analyses are commonly stripped of extra-linguistic communicative components that enrobe collective apologies. These may work as paralinguistic elements, sometimes as substitutes to explicit apologies as in the case of Willy Brandt’s Kniefall or as amplifying non-verbal communicational devices that moderate and amplify messages performed verbally as in several other cases in this...
book. The above mentioned formal demand for forgiveness that is allegedly so pertinent to successful apologies may be expressed via gestural performances. The symbolism of demanding or begging for forgiveness takes on other forms in apology performances that substitute this verbal element via symbolized performances of submission, or disclosed public vulnerability of the apology agent, which included kneeling in the case of Willy Brandt; but also takes on other forms in symbolic gestures that render the apologizing agent “displaying itself standing before the wronged other with a countenance of vulnerability” (Celermajer 2009: 62). Taking rituals more seriously thus helps us overcome the linguistic fixation of the literature on collective apologies or as Kay O’Halloran writes: “To date, the majority of research endeavours in linguistics have tended to concentrate solely on language while ignoring, or at least downplaying, the contributions of other meaning-making resources” (O’Halloran 2004: 1). These other meaning-making resources and their status thus represent the empirical objects of this book.

With regard to the (ii) role of actors the ritual perspective highlights the significance of the status and capacity already mentioned above. Additionally the book chapters will also reveal that not only the formal elements of status and capacity matter but that the perception of authenticity and meaning is also closely coupled with the essential corporality of the ritual acts. Rituals are enacted, thus are acted out by real persons and hence have an essential corporal aspect. This physical factor found its entrance into the scholarship through the work of Daniele Celermajer. In relation to the essential corporality of apologies – i.e. the physical materiality of the apology – Celermajer incites us to envision contra-factually the absence of corporality in apology performances:

“imagine that apology was delivered by a piece of legislation, published but not spoken by a particular person. Absent the authentic embodiment of shame and sadness, the act would certainly fail” (Celermajer 2009: 257).

‘Faceless’ apologies, extensively recorded in parliamentary declarations or issued via press releases miss one important component that has not been thoroughly addressed by academia: The role of emotions and the medium that transports these emotions in public. Rituals and corporal expressions are the medium through which the authenticity and sincerity of the act is usually evaluated. “It is only by virtue of the fact that the leader is a person with a body, can stand in for the nation that the nation’s repentance can appear” (Celermajer 2009: 258).
The category of actors that are crucially involved in the creation of apology events also comprises a second class of actors in the apology process: the recipients of the apology. Widespread conceptions of political apologies fail to take the specific productive role of the audience into account. As Edward Schieffelin underscores: “fundamental to this image is the division between (relatively active) performers and (relatively passive, but emotionally responsive) audience” (Schieffelin 1998: 200). The empirical chapters below will reveal the co-performing function of the audience in ceremonial settings. In this regard the use of ritual theory will pinpoint the productive role of audience reception in rituals of apologies.

With regard to (iii) context researchers studying political apologies have predominantly interpreted apologies as one component in a broader field of apologetic remembrance policies. In doing so they have blurred and failed to unearth the distinctive value of apologies in reconciliation processes. They only marginally address the single value of apologies and couch the apology deliverance in the broader field of other reparative instruments of the “politics of the past” (Torpey 2006; Barkan 2000; Minow 2003: 91–117). However, the contextual foci on apologies seem to dissolve the genuine force of apologies in macro political processes. They are commonly too broad to capture the micro pragmatic steps that are coupled with apologies and their reconciliatory potentials. The role of the “deictic or situational context” (Kampf 2008: 581) or the “proximate context” (Müller 2010) of the apology deliverance is widely neglected, thus the role of the ceremonial in situ context has continued to remain under-theorized and under-evaluated. However, it is specifically this “deictic or situational context” that renders some apology gesture by state representatives highly significant in the eyes of the addressees. The ritual perspective chosen in this book highlights the spatial and temporal context in which apology performances unfold and will demonstrate the significance that these two in situ contextual elements exert on the working of apologies. The analysis of the ceremonialism and the ritual context in which a significant amount of state apologies unfold is thus still in its embryonic status in the literature.

The academic literature on the success of collective apologies presents approaches that put forward a conglomerate of seemingly interrelated factors that are rarely systematized and differentiated in their importance. The dominant assumption is that apologies exert a gradual force, i.e. the more the act of apology fulfils the criteria the more effective it will be, i.e. it
will be more meaningful and significant. The more, the better is the dominant conviction. Two major critiques can be made:

First, that the workings of apologies are inherently mechanical. The approaches described above intrinsically reify the concept of successful apologies by presuming they have identified fixed indicators for their universal achievement. Analogous to the critique aired against formalistic speech act theory approaches in the domain of securitization practices, apologies do not have to be meticulously enacted according to a pre-given script in order to exert a convincing power. Like securitization moves, apologies do not “have a fixed, permanent, unchanging [code of practice]” (Gusfield, cited in Balzacq 2005: 172), thus should not be read as “a self-referential automaton that, once applied, miraculously affects the political agenda” (Guzzini 2011: 335). Apologies resemble more what Catherine Bell has termed ritualized practices, i.e. political actions in ritualized forms that hinge less on a strict “formality, fixity and repetition” in order to successfully convey the message than on “culturally specific”, symbolic verbal and non-verbal expressions in “symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environments” (Bell 2010: 92–93). The approaches are thus not receptive for singularities and contingencies that may render less complete apologies equally significant if not more powerful for the modification of the relationship between collective actors than complete ones.

This brings us to the second main criticism. The literature is un receptive to attempts at analytically grasping the different grades of meaningfulness of apology gestures on the receptive side. Although it has been generally accepted that less meaningful apologies are also significant, research still fails to evaluate the meaningfulness of less ‘complete’ apologies.

As the discussion of the factors reveals the identification of successful apologies is still a fuzzy undertaking and more gradual than categorical. The more the apology presentation matches these criteria the more forcefulness and transformative power the apology will exert (Smith 2005: 486). “[The] more elements a request contains, the more meaningful, important, and sincere it will be” (Löwenheim 2009: 538). The identification of felicitous apologies can only be approximated and neither categorically nor universally delineated in a binary mode with felicitous presentations on the one hand, comprising a set of necessary factors, and failing presentations on the other that lack them. Empirically “[s]uch binary conceptions fail to appreciate the complexities of the topic” (Smith 2005: 473). What researchers have failed to take into account is the diverse gradual degrees
of meaning that apologies may assume. In several studies scholars con-
cede that “even the less meaningful types” of apologies “are also signifi-
cant” (Löwenheim 2009: 538), but fail to grasp this assumed subordinate
significance empirically. Additionally, by labelling so-called “complete”,
“real” types of apologies with the predicate of being “meaningful types of
apologies” several scholars inherently and tautologically assume these
apologies to be per essence more meaningful than other forms of presenta-
tions. However this is empirically unwarranted; the empirical evidence
demonstrates that “even a full and humble apology may be rejected. In-
versely, even an incomplete form may be accepted” (Kampf 2008: 581).

If we take stock of the literature we not only encounter the recurrent ar-

gument that only those performances that harmonize with the expected
criteria can expect to be transformative, but also the castigation of forms
that do not fulfil these criteria as assuming meaningless rituals. Apolo-
gies that fail to match the purported criteria are brand marked as fraudu-
 lent apologies, as “hijacked apologies”. These “mimic” apologies are said
to abuse real apologies and copy the form of apology presentation without
bringing change and transformation to the social relations in question.
They are castigated as empty rituals, mere window dressing with no sig-
nificance for the parties. “Performing a ceremonial apology without gen-

unely apologizing is one form in which apology has been politically mis-
carried over the years”, write Jean Marc Coicaud and Jibecke Jönsson
(10028: 85, 86). “Many apologies cheat by mimicking the meaning of full apologies without doing the required work” (Smith 2005:
474). And most prominently: “A ritual apology is insincere and therefore
meaningless” (Dundes Renteln 2008: FN 11). These critical interventions
are understandable; however, two strong caveats – one empirical observa-
tion and one analytical point – have to be put forward: The criticism is
made in reference to an abstract comparison of the apology performances
with the elaborated criteria defined above. Empirically, such a refutation
of ritualized apologies does not hold. Some incomplete apologies ‘work’,
as this book will demonstrate and as scholarship has recognized, even
though not according to systematic empirical observation. Additionally,
strongly rebuking incomplete apologies is also analytically premature and
underestimates the communicative power of the non-linguistic elements
of rituals. Rituals as meta-communicative devices transport meaning on vari-

ous communicative channels and have transformative potentials that the
linguistically-oriented scholarship on apologies tends to omit.
Rituals are thus invoked synonymously with unreal, insincere, and content-free political actions that reflect the form but not the substance required to be counted as significant. These pejorative denominations of apologies as ‘mere’ rituals that do not fit all the criteria brought forward reflect the commonly voiced criticism against rituals in general of being nothing less than pure form. However, this research project started by questioning these conceptions. Are so called meaningless apologies really as meaningless as they are commonly described? This project started with the puzzling question of why apology gestures that rely on purely symbolic performances such as in the case of the German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s ritualized genuflection are able to exert such performative forces besides the factors commonly invoked in academia. The gesture by Brandt is instructive for the argumentative avenue taken here, since it was a speechless apology; the symbolic act was clear and spectacular enough to exert performative power without a spoken word. The force of this act lay in its minimalist form, its adequacy and, its *mise en scène* in front of the memorial dedicated to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising during the Second World War. As Michael Marrus correctly affirms: “Silences or ambiguities can be useful. In Brandt’s case, the lack of specificity seems actually to have facilitated communication of the main message... With historic wrongs, form can count for as much as content” (Marrus 2007: 72).

The critique aired against ritualized apologies as unsubstantial is thus premature and undervalues the potentialities of rituals to actually work. This book will demonstrate when and how staged apologies succeed and when they fail. Projecting the prism of a ritual approach, hence taking the ritual seriously, means opening up the perspective for the other forms of meta-communication at work in these apology processes.

3. *Taking rituals seriously*

Accordingly, this book highlights the importance of rituals and symbolic performances. It demonstrates that ceremonialism is neither an annex to apologies, nor an abusing simulacrum. At the base of this approach lies a fundamentally different conception of the nature of politics. Politics is not the exclusive sphere of rationality and analytical cognition, but the evocation of emotion and affection through symbolic activity (Kertzer 1988; Edelman 2005). Activated symbols find their expression in political rites that structure the political cosmos in affectively loaded sacred objects on
the one hand and quotidian and less significant profane entities on the other (Durkheim 1981). According to Randall Collins “politics is... a struggle by, with, and over the ‘emotional means of production’” (Smith 1991: 107 cf. Kertzer 1988: 99–101). What does this mean for the ontological status of and the epistemological approach to the analysis of collective apologies? Projected onto collective apologies this means that the force of apologies lays not uniquely in their capacity to correspond to cognitive criteria that may be identified via purely linguistic approaches corresponding to an abstract observational analysis, but that the force of apologies is tied to the creation of affection, of “intuitive and unreflected trust” (Alexander 2006: 31) through the evocation of symbols that can only be introspectively deciphered by the meaning which is attributed to them by the apologies’ addressees. Apologies are symbolic performances and their force or their contestation is bound to their capacity to evoke affective emotional states on the side of the recipient parties. The overall argument is that these affective states are not only coupled to the correct words being delivered, but also significantly to extra-linguistic elements and to the symbolic gestures enwrapping in ceremonial contexts. The argument deployed here thus corresponds to the point made by Marc Howard Ross who states that “whereas verbal apologies are more cognitive, symbolic actions are often more affective” (Ross 2004: 211).

4. Rituals of apologies as liminal events

Since the argumentation of this book rests on the assumption that gestures and symbolic performances on symbolic sites may also count as valuable apologies, it is suggested to lay bare how rituals, ceremonialism, and social performances are understood in this study. What are rituals? What is the relation between ritual, ceremonial and performance?

The book conceives rituals to define a specific mode of social action. Agents act through rituals to communicate on the one hand, but also to accomplish activities on the other. As the second chapter will elaborate in more detail rituals have several functional dimensions at the same time. Via rituals social agents project and represent collective ideas, notions, values and Identities, that through their ritual representation brings order to the social world (Durkheim 1981; Burke/Gusfield 1989; Moore/Myerhoff 1977: 16–17). Through rituals collective entities constitute themselves by propagating mythical messages of origin, continuity and unity to
I. Introduction

themselves. As “attention commanding” (Moore/Myerhoff 1977: 8) activities rituals highlight sacred and constitutive narrations, so called “master narratives” (Francois 2004 see also Schwartz 1996; Hobsbawm 1992) of the political community. Rituals are said to be the medium in which collective groups represent their own society, a mirror of and for themselves. This is the core function attributed to rituals in general, as an instrument of traditionalizing through repetitive mass ceremonies in order to represent social hierarchies and foster social cohesion.

With regard to the question of the nature of collective apologies a second dimension that is attributed to rituals comes to the forefront. Rituals do not only mirror, but also model and remodel social arrangements. They do not only bear traditionalizing and a stabilizing function but also bear a significant transformative aspect. “Ritual may do much more than mirror existing social arrangements and existing modes of thought. It can act to reorganize them or even help to create them” (Moore/Myerhoff 1977: 5). Rituals have a transformative and creative potential and are not only confined to reflect persisting social orders, but may also fundamentally change them. Rituals are thus invoked by social agents as a means to the social production of meaning by diverse groups in society (Turner 2009; Gluckman 1963; Tambiah 1985). Agents act through rituals to state political claims, address or mediate social conflicts, to change social relations and to bring new normative orders into being. This second aspect refers to the performative quality inherent to rituals, which is most saliently visible in the use of rituals to mark and symbolize transitions as in the execution of rites of passage.

Apology rituals are thus situated more in this second reading of rituals. They are invoked by state representatives to reshuffle the conflictive memory relations with the victimized parties after the perpetration of collective violence. This refers to the overall social function and nature of the rites that will be encountered in the empirical chapters below. What are the ritual features and elements that may potentially create and these transitory states.

Ritual agents use the dramatic techniques of ceremonialism or theatricality, in order to convey their collective messages. As a specific mode of collective action rituals comprise elements that make this specificity sensuously tangible and publicly perceptible. The formal properties of rituals therefore underscore the extra-ordinary nature of this mode of social action. The following summarizes the clusters of interrelated elements that commonly underpin the ceremonial aspect of rituals:
The spatial-temporal frame

The spatial-temporal frame of rituals elevates the action to something special. Rituals are enacted on special sites, on special occasions, by special agents. They “break with the quotidian routine” (Bromberger 2003: 293).

Staging:

Since rituals are inherently public and address subjects of sacred significance for the participants, they are characterized by an “evocative presentational style”, i.e. staged in order to capture the attentiveness of the participants and the audience (Moore/Myerhoff 1977: 7).

Stereotyped activity:

Agents act not in a natural and spontaneous way, but rather as role players with typified formal behaviour more or less prescribed for them. These formalized actions structure the sequenced unfolding of symbolic utterances and doings within these ceremonies that represent culturally coded and conventionalized practices that articulates or “denotes” the purported collective massage. (Tambiah 1985: 133)

Corporality:

Subsequently, the ceremonial unfolding of rites is dominated by reduced verbal interaction and dominated by minimalist corporal interaction. Agents act physically, twist and turn, bow, kneel etc.

Symbolic objects with transcendent meaning

Finally, the symbolic objects used, manipulated or transferred in these contexts are themselves imbued with meaning. And this meaning, the symbolic meaning, commonly refers to a transcendent world.

4 In the conceptualization of symbols I draw on Susanne K. Langer and Stuart Pierce who perceive symbols to be “conventionalized but clearly arbitrary relations” between signifying and the signified object. Symbols have the function to stand for something, “but are not proxy for their objects, but … vehicles for the conception of objects…and it is conceptions, not the things, that symbols directly “mean” (Langer, 2008: 14).
All these formal properties are indicative devices pointing to the special
meaning of the actions performed. In the following chapters this cluster of
diverse ritual elements will be referred to as the ceremonial dimension of
rituals of apologies. The ceremonialism that comes along with apologies is
meant to create apartness, to indicate a sequence of actions that is ren-
dered highly important and salient for the parties. Ceremonialism is thus a
subordinated but crucial component to rituals. Due to its salient nature cer-
emonialism lays at the base for rituals to be transformative. In this regard
Victor Turner maintained that while “ceremonialism is indicative, a ritual
is transformative” (Turner 2009: 128). While ceremonial activity indi-
cates, ritual activity transforms.

The category of performance stands in between both ritual and ceremo-
nial staging. Performances are the corporal and verbal actualizations of
these rites. And since the enactment of rites is inherently risky and con-
tentious, as it will be disclosed in this book, agents performing in public
have to cope with critical situations and may creatively break with the cer-
emonial corset. In contrast to liturgical rites that are characterized by a
rigid form, the aspect of performance alludes to the active and creative
contribution that agents may bring in into the orchestration and execution
of apology rituals. And this is exactly the analytical question of this book:
When and how do performers present convincing collective apologies.
Thus this book will use the concept of social performances in order to dis-
criminate bad from good apology performances.

The ritual anthropologist Victor Turner coined the term of liminal activ-
ities to denominate ritual performances that create transitory states. Limi-
nal periods stand in between pre-liminal periods of open or latent social
conflict and a post-liminal period that may lead to reintegration or schism
in social dramas. As the empirical work will demonstrate the unfolding of
apology rites correspond in various ways to these liminal entities present-
ed by Turner.

So far this introduction presented the different avenues brought fore-
word by the scholarship with regard to the question of what renders state
apologies successful. The following section addresses the question of
identifying how success and other effects are empirically identified in this
book.
5. “Successful” apology performances

“[S]uccessful ritual performance is one in which a type of transformation is achieved”, writes Catherine Bell (Bell 1997: 74). Intuitively, a successful apology puts requests to further apologies at rest. Valid apologies ‘close the books’, achieve the transcendence of the memory conflict at issue, and settle the accounts. “Specific rituals of apology achieve settlement… while others work toward division”, write Zohar Kampf and Nava Löwenheim (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 9). However, as an “impure genre” rituals are difficult to evaluate along the lines of success and failure (Grimes 1990: 193). We encounter rituals that do not completely fail, nor completely convince but rather gradually meander between these poles. As Grimes says “a rite need not fail on every level or from every point of view for it to be worth our while to consider the question of ritual infelicity” (Grimes 1990: 193). The same holds true for collective apologies. Therefore, this book chooses a gradual evaluation of the effects of state apologies.

As the case studies will demonstrate transformations are not always achieved. On the contrary, some apologies backfire and re-manifest conflict rather than settlement. Others in contrast work as transcending devices. Therefore, the research into the effects of these rituals is left open to integrating as well as disintegrating states in order to capture the various effects of apology performances. Empirically the evaluation of the apology presentations in the studies below will have to cope with the grey tones that exist between these categories. Thus both qualifications of apologies – reintegrating and disintegrating qualities – are further differentiated according to the cohesiveness of the audience reception they receive. While transcending apologies are valued by official as well as social representatives to be ground-breaking turning points, transforming apologies are marked by less univocal positive receptions from the official and civil society. Correspondingly disintegrating apologies that do not reflect a changed positive perception of the apologizing party will be further differentiated in two categories: In futile apologies that are nevertheless acknowledged on the official level reflecting an endured conflictive state, and apologies that are overall rebuked by state officials and societal representatives representing conflict fueling performances.
Apologies are successful if they are transformative vis-à-vis the memory issue at stake. This means that apologies are perceived as potentially reconciling devices and not as harbingers of reconciliation per se. A careful differentiation between successful apologies and successful reconciliation has to be made in this context in order to avoid overburdening and over-determining collective apologies in their capacities to achieve reconciliation. The apology, if successful, is one independent component, one anchor on which actors can draw in the further processes of dialectical reconciliation (Celermajer 2009: 57; Kriesberg 2001; Lederach 1997). This also reflects the capacity for reconciliation that provides the basis for this book. Successful apologies should not be equated with successful reconciliation. They represent potential reconciliatory points of rupture in the relations between agents but are not to be conflated with reconciliation as such. Therefore, at the base of this book apologies are perceived as reconciling devices, to underscore this processual nature.

6. What renders apology performances successful?

Just as with drama performances or films, evaluating apologies as rituals in terms of logic, with its associated evaluative categories of true and wrong, is inadequate. Ritual performances are inherently expressive, not argumentative. Compelling ritual apologies are neither complete nor true or false, they are, like good films or drama performances, authentic and moving or contrived and inauthentic. As Maurice Bloch indicated, the compelling nature and evasion of rituals from the domain of cognitive ar-
argumentative evaluation has to do with the fact that rituals resemble dance and song, and “you cannot argue with a song” (Bloch 1997: 37). Successful performances advance to fluent “dancing of attitude[s]” (Burke/Gusfield 1989: 31) which are inherently compelling and emotionally convincing to the participants involved.

The underlying empirical focus of this project is to delineate how apologies achieve this. As the empirical chapters demonstrate, powerful rites of apologies are clusters of sequenced performances in symbolic contexts. Meaningfulness is ascribed to highly exposed and concentrated public performances enacted in so-called realms of memory that advance to reconciliation events and by the same token symbolize and change the relationship of collective agents (Sewell 2005: 100; Dayan/Katz 1992). Powerful apologies are genuine collective apologies. They are issued or performed in official capacity by the apologizing agents. Powerful apology performances break. They are unprecedented events. Powerful apologies are adjoined if not created by typified body performances – kneeling, bowing, deposing objects. Powerful apologies are marked by concentration which means that the apology performances are spotlighted. And powerful apologies are characterized by conversation which claims that some kind of uptake of the apology performance is needed to prevent acts becoming lost in dispersion. Most interestingly, this conversation and positive uptake is accomplished through ‘anticipated reactions’ in the forefront of the apology presentation, a feature that is due to the energetic force that upcoming rituals exert. Contrary to the conceptualization of apologies as monadic enterprises, the successful apologies in this book are commonly characterized by a dialogical play in a ceremonial setting. Although admittedly additive, these are the findings that can be inferred from the empirical analyses in the following chapters.

7. Epistemological considerations

This study of rituals of apologies in global politics is situated in discourse analytical approaches in International Relations (IR) that perceives politics as permeated by socially constructed symbols and cultural representations. However approaches in postmodern discourse analysis tend to take the interpretation of discourse as “text in context” (Milliken 1999) too literally and all too often take the linguistic substrate as their sole object of analysis in order to excavate discursive matrices (Meta-narrations, stories and rep-
representation) present in processes of identity formation (Hansen 2007: 23). But “discourse should not be confined to the linguistic” (Campbell 2010: 230). Perceiving the discursive text as a system of differentiated signs and symbols in action also enables other “semiotic modalities” (Fairclough 2010: 7) to be incorporated into the analysis. Visual representations (Williams 2003; Rose 2006); the symbolic articulations of spatial representations like memorials (Young 1993; Edkins 2003); or the bodily practices of actors (Neumann 2008) are empirical objects worthy of analysis in order to approach the modalities in which meaning can be reflected, transported and consequently modified. Body performances in rituals, gestures and other symbolic actions are also enactments of texts: they make the text “walk and talk” (Alexander 2006: 36). Ritual performances are thus multifaceted discourse practices that activate symbolic texts in specific, i.e. contingent contexts. Thus they are discursive practices worth analysing, despite the fact that they have been rarely evaluated in the literature until now.

The empirical object of this book is thus the contextual, the material and the corporal manifestation of the practice of apologizing in international relations. With this inductive analysis this book contributes towards a more adequate understanding of the social practice of apologizing for historic crimes in international relations. Following Andreas Reckwitz a social practice, like apologizing, is:

“‘a temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings’ (Schatzki 1996: 89). Practices are not only forms of ‘saying’ – hitherto falsely privileged in social theory – but also forms of doings. Doings and sayings cannot be conceptualized as mental competences or as sequences of signs, but present themselves first and foremost as certain regular bodily activities” (Reckwitz 2002: 212).

What is the temporal and spatial and corporal form of successful apology presentation? Thus the book undertakes an investigation in the morphology of apology presentations, i.e. its specific form.

This book will not only retrace the material manifestation of several apology sequences, it also perceives the apologizing act and the transformative power (reconciling relations) these sequences may engender as belonging to a single analytical object. In this regard this study assumes an ideographic and hermeneutic approach for the following reasons.

“Apologies achieve varying degrees of subtle meaning that will differ between contexts” and more importantly “the meaning of all apologies cannot be quantitatively compared with one another” (Smith 2005: 474).
Positivist approaches tend to devaluate the contingent and singularities of apology processes and the different ways meaning is transported through them. Instead of approaching the force of apologies with a positivist methodology, this book argues that the creation of meaningful apology events should be approached introspectively. Instead of brushing over apology cases with a corset of fixed analytical factors to be ‘tested’ with regard to their explanatory power, this approach ‘reads’ apology performances as discursive practices that constitute the reconciliatory event themselves. As discourse practices ritual apology performances are potential referent points in the larger memory discourse defining the relation between the parties. As a method, thus, discourse analytical approaches address these discursive practices as ‘text in use’ in specific contexts, while the text refers to sign based practices that may be grounded in linguistic representation like language, but also in aesthetic forms like body practices. Pertinent to discourses is thus to delineate the scope and shape of this context that renders the text in usage potentially meaningful.

This approach is hence inclined towards a constitutive logic of understanding the attributed meaning of participants of ritualized apologies, which can be contrasted with an analytical logic of explaining the causal force of rituals in apology processes (Hollis/Smith 2004). What are the meanings transported by the agents through their gestures and what are the meanings that are attributed by the participants towards these gestures? How do performer and recipients of apologies co-constitute meaningful apologies? Consequently, this study does not artificially differentiate between rituals on the one hand and reconciliation on the other, independent and dependent analytical entities, or active analytical subjects causing passive analytical objects, but conceives both the apology ritual and the transformation it potentially engenders as interrelated and belonging to the same class of analytical entities (reconciliation events). A successful rite is therefore the discursive assignment of meaning to the enacted rite. Success emerges within and out of the enactment of the rite and not externally to it. Thus reconciliation will not be decoupled from the apology itself and ‘tested’ externally to the performance in subsequent episodes, but will be conceptualized as the attribution of transformative power to the act itself. Hence the study asks not what causes reconciliation but how reconciliatory events are socially constructed in ritualized apology performances.

Even though the analysis is based on a constitutive logic, this does not mean that all of the empirical studies will be restricted to contingent bilateral memory discourses without considering the relevance of the global
practice of apologizing. As will be further elaborated in Chapter 2, the practice of state apologies has emerged as a global discursive type; this will be empirically confirmed by demonstrating the singularities of ritualized apology performances in their concrete unfolding on the one hand, but also by showing the commonalities shared by the types of symbols invoked across the cases on the other. It is thus an inductive study on the meaning-making techniques present in global state apologies. Although the issue of generalizing discourse analytical approaches has been recurrently questioned, the techniques for creating reconciliatory events mean it is possible to compare patterns and commonalities without succumbing to the temptation of perceiving them as empirical laws.

7.1. Case selection

Since this study scrutinizes the significance of verbal and gestural apology performance the parameters guiding the case selection comprise exactly both of these. The cases assembled here have a salient ceremonial mode of apology presentation. Additionally, all cases are characterized by serious memory crises between the collective parties that structurally strain their relationship, so the analysis will sideline other types of apologies as diplomatic apologies for short term misbehaviours or infringements of international law. Furthermore, since collective apologies are elite driven undertakings all apology presentations encountered in the book will be issued by state leaders. However, according to the conceptualization above these apologies contain symbolic remedial interactions to appease a conflictive past, which do not necessarily comprise apologies in linguistic terms. The divergent linguistic form of apology presentation was thus not the guiding parameter for the cases selected below. The internal ritual features presented above guided the case selection. All apology presentations below are characterized by a significant ceremonial presentation. However, not all these ceremonial presentations impacted. This book investigates why.

This said, the social construction via gestural and verbal performances in ceremonially staged apologies will deliberately sideline external factors that may be legitimately put forward in order to explain the benevolent reactions of the apologies’ addressees, such as specific power relations looming in the background or strategic interests of the participating agents. The focus of this study is internally oriented, towards the creation of reconciliation events in apology events and aims at the description of
the typical structure these events commonly assume. It is not externally oriented towards factors that may be identified that render these apology performances in conjunction with other factors felicitous. Thus this book restricts its analysis towards the apology presentation itself and does not test other factors that may also have an explanatory power with regard to successful apologies.

7.2. Phenomenological Methodology

As stated above, rituals and their performances are complex compositional wholes. According to Turner ritual “performances are never amorphous or open-ended, they have a diachronic structure, a beginning, a sequence of overlapping but isolable phases and an end” (Turner/Schechner 1995: 11). In order to break them down into analyzable pieces this book approaches the empirical material by dividing the respective apology processes into three phases: a forefront leading to the apology; the apology procession itself and the closing of the ceremony, mainly focusing on the immediate reaction of the addressees to the apology and how these reactions framed the apology performances. This is the sequential method that envisages to retrace the potentially transformative power of ceremonially presented apology rituals.

The case studies in chapters 3 to 7 comprise of five larger structured descriptive analyses of verbal and non-verbal apology presentations that were respectively sub-differentiated into apology episodes partitioned in a foremost, procession and closing phase. Due to the ritual angle taken here, the empirical material had to be adaptable to the multimodality of ritual performances. Thus the study comprised of textual as well as visual elements.

The visual material was extracted via the Internet and especially from the web platform YouTube. The visual footage was taken from official and public broadcasting channels; since official sources are usually deliberately involved in the choreography of the apology event. The material was approached at first sight with an attentive naivety according to the purist phenomenological approach. With the visual material the interrelated corporal doings of the performers within the procession was captured and interpreted following the method of suspension in visual analysis (Rose 2006). The visual material was used in this regard to collect information about the factual unfolding of these rites. In order to excavate which ‘do-
ings and sayings’ achieves the status of meaningful gestures the analysis turns to the official and media reception of the acts, which represents the main part of the interpretative work.\footnote{Since it was not possible to gain access to an equivalent set of visual data across all the cases the analysis use the visual material mainly for illustration purposes in the following case studies.}

Next to the visual analysis of the performance this qualitative study thus retraces the official reception that the overall apology performance received. The analysis of the official reception is based on a structured textual analysis in which the text corpora of English, French and German newspaper articles as well as news agencies were analyzed in reference to the framing of the apology gesture. The textual analysis retraces which corporal doings achieves meaning for the addressees. In order to gain a representative picture of the overall reception and in order to validly weight the potential transformative effects of the performance the analysis brackets the reception into three levels: (1) The framing by official representatives sanctioning the performance, (2) the framing by central societal groups as religious leaders or representatives of the victims commenting the gesture as well as (3) the framing by the “hermeneutical power” of the media reporting on the event (Alexander 2006: 67). Thus the comments comprised reactions by collective representatives as well as societal representatives.

**8. The chapters**

Chapter 2 presents the generative aspects of the perspective taken here in more detail. It first situates the practice of ritual apologies within the field of other techniques deployed in so-called post-conflict situations and that are addressed by the *Transitional Justice* literature. Additionally, Chapter 2 presents a genealogy of the practice of apologies in global politics and ties the emergence of a “norm of apology” back to the practice itself. Apologies, and their ceremonial and ritual execution, do not rely on an externally pre-given script – a convention that was fixed in advance and is to be valuably executed – but are themselves the source of changes in normative structures. The enactment of a ritualized apology performance bears generative potentials that are *internal to* the practice itself. The enactment of rites should therefore not be considered as rigidly and scleroti-
cally mimicking liturgical rites, but as the creative modification of a diplomatic custom that gave birth to the normative structure on which the executions of state apologies that followed were to rely. This leads to the central theme of the chapter: the identification of the nature of the rituals regarding state apologies. The concept of rituals is presented as a medium of communication – the expressive function of rituals – and as a category of action, the transformative potential of rituals. Following this Chapter 2 draws on already identified types of rituals that can be projected as prisms into the practice of state apologies and discusses their modus operandi and the social relations they symbolize. Finally, the chapter draws on sociological approaches in order to identify parameters for felicitous and infelicitous public performances. It concludes by presenting these elements that then guide the subsequent empirical case studies.

The first empirical study (Chapter 3) is devoted to the apologies delivered by German state representatives and specifically focuses on the groundbreaking apology performance enacted by the German Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1970 in Poland. In regard to content, the apology illustrates the argument deployed here. Successful apologies may purely consist of the minimalist orchestration of gestural signs at symbolic sites. The chapter has two foci. First it retraces the performance of the Kniefall and reveals that the force of the apology emanated from the symbolic break it represented. The break consisted of a deviation in customary state visits by changing a ceremonial procedure during the critical moment of a conventionalized diplomatic ritual. The break helped to render this event authentic through its perceived spontaneity coupled with the biographical attributes attached to the protagonist Willy Brandt. The analysis also highlights that this break helped to turn this mundane diplomatic practice into an extraordinary event of reconciliation. This leads to the second focus of the chapter: the demonstration that rituals are not rigid and unchanging executions of conventionalized scripts but potential locations for the structural modification of subsequent practices. It retraces the international career and the reference character the apology could achieve.

The third empirical chapter analyzes apology performances in recent Australia and Canada (Chapter 4) that were enacted in order to address the painful memories of colonial policies of discrimination in each country. In contrast to the minimalist performance by the German chancellor these episodes are characterized by a plethora of symbolism that enwraps the apology performance. All the components mentioned above – the spatial context of a live broadcasted extraordinary session in parliament, the
choreography and form of the verbal and gestural presentation of the respective prime ministers highlight the extraordinariness of the event taking place. Both episodes show how these public rituals advanced to affectively binding rites of passage characterized as turning points by the addressees of the apology.

Chapter 5 focuses on the bilateral commemoration rite of the Polish and Russian Prime Ministers in Katyn in 2010 in which the latter issued words of regrets for the ‘tragedy’ of the Katyn massacre during the Second World War. The chapter demonstrates how, in the run-up to the event, this first official bilateral commemoration was staged as a groundbreaking bilateral affair with high societal and media attendance, and how it was then ceremonially enacted as an episode in bi-national reconciliation. The ceremonial procedure was marked with pomp and the attendance of significant political prominence on both sides; it was additionally characterized by carefully coordinated, if not synchronically enacted, typified performances by both state representatives at the commemoration site. The case has a singular status due to the fact that in the wake of this official ceremony the plane crash transporting the Polish delegation to an additional – polish – commemoration triggered several ad hoc public performances of condolences by Russian representatives that reverberated emotionally in Poland.

The next chapter (Chapter 6) ties together three apology episodes on the Balkans and represents the medial chapter between the highly evaluated and impacting apology performances above and the following infelicitous and contrived apologies that are to come. The chapter starts with a felicitous apology performance by the Croatian President Ivo Josipović with regard to the Croatian crimes in Bosnia. This section highlights the significance of novelty in the creation of reconciliation events. It was the first visit of a Croatian president to highly symbolic sites and a first apology declaration by a Croatian representative for the crimes in Bosnia. The second episode in this chapter analyzes the bilateral commemoration procession of the Croatian and Serb President that highlights the dialogical nature and exchange character of apology performances. This episode also demonstrates how announced apology events seem to emit magnetic power in the forefront by triggering anticipated positive reactions on the one hand and being the occasion for public contestation during the procession on the other. The episode also highlights the missing of formal elements that triggered scepticism on the side of the addressees: the performance in a private capacity, the international diplomatic audience rendering the apology outwardly-oriented. While the second episode describes apology
performances that impacted positively on bilateral relations, the third episode scrutinizes the infelicitous attempts by Serbia to authentically atone for war crimes committed in Bosnia. This section confirms conventional explanations by showing how the shortcomings of the verbal content of Serb apology presentations and the lack of contextual steps undermined the authenticity of the apology deliverance. Flanking these convictions, this section discloses weaknesses in the theatrical performances of Serb state leaders in presenting these apologies: the apologies were presented as written declarations, not physically by a political representative but passed by a close majority vote after a long process of contestation with regard to the exact wording of the text. The process leading to the apology and its form led to ‘nausea’ on the side of the addressees. In contrast to the other apology episodes the Serb apology is not characterized by an involvement and dialogical mise-en-scène with the addressees in the delivery of the apology. The analysis of the visits of the Serb President to the international commemoration events demonstrates that the choreography of the visits neither finds a symbolic uptake on the recipient side, nor can it be characterized by a high public concentration, which would have rendered the visit symbolically important. The Serb apologies in Bosnia resemble insignificant rites of purification. The performances are dispersed and even perceived as contrived and hollow, which is underscored by facial expressions such as the Serb President wiping away tears during the central commemoration. The case thus demonstrates how dramatic performances not only mark in a positive sense, but how overdramatized performances may be interpreted as artificial and insincere rendering the performance void of meaning.

The last empirical chapter (Chapter 7) rounds up the journey from felicitous to infelicitous apologies. While confirming the main factors identified by the literature regarding the reasons why apologies fail – such as contradicting memory practices on the domestic level and vague apology formulations – a closer look at Japanese apology performances with their ritual features reveals that these performances are mainly characterized by an inadequateness of the central contextual anchors, the mise-en-scène, surrounding the apology. These apologies were dominantly performed with reference to meaningful Japanese anniversaries and memorial sites instead of meaningful dates and places for the addressed community. But, the study of Japanese apologies also reveals that those performances that tactfully respected this symbolic wrapping did exert some positive reactions at the micro-level. However, these performances were occasions of
tremendous societal contestation and could not enflame a transcending character due to the lack of symbolic uptake within the apology procession. The lack of a symbolic exchange and the retying of symbolic bounds between collective agents are manifested through the fact that the Japanese representatives were ‘bowing alone’ within these processions. The chapter thus also demonstrates the limits of the performance approach by demonstrating how appreciated micro-practices may be undermined by macro-political developments.

What are the ritualistic features present in collective apologies? What types of rituals are collective apologies and what ceremonial elements contribute to the success of collective apologies? The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) answers these questions and presents a structured compilation of the components of meaning-making present in the preceding chapters.
II. The emergence, force, and types of apology rituals in international relations.

1. Introduction

In an article from 2005 Tim Kelsall described his participant observation of the hearings of a provincial truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) in Tonkolili, in northern Sierra Leone. Kelsall made a paradoxical finding. According to his observation “most curiously, in truth commissions, the truth is rarely told” (Kelsall 2005: 363). Even though the truth was seemingly not the aim of the hearings he attended – due to dubious testimonies and confessions that were recorded in the long-lasting procedure of TRC report writing – the overall process did exert a tremendous effect on the TRC’s participants. The “change”, Kelsall writes, “was due to the addition of a carefully staged reconciliation ceremony to the proceedings, a ritual that created an emotionally charged atmosphere that succeeded in moving many of the participants and spectators, not least the present author, and which arguably opened an avenue for reconciliation and lasting peace” (Kelsall 2005: 63).

I think a corresponding argument is in order when it comes to the question of what renders collective apologies meaningful. As the following chapters will demonstrate, the practice of state apologies in global politics is characterized by ‘carefully staged ceremonies’ often bearing ‘emotionally charged atmospheres’. In analogy to Kelsall’s observation this book also argues that the force of apologies in international relations is tied to the ceremonial and ritualistic form present in several apologies. In order to do so, this chapter will lay bare the analytical tools and the conceptual approaches used in this book.

Under the question of “where do they come from” (ii) the chapter will first present the trajectories that gave birth to apologies as a diplomatic practice in international relations. The chapter presents a macro-perspective in presenting the cartography of the field in which the practice of apologising emerged as a mode of symbolic activity to amend conflictive memories. The ritual perspective will elucidate how the enactment of public symbolic apology gestures contributed to the establishment of a widely identified norm of repentance on the global scale. The historical genesis
incites us to perceive apologies less as passive reflections of a fixed normative structure but rather as generic loci of norm evolution in global politics. In this regard apologies exert a meta-performative quality for normative change in international relations. The rituals themselves established this practice. Under the heading of “What do rituals do” (iii) the inherent potentialities of rituals to act as means of meta-communication and social action will be further elaborated with regard to bilateral reconciliation. This also involves highlighting the multi-sensational quality of rituals to communicate and presenting the performative quality of rituals. However, not all performances are performative, i.e. transformative for the relation at stake. Since some apologies achieve the transformation of social relations between collectivities the chapter proceeds under the rubric of “How do they transform?” (iv) to the social mechanism of how these transformations may occur through ritual interaction. Drawing on insights from political anthropology and nascent apology studies the section presents three types of rituals – rituals of purification, humiliation, and passage – and discusses their respective transformative potential. Departing from this the section further (v) elaborates on the elements that render ritual (speech) acts felicitous. These elements stem from performance studies; after presenting them the section also discloses indices for the empirical analysis.

2. Ritualized apologies – Where do they come from?

Perceived as social practices, the stock of internationally discussed apology performances has established the apology as a respected and increasingly requested form of conduct. The “public political apology has established its place amongst the lexicon of standard strategies for addressing social and political injustices and human rights violations”, writes Danielle Celermajer (Celermajer 2006). Since social practices are a “product of history” or “incorporated history” (Bourdieu 1980: 91, 94) it is necessary to undertake a historical investigation of the sources and location of this practice. We now turn to this endeavour.

It has to be made clear at the outset that there is no such thing as a ‘pristine source’ of social practices. Social practices have no original starting points; at best they have entry points into the cosmos of existing practices. Their entrance into a valued practice commonly involves modifying existing practices; thus the metaphorical origins of the practice of apologiz-
ing in international relations has to be located at the intersection of diverse fields in which apologies unfold (diplomacy, commemorative policies and transitional justice politics). The emergence of the practice becomes comprehensible if we assume the perspective of perceiving the social activity in its temporal trajectory and the social gratification this practice has received over the years. To begin with, apologies are imbricated in the field of reparative policies that gained academic and international currency. What follows is not an integrated empirical genealogy of the apology practice, but the description of the various sources that have been put forward in the literature as underpinning the emergence of apology practices in international relations.

2.1. Human rights

‘Apologetics’ of apologies see the inflation of apologies as the normative progression of human and collective rights in international relations. Elazar Barkan even evokes a “new morality” reflecting a “Neo-Enlightenment” period on the global scale that philosophically underpins the granting of a form of liberal group rights that are comparable to rights that were commonly ascribed to individuals (Barkan/Karn 2006; Barkan 2000: 317). The sociologist Jeffrey Olick scrutinizes the widespread argument that the evolution and codification of human rights norms in international relations may have propelled the “politics of regret” after the Second World War (Olick 2007b: 125; see also Derrida 1999; Celermajer 2009: 248). According to this line of interpretation universal human rights norms not only prohibit violations of human rights norms in the present but also exhibit a trans-historical evaluative power that inherently brings to the fore past crimes. “[H]uman rights”, writes Olick, “are universal, which means not only that they are applicable all over the world but that they are valid principles for evaluating past societies as well” (Olick 2007b: 125). However, this correlation between an increasing leaning to atonement politics and the development of human rights norms “remains rather general” and based on normative accounts lacking any clear empirical validation, as Olick points out (Olick 2007b: 125–126). In his critical evaluation of the apology trend Jacques Derrida proposes the interpretation of a globalization of “Abrahamic” religious tropes in commemorative politics. This globalized “Christianization” of repentance expands “without the need of the Christian church”. Derrida underscores the normative power of the
conceptual legal figure of “crimes against humanity” that would stand as a malleable and transposable signifier at the centre of this discourse in a widespread universe of cases and thus engendering the “simulacrum, automated rituals” and “parasites” to this “ceremony of culpability” on an international scale (Derrida 1999).

2.2. Globalized Holocaust memory

Closely connected to the development of human rights norms and sideling the evolution of politics of regret is the global reception of the Holocaust. Several scholars have pointed to the fundamental role the globalized reception has played as a foil to gauge other crimes. The Holocaust stands as the “master analogy” or the “free-floating signifier for building analogies” (Assmann 2006) with regard to the moral evaluation of other mass crimes. The “icon” Holocaust stands at the centre of an increasingly victim-oriented line of interpretations of “culturally traumatic” historical experiences (Alexander 2004; LaCapra 2001). The perception of these events as culturally traumatic experiences calls for practices that remediate or ‘heal’ such experiences. In this regard the German policies that tried to address the traumatic reverberations that followed from the Holocaust advanced to the “gold standard” in global memory politics. Not only did the globalized reception of the German crimes lead to the construction of master analogies with regard to the quality of those crimes, it also did so regarding the appropriate way of addressing these ‘wounds of history’. As the French journalist Daniel Vernet from Le Monde poignantly put it: “The Germans: unsurpassed both at the crime and at repenting it” (Lind 2008: 101). The official German “stance… has contributed mightily to the worldwide spread of Holocaust consciousness and set a standard of reckoning with the past that others have been forced to confront” (Torpey 2003: 2). The memory of the Holocaust underwent a period of globalization and the emergence of apologies on a global scale represents the flip side of the same coin (Levy/Sznaider 2006).

2.3. Rituals of transition in transitology

We can concretize the location of apology practices in international politics by consulting the so-called Transitional Justice literature (Teitel 2002;
Mani 2002; Minow 2003). Apologies, as gestural practices in the political sphere, interact with and sideline other practices that have evolved during the last century in this academic field in order to address past crimes of different nature. Even though this book project attempts to delineate the generic value of apologies and the different ceremonial and practical shapes that they can assume, the juxtaposition of apologies and other instruments can help clarify the scope of the field in which apologies unfold, and delineate its contours. As Danielle Celermajer rightly indicated:

“though *sui generis*, apology’s political ascension also belongs within a more general international trend towards embracing reparative models of justice for past societal violations. As Truth Commissions, reparations schemes, and rituals of public memory inscribed themselves into international political institutional practice and consciousness” (Celermajer 2009: 248).

We thus encounter a family of different practices sharing a “common language” (Torpey 2006: 49) that constitutes the multivariate inventory of the domain of “reparative justice” after violent conflicts (Mani 2002; Minow 2003; Teitel 2002). Similarly, John Torpey has situated apologies in the field of reparation policies that mutually communicate with each other in addressing past crimes, the inventories deployed in transitional justice processes such as lustration and the installation of TRCs; as well as restitution payments, and commemorative policies materialized in education manuals and public memorials (Torpey 2006: 49–54).

2.4. Apologies as historically incorporated practices

Having sketched out the different sources that adjoined the evolving practice of apologizing in international politics, one last avenue explaining the advent of the practice deserves closer attention: The practice itself. Social scientists tend to focus on external factors causing the ascension of a phenomenon. A causal dissection of the social world into subjects that exert an effect on other social objects is common in positivistic approaches; yet this blinds us to factors that are intrinsic to the social practice: the social practice’s path-dependent evolution and historicity. The emergence of apology practices in international relations lay essentially therein. The advent of apologies as a valued and appropriate social practice with which conflictive memories could be addressed is rendered more comprehensible if we approach the emergence of state apologies as belonging to a historically built *habitus* – a set of regulated dispositions engendering practices.
at the hand of agents to intervene into and shape the world (Bourdieu 1980: 88), i.e. dispositions guiding the manner of how to atone appropriately, of how to do it right. Since the habitus is inextricably a historically built system of disposition, “shaped by history” and “shaping history”, the legacy and path-dependency of apology practices and the gratification these performances received renders more intelligibly the emergence of this trend towards apologies in international relations. Presentations of apologies have established a path and thus the conventionalized form of this political action. In this regard I want to draw on a longer quotation by Danielle Celermajer which captures well temporality and social contextualization as an avenue for the explanation of the emergence of the apology practice.

“[T]he trajectory of particular practices can be neither predicted nor understood through abstract analysis of their potential contribution or even the environmental conditions, but is also path-dependent, rising or falling with the success, failure, and popularity of other related processes and their own historical deployment. Apologies and their cousins also provide the precedent for future apologies” (Celermajer 2009: 248–249).

Successful practices are not forcibly manifestations of a pre-established normative order. Rituals are not invariably executions or derivates of pre-existing scripts and conventions. Rituals not only bear a conservative and traditionalizing feature, they also have a significant productive potential. They may also contribute, if not bring into existence, modified normative orders. Ritual anthropologists following Roy Rappaport, Stanley Tambiah, and Don Handelman repeatedly incite us to perceive rituals less in their rigid and constraining quality and more as dynamic sources of creative normative change (Tambiah 2003; Rappaport 2002; Handelman 1998). The cultural anthropologist Marshall Sahlins even conceives rituals to be the intermediary between “structure and history, system and event, continuity and change”. As the application “of cultural structures to new situations” the ritual action would advance to the driver of history, “the very process of history itself” (Bell 1997: 77), thus representing quite the contrary of sclerotic traditionalizing practices that putatively reproduce existing normative structures. Don Handelman interprets rituals and ritualistic behavior in a twofold manner as “mirrors” and “models”: The “mirror” metaphor stands for the reflection of social structures present in ritual practices. As Handelman says “rites become mirrored reflections of [social] order”. The “model” metaphor, in contrast, stands for ritual practices that are less determined as pure reflections of the social order. Rituals as
models are not sclerotic but productive; since the symbolic communicative tools activated within these rituals may foster social change (Handelman 1998: xiv–xv).

Following ritual theorist David Hymes who understood “structure as emergent in action” (Hall 1999: 185), we may thus perceive the very practice of apologies as the generative location of the establishment of this emergent norm. At this point it is necessary to empirically substantialize this point by addressing the international career of the kneeling gesture by Willy Brandt. Danielle Celermajer writes:

“An apology that captured the public imagination, like Willy Brandt’s Kniefall, opened a space for a form of action to crystallize as standard political practice; but so, too, apologies that fall flat can cast a shadow on that path” (Celermajer 2009: 249).

Indeed the gesture by Brandt immediately made the headlines of the international press (see Chapter 3). Willy Brandt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971, the highest international prize that confirmed the international acknowledgement he received for his policy. International reputation, and international status is attributed to actors according to the “cultural capital” they are endowed with and awards and titles are nothing else than the transfer of this cultural capital (Bourdieu 1989). Not only do international prizes honour the laureate but also the manner of the performance that led to the award. They are devices with which performances can be evaluated. As Jeffrey Alexander pointed out bestowing prizes such as the Academy Awards in Hollywood or the Nobel Peace Prize in international relations work according to the same “institutional logic... The aim is to employ, and deploy, autonomous criteria in the evaluation of social performance” (Alexander 2006: 69).

The institutionalization and ‘memorialization’ of the apology act by Brandt has taken different cultural and transnational forms. The gesture has found its way into the global memory landscape. In December 2000, the Polish President Jerzy Bużek together with the German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder inaugurated a square named after Willy Brandt in Warsaw that also displays a memorial plaque dedicated to the apology. Thus the gesture has undergone a career of global iconification (Schneider 2006). It has been used in various societal fields as well as globally in the evaluation of apology gestures in other contexts of conflictive memories.

In addition to the international gratification and institutionalization of the gesture, one further aspect manifests the normative impact of this apology: It exerts a reference character when evaluating other performances in
the field of remedial work in post-conflict situations. Some apology gestures are positively evaluated by characterizing the act as "worthy of a Willy Brandt", as in the case of the Croatian Foreign Minister after the apology by the Montenegrin President Milo Đukanović in 2000, while others are specifically renounced as they are perceived as failing to have matched the German role model (see the critique by Kim Dea-Jong of Junichiro Koizumis’ apology in 2001 in this book). As Leo Howe put it: “Any especially memorable performance (successful or otherwise) may become a bench-mark… for evaluating subsequent ones” (Howe 2000: 67).

Therefore, in order to grasp the validity of apologies on the global level the temporal trajectory of the practice itself has established apologies as a valuable and subsequently requested form of reparative action after violence. Thus some scholars have read the apology performance not as an isolated and decoupled mode of action – singularly invoked on different contingent occasions without any cross connection to other apology presentations – but as a “type” of action, as a “genre” following the conceptualization of Bakhtinian discourse theory (Yamazaki 2006; Olick 2007a). As “practical types” genres “are historical constructs... the results of a continuous and generative process... residues of past behavior that shape, guide, and constrain future behavior” (Olick 2007a: 106). As genres the practice incorporates the “culture’s congealed events and crystallized activity” (Olick 2007a: 106). Thus the genre concept is equivocal to the conceptualization of social practice elaborated by Pierre Bourdieu who presented the practice to be “incorporated history”. Actors mime the techniques that are historically available to them to intervene in the world, strategically or unconsciously. That does not implicate that they are culturally determined and “manipulated ... or simply carrying out discourses but that the materials available to them in any context... are historical accretions, the results of long developmental processes.”(Olick 2007a: 106).

According to this elaboration we can pin down that apologies are typed activities and that their historical evolution has contributed to a ‘sediment’ stockpile of apology performances. Analogous, Zohar Kampf and Nava Löwenheim see that "representative apologies have been adopted as a type of discourse of globalization that widens the repertoire of rhetorical resources available for contemporary political figures", when confronted with conflictive memories (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 2). "I consider national apologies as international or global discourse, as statements performed on an international stage and with international expectations, com-
parisons, and evaluation” (Yamazaki 2006: 14). What does this imply for the discussion of successful apologies?

The question remains whether the historical character of this apology type prescribes any prefixed, conventional script in order to separate valid apologies from inappropriate ones. Do political figures have to copy liturgically successful apology performances? The answer to this question is no, and the reason lies in the specific type of ritual encountered here. Apologies are ritualized practices that are always embedded in a contingent contextual symbolic framework and would misfire if they were presented as inadaptable liturgical processions characterized by a rigid adherence to ritual conventions. Apologies have been termed as “emergent norms” or as “softly conventionalized” practices; however, they still lack clear conventions that would guide the proper deliverance of an apology in a universal mode. Even though no manual exists that sets out a clear procedure, it remains questionable, if not renounceable, whether apologies need such a prefixed convention in order to be felicitous. Conventions need not forerun performances in order for them to be felicitous. They may bring up conventions by virtue of the success of the performance. In this regard, Roy Rappaport coined the term metaperformatives to describe performances that establish conventions by virtue of their unfolding: “Austin stipulated as requisite to the effectiveness of performative that relevant conventions exist and be accepted, but he gave only scant attention to the ways in which this prerequisite might be fulfilled”, writes Rappaport. “Rituals do more than achieve conventional effects through conventional procedures. They establish the conventions in terms of which those effects are achieved” (Rappaport 2002: 458–459). This echoes what Leo Howe said when he argued that memorable performances may not only work as evaluative foils for subsequent performances but also by “influencing how subsequent performances “are actually conducted” (Howe 2000: 67). Successful performances contribute to the emergence of a soft script guiding the proper conduct of apology performances. But this script, in contrast to liturgical religious rituals, is less formalistic and rigid in achieving its power to transform relations. Apologies do not need to be meticulously enacted according to a pre-given script in order to exert transformative power. Like securitization moves in the literature on securitization, apologies do not “have a fixed, permanent, unchanging [code of practice]” (Gusfield, cited in Balzacq 2005: 172), thus should not be read as “a self-referential automaton that, once applied, miraculously affects the political agenda” (Guzzini 2011: 335). Rituals of apologies resemble
more of what Cathrine Bell has termed *ritualized practices*, as political action in ritualized forms that hinge less on a strict “formality, fixity and repetition” than on “culturally specific”, symbolic verbal and non-verbal expressions in “symbolically constituted spatial and temporal environments” (Bell 2010: 92–93). Similarly, Victor Turner writes that “only few rituals are so stereotyped that every utterance, every gesture, every scene is meticulously prescribed” (Turner 2009c: 130). This book’s endeavour, however, is to decipher how these ritualized practices unfold and what specific impact they had on the bilateral relation addressed via these rituals.

Summing up this discussion we can retain that the prism of rituals projected into apologies provides us with the answer to the question of where the rituals came from – as the legacy of eventful apologies. Furthermore, we can retain that history unfolds in the guise of historical events that provide the historical structure with its skeleton. These “historical events are punctuated by rituals” (Sewell 2005: 251), as William Sewell writes. Social performances such as the enactment of rituals that exert highly transformative potentials – including the globally-hailed apology performance of the German Chancellor – crystallize as anchoring points, not only in the relationship between Germany and their victimized communities, but also on a second level: the global discourse of reparative politics.

The practice of apologizing in international relations has thus found its way as a modified type of diplomatic activity, a genre, a *habitus*, and this practice is situated at the crossroads of different trends and customs in globalized memory and so-called *transitional justice* policies. In a similar manner to Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptualization of “practice”, the practice of apologizing can be viewed as a set of practices in the broader “field” of memory politics (Torpey 2006: 49). Conceptualized as a social practice, successful apologies are the “models” and “mirrors” of this changed normative setting. Taking this processual approach to social order apology deliveries are by the same token both the propellers and the products of a normative change occurring in “the global arena” (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012). Thus they bear the same qualities as practices in the elaboration of Pierre Bourdieu’s practice-oriented sociology by perceiving these activities as “structuring structures” – the generative aspect of the practice concept – and as outcomes of a “structured structure” – the representational aspect of the concept (Bourdieu 1980: 88). The enactment of apology performances and the international gratification of the performance received by Willy Brandt were the drivers of normative change in this memory
field. The next section addresses the questions of the respect in which the practice of apologies may be regarded as ritualized; the kind of social activity to which rituals belong; and what they accomplish.

3. What do rituals do?

“Ritual is not a single kind of action. Rather, it is a convergence of several kinds we normally think of as distinct. It is an ‘impure’ genre” (Grimes 1990: 192). Scholars have circumscribed rituals, or ritual events as “ceremonial hybrids: part spectacles, part festivals, part text, part performances” (Dayan/Katz 1988: 166). Ritual is an essentially fuzzy concept and is what William Connolly would characterize as an “essentially contested” concept (Connolly 1993). Indeed there have been various attempts to define the essence of rituals and the essential features that characterize them. Several scholars have argued that this endeavor is conducted in vain, due to the fuzziness of the concept and the various invocations it has found in the Social Sciences, especially in Sociology and Anthropology (Platvoet 1995; Handelman 1998: xvii; Goody 1977). The essences shift according to the domains in which the ritual is analyzed. Rituals are commonly juxtaposed, if not used interchangeably, with other concepts such as ceremonialism, liturgy, public dramas, public events, happenings, and public performances on the one hand, or routine, stereotyped and repetitive behaviour on the other. Ritual is the catchword that clusters all these features into one meta-category and this “universalism is of little help” if we wish to grasp the distinctive nature of rituals “as a category of action” (Goody 1977: 28). In order to ground the concept of ritual here and to locate the usage of ritual vis-à-vis other usages the term ritual will be demarked from usages that assume a quotidian perspective on rituals. In this regard the term ritual will be used here as a macro-concept denoting public events of symbolic communication. This said the definition of ritual does not explicitly comprise of those micro-conceptual approaches that perceive ritualized behavior as ubiquitous in interpersonal relations, as it has been underscored by the approaches provided by Ervin Goffman and especially Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1980; Goffman 1971). Rituals here are not to be conflated with a ritual use of unconscious behavior by agents that naturalize social hierarchies via their “body hexis” – the way people act in everyday interaction rituals – even though these practices exhibit symbolic power relations (Bourdieu 1980: 117; Neumann 2008). When
the term *ritual* is used here, it refers to public ceremonial rituals and not quotidian routine. The book thus confines its analysis “to collective ceremonial forms in order to keep the social context at the center of attention” (Moore/Myerhoff 1977: 4).

3.1. Ritual as the creation of apartness

Rituals are commonly conceptualized according to the social function they fulfill. According to the functionalist perspective, rituals are perceived as functional devices that lay at the basis of all community building. Rituals are constitutive devices of group solidarity and social cohesion as they render collective representations manifest on ceremonial occasions. According to Emil Durkheim rituals instigate affective bonds between the participants, termed as “collective effervescence”, that are attached to sacred objects, making the symbolized group, the nation, the *représentation collective* emotionally vivid and cognitively intelligible (Durkheim 1981). Inherent to rituals is the presence of schemes that demark sacred objects central to the normative system of the community from profane objects belonging to the mundane quotidian world. Through rituals, agents pay tribute to sacred symbols that are meaningful to the political or religious community, which fosters social cohesion and thus exerts integrating power on the participants and the social community as a whole. These objects represent the core values that constitute the proclaimed identity of the group. “Stripped to the essential, ceremonial action consists of a ‘presentation of self’ performed by a given society for its own members and those of other societies” (Dayan/Katz 1988: 166). Durkheim’s reading of rituals as inherently structuring the world in highly meaningful and sacred objects exerting centripetal force on the one hand and dispersing profane objects on the other became commonplace in ritual studies and is also insightful for the analysis of ritualized apologies. The ceremonial enwrapping of verbal as well as non-verbal apologies elevates the gesture to something special, to something socially exposed, spotlighted and thus important, in contrast to apologies that are presented in the course of quotidian exchanges of rational argumentations between conflicting groups. Rituals are spotlighting devices; they point to objects that are highly meaningful to the participants or render these objects – here the apology – meaningful for the participants.
The opposition between sacred and profane has also been picked up by other scholars who have modified these categories by opposing the “indicative” spectre of quotidian life to the subjunctive spectre present in ritual action (Turner 1995b: 127; Dayan/Katz 1988: 166–167). The “subjunctive” comprises of all the potentialities, aspirations, principles and normative ideals to which agents and collective actors abide but which are commonly unachieved and alienated through the corruption of daily life with its quotidian social conflicts.

The subjunctive emerges at exceptional moments during which the rules of daily life are temporarily suspended… [...] When it accedes to the subjunctive mode, a society becomes, at least temporarily, what it ought to be. It enacts its professed objectives, reiterates its own principles. Subjunctive behaviors thus call for ceremonial display… [...] Through ceremony, a problematic situation is redefined, transcribed in another language, transposed from the ‘indicative’ of conflict to the subjunctive of conflict resolution (Dayan/Katz 1988: 167).

Rituals are sets of symbolic actions that are invoked by agents to accentuate normative ideals and this accentuation indispensably requires that the ceremonial, dramatic display be socially recognized. Rituals have a salient character; rituals accentuate ideals and other cultural representations. In this regard rituals and the ceremonial enactment that underpins them can be perceived as a catalytic and dense form of social communication about professed values. Irrespective of their putative transformative effectiveness, rituals and ritualized performances primarily set things apart, and so achieve public attention. As “a certain kind of activity” rituals – understood as social performances – can be “set apart from other activities by space, time, attitude or all three” (Carlson 1999: 15). The next sections highlight rituals as a medium of symbolic communication that conveying meaning (3.2.) before turning to rituals as a category of social action (3.3).

3.2. Rituals as a communicative system

Regarding the communicative dimension of rituals, agents use rituals to express abstract social relational concepts like inter alia mental states (such as guilt, sorrow or affection), intentions and commitments (including marital bonds, war), emotions (affection, aversion) or societal values (cultural values, metanarratives) (Tambiah 2003: 232). Rituals are intrinsically expressive as they represent ideas (Langer 1963: 123–124). Tran-
ferred to the collective level, rituals do not express intentions of actor’s inner conversation but express and state collective intentions as part of a discursive process: “We engage in rituals in order to transmit collective messages to ourselves”, said Edmond Leach (Leach 1976: 45).

Rituals broaden the communicative instruments at the disposal of political actors. Rituals activate many more sensory channels than linguistic discourse analysis approaches will ever be able to grasp. Rituals are said to be polysemic, i.e. characterized by a “many-leveled and tiered structure…, each level having many sectors, makes of these genres flexible and nuanced instruments capable of carrying and communicating many messages at once, even of subverting on one level what appears to be ‘saying’ on another” (Turner 1995a: 24). Thus, approaching the apology phenomenon by the fixation on language via rhetorical analysis, as is done recurrently, blinds students of apology processes and prevents them from grasping the totality of communication channels at work within such processes. Rituals are experienced by the participants through an ensemble of sensual channels constituting a “compositional whole” via incantations, rhythms, sequenced body performances, and the manipulation of sacred objects in sacred spaces on special calendrical occasions. Paul Connerton writes that “other types of formalization in which speech, singing, gesture and dance are bound together in [a] compositional whole represent ritual’s distinguishing mark” (Connerton 2004: 60). “Insofar as rituals are stage plays and performances of bodies, they usually have more social weight than mere discourses” (Wulf/Zirfas 2003: 23). In this regard rituals accentuate the aesthetic and staged behavior that surpasses the traditional modes of communication commonly analyzed in social science in general and in post-conflict and transitional studies in particular. However, several scholars also point to the fact that rituals not only surpass the established and dominant modes of interaction, they represent a distinctive mode of interaction. “To interpret ritual as an alternative symbolic medium for expressing what may be expressed in other ways, and in particular in the form of myth, is to ignore what is distinctive about ritual itself… Certain things can be expressed only in ritual” (Connerton 2004: 54). This distinctive mode gains plasticity if we focus on the performative potentiality inherent in rituals.
3.3. Rituals as performative action

Rituals do not only work as an instrument of communication, they also “work”, i.e. create new social states, and modify social relations through their very enactment. This third perspective on rituals shifts the focus from rituals as manifestations of cultural and social systems of communication to rituals as types of actions, as a “type of human practice” (Bell 1997: 77). Rituals change the status of the participants within and through the ritual process. Transition rites, for example, endow the agents participating as role players within the ritual with new statuses. Rituals do not only have the potential to transform the participants of the rites but also the societies in which the rituals unfold (Tambiah 2003; Turner 1995b; Kolesch 2004: 289). Potential new states of relationships between groups are created via rituals and the manipulation of symbolic objects that are themselves endowed with meaning. Besides its characteristic to mirror states and cultural norms, rituals have a tremendous productive potential in modelling and reshuffling social relations by virtue of the very ritual execution. In speech act theory John Austin coined the term of performative utterance to denote speech acts that by virtue of their very utterance act in the social world (Austin 1962). Interestingly, in his discussion of performative acts Austin himself did not restrict himself to speech acts but to “all acts… which have the general character of ritual or ceremony”, thus explicitly also to those which are “performed in non-verbal ways” (Austin 1962: 18–19). In rituals performativity is engendered by a dynamic play of symbols, verbal utterances and body actions performed in these contexts; these are the potentials inherent in rituals. However, the following section addresses the questions of if and how these potentialities are actualized and what kind of conditions render rituals of apologies performative, i.e. successful.

Throughout the history of anthropology magical force has been attributed to rituals (Tambiah 1968). This magic is juxtaposed with other adjectives such as the ‘transformative’, ‘changing’, ‘moving’ – elevating or downgrading – as well as ‘binding’, ‘integrating’ and ‘disintegrating’ qualities of rituals. All these adjectives point to the fact that rituals are not only modes of communication but crucial modes of social action. Transformations are ‘at work’ in, by and through rituals. This transformative quality has been subsumed over the last few decades under the umbrella word of performativity. This potency of rituals is particularly present in transitory rites, rites de passage, to which apology deliverances belong.
However, a caveat is warranted in this regard. John Searle stipulated that “though every utterance is indeed a performance, only a very restricted class are performatives” (Wirth 2007: 39). In order to differentiate between performatives and performances it has to be clarified that performative utterances and performative gestures are those that exert this magical force of changing relations by virtue of their very execution. The other term, performance, is reserved for the description of the agent’s theatrical and staged corporal behavior (cf. Tambiah 1985: 128; Fischer-Lichter 1998: 86). In rituals of apologies both dimensions are present. The staged character of the deliverance warrants the description of these political actions as social performances; the transformative power they sometimes achieve as performative actions.

We have so far found the distinctive value of rituals, what do rituals do, to be located in their meta-communicative potentialities to multi-sensually accentuate and articulate collective messages and in their function of actualizing or achieving social change in accordance with their performative dimension. This last point indicates that rituals commonly flank, if not create, the transformation from one social stadium to another. Rituals are physically felt articulations of transitions. These potentialities of accentuation, articulation, and actualization are inherent in rituals understood as ceremonial processions. However, if we want to grasp more than the meaning present in ceremonial processions, the angle of analysis needs to take some distance and look at the effect on the relational social status that accompanies the enactment of rites. What type of rituals are state apologies, and what mechanisms are at work within them?

4. How do apology rituals transform?

What kind of class or types of rituals can be legitimately projected into the phenomenon of international apologies? How do these different types translate in the form of presentation of the apologies and what do they accomplish? The question of types and class refers to the mechanism at work in the ritual process itself. The types refer to the grammar and syntax of the ritual and focus on the social role and mechanism at work within rituals and the states they create. This means the types of rituals ask what kind of transformation is occurring (states); for whom (actors); and by what kind of mechanism (process). These are the determinants categorizing two types of passage rites that will be discussed in the following: puri-
fication rites and settlement rites. So far, the literature on apologies has predominantly avoided presenting a typology of rites that could be empirically substantiated – with the exception of Kampf and Löwenheim’s contribution that identified three different sorts of ritual types present in political apologies: Apologies presented in the mode of (a) purification rituals; apologies following the modes of (b) humiliation rituals; and so-called (c) settlement rituals (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012). The following section will discuss two of these types, purification and settlement rituals, since they represent the main ritual types encountered empirically in the chapters below.

4.1. Rituals of purification

With regard to the process, purification rituals are characterized by a unilateral “mode of interaction” in the deliverance of the apology (Kampf/ Löwenheim 2012: 55). Apologies have a monophonic dimension since the regretful public declaration by the apologizing actor is presented irrespective of the demands and needs of the formerly offended party. In issuing an apology the agents seem rather to purify their consciousness. They allegedly express the moral pain that mortified their ‘soul’. Since the acceptance of the addressed party is irrelevant within the unfolding of the ritual the audience to which these kinds of apologies speak seem to be broader and lay outside of the addressed group.

“The real purpose of those expressions of regret [are] not so much to convince the victims of the sincerity of the apology, as to ‘purify’ [the apologizing agent] in the eyes of the international community and reinstate them. This objective is achieved with the real target public (the international community) but not with the target group for which the apology was in theory intended” (Hazan 2006: 43).

Since the reaction of the addressed group within this type of ritual apology is secondary, the purification type apology is in essence a monophonic undertaking, and potentially reinstates power imbalances. The victims are instrumentally used for external purposes: the restoration of the image of the apologizer as a moral agent and assumingly the apologizer’s international

6 The painful confession of the “inner conversion” of sorrow and regret within an apology is said to be the centerpiece in personal apology presentations (Benoit 1995; Tavuchis 1991: 23; Taft 2000: 1140).
II. The emergence, force, and types of apology rituals in international relations.

reputation (Daase 2010; Ross 2008). The victims represent an addressed foil in the unfolding of the apology. However, this does not mean that the purification model does not allow for a status conversion on the part of the apologizer and that these types of apologies are doomed to fail. The potential transformation of the apologizing agent is achieved via the positive international reception of the apology act and not via the positive sanctioning of the gesture by the addressed community. In fact the following chapter analysing the prostration of the German chancellor will demonstrate how this kind of model may work, if they “are perceived as sincere and spontaneous” (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 49) by the audience. Reversely, if they lack this image of authenticity, this mode of apology presentation rather disintegrates, as the chapters on the Japanese and the Serb apologies will confirm. These acts are thus centred on the apologizing agent and implicitly confirm power imbalances between the involved parties. They potentially “reinforce[e] feelings of resentment” by the way the “apologizer symbolically positions himself as superior to the victim” rendering the reactions of the addressed group irrelevant and sidelining the essential interests of the addressed party (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 49).

4.2. Apologies as settlement rites

According to Zohar Kampf and Nava Löwenheim settlement rites are characterized by a bilateral mode of interaction and by the essential acceptance of the apology by the addressed party (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 52). These enactments are by essence dialogical, in the sense that the apology deliverance is delivered publicly in the presence of the addressed group. Moreover, a characteristic that singles them out is the fact that the positive public uptake of the apology is part of the ritual process and not a derivate of the overall ritual. “Settlement rituals are bilateral by nature… the alleged offender wishes to apologize and the recipient wishes to receive an apology. The positive response of the latter to the act is crucial” (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 52). In this regard these rites of apology are essentially staged pas de deux, in which both sides are protagonists. Kampf and Löwenheim differentiate further within this type of apology in which the transgression has been either one-sided and thus the apology deliverance unidirectional, or mutual and thus the reconciliation ceremony comprises apology gestures that address the mutual transgression of both sides (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012: 52). Occurring dominantly within the frame of
bilateral visits, these ritual enactments are commonly prenegotiated. Settlement rites resemble reconciliatory events in which equilibrium between the parties is re-achieved. The second category discussed here addresses the type of ritual that seems to be the avenue along which most of apology presentations in the empirical studies can be situated.

This typology help to order the apology deliverances encountered in the case studies. We will see that the main type encountered in the empirical chapters corresponds to the here presented settlement rites. Nevertheless, both types may mark as transforming rites.

How do they accomplish this transformative force? In order to address this question we should turn to the discussion of liminal events in Victor Turner’s conceptualization of ritual processes as “social dramas” (Turner 1995b; Turner 2009b).

4.3. Apologies as liminal performances

The social drama, as elaborated by Victor Turner, is a valuable prism with which to understand the unfolding and potential mediation of fundamental conflicts in societies, and is also transposable to memory conflicts between collectivities in which the presentation of apologies unfold. Social dramas are characterized by typical patterns and can be dissected into a four phased structure. The first phase, the breach, comprises the fundamental norm violation occurring within a society or between collective groups. In social dramas read as memory conflicts this fundamental breach consists of the historical wrong that strained the relationship between the collective parties. In the second phase of Turner’s approach, the crisis, these breaches undergo a process of increased politicization leading to the evolution of memory crisis situations in which the relationship becomes polarized and characterized by the formation of political groups with antagonistic positions. In order to symbolically mediate or confine the further deterioration of the relationship, agents invoke coping mechanisms to address the conflictive issue at stake. In this redress phase the parties may use judicial forms of conflict regulation, but also address the breach through other means such as ceremonial performances. The redress period is the period in which inherited patterns of interaction are suspended in a compartment of ritual interaction, the passage period, which Turner termed the “liminal” period. After this period of passage, the final period

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845261614
Generiert durch IP '54.70.40.11', am 17.03.2021, 20:05:19.
Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.
either brings up the successful reintegration or the public acknowledgement of the schism (Figure 2).

**Figure 2.1: Reading memory conflicts as social dramas**

![Diagram showing the phases of Breach, Crisis, Liminal, Reintegration or Schism]

Source: Illustration by the author

Apology performances can thus be situated at the center of liminal periods, they even represent this liminality. In contrast to other ritual approaches which perceive the ceremonial transition as symbolically re-establishing or rearticulating order, and dominating over chaos and social conflict, Turner perceives these liminal periods as the “seedbeds” of normative transformation, as playfields or social windows in which new modes of normative configuration and innovation are played out (Turner 2009a: 69). The liminal entities and the aesthetic representation they assume are contexts in which the normative order is transiently suspended. As periods of suspended orders, liminal periods provide room to reshuffle normative matrices and social innovation and as such are inherently dynamic. “In liminality, new ways of acting, new combinations of symbols, are tried out, to be discarded or accepted” (Turner 1977: 40). What do agents and participants to liminal events experience? They experience an experimental field of how the world could be; they experience the potentialities, and thus the world in the “subjunctive” mode as described above. Liminality refers to a period that symbolically questions the inherited order without replacing it with another but by projecting other possible orders. “Liminal enmities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and be-
between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial” (Turner 1995b: 95). I draw here extensively on the concept of liminality since the description of the empirical cases will disclose several analogies between Turner’s conceptualization of rites as liminal performances, and state apologies. The first correspondence refers to the liminal properties that Turner identified (Turner 1995b: 106). Turner describes the liminal procession for the incumbents as a “limbo of statuslessness” (Turner 1995b: 97), i.e. the dialectic of status reversal during the liminal period followed by status uplift in order to mark the status transfer. Even though agents in apology performances are not disrobed of status symbols, the submissive quality, which is a characteristic of liminal procession, is also present in talk and symbolic body performances in ritual apologies as will be demonstrated in the subsequent empirical chapters.

Secondly, Turner describes the liminal period to be characterized by a plethora of binary oppositions in its unfolding, inter alia by “silence” and “simplicity” dominating in liminal redress phases in contrast to “speech” and “complexity” in the others; “sacredness” and “transition” in opposition to “technical knowledge” and “state” (Turner 1995b: 106).

This non-exhaustive characterization of the liminal period assembles several factors that will be encountered in the following apology presentations. Not all of the attributes of Turner’s liminal period are completely transferrable to the issue of state apologies. Nevertheless, apology performances are recurrently interpreted as attempts to accomplish a transition or symbolize a transition in the episodes encountered in the following. This finds its correspondence in the way apology performers project transitions in their speeches enveloping the apology presentation by evoking the metaphorical ‘closing of chapters’ and ‘the turning of pages’. Finally, in his discussion of the term ‘performance’, Turner etymologically roots his conception of liminal performance in the old French term *parfournir*, which means to “‘furnish forth, to complete’ or ‘carry out thoroughly’” (Turner 2009a: 18). The characterization of physically going through a liminal and dynamic procession in apology processes will become clear from the empirical chapters below, and corresponds to Turner’s conceptualization of performance.

---

7 Turner evokes a plethora of characteristics reflecting the stripping of status symbols during liminal periods which found their correspondence in the way initiates are dressed, nurtured and treated (secluded and humiliated). The analogy of liminality is thus forcibly selective, but several crucial similarities remain.
These typologies of rituals of purification, rituals of settlement and the mechanism of liminal performances help to order the apology deliveries encountered in the case studies. I will read them as different rites de passage. This typology provides a heuristic tool for interpretations, as possible ritual readings, but not as categorical and distinct analytical types of apologies with different success grades. Nevertheless the accomplishment of passage is not always achieved. According to our discussion of apology rituals, attempted liminal performances left open the possibility of continued conflict and further strain in the case of inappropriate performances. This leads us to the last question, what is meant by the successful completion of an apology ritual?

5. What is “success” in ritualized apologies?

In the first chapter it was maintained that apology performances may exert an integrative as well as disintegrating force. It was further maintained that the performances received different evaluations by the addressees of the apology that defines the potential transformative power of apologies. The following section substantiate in more detail what rendered apology performances powerful or less powerful before turning to the question how these states can be found in the empirical data.

As potentially reconciling devices apologies may create reintegration, i.e. they have re-fusing qualities in opposition to de-fusing, i.e. disintegrating qualities. It is these re-fusing qualities that define whether apologies will be successful. In contrast, de-fusing qualities lead apologies to be infelicitous in creating a positive change in the strained relationship. This positive change is created by the emotional binding force that the apology performance may exert. The term re-fusing reflects the potency of the performance to symbolically retie broken relationships. Re-fusing means that a social performance achieves the perception of authenticity, rings true to the audience and compels affectively; and it does so by sewing “the disparate elements of performance back into a seamless and convincing whole” (Alexander 2006: 55). The performance seems adequate, authentic and to unfold naturally, which Alexander terms as “flow” (Alexander 2006: 56). It seemingly reflects the spontaneous and true feelings of the performing agent. It achieves “verisimilitude – the appearance of reality” (Alexander 2006: 57) when the performer activates culturally meaningful symbols and in exchange is rewarded with positive psychological identifi-
Defusing is the attribution of the opposing characterization: performances that seem artificial, externally driven, or contrived and as such are unable to create a psychological identification among the audience with the performing agent. “To the degree” that apologies as social performances “achieve re-fusion [they] become convincing and effective – more ritual like. To the degree that social performances remain de-fused, they seem artificial and contrived, less like rituals than like performances in the pejorative sense” (Alexander 2006: 32).

Since these conceptions of successful and unsuccessful performances are ideal type conceptualizations the empirical evaluation of the apology presentations in the studies below will have to cope with the grey areas that exist between these categories. Thus both qualifications of apologies – re-fusing and de-fusing qualities – are further differentiated in highly successful rites: the transcending state, in which the apology is highly acclaimed as a reference point in the further interaction process on the one hand, and in a successful transforming state, in which the apology is positively perceived and accepted to be conducive for further interactions between the parties although the overall transcendence of the conflictive issue remains open.

Infelicitous apologies are those which do not exert any identifiable positive change in the quality of the relationship. These apologies are perceived as insufficient. They do not exert any transforming quality, they do not mark, and thus the strained relationship endures. Other apologies may even fuel conflictive relationships as they may be perceived as hypocritical and inauthentic actions, thus rendering the apology a further bone of contestation between the parties. The different grey tones of reception have to do with the fact that the audience’s reception of apologies is marked by dynamic processes involving the various “hermeneutical powers” used to interpret the apology (Alexander 2006: 68). It is particularly important that the analytical evaluation of the performance reflects this in performances where the receptive side is split by divergent official, societal, and media evaluations of the performance. Evidently these performances do not transcend the conflictive issue. Transcending apology performances are framed as “turning points” by all hermeneutical agencies. The class of transformative apologies reflects performances that receive

---

8 According to Jeffrey Alexander the hermeneutical power refers to those agencies in media and society entitled to critically judge the performance ex posteriori.
positive official reactions by the addressees. However, these positive official reactions may be superseded by the contestation the performance receives on the societal level. Thus if societal outcry dominated the interpretative process, despite a benevolent reception by the official side, then the performance fails to transform and instead reflects an enduring conflictive state. A blatant rejection of the receptive audience on the official as well as the societal level then represents the last spectre of this gradual scheme, i.e. conflict fueling apologies.

The following figure (Figure 2.2) presents in addition to the identified types of states the characterizations made out of the “in vivo” characterizations of the apology performances by leaders of the addressed community or media reports of them in the following empirical chapters.

**Figure 2.2: Characterizations of states of social Integration and Disintegration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disintegrated State</th>
<th>Liminal State</th>
<th>Integrated State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>De-fusing quality</td>
<td>Apology</td>
<td>Re-fusing quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Inauthentic”</td>
<td>“Important step”</td>
<td>“Turning point”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hypocritical”</td>
<td>“Statesmanlike”</td>
<td>“Groundbreaking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Took note”</td>
<td>“Important step”</td>
<td>“Turning point”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Illustration by the author

6. **Elements of apology performances**

In the first chapter apologies were conceived as social performances. As instances of discursive practices social performances are said to make the text “walk and talk” (Alexander 2006: 36). The chapter set out the argument that rituals and social performances represent a compositional whole, and that when the elements are stitched together seamlessly they may exert a fusing quality. Apologies were conceptualized as representing liminal performances that potentially create reconciling events in social dramas understood as memory dramas. Let us recall that these liminal periods are
celebrations of the extraordinary and apartness. In order to work, these
celebrations have to achieve condensation and concentration on the one
hand and have to allow conversation and “communicative intimacy”
(Alexander 2006: 66) between the collective agents on the other. This
leads us now to the question of how to operationalize liminality into
analysable material pieces. How does the concept of liminality translate
into materialized elements? The following elements are the instruments,
techniques, and requisites that agents have at their disposal to stage cere‐
monial apology performances. Drawing on the conceptual scheme present‐
ed by Jeffrey Alexander these elements comprise of the following cat‐
egories which are also the parameters and codes that guided the empirical
analysis (Alexander 2006: 33–37, 57–76): The analysis of the background
symbols (i) of space, time and cultural objects, the foreground scripts (ii)
of verbal and non-verbal performances; the (iii) actors understood as pro‐
tagonsists, participants and audience and finally the (iv) setting of the stage,
choreography, the mise-en-scène bringing these factors into playful circu‐
lation and the dynamic.

The first parameters refer to the broader background symbols (i) activ‐
ated in ceremonial apology performances. These background symbols
constitute the context, specifically the in situ context in which apologies
unfold. Social performances draw on stabilized cultural symbols, “codes”,
“patterned representations” (Alexander/Alexander-Giesen-Mast 2006: 33)
in order to convey a collective message within ritualized performances.
These background symbols comprise “signifiers whose referents are the
social, physical natural and cosmological worlds” (Alexander 2006: 33).
Translated to apology performances these background symbols comprise
of three dimensions:

The space: Where does the performance ‘take place’? Symbolic places
like political centres or realms of memory are suffused with salient mean‐
ing for the participants that radiates into the procession.

The time: When does the performance take place? How do symbolic
dates temporarily mark the occasion of the enactment of an apology per‐
formance?

The objects: Which cultural objects endowed with specific meaning are
presented during apology performances? This refers to the objects at the
disposal of the apologizer that are used to convey the message of a repent‐
ing agent, i.e. the transfer of meaningful documents or cultural goods.

The background symbols were the condensed signs that were at the dis‐
posal during the ceremony. Actors use this ‘collage’ of background sym‐
bols in order to communicate in a public setting. However these background symbols must be brought into a presentational mode that brings the verbal and non-verbal actions by the performers to the forefront. Since codes have to be activated, they first need to be physically encoded by actors who are the carriers of these codes. The “foreground scripts” (ii) activate these background symbols in (a) speech and (b) physical action. Foreground scripts thus pilot the analysis from the context to the form of the apology performance’s content.

In regard to the (a) linguistic package of the apology message performers may use different ceremonial figures of speech. Apologizing agents envelope their apology message in specific (1) narrative forms or (2) rhetorical figures, and these are scrutinized in the empirical chapters. With regard to speech performances, condensation may be achieved through “melodramatic” narrative devices by opposing the actual apologizing actor to the former, performing temporal binaries between a former perpetrator and a now repented agent. Other narrative figures such as metaphors may also underscore this transitional state, and this will be recurrently demonstrated in the case studies. Ceremonial speech is commonly characterized by “cognitive simplification” that helps to get the message of atonement across via its specific rhetorical form of presentation. In this regard, agents have rhetorical repetitions in rhytmical speech at their disposal with which to underscore crucial parts of their apology discourse.

(b) Physical performances: Assuming the ritual perspective implies that the content of the apology performance necessarily communicates with the context in which it unfolds, context radiates into the content and vice versa. This is reflected in the fact that actors do not only verbally perform in specific spaces, they physically act towards material objects such as cenotaphs, and altars in these spaces. Towards which objects do agents act? The category also addresses the instruments and material objects – the “mundane material” – that could serve as “iconic representations” in order to “make visible the invisible motives and morals [actors were] trying to represent” (Alexander 2006: 35). Actors use flowers, scarves, candles, and books to represent different motives and intentions. With which objects do agents act? Finally, physical performances can express cultural meanings by substituting or amplifying the apology message, such as through kneeling or by facial expressions. What kind of body behaviour achieves the status of meaningful corporal cultural expressions in apology performances? To which kind of body performances do audiences attach positive affective meaning? Since actors not only act physically monotonically
towards mundane or sacred objects but also enter into a gestural dialogical process with other participants in these processions, the role of other actors comes to the forefront.

The parameter of actors (iii) comprises the main protagonists who are centrally spotlighted during the procession: the collective representatives. However, other actors are also present in these processions. Thus the empirical chapters open the perspective with regard to the question of how this audience is involved. Political celebrities, religious and societal representatives are not passively present but contribute to the symbolic production of meaning as participants via their presence at the scene. The audience in this research project is not only restricted to deciphering the overall performance but represents a constitutive element in the deliverance of the apology. The parameter of audience scrutinizes who is implicated in the unfolding apology process, and the role of the audience. Which groups are allowed to take part directly in the performance process and how do they fill out this presence? How does symbolic communication take shape between the protagonists, the participants, the audience, and the remote spectators involved in the procession?

Finally the mise-en-scène (iv) focuses on how these diverse elements are choreographed spatially and how they are brought into a temporal sequence. The mise-en-scène is thus the spatial and temporal staging of the ensemble of physical and verbal gestures that constitutes a performance (Alexander 2006: 36). The parameter of mise-en-scène analyses the sequential unfolding of the apology performance. This category also grasps the unforeseen events and dynamics that characterize apology performances, as was argued in the discussion of the nature of the rituals. How do agents react to them? What kind of creativity, spontaneity and “recipe knowledge” (Alfred Schütz, cited in Carlson 1999: 49) can be testified to the agents? Rituals and performances addressing social dramas are the locus of public contestations and thus inherently risky. Thus “improvisations whereas on the verbal as well as on the non-verbal level are not only allowed, they are necessary” (Turner 2009b: 130). All four broader parameters are clustered together in the figure (Figure 2.3) that follows.
It is important to point out that singling out specific factors – slicing them out of the context – in order to identify specific necessary factors for the achievement of successful apologies would overlook the mutually interrelated nature of the elements. Rituals and ritualized performances are clusters of activated symbols in contingent situations. As Alexander points out:

“In the language of hermeneutics, this sketch of interdependent elements provides a framework for the interpretive reconstruction of the meanings of performative action. In the language of explanation, it provides a model of causality. One can say that every social performance is determined partly by each of the elements… that each is a necessary but not sufficient cause of every performative act. While empirically interrelated, each element has some autonomy, not only analytically but empirically vis-à-vis the others. Taken together, they determine, and measure, whether and how a performance occurs, and the degree to which it succeeds or fails in its effect” (Alexander 2006: 36).

All of these elements and research avenues for the ideographic analysis represent co-constitutive techniques and entities that create meaning. They capture elements that have a mutually moderating and activating character. Performing the bowing of heads in the context of a memorial transports
other meanings than the bowing within the procedure of a quotidian press conference. It matters where, on which occasion and in the presence of whom such acts were effectuated. The following chapters will empirically substantiate the identified elements in their capacity to evoke marking apologies.

6. Elements of apology performances
III. The Warsaw Kniefall

1. Introduction

The following is a description of events by the German journalist Hermann Schreiber who accompanied the German Chancellor Willy Brandt during the state visit to Poland in November 1970 and who reported on the prostration of the chancellor:

“It will not be written down in the history textbooks like this, even though it should be: this sudden, wild, jostling for a place by the photographs; this breathtaking moment; the shock. Where is he? What happened? Did he fall? Faint? Willy Brandt was kneeling. He adjusted both ends of the ribbons of the wreath with ceremonial handle, although they were already in the correct position. He stepped back on the wet granite. He remained a moment in the diplomatic pose of the wreath-deposing statesman. And he went down on to his knees, unprotected, his hands folded, head bowed. There, where he knelt had been a place of hell – the Warsaw Ghetto. It was a place where history had fury – our history” (Schreiber 1970: 29).

Schreiber’s report succinctly describes the unexpectedness and tremendous impact that characterized the kneeling gesture by the German Chancellor during the formal diplomatic ceremony of laying a wreath. The description manifests that the minimalist deviation from the ceremonial script by kneeling created a ‘thrilling moment’, and the ‘extraordinary’ within this customary ritual of diplomatic wreath depositing. The account reflects the concentration and energy that the gesture created on this symbolic site of the former Warsaw Ghetto where a furious, specifically German history once raged.

Brandt’s kneeling will represent the main focus of this chapter, since it demonstrated how ‘silent’ apologies may work. Moreover the prostration of the German Chancellor in Warsaw advanced to become the ‘icon’ of German political repentance vis-à-vis the Holocaust. The recurrently hailed German reappraisal of the past – the Aufarbeitung – comprises several different facets and could have made up the analytical focus of this chapter. Brandt’s kneeling was preceded by various compensational steps both beforehand and afterwards (Hockerts 2003: 17–18; Barkan 2000: chapter one). However, this chapter focuses on the performance by Willy Brandt in order to demonstrate that collective apologies may work solely...
due to the symbolic form of their presentation and that the status of the represented collectivity is transformed through the actual performance itself. This chapter singles out the force of corporal performances and demonstrates that they may not only substitute verbally performed apologies, but even “excel... in what words cannot easily do” (Tambiah 1968: 202). As Brandt himself framed his gesture, he did what he did because of the paucity of words vis-à-vis the crimes he commemoratively encountered in the situation. As he pointed out: “At the abyss of German history and subject to the burden of the millions murdered I did what human beings do, when words fail them” (Brandt 1989: 222). The chapter thus illustrates the overall argument of this book that apologies may be successfully conveyed by symbolic performances that are presented extra-linguistically, and may purely rely on symbolic performances in order to have an impact. It flags out the force of ritual performances and the creative potentials of symbolic performances in ceremonial settings. It echoes what Bourdieu pointed out: that ritual gestures may not have an objective meaning apart from saying or doing something “when there is nothing else to do” (Bourdieu 1980: 36).

The chapter thus singles out the performance itself and will describe the context in which it unfolded. The chapter will begin with the description of the apology performance and portray the presentation of the apology as characterized by the appropriateness of the space, the actor and most significantly by the corporal performance of the gesture itself. The presentation and the reception shows that the way Brandt presented this corporal act of atonement rendered the apology authentic. And this authenticity, as the chapter will highlight, is coupled to the unexpectedness, spontaneity and flow with which the prostration was performed. With regard to the reactions to the apology this chapter focuses on one particularity. Brandt’s Kniefall did not receive any official reception or explicit official uptake in Poland, the country in which it was performed. As the chapter shows, the transcendent and performative quality of the apology was attributed via the international media reception the performance received. The apology thus represented a global purification ritual that successfully modified the status of Germany rather than a dialogical bilateral rite of passage. The last section of the chapter will thus show how the gesture by Willy Brandt advanced to an international icon of adequate repentance. It will demonstrate the iconified status the gesture achieved by presenting evaluations of other performances, the value of which was gauged by referring to Willy Brandt’s apology gesture.
Willy Brandt’s visit was preceded and embedded in a sequence of other state visits accomplished in the wake of the German *Ostpolitik* in the early 1970s. During this period the German government was reorienting its policies towards the Communist Bloc that until then had been characterized by isolation and non-recognition. The Brandt government brought about a remarkable change in policy leading from isolation and non-recognition to rapprochement and de facto recognition of the post-war order. The principle behind this domestically contested policy shift comprised the famous leading theme “change through rapprochement” (Cordell/Wolff 2007: 256). Hence, on August 12, 1970 the West German Government concluded the *Moscow Treaty* normalizing the relationship between the West German state and the Soviet Union by acknowledging the status quo and the state borders in Eastern Europe. Between December 6 and December 7 1970, the German Chancellor visited Warsaw; this represented the first visit to Poland by a West German Chancellor since the end of the Second World War and the conclusion of the *Warsaw Treaty*. According to observers, the state visit to Poland was – in contrast to the formal state visit to Moscow – an “atmospheric, historical” visit, emotionally “loaded in the highest sense” (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 16). The particular attention given to the state visit to Poland was due to the specific suffering Poland had endured during the Second World War. Today’s Polish territory represented the amphitheatre of the Second World War in Europe: the German genocide of the Jews and the crimes under German occupation mainly occurred on what is now Polish territory, as did the expulsion of Germans from Eastern Europe together with the reshuffling of state borders after the Second World War. Consequently, the first official state visit by a chancellor of the Third Reich’s successor state gained strong attention on both sides as well as in the international media.

The first drafts of the diplomatic protocol of the state visit exchanged between both sides did not envision any wreath deposing ceremonies. The Polish side came up with the idea of such a ceremony at the national Grave of the Unknown Soldier to honour the fallen Polish martyrs of the Second World War. However, the German Chancellor desired either to additionally incorporate a wreath deposing ceremony at the Warsaw Ghetto uprising memorial “or to no one at all” (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 20). The Polish side agreed to this request and warranted a “sober” wreath deposing ceremony at the Ghetto memorial. In contrast to the visit to the
Grave of the Unknown Soldier the wreath deposing ceremony did not provide for any state ceremony, “no military band, no anthems, no guards of honour, no guestbook, not even a reduced ceremony” (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 21–22).

However, the Polish side conceded to the demands of the German Chancellor. Thus the reduced ceremonial formality accorded to the wreath deposing ceremony at the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising memorial reflected the minor importance the Polish side accorded to the commemoration of the Ghetto Uprising and the memory of the Holocaust in general. It also converges with the government-backed anti-Semitic policies that had ravaged Poland since March 1968 and that had forced the few remaining Polish Jews to emigrate (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 37–38). It reflected the anti-Semitic stance of the Polish Government that lamented that “the world... exclusively talked about the Jewish victims of the war” and were “silent” vis-à-vis the “Polish victims”, as expressed by the Minister of Homeland Affairs Mieczysław Moczar, the main organizer of the anti-Jewish campaign in Poland (Krzeminski 2000: 1086).

It was thus the explicit request of the German Chancellor to perform a wreath deposing ceremony at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial. Compared to the rigid formality of the state ceremony at the Grave of the Unknown Soldier, the sobriety of protocol at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial provided the German Chancellor with a large amount of ceremonial flexibility and autonomy with regard to his gestures, an autonomy that “Brandt knew how to use” (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 22). On the evening of December 6, 1970 the German delegation arrived in Warsaw. It comprised not only of political representatives such as the German Chancellor and Foreign Minister Walter Scheel, but also leading political personalities such as the co-chairman of the Social Democratic Party and vice-president of the German Parliament, Carlo Schmid; personalities such as the German authors Günter Grass and Siegfried Lenz, both of whom had been expatriated from former German territories but were engaged intellectuals with regard to the acknowledgement of the German crimes in Eastern Europe and “advocates of political settlement with Poland on the basis of the post-war status quo”9. The German anthem was played during the official reception, the first time on the Polish soil since German capitulation 25

years before. The anthem is based on the same melody as the anthem used during the Nazi regime and was well known to the Polish participants, and especially to the hosting Prime Minister Cyraniewicz, “a former inmate of Auschwitz”\textsuperscript{10}. During the morning of the following day the chancellor was to deliver his famous act of contrition in front of the Warsaw Ghetto memorial.

3. **The performance**

Before both delegations proceeded to the ceremonial signature of the *Warsaw Treaty* at the Office of the Polish Minister-president the protocol envisioned the performance of the ceremonies to lay wreaths, which had already been agreed upon. On the morning of December 7, 1970 Willy Brandt performed the wreath deposing ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier together with his homologue, the Polish Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz. The procession at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was attended by nearby 2000 spectators and rigidly followed the prescribed protocol. The German Chancellor paid tribute by silently deposing a wreath, and bowed in respect for the commemorated victims (see Photogramm 3.1). Without addressing the public Brandt wrote the following in the memorial guestbook: “In memoriam of the victims of the Second World War and to all victims of injustice and violence” (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 21). After this first wreath deposing ceremony the official German delegation and the Polish delegation continued to the Warsaw Ghetto memorial. In contrast to the first wreath deposing ceremony the second ceremony is disrobed of ceremonial pomp and lacks the joint character. Brandt performed the following symbolic gesture alone.

Not all of the German delegates were present when the German cortege proceeded in the procession. At 10.35 a.m. the German Chancellor, together with his Foreign Minister Walter Scheel, walked down the corridor of journalists and the 300 to 400 spectators attending the scene. The German delegation walked behind the wreath, which was decorated with white carnations. After the deposition of the wreath at the memorial, the German Chancellor separated himself from his cortege (Photogramm 3.2: Picture 1-9), adjusted the ribbons on the wreath (Photogramm 3.2: Picture 10-27) with the inscription ‘the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany’, and stood for a second with his head slightly bowed. At this point, Brandt was spotlighted by the attending media representatives. Then, in a fluent movement, Brandt fell to his knees. As if hit by an overwhelming power in the back of his knees, Brandt dropped down on the wet granite. Brandt did not amortize his fall with his hands (Photogramm 3.2: Picture 28-40). He only used his arms when he folded his hands in front of him (Photogramm 3.2: Picture 41-48). The German Chancellor remained in this position for approximately 30 seconds. His facial expression remained firm, the corners of his mouth slightly turned downwards (Photogramm 3.2: Picture 49 and 50). As sudden as he had fallen to his knees Brandt stood up, turned away and rejoined his delegation (Photogramm 3.2: Picture 51-84). After this commemoration Brandt and his Polish homologue...
III. The Warsaw Kniefall

proceeded to the ceremonial signature of the *Warsaw Treaty*; this was concluded at 12:30 in the Presidential Palace in front of the international media.

*Photogramm 2: The Warsaw Kniefall*
3. The performance
III. The Warsaw Kniefall
3. The performance
III. The Warsaw Kniefall
4. The liminal character of Brandt’s performance

Before turning to the international reactions of Brandt’s prostration this section continues by presenting the frames of interpretation of the kneeling performance by the German and international media. As outlined in
the theoretical chapter, audiences are not confined to the role of the primary receiver but may also be productive in rituals of apologies. In the case of the prostration by Willy Brandt this productive potential is actualized by the second order audience: the print media responsible for the dissemination of the act. In the following it will be demonstrated that these portrayals point out – if not create – the extraordinariness of the prostration, and that they underscore several features that the theoretical chapter had already highlighted as characteristic of liminal, transformative events.

Let me point out again that Turner’s approach to rituals was characterized by an emphasis on the central liminal phase in ritual processes that constituted the central passage phase in which old orders are symbolically suspended and new normative structures ritually invoked. Liminal periods are then characterized by the dynamic suspension of status, the “limbo of statuslessness” to allow the re-investiture of the agents with a modified status after the completion of the rite. Liminal stages are furthermore characterized by a dominance of symbolic body performance over complex argumentation, the experience of humility vis-à-vis transcendent powers and a sense of fundamental humanity among the participants that triggers emotional reactions. Liminal periods are periods of the extraordinary, of a break with established patterns of interaction. The liminal period is marked by “time in and out of time” (Turner 2009: 34–35). All these features are present in the media articles on the performance by participant observers, the media and academics who interpreted the gesture.

4.1. Suspended time – sacred time

That time seems to be suspended is reflected in several temporal frames used in the media: the German Spiegel article speaks of the “breathtaking second” as subtitled under the picture of the kneeling chancellor (Schreiber 1970: 29). The New York Times extended the time by reporting that Brandt “dropped to his knees and remained that way for a full

11 Forty years after the presentation of the apology, a Spiegel report underscored the performance with the oxymoron the “endless moment” (SpiegelOnline: Willy Brandt in Warschau – Kniefall vor der Geschichte, in: http://einstages.spiegel.de/external/ShowTopicAlbumBackground/a18281/l2/10/F.html#featuredEntry; accessed: 6 September 2012.
minute”. The prostration by the chancellor thus belonged and opened up the gates to a special temporality that does not belong to the common sequential temporality. It breaks and ruptures with the common mundane temporality and reaches to transcendent temporal spheres: time ‘stood still’ as Brandt sank to his knees.

This extraordinariness is further reflected in the descriptions by the audience that witnessed the prostration. The report by the German newspaper *Stuttgarter Zeitung* underscores this extraordinary, sublime scene by pointing out: “the small number of witnesses present on the large, barren site of the former Ghetto all held their breath” (Schneider 2006: 43). The attendant spectators of the scenery also present accounts of the performance that clearly indicate that something sacred and extraordinary occurred through and within the performance. Egon Bahr, Brandt’s personal advisor, wrote in his memoirs that a “sudden complete silence” captured the space. “While approaching one whispers: ‘He knelt’” (Krzeminski 2000: 1088). The accounts clearly indicate that by kneeling, Brandt suddenly captured the attention of the audience and by the same token filled the space with sacrile piety and energy. The participants whistled, as they were caught by the performance – even emotionally. A journalist from the German weekly, *Die Zeit*, described the impact of the gesture by reporting the reactions of a Polish attendant: “‘Does the Federal Republic of Germany deserve such a chancellor?’ whispers an otherwise very cold Polish observer” (Schneider 2006: 42).

4.2. Status reversal

Another characteristic of liminal performances in Turner’s sense was the underscoring of the humiliating and the symbolic status reversal that is commonly present in liminal performances. Brandt knelt publicly in front of the Cenotaph. What did Brandt accomplish by the performance of the kneeling? First of all he corporally ‘cited’ a well-established cultural code expressing devotion towards a higher power. He performed a self-denigrating act and disclosed the vulnerability, passivity and submission that we encountered in the first chapter as characteristic of apologies. The tran-

---

sient reversal of power relations is symbolically expressed by this gesture. Additionally, through the very enactment of this gesture a communication with the symbolized victims is accomplished. This aspect has been succinctly expressed by Christoph Schneider in his interpretation of the Warsaw prostration:

“By kneeling, Brandt gave voice to the victims. With his prostration Brandt chose a symbolic gesture with a specific meaning: If one kneels, then there must be someone else in front the person kneeling (who is the addressee of the kneeling). [...] That means that the kneeling stands for a specific form of communication between two parties [...] even though there is nothing else than a stony, mute memorial” (Schneider 2006: 243).

By kneeling Brandt entered into symbolic communication with a transcendent sphere – the symbolized victims of the Holocaust – and symbolically asked them for forgiveness.

In conjunction with this, kneeling not only signified symbolic communication with the materially represented victims through the cenotaph. The kneeling also secluded the chancellor from the other participants and the immediate world around him. His communication was reported as an inner conversion that reached to the transcendent world. This is reflected in some reporting that Brandt performed the kneeling gesture ‘in isolation’. Alone and on his own, secluded from the other participants, from the mundane world around him and publicly displaying inner conversation and spiritual reflection, Brandt’s performance assumes characteristics of Turner’s conceptualization of the seclusion of neophytes in rites of passage. As stated in *Time Magazine*, Brandt was “enveloped in silence except for the soft hiss of two gas-fed candelabra. Then, as if to atone for Germany’s sins against his neighbours [sic], Brandt falls to his knees”13. The Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* reports that “we saw Willy Brandt kneeling and engrossed in deep reflection, engrossed in grief and isolated from the world around him” (Rauer 2006: 267).

The German accounts of the ceremony recurrently frame the performance as a climax and an unexpected event that marked the state visit. Most interestingly the presented, predominantly German, media reports recurrently refer to *witnesses* instead of *observers* or *spectators*, as if

---

something supernatural or magically happened that had to be testified and spread to others (Schneider 2006: 227).

4.3. Spontaneity and Virtuosity

In the theoretical reflection on successful performances it was maintained that convincing performances exert the image of playfulness, immediacy, and spontaneity, which was characterized as “flow” (Alexander 2006: 56). A performance needs to appear appropriate to the situation and not externally driven, but intrinsically motivated and as reflecting the ‘real feelings’ of the agent. It then transports the image that the agent dissolves with the situation, does inherently the ‘right thing on the right spot’.

In this regard the case of Brandt’s kneefall is paradigmatic and exemplary of this theoretical argument. Its suddenness and perceived spontaneity rendered the performance authentic in the eyes of its audience. This authenticity is not only reducible to the fact “that Brandt knelt, but also how” (Schneider 2006: 183) he knelt. In this regard the quality of the performance crucially counted. The sequential unfolding of the gestural composition seemed to flow by itself, intuitively, as if Brandt was playfully executing a corporal performance with a certain kind of musicality and implicitness that was guided by the situation itself. Let me quote at length Christoph Schneider, whose description of the event succinctly reflects this:

“Although the Kniefall was a relatively short performative sequence, it was still ‘virtuous’. Brandt’s gesture and particularly the confidence with which it was incorporated into the performative context of the original ritual, is... an example of perfectly presented body language... A decisive factor in imparting this impression was the calmness with which Brandt fell to his knees – it seemed as if he had not simply done so by himself, but instead had been weighed down by something else. Brandt’s mimic was perfectly balanced – it was neither pathetic, nor was it too distanced. Furthermore, a minimal, equally perfectly placed sway – that was neither too short nor too long – shook him as he knelt down, and it conveyed to the observer that this had not been planned beforehand, but had actually arisen out of ‘the situation’ itself. At no point did even the smallest detail arise that could have led the audience to interpret the event as ‘inauthentic’. In this regard the prostration was a moment of perfectly formed corporal expression; a form of performative musicality that could have hardly been better performed” (Schneider 2006: 183).

The reports in the German and international media recurrently point to a perceived passivity in the way Brandt inaugurated his corporal perfor-
mance. Brandt “dropped to his knees”14 “as if shot dead” (Corriere della Sera, cited in Rauer 2006: 268). Brandt’s gesture is stored in the global memory as the Kniefall, as ‘falling’ onto his knees (see Photogramm 3.2: Picture 28–40). It highlights that Brandt was overwhelmed by an inherent call that the context had imposed on him.

Brandt’s gesture highlights how public apologies can work through the telling silence they provoke. It has to be pointed out that Brandt’s visit to the Warsaw Ghetto memorial was an explicit demand by the German Chancellor himself and had not been requested by the Polish side. The organization of the ceremonial ritual did not envision the encounter of Jewish representatives at the commemorative site nor did it propose a symbolic dialogue between the German and Polish delegations on the site. The procession unfolded according to the structure of a purification ritual as set out in chapter two, as demonstrated by the closing of the procession.

5. The closing

The impact of Brandt’s apology was not immediately reflected in the addressees’ official reactions. Indeed, the analysis of the newspaper articles as well as the work of historians clearly demonstrates that the apology gesture by Brandt did not trigger any immediate official response or evaluation neither by the Polish representatives nor by Jewish representatives in Israel (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005). The Polish side did not officially recognise Brandt’s apology gesture. The official Polish reactions positively hailed the concluded accords but were deliberately silent on the gesture of atonement performed at the memorial. Indeed Brandt seemed to have caught the Polish side on the wrong footing due to the anti-Semitic policies that were being orchestrated by the Polish regime at the time. The Polish media thus dominantly neglected the performance and rarely printed pictures of the gesture. If they did so, they ‘nationalized’ the performance by manipulating the pictures of the kneeling chancellor and only printing pictures taken from an angle that suggested he was kneeling in front of one of the two Polish military guards that flanked the cenotaph (Krzeminski 2000: 1086). If Brandt performed a liminal performance,

where then do we find the indicators for the transformative effect his performance might exert?

We find them dominantly in the personal accounts of those who participated at the memorial and more importantly in the international Western media reporting on the apology ‘event’. And we find this transformative impact in the visual presence that was accorded to it on the one hand and the textual-linguistic comments it received on the other. Pictures and articles on the Kneefall could be found on the front pages of the leading print media in the US, France, Britain and Italy on the following day ((Giesen 2004: 42; Rauer 2006: FN 17, 278). The New York Times even displayed the picture of the kneeling chancellor on two consecutive days. The prominent place that the picture received in the international media manifests the importance that was attributed to the act (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 53). In conjunction to the prominent visual presentation of the performance the headlines also underscored the historic impact and the emotional effect that was accorded to the gesture.

5.1. The emotional impact

On December 9, the headline in the British newspaper The Times stated that Brandt’s prostration would represent the “emotional climax” of the state visit (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 53). The New York Times reported that “this touching incident” overshadowed the signature of the German—Polish accords. The French newspaper Le Monde wrote that the German Chancellor “had found the way to the heart” at the Ghetto memorial (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 56). The Italian newspaper Corriere Della Sera framed the gesture by Brandt at the Warsaw Memorial as the “culminating moment” (Giesen 2004: 42) of the visit. That Brandt’s prostration exerted high emotional reactions is also manifested by the fact that on the following day the Polish Prime Minister Jozef Cyriankiewicz took the German Chancellor aside in order to tell him that his wife had been deeply moved by his gesture. According to him his wife would have discussed the gesture with a friend in Vienna and “cried bitterly” (Brandt 1976: 525).

5.2. The status transformation of the collectivity

Most importantly the gesture transformed the status of the represented nation, Germany. The immediate impact on the participants and especially on the victims of the German program of extermination is exemplified by the following report given by Lev Kopelev. Kopelev cites an unnamed witness of the Warsaw Ghetto:

“And I saw how Willy Brandt knelt in Warsaw at the Ghetto memorial. In this moment I felt: Within me there is no longer any hatred! He knelt down – and elevated his people […] He highly elevated it in our eyes, in our hearts. I confess this as a Pole and Christian” (Kopelew 1977: 46).

The Italian newspaper *Il Messaggero* argued that the gestures “drew a line under the past” or even represented “a sign which deletes the past” (Rauer 2006: 268). That the prostration of the chancellor represented a turning point with integrative power and the magic to symbolically ‘close the books’ is reflected in the framing of the Italian leftist newspaper *Avanti* that perceived the genuflexion of the chancellor to be the “closing of a chapter that began on 1st of September 1939 as Hitler’s aggression against Poland unleashed the Second World War” (Wolffsohn/Brechenmacher 2005: 57). The symbolic prostration thus created the transition from a state of crisis and enmity and closed symbolically the crisis state, transmitting it towards another status. Brandt’s prostration and the accords that were concluded on the same day transformed the relationship, and created new realties in the relationship between Germany and its former enemies. Enmity and hatred gave way to rapprochement. “We all have first to accustom ourselves that from now on a new chapter begins” said the President of the Polish Communist Party Władysław Gomułka at the end of the day (Schneider 2006: 41). Germany’s status transformation is also reflected in the remarks of the Polish Premier Cyrankiewicz who “recalled the events of the war and spoke of West Germany as ‘having risen from the rubble of the Third Reich’”16. Thus, even though no official solemn reaction by the Polish representatives was recorded regarding the *Kniefall*, the gesture, together with the concluded treaty, exerted a “transforming or even ‘carthartic’ effect on the audience” (Rauer 2006: 276).

---

5.3. The biography of the protagonist

Finally it has to be highlighted that media reports as well as the participants involved during the state visit recurrently pointed to Brandt’s role and image that seemed to matter crucially for the creation of this transition. “Only he could have one this” said the Polish Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz with regard to the prostration in private discussion with journalists on the very same day of the apology (Schreiber 1970: 30). The personal identity of the German Chancellor played a particular role in the unfolding of the ritual and especially for the question of in whose name the act had been performed: his personal name or that of the collective. However, Brandt’s well known political opposition and exile during the Nazi period helped underscore the collective nature of his performance at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial. The following quote by Herman Schreiber accentuate this:

“If this man, who is not religious, and was neither personally responsible for the crimes, nor present at the time they were committed chooses to make his way through the former Warsaw Ghetto and to kneel there, then he is not kneeling for himself. This man, who does not have to kneel, is then kneeling for all of those who should be kneeling, but are either unable to do so or do not even dare. When this man admits to a guilt that he should not have to shoulder, and asks for a forgiveness that he does not even need, then he kneels there for Germany” (Schreiber 1970: 29).

This quote as well as the famous quote by Lew Kopelew point to the fact that the audience knew in whose name Brandt was performing his Kniefall. Although Brandt certainly was moved by personal motivation, the redemption that ensued was not granted solely to Brandt but to the collectivity he represented. Via this personal act of kneeling, Brandt – as a representative – elevated his people.

6. Brandt’s Kniefall: the creation of a global icon

From the outset, Brandt’s Kniefall was a global historical event. Its resonance was global rather than bilateral. The international reactions demonstrated that the gesture by Willy Brandt was perceived as a historic event. And the historical quality of the gesture also contributed to the international iconification that it underwent as a role model for appropriate apologies. In accordance to the approach taken in this book, ritual performances not
only replicate established normative structures, they may also change
them. Normative change is inextricably coupled and manifested through
ritual and symbolic performances. In chapter two rituals were conceived
of as “structure as emergent in action” to point to the productive potential
of ritual performances. This productive and norm-changing quality is
present in the way Brandt’s prostration found an international reception.
On the following day, the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera wrote that
Brandt had created a “nuovo rizualte” in Warsaw (Giesen 2004: 42). In
what respect did Brandt create a new ritual and what was the subject of
this ritual? As Valentin Rauer has pointed out, at the time of Willy
Brandt’s kneeling gesture national memory centred on heroic interpreta-
tions of the past.

“The ‘guilt of nations’ was a totally new phenomenon for imagined commu-
nities. There existed neither a traditional knowledge of how to remember ade-
quately such a ‘counter past’, nor were there collective scripts and commemo-
ration rituals on which one could simply rely. All these cultural techniques
and representations had to be invented almost out of nothing. The kniefall
was one of these inventions” (Rauer 2006: 262).

Brandt’s prostration invented a cultural template for the public expression
and communication of collective atonement. Through its deviation from
the customary diplomatic ritual of wreath deposing the gesture marked; it
represented a rupture, not a scandalous one but a normative break in the
positive sense. This rupture was intended by Brandt himself due to the
paucity he felt that the ordinary ceremonial unfolding of the ritual would
provide. Brandt confessed to his advisor Bahr late in the night that “this
morning” he knew “that it won’t be as easy as with other wreath deposing
ceremonies, only bowing the head. After all, this is of different quality”
(Schreiber 1970: 30). Brandt inherently felt the incapacity of the ordinary
ritual and thus his deviation created a new model for the ordinary ritual
script.

The reactions displayed above demonstrate that this innovative modifi-
cation received an international positive evaluation and that the perfor-
manece successfully symbolized the ‘passing of a threshold’ vis-à-vis the
identity of the German state. The Kniefall by Brandt symbolically closed a
chapter that Hitler had opened. The extraordinary severity of the crimes of
the Holocaust meant that it could not be sufficiently symbolically compen-
sated for by an ‘ordinary’ ritual and instead needed an extraordinary ges-
ture if Germans were to be symbolically exempted from the extraordinary
stain of the perpetration of the Holocaust. The novelty of Brandt’s gesture

III. The Warsaw Kniefall

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845261614
Generiert durch IP '54.70.40.11', am 17.03.2021, 20:05:19.
Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.
presented a new template of how to address collective crimes such as genocides with symbolic actions. The positive international evaluation, and last but not least awarding Brandt the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971, helped render this gesture an icon of German atonement and establish a reference for other cases confronted with collective traumas. That Brandt’s performance advanced to a signifier of appropriate atonement will be elucidated now with citations from academia, and in the invocation of Brandt’s *Kniefall* to gauge other performances by political actors, official representatives as well as civil society groups who appropriated the gesture in other memory conflicts. It will be shown that Brandt’s apology gesture advanced to a global signifying icon that is recurrently used as an evaluative category for the creation of meaning in other settings, and this underpins its potent status as a signifying device.

If one screens the academic literature Brandt’s *Kniefall* is recurrently invoked in order to present a paradigmatic marking apology. Brandt performed “the most memorable” apology (Wohl et al. 2011: 75) see also (Marrus 2007) or “created a symbol” (Olick 2007b: 101), a global icon of appropriate collective atonement in world politics. In this regard Danielle Celermejer points to the “potent image of the original *Kniefall*” (Celermejer 2009: 167) that Brandt provided locating the prostration of the German Chancellor thus at the origins – “the original *Kniefall*” – of a changed international discourse on collective guilt.

Next to the academic field that recurrently invokes the prostration as a valuable example of an appropriate act of atonement we find the gesture invoked as a reference in international political interactions. In this regard, writes Valentin Rauer, “the kneefall [sic] was used outside of its historical and geographical contexts as a model of appropriate recollection with respect of political gestures associated with the acknowledgement of national guilt” (Rauer 2006: 269).

Screening other cases of memorial conflicts, one encounters Brandt’s apology as a “frame” that is used to evaluate other apology performances, in both negative critique and in positive references accorded to them. Rauer cites a case in which “China praised the Germans for coming to terms with their past and recommended it as a model for Japan […] the news agency also referred to […] the kneefall [sic] of the German Ex-Chancellor Willy Brandt in 1970 and compared it to the disputed gestures of the Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto” (Rauer 2006: 272). By the same token the Korean President Lee Myung Bak also invoked Willy
Brandt as a role model to substantiate the claims issued against Japan in the run up to a state visit by the Japanese Emperor.

“Brandt touched a firm emotional chord with the whole of the Polish people, Europeans and indeed the world […] That was a turning point in the partnership between the countries of Europe. And the visit of the Emperor of Japan could be a similar occasion when relations between Korea and Japan can really look forward.”

With regard to apologies presented on the Balkans, Brandt also figured as an interpretative scheme in order to point to insufficiencies in the presented apologies. In 2003 an avalanche of mutual apologies was presented by the heads of state of the Ex-Yugoslavian republics of Croatia, and Serbia and Montenegro. Regarding the quality of these apologies, one commentator stated:

“When the German Chancellor was kneeling at the old Ghetto of Warsaw in December 1970, no one thought that this gesture… would put the heads of state of future warring countries to a severe test.”

But Brandt’s gesture also figures as a positive foil invoked by political actors, as with the positive evaluation of the apology by the Montenegrin President Milo Đukanović, a gesture framed as “worth a Willy Brandt” by the Croatian Foreign Minister after his apology presented towards Croatia in 2000.

References to Brandt’s apology are not only made by observers or political representatives but also by civil society groups who uses the picture of Brandt kneeling in order to define and substantiate their requests. One of the most revealing examples is the visual invocation of Willy Brandt’s kneeling by a group of activists in order to publicly lay bare the insufficiencies of Japanese apologies regarding the widespread sexual enslavement of so called “comfort women” during the Second World War in Asia. On May 29th, 2012 the group “ForTheNextGeneration.com” posted a full

page advertisement in the *New York Times* displaying the German Chancellor kneeling in front of the Warsaw Ghetto memorial. Under this picture the advertisement presents in huge dark letters the provocative question: “Do you remember?” The text then portrays the kneeling of the German Chancellor as “a symbol of Germany’s sincere appeal for reconciliation to the rest of the world, greatly contributing to world peace. […] The Japanese government needs to learn from Germany’s actions”.

*Picture 3.1: “Do you Remember?”*
7. Conclusion

The apology presented in this chapter demonstrated the forcefulness of a ‘silent apology’. It demonstrated that the force of this non-verbal, purely gestural performance laid in its spatial, corporal and ceremonial adequateness triggering an emotional impact in the eyes of the audience and the international media. This compelling force was tied to the unexpectedness and thus perceived spontaneity along with the displayed naturalness with which the protagonist Brandt performed this kneeling gesture. Moreover, the case of Brandt’s apology is a paradigmatic case for the strength of non-verbal communication in symbolic contexts. As previously claimed, non-verbal gestures can assume the role of paralinguistic devices. They can substitute verbal explanations, thus substituting verbally presented apologies. The case of Willy Brandt’s kneeling, however, not only substituted the capacities of a verbally delivered apology; it exceeded the capacities of linguistic representation. Ritual scholars have pointed to the fact that non-verbal acts can exceed the limits of logical verbal argumentation (Grimes 1990: 196; Bourdieu 1980: 36). They can realistically represent – through their minimalist gestural form – a collective state that may otherwise have been inadequately expressed via verbal explanations. As Brandt himself pointed out, he did what human beings do when words fail. The gesture by Brandt is thus a strong case for the argument that in the presentation of collective apologies symbolic gestures may speak louder than words. In addition to the strength of gestural performances this case also demonstrates that typified gestures are so compelling that their presentation as a corporal symbolic performance enables them to surpass critical evaluation. Regarding Brandt’s performance, Bernhard Giesen wrote that: “Brandt’s gesture was not presented in a well-considered public speech, but in a spontaneous, silent gesture that did not tolerate any objection and that did not need any further explanation” (Giesen 2004: 42). In contrast to written and recorded apologies Brandt’s performance marked; this was the case due to the specific working of ritual performances that use other modes of communication for the creation of legitimacy. The inherent musicality and the adequateness of the performance in this commemorative ritual did not allow for critical argumentative judgments. It demonstrated that ritual performances escape critical argumentative evaluation since they work on an emotional sphere that guides the rational categorization of these acts.

The presented case falls into the category of rituals of purification, as described in chapter two. The empirical analysis showed that official reac-
tions to the act were scant. There was no immediate uptake by state officials, thus the performance was less characterized by conversation between the parties than by a concentration on the performance of the German Chancellor. If the attendant representatives of the performance did not react to the apology gesture, where do we find the positive sanctioning of the act as a status transformation ritual? As the case showed, the uptake was less accomplished by the audience that was present or the Polish representatives, but predominantly by a global audience. The international media framed the gesture as an authentic historical apology gesture successfully representing collective atonement for Germany.

But the case also pinpoints another relevant element that deserves attention: The role of the person presenting the apology. Brandt had been an opponent of the Nazi regime, and had lived in exile. Consequently, his *Kniefall* was read by the Polish addressees and international audience as the kneeling of a collective agent. Brandt knelt and this gesture elevated his people: Brandt knelt for Germany. “The *individual* innocent body of the Chancellor bowed down as the representative of the *collective* body of Germany”, as Valentin Rauer put it (Rauer 2006: 276). Consequently, this chapter demonstrates not only that the status and the official role that protagonists assume play a role in apology performances, but also that personal identity is projected into the ritual agents and radiates through the performance indicating the collective nature of the act.

Thus Brandt’s *Kniefall* was able to accomplish a transcending power regarding the relationship between Germany and the communities it victimized during the Second World War. The case empirically demonstrated how the chancellor’s *Kniefall* was read by the international audience as a liminal moment according to the conceptualization by Victor Turner presented in chapter two. Finally, this chapter also showed how this minimal gesture and the picture of the kneeling chancellor advanced to an international icon of appropriate atonement in international relations.

The next chapter will address apologies that are less characterized by minimalist symbolic performances than by the activation of national apology rituals using a plethora of ceremonial devices to mark a normative transition.
This chapter analyses recent apology performances in Australia and Canada that were enacted in order to address the painful memories of colonial discrimination policies in both countries. In contrast to the minimalist performance by the German chancellor these episodes are characterized by a plethora of symbolism enwrapping the apology performance. All the mentioned components – the spatial context of a live broadcast of an extraordinary session in parliament, the choreography and also the form of the verbal and gestural presentation of the respective prime ministers – highlight the extraordinariness of the event taking place. Both case studies show how these public rituals advanced to affectively binding rites of passage characterized as turning points by the addressees of the apology.

This chapter starts by shortly describing the crimes in question and how requests for a collective apology gained currency throughout the years in the run up to the Australian apology, before turning to the apology performance of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd who delivered in the Australian parliament in 2008. In the second part of the chapter the almost identical Canadian apology by Prime Minister Steven Harper will be analyzed accordingly.

1. *Australia*

Since the first arrival of European settlers in the late 17th century the indigenous peoples were confronted with discrimination, forced assimilation and expulsion from their ancestral territories. In the 1940s and 1950s aboriginal people faced discriminatory policies that prohibited them from voting, travelling, and even marrying without permission (Celermajer 2009: 145). Even though they had theoretically gained equal civil rights during the 1960s, the historical injustices of colonialism and the doctrine of *terra nullius* that had underpinned the expulsion of Aborigines from their ancestral territories remained untouched in their social and economic conse-
In this regard public awareness was raised in the 1970s and 1980s due to several government-sponsored reports that displayed the deeply-rooted social discrimination that had emerged from the legacy of colonization. A first breakthrough in relation to aboriginal land claims was achieved by the ruling of the High Court in the case *Mabo v. Queensland* in 1992. The plaintiff, Eddie Mabo, from the Meriam People, successfully demonstrated that indigenous people “did have a distinct form of land ownership prior to colonization” (Celermajer 2009: 150) and thus undermined the common ideology that neglected the vested aboriginal land rights. However, the legal ruling made by the highest Australian court also pointed to the limitations of treating the issue of post-colonialism in legal terms and brought up the question of a new political and socio-normative re-evaluation and reorientation of the Australian nation.

It was in this context that the then Australian Prime Minister, Paul Keating, delivered a first “proto apology” that “threw down the gauntlet for a national normative reorientation” in the following decades (Celermajer 2009: 154). His so-called “Redfern Address” was delivered in December 1992 in Redfern, a stronghold of Aboriginal people in Sidney, during the launch of the International Year of the World’s Indigenous People. I want to quote this address even though it is not the central performance that will be analyzed in this empirical study, because of its salient rhetorical form that bears high resemblance with the subsequent apologies that will be analyzed below. In relation to the question of historical responsibility Keating declared:

“and, as I say, the starting point might be to recognize that the problem starts with us non-Aboriginal Australians. It begins, I think, with the act of recognition. Recognition that it was we who did the disposessing. *We took* the traditional lands and smashed the traditional way of life. *We brought* the disaster. The alcohol. *We committed* the murders. *We took* the children from their mothers. *We practiced* discrimination and exclusion” (Celermajer 2009: 154).

Like other apologies in this book, Keating’s statement used a recurrent rhetorical form that substantially places the weight on crucial parts of the

---

20 The doctrine of *terra nullius* was based on the ideology that romantically perceived indigenous peoples as unequal to other human beings; consequently, they did not have equal political and land rights. Indigenous people were classified as belonging to the flora and fauna of the country; as such, their ‘uncivilized’ status meant they were denied all land rights and rights to self-determination (Celermajer 2009: 146–152).
content of the address, namely the assumption of collective responsibility
via the usage of the word ‘we’ to demark the actors responsible for the
discrimination that had been committed. In the analysis below and at the
end of this chapter we will see that similar rhetorical figures are used to
put emphasis on central parts of a speech.

In 1997 the government-sponsored Bringing them Home Report, which
revealed the systematic policies of Aboriginal child removal until the early
1970s, stirred up claims for an official governmental apology. In the sub-
sequent years apologies on the communal and sub-national level prolifer-
ated throughout Australia. All state parliaments “tendered… official
apologies staged as part of dramatic performative sequences held in their
ceremonial chambers” (Celermajer 2009: 175) with the exception of the
highest body in the country, the federal parliament in Canberra. “Sorry
days” were launched, “Sorry books” published and compilations of writ-
ten apologies from individual non-aboriginal Australians were “ceremoni-
ally handed over to Aboriginal representatives” (Celermajer 2009: 176).
Several societal reconciliation rituals were performed in public spaces
such as in Melbourne where the key to the town was symbolically handed
over to representatives of the ‘stolen generation’. Several institutions and
organisations, sometimes even those that were not specifically involved in
the removal policies “felt called to the sorry discourse” (Celermajer 2009:
175). One exception was the highest political authority in the land, Prime
Minister John Howard, who steadfastly refused to present a collective
apology for the crimes. On several occasions Howard expressed his per-
sonal sorrow for the fate of the victims but simultaneously refused to as-
sume and acknowledge collective responsibility for the policies, arguing
that the present generation could not be held accountable for the misdeeds
of preceding generations (Augoustinos et al. 2002). He also did this at the
launch of the government sponsored Bringing them Home Report in his
address at the National Reconciliation Convention in May 1997, which
sparked numerous members of the audience to rise and turn their back on
the Prime Minister (Celermajer 2009: 178).

1.1. Forefront

The delivery of the apology act was carefully orchestrated as part of a
chain of highly symbolic performances. Over a period of several days in
the build up to the event on February 13, 2008, tents were installed for
musicians and stages were built for their public performances. Several thousand people from all parts of the country waving Australian and Aboriginal flags attended the ceremony in Canberra.

A day before the expected delivery of the apology, on February 12, 2008, the newly elected government introduced a new opening ceremony for the federal parliament in accordance with the opposition. From then on an Aboriginal welcoming ceremony was to “become a permanent feature of all future openings of the federal parliament”\textsuperscript{21}. The introduction of a ‘welcome to country ceremony’ had already been recommended by a bipartisan commission in 2003 in order to symbolically recognise the “traditional owners of the land, the Ngunnawal people”\textsuperscript{22}, but the implementation of this recommendation was rejected by the Prime Minister at the time, John Howard.

The inaugural ‘welcome to country’ ceremony on February 12, 2008 was led by Matilda House-Williams, an elder woman from the Ngambri People, who was accompanied by a didgeridoo player when she entered the site of the ceremony. Before she spoke to the assembled audience a “message stick” was handed over to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd by one of Matilda House-Williams’ granddaughters as a “tangible symbol” of the inaugural ceremony, as she said in her speech. The importance of the ceremony should not be over-evaluated here, but it represented a salient item in the preliminary phase of the apology that was to follow on the next day. The transfer of a gift in the ceremony, the act of handing over an object perceived as sacred, represented a symbolic attempt of renewing bond between the ‘former land owners’ and the ‘newly arrived’: the Aboriginals and the dominant, immigrant white settlers. This significance of the message stick as a communal bond is supported by Matilda House-Williams who stated in her speech that for her ancestors the stick represented a “means of communication” between the different Aboriginal tribes (Reconciliation Australia 10).

Digging further into the role of this preliminary ceremony it might be important to reflect on what the ‘welcome to country ceremony’ may be


intended to accomplish. A ‘welcoming’ is always dyadic in so far as there is one part who welcomes (activity) and the other part who is welcomed (passivity). The former grants hospitality and the latter receives it. The declarations by the participants of the ceremony, especially the declaration made by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, underscore this interpretation of the ceremony.

“Despite the fact that parliaments have been meeting here for the better part of a century today is the first time in our history that as we open the parliament of the nation that we are officially welcomed to country by the first Australians of this nation.”

The Aboriginals are welcoming the settler communities. If one steps back and takes a more distanced view on the ceremonial play, however, the symbolic welcoming to country appears less as a welcoming by the aboriginal people than the welcoming of the Aboriginal people. The relation is inversed. Kevin Rudd as Prime Minister is the person who is receiving the ceremony and appears to be its host. This impression is underscored by the fact that the ceremony is played out in the forecourt of parliament and in front of spectators. The Aboriginal delegation arrives and is received by the Prime Minister in the middle of the hall. Thus, a welcoming may have been more adequate if it had taken place at a symbolic place to Aboriginal people with the opposite corporal movement to underscore the intended message. The physical process of the ceremony is thus in contradiction to the projected message and demonstrates the persistence of power asymmetries between the constituent groups pertaining to the reconciliation ritual. However, the contradiction inherent to this ritual was not of conscious significance to the parties participating in the ritual; indeed, the media data does not point to any critical voices in this regard.

The enactment of the ‘welcome to country’ ceremony also prepared the participants for the central ceremony to come. One significant characteristic of rituals is the demarcation of the profane everyday life from sacred moments. The symbolical cleansing and preparation of the place with a song played on didgeridoo demarks a break, and underscores the fact that the following event is highly important to its participants. This is commonly underscored by salient sensory materials that are used to ingrain this demarcation into the minds of the participants. One only has to think

of the marking and biting smell of incense during the Christian sacrament procession. Similarly, the sounds of the didgeridoo provided a sensual signal marking the start of the extraordinary event that is to come.

The divergent and possibly contradictive massages inherent in the ceremony echo Victor Turner’s conceptualization of the “polysemic” nature of rituals with potentially different, multiple layers of meanings for the participants at different stages of the ritual process. As “multi-levelled and tiered structure” rituals and public dramas are sometimes “capable of carrying and communicating many messages at once, even of subverting on one level what it appears to be ‘saying’ on another” (Turner 1995: 24). All in all the ‘welcoming to country ceremony’ was perceived as a symbolic gesture that paid tribute to the long history of Aborigines in Australia.

1.2. The procession

The following apology analysis will concentrate on the performance quality of the presented apology. This includes the form of presentation, the stage in which it is presented and the content of the apology.

The apology was issued by Kevin Rudd, the newly elected Labour Prime Minister, and was part of the envisioned governmental program. During his election campaign Kevin Rudd had repeatedly stated that he would make a governmental apology to the Aborigines for the crime of child removal, should his party be elected.

1.2.1 The creation of an apology event

In analysing political performances one has to consider the space in which the rituals are taking place. As mentioned above, the presentation of the apology was meticulously orchestrated beforehand and a public event was staged on the parliament lawn in Canberra. The apology was broadcast live on several television channels nationwide. People gathered together in public spaces in front of giant television screens that had been installed for public screening events, similar to big sport events (see Picture 4.1 showing the Federation Square in Melbourne). The central screening event in Canberra in particular brought together celebrities from Australian society who attended or performed at the central festival, including Peter Garrett, the singer from Midnight Oil, who at this time was a newly elected Labour
politician and who was to become Minister for Environment Protection, Heritage and the Arts.

The vast movement and involvement of Australian society ensured that the event was indeed a national event. The apology was also extraordinary since it broke with quotidian life. Although the move did not go uncontested by parents, in New South Wales school was interrupted in order to grant the pupils the opportunity to watch the apology. “We just want to get the idea across that it is something special and particularly relevant to our students”, said Michael Ward, a principal from the Cape York community of Kowanyama.24

*Picture 4.1: “Public screening and mass mobilization”*


The Prime Minister’s public apology was introduced as a bipartisan motion and the ceremony within the Australian parliament envisaged the ad-

dress of both government and opposition in the form of a declaration by
Kevin Rudd and the opposition leader of the liberal-conservative party
Nelson Brandon. Both addresses will be the subject of a more detailed per‐
formance analysis below.

The apology was performed at the political centre of Australia, the fed‐
eral parliament. It might appear trivial, but the fact that the apology was
issued at the political centre of the nation, that the apology was backed by
the entire parliament as well as the fact that it represented the first political
action of the newly elected government, demonstrated the primacy at‐
tributed to the act itself. By conceiving of parliament as “space and place
as social data” (Emmison/Smith 2007: 6) the so-called sacral quality of the
‘temple of authoritative deliberation’ becomes manifest. Declarations and
utterances by the highest representative, the Prime Minister, have more
weight in this spatial context than in other places, for example, those made
in interviews. Performances always have an important spatial aspect since
gestures and acts not only rely on how they are presented for their social
significance, but also on where they are performed. In this case the place –
parliament – is not only the context in which the apology was abstractly
conducted, but it also bears, in contrast, a constituent character that under‐
scores the collective quality of the declaration. That was also the reason
behind the insistent request by proponents of an official apology to see it
issued by the highest political authority, the federal parliament.

Thus the place itself renders the apology significant and by the same to‐
ken canalizes the modus of the apology presentation. It symbolises the
collective nature of the apology and assures that the formality of the ritual
process is upheld. The ‘presence’ of the space ensures that the presenta‐
tion “retains its solemnity, and speech is now formal, carefully spoken,
and a matter for the public record” (Emmison/Smith 2007: 7).

Next to the spatial frame of the apology, a further pertinent feature of
the apology ceremony is the specific nature of the audience. As demon‐
strated the apology triggered mass mobilisation outside of the parliament.
Inside the parliament gathered several prominent former political figures
who attended the ceremony. The attendance of the former Prime Minister,
Paul Keating, underlined the continuity between his “Redfern Address” in
1992 and the performance in 2008. Additionally, Keating’s attendance
symbolized a continuity that fostered the picture of a genuine trans-histori‐
cal performance by a national collective. The very presence of several for‐
mer prime ministers in the ranks participating at the ceremony including
Paul Keating, Bob Hawke, Gough Whitlam, Malcolm Fraser, and Sir
William Deane places the apology act outside of profane political quarrels and underscores its secular, sacral, trans-historical quality for the entire nation. At the same time, 17 victims of the stolen generation were also present and sat in the visitor’s ranks in parliament. The next paragraph will focus on the declaration by Kevin Rudd in order to excavate the rhetorical form and the different reaction of the audiences (within and outside of parliament) to Kevin Rudd’s performance.

1.2.2 The apology declaration

Kevin Rudd and the Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, “received a standing ovation as they entered the Great Hall before the Prime Minister delivered the speech... The apology was read at 9am to the minute, as the first action of the second sitting day of the 42nd Parliament of Australia.” After the introduction of the motion by the presiding body of the house, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd started with the following words:

“Mr. Speaker, I move: That today we honour the indigenous peoples of this land, the oldest continuing cultures in human history” (Rudd 2008).

The allusion to the “first” Australians was a recurrent trope in the subsequent speech by Kevin Rudd and was also present during the inaugural ‘welcome to country ceremony’ the day before, as seen above. The speech by Kevin Rudd unfolded very directly to the issuance of a collective apology as will become clear in the following paragraphs. The next paragraph is worth quoting at length as it demonstrates the rhetorical form of the speech:

“*We reflect* on their past mistreatment.
*We reflect* in particular on the mistreatment of those who were stolen generations. [...] *We apologise* for the laws and policies of successive Parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.

---


We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country. For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry. To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry. And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry. [...] It is time to reconcile. It is time to recognise the injustices of the past. It is time to move forward together. To the Stolen Generations, I say the following: as Prime Minister of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the Government of Australia, I am sorry. On behalf of the Parliament of Australia, I am sorry. And I offer you this apology without qualification” (Rudd 2008).

In several crucial paragraphs – crucial insofar as they conveyed so-called necessary features of apologies according to the literature on apologies discussed in Chapter I – this rhetorical feature of *repetitio* is used to enforce the gravitas of the message.

We see that the apology is framed in a form that is common in ritual religious ceremonies. Rhythmical speech as a tool of memorialization was common in preliterate societies in order to convey founding myths to the generations that followed (Ottmann 2001: 6).

Several issues strike the eye or the ear of the observer. First, Rudd avoids the direct address of the public but speaks – according to parliamentary convention – to the speaker. (2) Second, these crucial parts of his speech provoke different reactions from the audience within parliament and the audience outside of the house. According to media reports and to the pictures broadcast by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) people on the streets and on the lawn outside parliament spontaneously cheered and applauded the words of repentance by Rudd. Within parliament, however, the rules and procedures of the house itself canalised the emotional reaction of the audience. The context imposed a highly formal reaction. In other words, there were no open reactions to the speech inside the house, although there were spontaneous and open reactions outside of parliament. These different reactions demonstrate the distinctive ‘sacral’ quality of parliament compared to the mundane public squares outside.

After his 28-minute-long declaration, Kevin Rudd received a long standing ovation by nearly all the attendants to the parliamentary address. During the ovation, Rudd “reached across the house’s table and shook the
hand of the opposition leader Brendan Nelson before returning to the front bench, where he himself applauded”\textsuperscript{27}.

Although the collective apology is commonly attributed to the Prime Minister Kevin Rudd the apology ceremony in Australia included also the declaration by the opposition leader Brendon Nelson. Nelson held a speech in support of the motion directly after the declaration by the prime minister. In relation to the content of the apology the declaration by Nelson was characterised by a consistent apologetic (in part racist-ideological) spirit. Even though the crime of removal was acknowledged in his speech the responsibility was neglected and the removal policies at several instances even justified. Consider the following quotes from the speech of the opposition leader:

“Our generation does not own these actions, nor should it feel guilt for what was done in many, but certainly not all, cases with the best of intentions. But in saying we are sorry, and deeply so, we remind ourselves that each generation lives in ignorance of the long-term consequences of its decisions and actions. Even when motivated by inherent humanity and decency to reach out to the dispossessed in extreme adversity, our actions can have unintended outcomes. As such, many decent Australians are hurt by accusations of theft in relation to their good intentions…

It is reasonably argued that removal from squalor led to better lives: children fed, housed and educated for an adult world which they could not have imagined. However, from my life as a family doctor and knowing the impact of my own father’s removal from his unmarried, teenage mother, I know that not knowing who you are is the source of deep, scarring sorrows, the real meaning of which can be known only to those who have endured it…

There is no compensation fund for this—nor should there be. How can any sum of money replace a life deprived of knowing your family? Separation was then, and remains today, a painful but necessary part of public policy in the protection of children” (Nelson 2008).

Besides these levelling accounts for the moral responsibility of the removal policies Brendon Nelson gave a detailed description of the “endemic” violence and misery present in Aboriginal Communities:

“The sexual abuse of Aboriginal children was found in every one of the 45 Northern Territory communities surveyed for the \textit{Little children are sacred} report…. The Alice Springs Crown Prosecutor, Nanette Rogers, with great courage, revealed to the nation in 2006 the case of a four-year-old girl

drowned while being raped by a teenager who had been sniffing petrol. She told us of the two children, one a baby, sexually assaulted by two men while their mothers were drinking alcohol. Another baby was stabbed by a man trying to kill her mother. So too a 10-year-old girl was gang-raped in Aurukun, the offenders going free, barely punished. A boy was raped in another community by other children. Is this not an emergency, the most disturbing part of it being its endemic nature and Australia’s apparent desensitisation to it? … Our generation has over 35 years overseen a system of welfare, alcohol delivery, administration of programs, episodic preoccupation with symbolism and, at times, even excusing the inexcusable in the name of cultural sensitivity, to create what we now see in remote Aboriginal Australia. With good intentions, perhaps like earlier generations, we have under successive governments created lives, in many cases, of misery for which we might apologise. I certainly do” (Nelson 2008).

During the speech by Brandon Nelson a major part of the spectators outside on the public places turned their backs on the opposition leader, sometimes even pulled the plug on the broadcast and booed and jeered down the speech.28 In contrast to the situation on the public spaces no visible and hearable outrage reaction came from the audience within the parliament. Here again the context and the formality accorded to the space in which the performance took place canalized the reactions. It has to be underscored that the differences of both speeches are not only visible in relation to the explicit content, but also in regard of the rhetorical shape. In Nelsons’ speech no rhetorical devices are present to underscore the ceremonial and moral gravitas of his speech. No repetition figures are used to mark crucial climax points of his speech. The overall impression of the speech point to a different mode in which the declaration is held. The speech seems more to be held in the mode of a justifying political speech filled with factual arguments, rather than a speech shaped in the mode of a ceremonial sermon, as it was the case with Kevin Rudd’s apology declaration.

Even though the declaration by Brandon Nelson sparked angry reactions afterwards by leading representatives of the Aboriginal communities, the ceremony itself was not interrupted or disturbed by this faux pas. After Brandon Nelsons speech the motion for an apology to the aboriginal people was unanimously accepted by acclamation vote and both politicians, Rudd and Nelson went on shaking hands with and embracing the invited  

victims of the removal policies on the floor of the House as well as in the visitors sector of the house.

1.3. The closing

Emotional reactions and the display of such reactions were already present during the speech by Prime Minister Rudd. The media reports the highly emotional and affirmative reactions by a huge part of the public. The *Sydney Morning Herald* gives an account of the emotional reactions expressed in public spaces:

“As the rain fell across Sydney city this morning, a packed crowd in Martin Place stood silently, many weeping, as they listened to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd say sorry for the stolen generations. [...] Men and women in business suits, schoolchildren and other passers-by cried, smiled, clapped and stood in respect as they listened to Mr. Rudd apologise.”

The declaration by Kevin Rudd was responded to with a “thunderous applause” throughout the country on the numerous public places where people had gathered.

Next to this appraisal by the public, several representatives of indigenous communities officially welcomed the apology as “a first step” towards “true reconciliation”. The Aboriginal actor and celebrity Ernie Dingo who was present at the parliamentary ceremony said: “This today is the start of “rejoicing”. Lowitja O’Donohue, the first Chairwoman of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission said that the apology

was “wonderful, just magnificent”\textsuperscript{33}. All in all the reactions of the addressees – the indigenous people – underscored that the apology “had marked an important first step in what would be a long journey towards healing for Aboriginal people”\textsuperscript{34}.

\section{The Canadian apology}

The Canadian apology bears high resemblance to the apology presented in Australia. The ‘apology event’ presented in Canada on June 12, 2008 was reported as a “turning point” for relations between Canada’s indigenous communities and its non-indigenous majority. In a newspaper comment on Canada’s state apology the Canadian author Stephen Marche stated that “Harper’s apology… was distinctively theatrical, one of the best and most controlled pieces of political rhetoric produced in Canada in recent memory”. According to Marche “this unique moment of political theatre”, displayed by the “political thespian” Steven Harper, made the apology distinctive “from all its predecessors”\textsuperscript{35}. For observers and representatives of the aboriginal community the apology also marked a turning point\textsuperscript{36}.

\subsection{The historic wrong}

There are 90,000 victims of the Indian Residential School system and about 150,000 Metis and Inuit people who were removed from their communities over the years and forced to attend schools jointly run by the


\textsuperscript{35} The Toronto Star, \textit{Canada’s national word. The PM used it gracefully. But don’t be fooled, ”sorry” is our chief weapon of passiv-aggression}, 14 June 2008: ID 01.

\textsuperscript{36} It has to be mentioned that the apology faced mixed reactions especially in British Columbia where the constant refusal by the Harper government to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples overshadowed the apology (Galgary Herald, 14 June 2008).
Canadian government and Christian churches.\textsuperscript{37} The schools started forcibly removing aboriginal children from their homes in an attempt to assimilate them into the dominant white, Christian culture. The main ideology behind the residential school system was “to take the Indian out of the Indian” or to “kill the Indian in the child”, a motivation that has been termed as an attempted “cultural genocide”. In 1910 the residential school system represented, in the eyes of Duncan Campbell Scott, a senior bureaucrat with the Department of Indian Affairs, the “final solution of our Indian Problem”.\textsuperscript{38}

2.2. The apology crisis

Several institutions involved in running the residential school system have publicly expressed their regret for the child removal policies. Following increased public pressure since the 1980s the Canadian Christian Churches including the Anglican, Presbyterian and United Church have issued apologies. The only exception is the Roman Catholic Church, which ran 72 per cent of the residential schools, and has yet to offer an apology.\textsuperscript{39} In 1998 the Federal Ministry for Indian Affairs of the Canadian government issued its first statement of regret “for past actions of the federal government”. A C$1.9 billion compensation package was announced by the federal government in 2005 as part of the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.\textsuperscript{40}

Significantly, the 1998 apology by the federal minister was comprehensive. It states:

“The Government of Canada acknowledges the role it played in the development and administration of these schools… To those of you who suffered this tragedy at residential schools, we are deeply sorry” (Celermajer 2009: 30).

\textsuperscript{37} The Ottawa Citizen, Aboriginals plans to build on apology; Leaders seize on momentum of Harper's words to curb prejudice, 14 June 2008: A5.
\textsuperscript{38} Winnipeg Free Press, Commitments from apology not met: chiefs – Cite lack of action from government, 12 June 2009: A6.
\textsuperscript{39} Times Union, Canada apologizes for mistratement. Government says it regrets role in abuse of the aboriginals at church-run schools, 14 June 2008: B 3.
\textsuperscript{40} Times Union, Canada apologizes for mistratement. Government says it regrets role in abuse of the aboriginals at church-run schools, 14 June 2008: B 3.
However, the collective apology was not accepted by First Nation representatives because of the fact “that it was not delivered by Prime Minister Jean Chretien”, but by the state representative for Indian Affairs (Celermajer 2009: 31). The deafening silence by the prime minister had detrimental effects on the symbolic weight of the apology and triggered political conflicts in subsequent years. Thus, the 1998 apology was not performed by the proper person: a person entitled to speak representatively according to conventional procedure and with the envisaged role to perform the apology. The 1998 apology’s lack of acceptance among aboriginal communities demonstrates the importance of respecting procedures and ensuring that only authorized people assume the role of apologizer, as emphasized in the first chapter.

Thus, the issue of appropriate representation when delivering a collective apology has been on the Canadian political agenda for some time. The compensation granted in 2005, along with several legal claims in federal provinces, such as British Columbia, increased pressure for a symbolic act of atonement. Like his predecessor, the conservative Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, was initially reluctant to express a public apology but changed his mind according to the national Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, “after the government of Australia formally apologized to its aboriginal people this year [in 2008] for its policy of forced assimilation”.

2.3. The forefront

The 2008 apology was carefully planned but nevertheless several issues of contestation remained unresolved between the government and representatives of First Nation organizations as the scheduled date for the apology approached. A central issue was the “hundreds, if not thousands of people” who were not considered in the payment of compensation by the Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.

42 The Ottawa Citizen, Aboriginals plans to build on apology; Leaders seize on momentum of Harper’s words to curb prejudice, 14 June 2008: A5.
The next issue of contestation arose from Prime Minister Harper’s announcement of his willingness to express a collective apology, but his simultaneous rejection of requests demanding a consultation process with aboriginal representatives in regard to the exact wording of the apology. Harper’s refusal to negotiate the wording triggered harsh reactions from aboriginal representatives, who threatened to reject the apology before it had even been delivered.

A few days before Stephen Harper’s speech in the House of Commons about residential schools, observers noted that it had been a huge mistake not to consult native groups on the wording of the apology – it appeared to increase the risk of offending victims.

The Canadian Prime Minister’s refusal to consult with the aboriginal community had the effect that the addressees of the apology were held in uncertainty. Thus, the overall performance was deliberately exposed to the possible danger of non-acceptance by the representatives of the First Nations. This meant that Harper raised the stakes for the presentation of the apology by increasingly exposing himself to the reactions and discretion of the audience and addressees of his speech. The secrecy around the content of the apology meant that although everyone could reasonably anticipate what the apology would consist of, nobody could be certain. This process of clandestine elaboration created suspense; as a result, when the apology was finally presented, it was surrounded in risky unexpectedness.

This move by the Prime Minister reveals the “inherently risky” character of rituals. Leaders and audiences “have the licence to invent – indeed this is almost required – so risk is inevitable” (Howe 2000: 67). The next section will explore whether the risks that Harper engaged in were detrimental to the presentation of his apology.

2.4. The procession

The stage was set for the apology act. Television networks were reporting live from Parliament Hill and “more than 30 events were staged across the

43 The Toronto Star, Canada’s national word. The PM used it gracefully. But don't be fooled, "sorry" is our chief weapon of passiv-aggression, 14 June 2008: ID 01.
country so the apology could be viewed live”. The setting was even more extraordinary, as the ceremony was a special parliamentary session: “In a rare break with parliament tradition, several native leaders were allowed to speak from the floor of the House of Commons”. The session began with the speaker of the house announcing the entrance of the five invited high representatives of the indigenous population, who were centrally assembled on chairs in a semicircle in the middle of the chamber, between the ranks of the government and opposition members of parliament. Compared to ordinary sessions, where the space between the parliamentary benches remains empty, the configuration during this special session was more inclusive and did not stress spatial separation. While this configuration seemed to have been intentionally chosen, it was in fact the unintended product of the struggle of the native community to be represented on the floor of the house and to have the right to speak. “The government resisted till the last minute, but the natives won. Without that, it would have been one-sidedly focused on the words of the apologizers”.


The speech by Prime Minister Harper used special rhetorical devices that aimed to increase the forcefulness of the message and some rhetorical figures that put special emphasis on the almost liturgical words of ‘we are sorry’ in his speech. The next quote demonstrates this with the use of rhetorical figures such as symploce – a combination of the rhetorical devices of anaphora and epiphora (Dupriez/Halsall: 1991) – the repetition of the words or phrases at the beginning and end of several clauses:

To the approximately 80,000 living former students and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes, and we apologize for having done this.
We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this.
We now recognize that in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this.
We now recognize that far too often these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you.
Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this [small pause] we are sorry. (Harper 2008)
The pathos of the speech, which was emphasised through repetition, reaches its climax in the phrase ‘we are sorry’ that breaks with the rhythm of the preceding clauses and thus is especially accentuated. Repetitive rhetorical figures are commonly known for their forcefulness and are frequently used in religious sermons or biblical texts. Finally, Harper used five languages – Ojibwa, Cree, Inuktitut, French and English – to apologize to the victims of the Residential School system. Harper’s apology received a standing ovation from the house that lasted for more than one minute.

2.5. The Closing

In response, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine, opened with the words that “this day testifies to nothing less than the achievement of the impossible”. Overall Phil Fontaine and other speakers hailed the apology as a “turning point” in the relation between aboriginals and other Canadians. At the end of the session Stephen Harper participated in a smudging ceremony with aboriginal representatives, performing an indigenous catharsis ritual. Thus non-verbal cultural templates were used to mark the symbolic healing of the political body and to underscore the transition of the relationship between the communities. The ritual performance underscored symbolically the passing of a threshold, the rising of a “new dawn” in the relations between both communities, as several representatives of the First Nations repeatedly expressed.  

A significant aspect of the apology was its power to arouse a deep emotional reaction by the participants and spectators of the ceremonial presentation. A newspaper article stated:

“Amid tears and solemn silence, burning sage and banging drums, aboriginal leaders hailed Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s apology for the residential school system Wednesday as a turning point in the history of relations between natives and other Canadians”.  

Pictures of people crying publicly reinforced the gravitas of the apology presentation. “Many of those gathered in the public galleries in the Commons wiped away tears as they listened to Harper speak”. 49

According to polls conducted by the Canadian Innovative Research Group Survey “the majority of the respondents... supported the way the government delivered the apology. About half approved or strongly approved, compared with 13 percent who disapproved”. 50 Overall, Harper’s *mea culpa* performance has succeeded in being recognised as a positive historic event. Even one year later, besides continuing disputes and harsh criticism concerning the slow implementation of the restitution programs, the apology was still considered as a “watershed moment” 51 by indigenous representatives and thus interpreted positively. To mark the anniversary of the apology, the Assembly of the First Nations even launched the National Day on Reconciliation on June 12, 2009. 52 The institutionalization of the act through the creation of an annual commemoration day demonstrates the high symbolic value of the apology for the indigenous communities and their efforts to uphold a positively connoted remembrance of the act in the public sphere.

3. Conclusion

What did the Canadian and Australian apology demonstrate in relation to the relevance of the ritualistic shape of the performances? It showed that, apart from the ‘completeness’ of the presented verbal apologies, the apologies had an inherently ritualistic character. This was displayed through the respective location of the ceremony in parliament, the performer of the public act, the configuration of the speaker and the audience, down to the rhetorical figures that were used during the speech creating pathos, moral gravitas and, in the end, authenticity. Both apologies thus demonstrate that the working of apologies does not solely depend on the completion of ab-

Abstract textual content but calls for a variety of contextual and ritual components to be included. The success of an apology is constituted by the form of its presentation. In this respect words like ‘we are sorry’ can be perceived as liturgical expressions in this ritual play. Both cases also demonstrate that this seemingly well-orchestrated public presentation was the (partly unintended) product of strong contestation. The cases thus show that the audiences of the apology ceremonies and their immediate emotional reaction to them are crucial components for their working. This demonstrates that even though the apology act – by virtue of the convention that underpins it – hinges on the respect of formality and hierarchy, this does not mean that the addressed groups were passive recipients during the overall process. Their requests that the apology be presented by the highest authorities demonstrated their active involvement in the evolution of the apology process; and only by their public acclamation of the apology act could it be framed as a positive reconciliatory event.

Most importantly, both cases demonstrated that, via the ceremonial and ritual mise-en-scène, the presented apologies realized their purported goal to transform the relationship between the communities. In both cases the apology represented a turning point and drew on cultural templates that symbolised the ‘healing’ of the relationship.

Both apologies finally point to another important but less analysed issue in the literature so far: the role of emotions. Through its ceremonial form the apology rituals were able to exert their mysterious force by resonating not only on the rational level, but also, and significantly, on the affective level. It showed that rituals, as highly arousing and collective emotional activities, manage to exert power on the affective level. This emotional component is commonly neglected by approaches that evaluate apologies purely on an abstract and intellectual level.

3. Conclusion
This chapter analyzes the bilateral commemoration rite of the Polish and Russian Prime Ministers in Katyn in 2010 in which the latter issued words of regrets for the ‘tragedy’ of the Katyn massacre during the Second World War. This chapter demonstrates how the first official bilateral commemoration was staged as a historical bilateral event with high societal and media attendance and how it was ceremonially enacted as a bi-national reconciliation event. The ceremonial procedure was marked with pomp and the attendance of political prominence from both sides. It was further characterized by carefully coordinated if not synchronically enacted performances by both state representatives at the site of commemoration. The case has a singular status due to the fact that in the wake of this official ceremony the plane crash transporting the Polish delegation to an additional – Polish – commemoration triggered several ad hoc public performances of condolences by Russian representatives that emotionally reverberated in Poland.

1. The historical wrong

After the annexation of eastern Poland in the wake of the secret non-aggression pact between Nazi-Germany and the USSR in 1939, the Soviet administration started systematically liquidating the Polish intelligentsia. According to historical sources, 22,000 Poles, among them high-ranking personnel from the Polish army, were executed, 4,500 in the forest close to Katyn (Sanford 2005: i). In 1943 the Nazi occupiers in eastern Poland exhumed the corps and used the massacre for propaganda purposes. After the Second World War the communist rulers in Poland and the Soviet Union attributed the massacre to Nazi Germany, and continued to do so until 1990. Michael Gorbachev, who was the general secretary of the communist party at the time, acknowledged that the executions had been perpetrated by the Soviets. After the transition of power in 1990, the issue of the remembrance of Katyn remained an issue of contestation between Poland and Russia due to the fact that successive Russian governments
had failed to acknowledge the illegitimate character of soviet domination in post-war Eastern Europe.

2. Forefront

The run up to the apology or reconciliation ceremony that took place on April 7th, 2010 starts with the ceremonies that took place on September 1, 2009 in relation to the 70th anniversary of the German attack on Gdańsk. During the preparation of the ceremony the Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, was faced with requests to publicly attenuate for the crimes committed by the Red Army during the Second World War. The serving Polish President, Lech Kaczyński, compared the massacre of Katyn to the Holocaust, and labelled the Katyn massacre as a “communist holocaust”. Furthermore, he asked the Russian Prime Minister to apologise. Within the scope of the 70th anniversary of the Second World War, Vladimir Putin explicitly characterized the massacre of Katyn as a “crime” in an article published in the daily newspaper Gazeta Wyborcza. Putin also officially invited Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk to jointly commemorate the events in April 2010, and to the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on May 9, 2010. Remarkably, this was the first official invitation issued by a Russian leader in relation to the commemoration ceremonies in Katyn. However, the protocol only envisaged inviting the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, and not President Kaczyński, the head of state, who was perceived as an antagonizing political figure compared to the more pragmatic Donald Tusk. A further novelty represented the fact that this would be the first time that a Russian Prime Minister had officially commemorated the event, and this was actually being done together with his Polish counterpart.

After the ceremony of remembrance for the 70th anniversary of the start of the Second World War some dynamics on the societal level were identifiable. In September 2009, a delegation of Russian orthodox monks asked for a copy of the Black Madonna from the central Polish site of pilgrimage in Częstochowa in order to exhibit it in their monastery in the Russian town of Ostaszkow. In 1939 the monastery was used by the NKVD as a

detention centre to hold Polish army officers who were then later killed in Katyn Forest. 54

Aside from such exchanges of symbolic objects between religious groups, there were also claims by members of civil society. Requests on the civil society level in the forefront to the official bilateral commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre focused on information relating to bodies that had found but could not be identified, and people who were still missing. In order to clarify the fate of their relatives, the families of the victims demanded complete access to documents that had been classified by the Russian government. 55 Among other demands, the Polish side had repeatedly asked for the so-called ‘Belarusian List’, which was expected to list the names of approximately 3,800 Polish Generals and intellectuals who had been killed in Belarus. Furthermore they demanded the publication of the report compiled by the military prosecutor after an investigation initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev in 1989 and which had been halted by Vladimir Putin in 2004 in his role as Russian President. These claims were sidelined by “Memorial”, a Russian NGO, which urged the Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, to reopen the halted investigations. It is noteworthy that in the build up to the ceremony in April 2010 Prime Minister Putin ordered the Russian intelligence service to search for the “Belarusian List” in the agency’s archives in order to hand it over during the bilateral commemoration. It was the chief of the Russian archives who declared two days before the official ceremony, on the Monday, that the list had not been found, but that other important documents in relation to the Katyn massacre had been recovered. Besides these requests “nobody in Poland imagined that Putin would ask for forgiveness like Willy Brandt did in the name of Germany back then” 56.

In addition, on Saturday April 2, and as part of the immediate run up to the commemorative event, the government-owned Russian channel Kultura showed the Oscar-nominated film “Katyn” during prime time television by the Polish director, Andrzej Wadja. The film was followed by a talk

54 Le Figaro, La Russie peut aborder son passé en vérité, 8 April 2010: 14.
56 Le Figaro, À Katyn, Vladimir Poutine bouscule le culte de Staline. Il assiste aujourd’hui au 70e anniversaire du massacre de milliers d’officiers polonaise, 7 April 2010: 8.
show that addressed the massacre. However, the public channel on which it was broadcast only has a small audience.

3. The Procession

“The commemoration, held amid the birch and pine trees of the Katyn forest, was pregnant with symbolism and not a little irony. Mr. Putin, a former K.G.B. officer, stood beside his Polish colleague as Russian Orthodox priests intoned prayers for the dead. Russian and Polish soldiers laid wreaths at the base of a towering red Orthodox cross. The short service, broadcast on Russian television, ended with the playing of the Russian national anthem”

On April 7, 2010 the Prime Ministers of Poland and Russia, Donald Tusk and Vladimir Putin, jointly commemorated the Katyn massacre at the memorial site in Katyn Forest close to the western Russian town of Smolensk. Both representatives laid a wreath in a meticulously scheduled and carefully prepared ceremony. Vladimir Putin did not hand over any objects during the ceremony, such as the “Belarusian List”, despite expectations to the contrary. The ceremony was then verbally opened with the following words by Putin who declared “We bow our heads for those who lay here.” In his address, which will not be the subject of a detailed semantic analysis here, Putin paid tribute to different victim groups: the Polish officers, and the Russians killed by Stalin, and Russians killed by Nazi Germany.

Putin continued, pointing out that: “These crimes cannot be justified in any way. Our country has given a clear political, legal and moral assessment of the atrocities committed by this totalitarian regime. Such an assessment cannot be revised”.

“For decades, attempts have been made to tarnish the truth about the Katyn executions with cynical lies. But putting the blame for these crimes on the Russian people would be a lie as well”, Putin said. The Russian

57 Le Figaro, La Russie peut aborder son passé en vérité, 8 April 2010: 14.
59 International Herald Tribune, Putin commemorates Katyn massacre. He is first Russian leader to honor 20,000 Polish officers killed in 1940, 4 August 2010: 3.
Prime Minister continued, stating: “Any history that is written with anger and hatred is just as false as a polished version of history” written in the interests of certain people and political groups.\textsuperscript{61}

The verbal reactions by Donald Tusk during the ceremony were significant, since he broke with the expected form by speaking extemporaneously in some parts of his speech. In his address Tusk turned to his Russian counterpart to give the impression of a dialogical posture: “A word of truth can mobilize two peoples looking for the road to reconciliation. Are we capable of transforming a lie into reconciliation? We must believe we can”\textsuperscript{62}.

Furthermore, in his address Tusk pointed to the adequacy of the memorial as a space to perform such a ceremony of rapprochement between conflictive parties. It was after their speeches that the Prime Ministers shook hands.

After the address both representatives filed down the central walkway leading to the central Polish memorial, an iron wall with the inscription of the names of persons identified as victims of the massacre. A huge catholic cross dominates the memorial wall with an altar at the front of the wall. It was here that the central ceremony took place.

Additionally, with regard to the audience it is significant that the procession of the ceremony was attended by a huge delegation of important representatives from both sides. The former President, Lech Walesa, attended the ceremony as well as other high representatives of the Polish government; these included Andrzej Paczkowski, the special appointee of the Polish government for Polish—Russian relations mandated with the resolution of difficult issues. So the guest delegation encompassed Poland’s highest legislative representatives as well as several of the country’s former highest representatives. Thus, the addressees presented a line of historical political continuity at the ceremony. On the Russian side, representatives of the Orthodox Church were salient. After both representatives had delivered their addresses, they proceeded to lay the wreaths, a ceremony that was broadcast live on Russian and Polish television.


Poland the live broadcast was said to reach millions of viewers.\textsuperscript{63} It is important to highlight that the choreographers of the broadcast filmed both prime ministers walking down the central path leading to the memorial site from a bird’s eye perspective (see Photogramm 5.1: pictures 1-11; 22-27). The laying of wreaths was accomplished there. The two main representatives followed a Polish or Russian soldier respectively who carried the wreath to the stand where the representatives displayed and redressed the wreaths. Then both representatives stood still for a moment and bowed their heads (see Photogramm 5.1: pictures 28-39). Tusk and Putin placed a lit candle next to the wreaths and Putin made the sign of a cross while standing up after placing the candle. The ceremony then proceeded with the recitation of fallen soldiers in Polish, the memorial roll call. Finally, the national anthems were played.

\textit{Photogramm 5.1 “Katyn – Official Wreath deposing ceremony”}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{katyn.png}
\end{figure}

V. Katyn N° 2

[9 photographs of a ceremony with military personnel]
3. The Procession
It is salient that the whole ceremony was held in total symmetry in relation to the way the procession unfolded. Both representatives acted in strict accordance. This was also reflected by the fact that both state symbols were equally present, including the delegations from the army corps, flags and the intonation of anthems. The ceremony was closed with the inauguration of an Orthodox church for which both representatives laid a cornerstone. The Church of Resurrection’s cornerstone was also placed in total symmetry, if not total symbiosis, as both representatives held and placed the bible jointly during the ceremonial inauguration of the new altar.

4. The Closing

The recipients of the apology reacted in a range of positive ways to the ceremony. Donald Tusk considered the ceremony as marking a “turning point” in relations with the Russian Federation. “For me it is a turning point, I believe this is a very important day. I know that, from the viewpoint of Premier Putin, it is also a turning point,” Tusk said in a joint news conference after the official ceremony. Former President, Lech Wałęsa, had a similar view of the ceremony. These perceptions of the ‘event’ also underscored the salience of the ceremony. According to Wałęsa, the ceremony marked a good “starting point” for the amelioration of the bilateral relationship between the two countries and he praised Putin

for his address: “I would consider some of Putin’s words as grand”\textsuperscript{65}. Other official reactions were more cautious: “This is a step in the right direction, though not yet a breakthrough”, said Bronislaw Komorowski, the governing party’s candidate at the presidential election, which had been scheduled for the end of the year.\textsuperscript{66}

With regard to the reactions of the Polish media, it is significant that the event was dominantly framed by a range of metaphors and figures that allude to a significant change in the bilateral relationship:

Adam Michnik, editor in chief of the national newspaper \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, wrote that something of “great significance” had happened during the joint ceremony and that the ceremony had put an end to the lies about Katyn.\textsuperscript{67} Other international news agencies metaphorically described the meeting as having cleared the clouds that overshadowed the Polish—Russian relationship. The Katyn massacre “cast a long cloud over their bilateral relations […] In spring sunshine, Poles and Russians including relatives of the dead gathered for solemn prayers at the memorial site in the Katyn Forest”\textsuperscript{68}. The ceremony was framed as a “unique event”, a “breakthrough” in the relations between the conflict parties.\textsuperscript{69} The cultural magazine \textit{ZNAK} ran the headline “We are willing to reconcile”\textsuperscript{70}. “History is in the making”, said Jacek Kucharczyk, president of the Institute of Public Affairs in Warsaw, an independent think tank. He continued stating, “This looks like a real breakthrough in our relationship”\textsuperscript{71}.

\textsuperscript{69} Le Temps, \textit{Poutine fait le déplacement à Katyn}, 8 April 2010: 3.
\textsuperscript{71} Schwirtz, Michael, \textit{Putin commemorates Katyn massacre. He is first Russian leader to honor 20,000 Polish officers killed in 1940}, International Herald Tribune, 8 April 2010: 3.
Next to these framings there were several historical analogies that were meant to evaluate the importance of the bilateral meaning. The Polish ambassador to France put the ceremony of the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre on the same level as the state visit by Helmut Kohl to Verdun in 1985. The international media used the same historical references and even compared the ceremony with the *Kniefall* by Willy Brandt.\(^{72}\)

It needs to be mentioned here that not all reactions were re-actions in a sequential sense. It is significant that the first official statements in reaction to the ceremony had already been issued before the ceremony and indicated a positive anticipatory reaction in relation to the commemoration ceremony: “We observe with great interest the new approach to the historical truth taken by the Russian authorities and we are welcoming the results in advance”\(^{73}\).

In contrast to the overall positive reactions, the Polish delegate, a member of the commission installed in 2008 mandated with the resolution of “difficult issues” between both countries, aired his expectations that the Russian government would now issue the documents used during the investigation that had been officially closed by the Russian government in 2004.\(^{74}\) This position was backed by the Polish parliament: on the following Friday it demanded copies of all remaining documents in relation to the missing people killed in the Katyn massacre.\(^{75}\) Representatives of the Polish conservative opposition were even more sceptical about the bilateral reconciliation ceremony and they criticized the handshake as premature and deplored the lack of a verbal apology by the Russian Prime Minister.\(^{76}\)

All in all the ceremony was staged, prepared and enacted as a symmetrical bilateral ceremony of reconciliation. The points on the agenda were jointly agreed upon. Only the ceremony itself dominated the gathering. The setting was in Russia and conveyed the impression of mutual accordance and that both countries shared the same fate. The site itself under-
went a major transformation from a Polish site of remembrance to a site dedicated to victims of Stalinism, which also enabled Russian victims to be remembered in these grounds. The site thus provided for the universalization of the victim status; Russians who were killed in this area by the soviet leadership also then achieved this status. The site changed from a Polish memorial space to a bilateral realm of memory.

A further salient point is the fact that the gathering was the first official bilateral commemoration in regard to the Katyn massacre. As the commentaries in the run up to the rite and the statements issued by Polish representatives indicated, the Polish side neither expected an apology, nor a gesture comparable with that of Willy Brandt’s in 1970. The holding of a joint ceremony and the fact that Prime Minister Putin would officially condemn the crimes sufficed to mark a “turning point” as framed by Polish officials and the media.

Despite the fact that the Poles had not been given a copy of the “Belarusian list”, something which had the potential to cause critical self-reflection, the ceremony succeeded in prompting cautious, positive reactions. Nevertheless, the political parties in Poland requested further steps to substantiate the Russian gesture and this was also clear from their reactions. Overall both representatives perceived the atonement ceremony as improving bilateral relations and a signalling gesture. This small change of perception was to be considerably boosted by a traumatic event that bolstered the reconvention of both representatives at this symbolic site a short time later.

5. Katyn No 2

On Saturday morning at 8.41 a.m. local time a plane carrying 96 high-ranking Polish delegates crashed in Katyn Forest while approaching Smolensk airport. The then Polish president, Lech Kacinsky, was on board of the plane together with other high-ranking representatives and descendants of the Katyn victims who had planned to take part in unofficial commemorations at the Polish cemetery in Katyn. The commemoration on Saturday, 10th of April, 2010 was a Polish commemoration ceremony scheduled to mark another event in relation to the 70th anniversary of the massacre. The fact that several of the highest Polish representatives perished in this aviation catastrophe led to historical analogies with the Katyn
massacre, and observers and the Polish media framed the crash as ‘Katyn nr 2’.

This episode is relevant insofar as the tragedy took place during a period in which the official ceremony was still very present and the new ceremony was envisaged as marking a potentially counter, different, and unilateral commemoration rite in contrast to the previous bilateral commemoration. The envisaged commemoration rite had the potential to mark a different point, and thus could have undermined the recent developments in bilateral relations. Furthermore, the ceremony was scheduled for the official day of commemoration dedicated to the victims of the massacre.77

Additionally, the catastrophe prompted some reconciliatory corporal moves that were shown in the Polish and Russian media and which received acclamation especially by the Polish representatives. The visit to the site of the catastrophe created a second ceremony of reconciliation between the representatives with a significant performative quality. In retrospect, the reactions of the Polish side demonstrate that the catastrophe had a catalyzing positive effect on the rapprochement that had been marked a few days before.

As the analysed Video (Photogramm 5.2) shows, the second encounter between Donald Tusk and Vladimir Putin within a few days was less formal. Both representatives were dressed in dark clothes and a trench coat; and they both arrived at the crash site on the first evening under the spotlight of the disaster response teams responsible for the recovery of the debris. The pictures show the two representatives on the site followed by a mixed group of random people comprising both delegations. The film footage shows President Putin listening to a member of the investigation team and then explaining the possible course of events that led up to the catastrophe to Donald Tusk (see Photogramm 5.2: pictures 13-20). Tusk remained on the spot with his eyes fixed, and his head tilted towards his counterpart. Both representatives were then passed bouquets from behind and approached some of the debris before laying down flowers (see Photogramm 5.2: pictures 20-39). By approaching the debris both representatives dissociated themselves from the group of people behind them and then became the focus of the scene. Tusk, the Polish representative, went down on one knee, folded his hands, bowed his head to his hands and then

remained still in a kneeling position and focused on the debris for several seconds (see Photogramm 5.2: pictures 40-43). Meanwhile his Russian counterpart stood in an upright position next to the kneeling Polish prime minister and made the sign of a cross in front of his chest (see Phtogramm 5.2: picture 44-47). Both representatives remained in this position for a while. Then, as the Polish Prime Minister was about to stand up, the Russian Premier laid down his right hand softly on the back of his Polish counterpart, turned slightly towards him, and in an apparently hesitant gesture was then given the opportunity to embrace his Polish counterpart. Both representatives then shortly embraced each other (see Photogramm 5.2: pictures 48-64).

Photogramm 5.2: “Putin, Tusk lay flowers at plane crash site near Smolensk“

1 2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9
V. Katyn № 2
V. Katyn N° 2
The joint embracement was one instance of a series of several symbolic actions drawing on various cultural templates to express grief and condolences undertaken by the Russian actors. The Russian President, Dimitri Medvedev, visited the site of the catastrophe several times and addressed the Polish nation on Saturday, the very day of the tragedy with words of solidarity and condolences. The Russian administration decreed a day of mourning the following Monday. The Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, laid roses on the coffin of the Polish President on Sunday, on the departure of the body of Lech Kacinsky to Poland.78

Significantly, messages of solidarity and condolence were also conveyed via symbolic forms of communication on the societal level. A “carpet of roses” lay in front of the Polish embassy, and thousands of people attended the transfer of the coffin to the airport in Smolensk, “much of them having tears in their eyes.”79 Russio one, an important, government-owned television channel reran the movie “Katyn” by Andrzej Wajda on prime-time television on Sunday to a broader public than the week before on the marginal channel Kultura. The film was shown on the day that Kacinsky’s body was being transferred. Additionally, the Moscow based newspaper Novaya Gazeta, used the Polish words “Jestesmy Z Wami!” (We are with you!) as its headline on the following Monday to express its solidarity in relation to the tragedy.80

79 Der Tagesspiegel, Die Last der Geschichte, 12 April 2010: 2.
The reactions to the chain of symbolic actions on various levels between both communities demonstrates that the commemoration ceremony on Wednesday was respectfully accepted by Polish representatives and framed as a “turning point” but that the tragedy of the plane crash and the reactions to it unintentionally helped instigate an inclusive emotionality of compassion, empathy and solidarity. By the public performances of embrace and other acts, the representatives instigated a final emotional breakthrough that had been lacking at the initial ceremony.

The Polish Foreign Minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, said that a certain “emotional breakthrough” had already been achieved that might lead to a political breakthrough.81 The interim president, Bronislaw Komorowski, publicly thanked the Russian people for “spontaneously” showing their compassion to Poland. Other social representatives also underscored the weight of the successful expression of collective empathy with Poland. During the official state funeral, Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, the Archbishop of Krakow, said that the “‘empathy and help’ from Russia since the crash ‘raises hope for rapprochement and reconciliation’”82. The cardinal even framed the relationship during the funeral in terms of brotherhood. During the ceremony he stated that, “The sympathy and aid we witnessed on the part of our Russian brothers give hope for the coming together of our two Slavic nations… I direct these words to the president of Russia”83.

By using these terms to describe close, familial relationships the cardinal picked up a wording used by former Soviet Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev a few days after publishing an article with the title “We are brothers” in the major Russian newspaper Novaja Gazeta.84 The relationship thus changed within a few days from a relationship marked by antagonizing public Othering, to a reconciliatory Brothering by leading representatives.

The international media repeatedly framed the displayed official politics of compassion delivered by the Russian officials as a something extraordinary, as a “startling break in the history of suspicion between the two countries”\(^85\). The media emphasized that “the Russian side showed unprecedented compassion”\(^86\) and displayed an “exceptional political empathy”\(^87\). Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the Russian performances were evaluated as impeccable by the international media. “The faultless gestures from the people currently in power in Russia profoundly changed the historical situation which seemed immutable”\(^88\).

6. Conclusion

In sum, the sequence of displayed signs of solidarity and especially the perceived spontaneous embracement by both representatives helped to give the ritual of reconciliation that had occurred just days before an image of authenticity and truthfulness. As one German commentator put it: “The reconciliation meeting of both of those politicians on Wednesday was something rehearsed – but the embracement was a human gesture”\(^89\). Thus, the plane crash and the symbols it generated inadvertently brought up a rapprochement between the parties through the spontaneous performances by Russian representatives that reverberated emotionally in Poland.

---

VI. A tour of reconciliation through the graveyards of former Yugoslavia

1. Introduction

The most successful apology in this case study was labelled “historic”, “groundbreaking”, and “authentic” by the recipient actors and international observers; the most infelicitous, in contrast, received labels such as “insulting”, “insufficient” and ‘meaningless’ by the apology’s addressees. These wide ranging characterizations were provided by representatives and are analysed as responses to apologies in the following. This chapter will present three apologies that were delivered in the former Yugoslavia; it starts with the presentation of a “groundbreaking” apology by the Croatian President Ivo Josipović. This chapter then continues its analytical path with the presentation of an “important apology” by the Serb President Boris Tadić, before ending its journey with an “insufficient” apology made by the Serb Parliament. The three cases assembled here thus comprise a three-staged assortment beginning with a highly meaningful apology, followed by an impacting apology in between and ending with an apology that led to more disruption than integration. Common to all three apology episodes is that they failed to be regarded as categorical apologies in purely linguistic terms. Nevertheless, the linguistic insufficiencies and qualifications they comprised of were only of significance for the negative evaluation in the last episode in this chapter – the parliamentary declaration. As this chapter will argue, these differences in success are connected to the form of each apology’s presentation. While the first two apologies are bilateral commemoration rites suffused with liminal tropes in speech and gestural performances, the last apology in this chapter fails to activate these liminal states in wording and in ceremonial performance.

The first apology episode presents Ivo Josipović’s apology declaration in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Parliament that was additionally coupled with a highly symbolic visit by the Croatian President to an emblematic memorial for Croatian war crimes in Bosnia. The episode demonstrates how apologies as reparative rituals may advance to ‘authentic’ performances and well-orchestrated compositional wholes. When this occurs, they stitch together the elements of the adequate official role in which the
apology performance is enacted, the adequate space and time in which it is performed, and an adequate choreography to enable a public dialogical interaction between the participants. This then renders the apology a threshold event in a bilateral relationship. Consequently, this episode shows that apologies may successfully work as settlement rituals without relying on categorical apologies.

The second apology – the apology presented in a private function by the Serb President Boris Tadić for Serb war crimes in Vukovar – points to the inconclusiveness that characterizes imperfectly enacted rites. As maintained in Chapter two, some rituals neither fail nor do they completely convince their participants. Some rites transport grey tones that may undermine their forcefulness. This episode demonstrates how ambiguities in the role the protagonist assumes may open the door to criticism by observers. However, this episode manifests how symbolic contestations by parts of the audience are superseded by the manifest receptiveness and positive evaluation of the addressed Croat representatives involved within the procession of this bilateral reconciliation event.

Whereas the first two episodes will present well-prepared ceremonially delivered apologies in bilateral contexts that in sum work positively on the relationship, the third episode presents the unilateral Serb parliamentary apology directed to the Bosniak victims of the Srebrenica genocide. This apology failed to exert any visible status transformation. While the first two apologies assume the ritual form of bilateral rites of passage that are characterized by a dialogical nature, the last apology assumes the modus of an attempted rite of purification that is void of meaning for the addressees of the apology. This section confirms conventional explanations by showing how the shortcomings of the verbal content of Serb apology presentations and the lack of contextual steps undermined the authenticity of the apology deliverance. Flanking these convictions, this section discloses weaknesses in the theatrical performances of Serb state leaders in presenting these apologies. The apology was presented as a written declaration, not physically presented by a political representative figure within the parliament, but passed by a close majority vote after a long process of contestation with regard to the exact wording of the text. In contrast to the other apology episodes the Serb apologies are not characterized by an involvement and dialogical mise-en-scène in the delivery of the apology. The analysis of the Serb President’s 2010 visit to the 15th anniversary commemoration demonstrates how the choreography of the visit neither found symbolic uptake on the recipient side, nor could it be characterized
by ceremonial concentration rendering the visit symbolically important. The Serb apologies in Bosnia resemble insignificant rites of purification that become lost in ceremonial dispersion. The case thus demonstrates how dramatic performances may not only mark in a positive sense. Before turning to these three apology performances, in the following section the chapter presents an overview of the war and focuses on the history behind these memorial conflicts in former Yugoslavia.

2. The Yugoslav Wars

In the 1980s and early 1990s Yugoslavia underwent a serious legitimacy crisis that ended up in the disintegration of the Yugoslavian State with wars between the constituent nations of the Yugoslavian state. All efforts to find a new “formula” for a potential constitution on the basis of a loose confederation as suggested by several proposals circulating were dismissed by the nationalist Serb authorities under the leadership of Slobodan Milošević as well as by the nationalist Croatian leader Franjo Tuđman (Ramet 2006: 375).

2.1. Vukovar

In August 1991 war broke out between Croatian police forces and militias on the one hand, and the Serb-dominated Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) and Serb militias on the other hand. The JNA attempted to take over the strategic town of Vukovar in eastern Slavonia, a border town on the Danube and hitherto under Croatian authority. In the preface to open war, the Slavonic region around the town had been the site of sporadic clashes between nationalist Croats and Serbs. The following three-month siege and takeover of Vukovar on November 18, 1991 by Serb forces was extremely brutal. After the takeover of the town, Serb forces deported approximately 200 Croats who had sought refuge in the central hospital. They executed the Croats at a farmhouse in Ovčara (ICTY 2010: 1–2). Additionally, Serb forces removed “eight truckloads of art from the city museum” (Ramet 2006: 399). Approximately 2,800 Croats died during the 86 day-long siege of the border town (Ramet 2006: 399). By the conclusion of the internationally brokered cease-fire in early 1992 nearly one third of Croatian territory was held by the Serbian JNA. The Croatian
Army recaptured the territory in summer 1995 leading to the deportation and systematic expulsion of 150,000 Serbs in the wake of the Croatian military campaign ‘Storm and Flush’ (Sundhausen 2008; ICTY 2011).

2.2. Srebrenica

In March 1992, open violence spread to Bosnia-Herzegovina as the Bosnian Parliament declared independence through a majority vote of the Bosniak and Croatian deputies, despite the absence of Serbian deputies. Two months before, the Bosnian Serbs had proclaimed the “Serbian Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina” which later on was to become the Republika Srpska, the Serb Republic in Bosnia (Ramet 2006: 382; Burg/Shoup 2000: 97). In July 1992, the International Society for Human Rights described for the first time the policy of “ethnic cleansing” by the Serbian forces which consisted of the deportation, detention and murder of non-Serbian citizens (Ramet 2006: 429). In the detention camps of Foča, Omarska, Trnopolje, Manjaca and Keraterm Serb forces detained “thousands of Muslims and Croats” and committed brutal crimes ranging from sexual abuse, deliberate malnutrition and starvation to arbitrary executions in the prison camps (Kalyvas/Sambanis 2005: 218). To halt the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia, the UN extended the UN Protection Forces (UNPROFOR) Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, imposed “no fly zones” and later on designated “safe areas” (Kalyvas/Sambanis 2005: 193) for refugees fleeing the combat. The climax of Serb war crimes occurred after the takeover of Srebrenica by Serb forces in July 1995. On July 6, 1995, the Bosnian Serb Army, the Vojska Republike Srpske (VRS), under the command of Mladić, started the assault of this “safe area” and overwhelmed the ill-equipped and unprepared Dutch contingent of the UN Protection Forces. After taking complete control of the city on July 12, the Serb forces began separating men and women. By the end of the following day more than 8,000 men had been murded (ICTY: Prosecutor v. Radislav Kristic).

2.3. Ahmiči

Within the Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995 which mainly confronted Serb forces against Bosniak and Croat forces a second war erupted, the so
called ‘war within the war’, that saw Bosnian Croat forces fighting Bosnian Muslims. Already before the start of the hostilities in Bosnia the then Serb President Slobodan Milošević and the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman agreed within a meeting in Karađorđevo in March 1991 the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the detriment of the huge Muslim population (ICTY: The Prosecutor v. Slobodan Milosevic). Shortly after the onset of the war in Bosnia on 6 May 1992 a second implicit agreement between the Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban and the Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadžić concluded a strategic cooperation between the Croat and Serb forces on the Bosnian territory in order “to determine whether certain zones would fall within Serbian or Croatian ‘constituent entities’” (ICTY: The Prosecutor v. Tihomir Blaskic). Based on these agreements an ethnic cleansing campaign led by the Croatian Defense Council (HVO) ensued in the central Bosnian Lašva Valley in which the massacre of Ahmići on 16 April 1993 represented the climax of Croat war crimes. At least 103 mostly “elderly people, women, children and infants” were killed by Croatian HVO forces, the Muslim symbols as the Mosque of the town destroyed and houses plundered (ICTY: The Prosecutor v. Tihomir Blaskic). In reverse an attack in December 1993 on the nearby village Križančevo Selo the Bosnian Army killed at least 27 Croatian soldiers and civilians, while the precise number of victims and the unfolding of the attacks remains not clarified (ICTY: Prosecutor v. Dario Kordic and Mario Cerkez). With the conclusion of the Washington Agreement in March 1994 the violent clashes between the Croat and Bosniak factions ended and the military partnership was restored.

3. The Apologies in 2010

This chapter now proceeds with the description of the unfolding of the three apologies for these respective war crimes. It starts with the presentation of the highly acclaimed apology performance by the Croatian President in April 2010 before turning to the apology by Boris Tadić in November 2010. It then focuses on the Serb Srebrenica Declaration in March 2010 and the analysis of the international commemoration of the Srebrenica genocide in July 2010.
3.1. The Ahmiči Apology

In the post-war period official remembrance in Croatia dominantly silenced the inglorious Croatian role in the Bosnian War. The declaration on the “Homeland War” by the Croatian parliament in 2000 officially underscored that the “Republic of Croatia led a just and legitimate, defensive and liberating war, which was not an aggressive and occupational war against anyone”, a position that only few political representatives publicly contested with regard to Croatia’s activities in Bosnia (Horelt/Renner 2008: 14).

On the political level this meta-narration of the war was upheld until April 2010, when President Ivo Josipović made a two-day official state visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina in which he stated regret for Croatia’s role during the war and performed apology gestures that had significant impact on the bilateral as well as on the domestic level. The next section analyzes the apology performance by the Croatian President and will demonstrate the coherent temporal and spatial composition, and the well-conceived mise-en-scène of the performance that rendered this visit a “groundbreaking apology” according to international observers.90

3.1.1 The forefront

Only shortly before the departure for his first official visit to Bosnia the Croatian President announced that he planned to visit the memorial site of Ahmiči in order to “open the door” for a bilateral reconciliation between Croats and Bosniaks. Additionally, Josipović declared that he would apologize for Croatia’s policy towards Bosnia in the early 1990s. “I will also say that I am sorry that Croatia’s policy was unfortunately one of the factors that contributed to the suffering of the people in that area”91. In preparation for the two-day state visit the Croatian President contacted the head of the Islamic community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Reis ul-Ulema Mustafa

Čerić, and asked him whether he would join him in paying tribute to the Bosniak as well as Croatian victims by attending two commemoration ceremonies, one in the emblematic village of Ahnići and the following procession in Križančevo Selo. “The two villages are seen as symbols of the conflict between Bosnia’s Croats and Muslims”\(^\text{92}\). The Islamic representative agreed to accompany the Croatian head of state together with Bosnia’s highest Roman Catholic representative, the archbishop of Sarajevo, Vinko Puljić. Remarkably, even the former commander of the HVO forces, Tihomir Blaškić, who had been sentenced as a war criminal, publically praised the envisioned move by the Croatian President as “statesmanlike” in an interview in the run up to the apology. An apology gesture that paid tribute to victims “on the site” would be a more profound apology than any of the other lukewarm apologies that had been inflationary presented in the region.\(^\text{93}\) The Croatian media even placed the scheduled apology – comprising the symbolic visit to the site – on the same level as Brandt’s apology in Poland in 1970.\(^\text{94}\)

The state visit thus provided the scenery for several novelties: Josipović’s predecessor, Stjepan Mesić, who was a declared opponent to Tuđman’s Bosnian war policies, never officially visited the sites nor presented an official apology to Bosnia during his ten-year term. Thus, Josipović’s apology represented the first official recognition of Croatia’s contribution to the disintegration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the first official visit of a Croatian state representative to the emblematic site of Ahnići that had advanced to a realm of memory for the Bosniak victims of the Croat’s policies of ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, it was the first time that two religious representatives would jointly be attending an official war crime commemoration on a symbolic site. The schedule also cited another symbolic temporal dimension by scheduling the mutual commemoration for the evening of the 17th anniversary of the atrocities in Ahnići.

---


3.1.2 The Procession

The Croatian President arrived in Sarajevo on Tuesday April 14, 2010 and held talks with the tripartite presidency in Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as with Valentin Inzko, the high representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina. After the consultation with the three representatives, the chairman of the presidency, Haris Siljadžić, praised the visit as “confirmation” of the “good neighbouring relations” with Croatia.95 Before his address at the state parliament, Josipović paid tribute by laying a wreath at the memorial dedicated to the more than 1300 children killed in artillery and sniper attacks during the three-year siege of the town by Bosnian Serb forces.96

The address by the Croatian President marked the first speech by a Croatian President ever held in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Parliament. In his speech Josipović expressed regret for the Croatian wartime policies and enwrapped his apology in a portrayal of an “evil past” and a “new age” as the quote beneath demonstrates. The speech thus manifests that the apology speech act is rhetorically situated as the liminal point demarking an un-reconciled burdened past from a cured or healed “new time” to come; and it also does this through its form, in other words, the narrative structure of its verbal presentation. Accordingly, the apology assumes the threshold position in the narrative plot of his address; it is placed in between these two states as the following analysis of the speech emphasizes.

The Croatian President introduces the paragraph in which he will present the apology for the Croatian policies with the reference to the past:

But what about our past? With the evil past that does not let us go on to the future restraining us as though having leaden balls on our feet? This past need not be forgotten, but we must not live in it (Josipović 2010).

Josipović continues by substantialising the evilness of this past, however, he does so without specifying the concrete authors of this burdened past, but by grounding them abstractly in the “politics of the 1990s”:

"The politics of the 1990s that... believed that the solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina was its partition sowed ill-fated seeds both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in their own countries. Seduced peoples and individuals reaped

war, death and the mutilation of hundreds of thousands, millions of displaced persons, devastated economies, destroyed families. Here, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, they left behind a torn fabric of indisputably a special social and cultural organism based on multi-ethnicity and multi-confessionality” (Josipović 2010).

It is at this point of the speech that the statement of regret by the Croatian Leader sets in:

“I deeply regret that the Republic of Croatia pursuing its politics in the 1990s also contributed to that. I deeply regret that such Croatian politics led to human sufferings and to divisions that still plague us today” (Josipović 2010).

Analogous to other apologies in this book we encounter an apology presentation that uses rhetorical figures to especially accentuate the words “I deeply regret”, that is, the expression of atonement. But more significant are the following sentences that demonstrate that the apology represented the ‘bridge’ between a burdened past and a peaceful future:

“A new age has come, an age when one resolutely needs to recognise mistakes of former times and courageously tread on a new path, a path that will lastingly bring peace, stability and prosperity to the region” (Josipović 2010).

This theme is a recurrent aspect of the Croatian President’s speech. During his speech Josipović prepared his audience for the second complementary element that was aimed at rendering his visit “historic” and that will be analyzed in the following section: The visits to the memorial sites as a gesture of officially recognizing the Croatian crimes in Bosnia.

“Tomorrow, I shall visit the sites of horrible crimes, for those crimes to be condemned once again. I shall bow before the victims whose only sin was that they were the others, different. Religious leaders, politicians, citizens and relatives of the victims will join me” (Josipović 2010).

The following day, April 15, 2010, on the eve of the 17th anniversary of the massacre, Ivo Josipović paid respect to the victims of the Ahmići massacre by visiting the memorial site together with the highest religious representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Grand Mufti Čerić and Cardinal Puljić. As the video material shows, both religious representatives flanked the Croatian President while walking down the hallway that leads to the cenotaph. The cenotaph is located next to a mosque that lists the Muslim inhabitants of this small village who were killed during the Croat-Bosnian war. The Croatian President adjusted the ribbons of the wreath, which was adorned with white roses, with ceremonial diplomatic handle before stepping back and rejoining both religious representatives for a moment of si-
VI. A tour of reconciliation through the graveyards of former Yugoslavia

 Pence. This ceremonial sequence was hence closed by the ostentatious bowing of the president (see Photogramm 6.1.: pictures 7-27). The inscription of the wreath read: “to the innocent victims – the President of the Republic of Croatia”, hence underscoring the collective capacity in which the silent act was performed.97

Photogramm 6.1: “Croatian Leader Apologizes for War-Time Crime”

---

3. The Apologies in 2010
VI. A tour of reconciliation through the graveyards of former Yugoslavia
The procession then proceeded to the second memorial site commemorating the Croatian victims where “Josipović, Čerić and Puljić conducted a similar ceremony at a huge cross overlooking neighboring Križančevo Se-lo”.

It was not until they had conducted the second commemorative ceremony that the three representatives addressed the media. “I came here to pay tribute to the victims with a message that such atrocities never happen

again”, President Josipović told reporters. The religious representative of the victims, the head of the Muslim community, also took up the opportunity an attempted to transcend the conflictive relationship through this joint symbolic gesture: “We visited two places marked by pain… to put an end to an ugly period in our relations and turn a new page”, Čerić said, standing shoulder to shoulder with the Croatian President and the catholic archbishop. The public remarks by the religious leader clearly indicated how the invoked transitional effect projected by the Croatian President was positively echoed by the religious protagonist during the ceremony. With his remarks, the Muslim representative was actively involved in the constitution of this liminal apology event. Čerić pointed out that “in this way, we want to close a bad chapter in our relations and open a new one, the one that should exude the message that some doors from Croatia to Bosnia should be closed, while others should be opened”. Furthermore, Čerić made explicitly clear what in his eyes constituted this turning of the relationship. He publicly “hailed Josipović’s move, stressing that ‘deeds are better than words’”. The conceptual chapter pointed to the accentuating potency of ceremonialism and the transformative function of the conduction of public rituals. Ceremonies highlight, while rituals transform. The procession presented here clearly indicated that the apology performance by the Croatian President comprised both of these attributes. The mutual ceremony created a remarkable public record via its spatial significance, its specific temporal context and via the dialogical performance of the participants. By the same token, the enactment of the ritual stipulated a transformed relation-
ship between the participant groups, not only through the projection of the apologizing agent but also crucially by the uptake that the apology gesture received during the ceremony. Mutual commemoration achieved the ‘realizing of the impossible’, in other words, it achieved the realization of the subjunctive potentialities that it itself projected. As the Croatian President highlighted:

“As far as I know, they [both religious representatives] had never been to one such place together. Many people did not believe that such an event could take place in their presence, and, in a way, I am very happy and proud that I succeeded in it”.103

3.1.3 The Closing

Positive reactions to the apology performance were already visible during and shortly after the performance itself. The co-performing Grand Mufti Mustafa Čerić praised the apology gesture as an authentic act of contrition in an interview published one day before the actual performance. “He [Josipović] is sincere” the religious leader underlined.104 On the local level the apology performance attracted the presence of several descendants and relatives of the victims who acclaimed the “important gesture” by the Croatian President in interviews on the site. The news agency AFP quoted a man who lost his parents during the war: “I believe that Josipović is sincere when he says that he regrets the crimes and the role of Croatia’s politics”.105 An old Bosniak woman said that she only left her house when she needed to see a doctor because she could hardly walk, “‘but I came to see this… After this, things will take the right turn here’”.106

dants hailed “[h]is visit and his apology” that according to another woman “mean a lot to us”. So did also Elvedin Kermo, the president of an association of survivors of the massacre in an official statement directed to the Croatian President.107

On the official level the apology, as well as the visit to the memorial site, triggered very positive reactions. The Chairman of the governing Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA) Sulejman Tihić considered “the gestures and activities of President Josipović during his visit to Bosnia-Hercegovina” as “very important”. Tihić underscored the importance of Josipović’s “speech in the B-H Parliament and his tour of Ahmici [sic] and other sites of wartime suffering”.108

The media reception manifested the importance that the Bosniak public attributed to the overall apology performance. The most-read newspapers Dnevni Avaz and Oslobodnenje reported extensively on the two-day visit and especially on the address by the Croatian President.109 On April 16, Oslobodnenje run the front page with a picture of the Croatian President at the memorial site in Ahmiči: “Croatia’s President Ivo Josipović visited a memorial to Muslim villagers killed by Croat forces in a 1993 massacre in central Bosnia”. It continued by quoting the touching words delivered by the Croatian President within the scope of the commemorative gesture: “We all are united in a wish to remember victims and say never again”.110

While the apology statement and gesture by the Croatian President in Bosnia represented a major shift in the official evaluation of recent history and thus was welcomed in Bosnia and on the international level, the acts by the Croatian President promptly triggered harsh counteractions on the domestic scene in Croatia. Croatia’s Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor from the conservative HDZ criticized the president’s speech by “arguing that

‘Croatia never fought an aggressive, but a defensive war’”. 111 The former Prime Minister Hrvoje Sarinić and Franjo Gregurić also expressed criticism, with Gregurić claiming that “suggestions that Croatia attempted to partition Bosnia... [were] an ‘absolute lie’ [and that such they would] ‘bring... great damage to Croatia and make... its international road harder’”.112 The divisions within the Croatian Government that the apology speech by the Croatian President laid bare even instigated the Croatian President to qualify his own remarks two days later by pointing out that his statement in Sarajevo “was not an apology” but that he had tried to express “regret at what happened during the war”, as he said in an address to students in Mostar, a Croatian stronghold in Western Bosnia.113

Even though the domestic reactions clearly manifested the contested nature of the apology act within Croatia and led to the stepping back by the Croatian President from his own remarks, the transformation that his visit had already accomplished was sustained. There were no reactions to these statements aimed at countering and justifying the Croatian Prime Minister’s own speech in official statements in Bosnia; consequently, they did not influence the atonement message that the president had already delivered. This sequence demonstrates that the physical presentation of an apology by the highest representative in this ceremonial setting bore higher validity than the negative statements made by secondary representatives. This echoes what ritual scholars recurrently maintain: that once a ritual has been accomplished, no matter how imperfectly it was accomplished, the status transformation that ensues from it lasts and is collectively valid until it is devalued by countering symbolic performances in subsequent rituals.

The Croatian President performed similar gestures in the subsequent months; however, these mutual commemoration ceremonies addressed Serb and Croatian victims of the Bosnian War in the Serb dominated enti-

ty of the Republika Srpska, and they will not be further analyzed here. These recurrent practices by the Croatian President in former Yugoslavia were answered with awards for his regional reconciliation policy. Josipović was honoured with the Man of the Year award by one of the leading newspapers, the Nezavisne Novine in the Republika Srpska\textsuperscript{114}, as well as the so-called Sloboda (freedom) Award by the International Peace Center in Sarajevo\textsuperscript{115}. Like Willy Brandt, Josipović was awarded – on a regional scale- for his reconciliatory gestures.

In an interview on April 16, 2010, at the closure of his “historic” visit to Bosnia- Herzegovina the Croatian President was asked in an interview if he would “propose to Tadić [the Serbian President] that he tours the sites at which crimes were committed in Croatia”. Josipović answered by saying: “We have started to discuss that, but I do not want to present any details yet. There are places that we need to visit in Croatia, primarily Vukovar”\textsuperscript{116}. This is the symbolic place were the second apology took place and which will provide the analytical focus of the next section.

3.2. The Vukovar apology

The anthropologist Victor Turner stipulated that social dramas assume the form of recurrent sequences of dramatic performances within the longer chain of interaction that characterize a ritual process. Memory conflicts interpreted as social dramas are thus seldom redressed by single events but resemble a dialectical process in which several subsequent dramatic performances attempt to redress the relationship. This section will present an overview of the apologies that preceded the Vukovar apology in October 2010 and which reflect the long term conflictive interaction between both parties with regard to memory of the war.

A day before the first official visit of a Yugoslav Foreign Minister to Croatia in December 2001, which additionally marked the 10th anniversary of the symbolic fall of Vukovar to JNA forces, a delegation from Belgrade handed back approximately 1000 stolen pieces of art that had been removed after the violent capture of the border town in November 1991. Despite demands by the Croatian side for an unconditional formal apology the then Serb Foreign Minister Goran Svalinović did not abide by the requests but issued an unspecific “personal emotion”:

“I would like to share my sincere regret because of suffering to which citizens of the Republic of Croatia, both Croats and Serbs, as well as citizens of FR Yugoslavia, were exposed over the last few years”.

Despite the equalization of the victim status in Svalinović’s statement, the Croatian Foreign Minister Tonino Picula evaluated the first visit of his Yugoslav counterpart as “excellent” while underlining the remaining differences in the evaluation of their “traumatic past” as a major impediment to a complete renewal of bilateral relations (Stanivukovic 2001). Slavinić clarified his own role and the authority in which he had expressed this statement by stating in an interview that an “apology is a big gesture which may come in time, but only a head of a state or someone elected directly by the voters has the legitimacy to make that act. In time, that may happen” (Niksic 2001). Apologies by heads of states were to follow in the subsequent years.

In 2003 the President of the State Union of Montenegro and Serbia, the Montenegrin Svetozar Marović, issued the following apology during the first official state visit of his Croatian counterpart Stjepan Mesić to Belgrade:

“As President of our Union, in the name of the past that we cannot forget I want to apologize for all the evils that any citizen of Serbia and Montenegro inflicted upon or committed against any citizen of Croatia.”

This seemingly spontaneous apology was officially welcomed by his Croatian counterpart as well as by the Croatian government; however, it did not lastingly transcend the conflictive relationship between both states. The apology lacked institutional authority and was perceived as having

been issued by the wrong person: “Marović is Montenegrin and not Ser-
bian”\textsuperscript{119} was a common objection. Moreover, as head of the “loose union”
of Serbia and Montenegro, Marović was not an “important” political fig-
ure.\textsuperscript{120} 

In June 2007, on the eve of the 16\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Croatian indepen-
dence, the Serb President Boris Tadić issued a further apology to Croatia, 
this time in an interview on Croatian television, where he explicitly as-
sumed responsibility for the crimes that had been committed: “I extend my 
apologies to all the citizens of Croatia who suffered because of what the 
members of my nation have done, for which I take responsibility”. The 
apology was explicitly welcomed by the Croatian President especially 
with regard to its timing: “The apology was made at the right time... It is 
good that... [Tadić] apologized to all who were wronged by members of 
his people”.\textsuperscript{121} Even though the apology was perceived by regional NGO 
representatives as “the most serious apology”\textsuperscript{122} until then, the relation-
ship between Serbia and Croatia remained strained by antagonistic inter-
pretations of the past. All of the apologies that have been spotlighted here 
received a benevolent welcome by state representatives; however, they 
failed to advance to apology events that marked a transition in the rela-
tionship between the parties. Despite this, in October 2010 a Serb apology 
was delivered for the crimes perpetrated in Croatia with the explicit aim of 
doing so.

3.2.1 The forefront

On October 25, 2010 the EU Council of Foreign Ministers finally decided 
to forward the Serb candidacy for EU membership to the European Com-
mission after the Netherlands ceased its hitherto steadfast opposition to

this step.123 Only ten days later, the Serb President Boris Tadić issued an apology for the crimes committed by Serb forces in Vukovar in 1991 in an unofficial, but well prepared, bilateral meeting with his Croatian homologe Ivo Josipović. Discussions between the two presidential offices aimed at setting up such a meeting had been underway since April 2010, as the interview with Josipović demonstrated above. In July 2010, while further preparations for the meeting in Vukovar were being made, the conservative Croatian Prime Minister, Jadranka Kosor, expressed that Tadić would be “welcome in Vukovar and his visit would certainly be a good move”; whereas the prominent NGO activist Nataša Kandić from the Humanitarian Law Center in Belgrade even framed the visit as a “symbolic apology for [the] Vukovar victims”, as she said after a meeting with the Croatian President Josipović.124 In anticipation of the visit the Croatian President, Josipović, verbally augmented the significance of the visit by declaring: “This visit will be a really important political event. It is a symbolic visit, but one that means a lot”.125 These positive evaluations by state officials and other personalities were recurrent in the creation of this reconciliation event.

Like Foreign Minister Slivanović approximately nine years before him, Tadić announced that he would be returning stolen objects, including some original documents from Vukovar hospital, which were removed by Serb forces and which Croatia had repeatedly demanded be returned.126 The 25 documents were perceived as providing crucial information regarding the fate of 460 missing people from Vukovar and the surrounding region.127

The procession of the mutual commemoration ceremony replicated the

123 Dutch opposition to the further integration of Serbia into the EU was due to the traumatic and humiliating experiences endured by the Dutch military during the takeover of Srebrenica in 1995 and the fact that Serb officials would not hand over the most-wanted war criminal Ratko Mladić to the ICTY (B 92, 25 October 2010).
considerably successful visit that had been performed by Josipović in Bosnia in April. However, the announcement of a reciprocal visit to the central memorial site in Ovčara near Vukovar and the scheduled visit to the memorial dedicated to Serb victims in Paulin Dvor by both representatives fuelled the heated debate within Croatia about the appropriateness of paying tribute to both events within the same ceremonial frame. Representatives of the nationalist Party of Rights (HSP) perceived the close juxtaposition of the commemorative gatherings as an unacceptable “humiliation” and levelling of the historical weight of both war crimes.128

With regard to the concrete timing of the apology, in mid-July Tadić said that “we will choose a right moment for that”.129 Indeed, the visit was not only symbolically scheduled appropriately – just a few days before the 19th anniversary of the fall of the city – but also strategically with regard to EU processes of adherence by both of the involved parties. Tadić’s visit was finally scheduled on November 4, 2010, on what would have marked the 50th birthday of Siniša Glavašević, a local reporter who was killed at Ovčara.130 Glavašević, a local radio reporter, was a so-called “voice” of the martyred population of Vukovar during the siege and advanced to an internationally known Croatian media figure after the war with the posthumous publication of his short stories about the siege (Glavašević 1994).

3.2.2 The Procession

Tadić arrived at 10.15 a.m. on November 4 aboard a ferry donated by the Dutch government. The transfer of the Serb delegation also marked the inauguration of the regular service of the ferry line between Vukovar and the Serbian municipality of Bač on the bank of the Danube.131 In addition, the

ferry was named *Golubica*, which means ‘dove’ in Serbo-Croatian and seemed to be intended as a “symbol of peace and a better future” as observers remarked.\textsuperscript{132}

At his arrival on the Croatian side Tadić was welcomed by the Croatian President Ivo Josipović, the head of Vukovar-Srijem county, Bozo Galić; Vukovar Mayor, Željko Sabo, and the Dutch ambassador to Croatia, Stella Ronner-Grubačić. The Serbian president was also greeted with applause by 50 to 100 people when he stepped off the boat.\textsuperscript{133} The video shows how the Serb President was the first person to alight from the ferry and how he was welcomed with a handshake by the Croatian President.

*Photogramm 6.2: “Boris Tadić arrives on the ferry Golubica“*

\begin{quote}
133 BBC, *Vukovar residents greet Serbian president with applause*, *Text of report in English by Croatian state news agency HINA*; available at Nexis & Lexis: http://h
\end{quote}
After this first encounter in front of the media on the Danube riverbank the two presidents proceeded to the town hall for brief one-to-one talks.\textsuperscript{134} The procession of the ceremony then proceeded to the well-established diplomatic custom of laying wreaths; this time at the Ovčara memorial site. The Serb President walked down the hallway leading to the memorial altar accompanied by a military salute until he reached the altar. There he stood still for a while and adjusted the ribbons of the wreath.

\textit{Picture 6.1 “Tadić at the Ovčara memorial”}

As the inscription on the wreath says: “To the innocent victims, Boris Tadić, President of the Republic of Serbia”. In contrast to Josipović’s performance in April, the ribbon’s inscription did not make it clear in which capacity, whether private or official, the apology was being enacted.

Tadić received a warm welcome and the surrounding attendants clapped on his arrival. However, on the way to the central memorial site and at the site itself his convoy faced the opposition of the descendants of victims and veterans. Several members of the small Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) gathered in Vukovar carrying banners saying: “Apology, Not Regret” and “You’re not welcome”.

At the central memorial site, Tadić faced additional opposition when descendants of the victims and veterans deliberately turned their backs on the ceremony. The displayed corporal act of opposition was hidden by the military guards who were stood between the protesting members and the Serb President while he was laying the wreath, as the picture below demonstrates.

As the visual material taken from the private Croatian media broadcast Nova TV discloses below, the protesters performed a double edged performance by turning their back. They did not only articulate their opposition towards the gesture of the Serb president, but also ‘protected’ the grave where the remains of the victims are buried by chanting and praying during the wreath laying ceremony (see Photogramm 6.3: pictures 3-4). These counter gestures by the protesters were thus also intended to prevent the sacred place to be tarnished by the presence of the Serb President on the site.

---


VI. A tour of reconciliation through the graveyards of former Yugoslavia

Photogramm 6.3: “Ovčara Protest”

In addition to the symbolic corporal protests by attendants at the ceremony, the descendants of the victims also displayed pictures of people who were still missing and lit candles. Others demonstrated against the visit “by wearing T-shirts with pictures of [Croatian general] Ante Gotovina [tried by the Hague tribunal for war crimes against Serbs]”. A relative of one of the victims stated that she considered the visit by President Tadić

an “act of violence”, because the fate of her family had still not been clarified.\textsuperscript{139}

It is after the wreath laying ceremony that both representatives addressed the media in a conference held in front of the vast Slavonian plains. The entire address by the Serb President was broadcast live by national media.\textsuperscript{140} In contrast to the sequence of laying down wreaths where both representatives had performed the symbolic gesture on their own, now they both stood shoulder to shoulder. This increased closeness is also reflected in the address that both representatives gave. Tadić began by expressing his personal “intentions” and then switched to the collective level in which he spoke (a) for Serbia and then (b) in the “we” form that implicates his Croatian counterpart. In his declaration, Tadić references his ‘repeated’ issuance of an apology vis-à-vis the crimes that “have been committed”. This leads to a vague and unspecified apology formulation that fails to specify the actor, nature and victims of these crimes. Finally, his apology universalizes the status of victim that now applies equally to both Croats and Serbs. According to Tadić:

“In I am here to do what I can in the sphere of personal responsibility – to say that a crime had been committed, to once again apologize, to propose reconciliation, and to demand equal rights for Serbs and Croats. Because there are missing persons among both Serbs and Croats, people killed from both Serbia and Croatia”\textsuperscript{141}

In further scrutinizing the declaration one encounters the same narrative structure that was already present in Josipović’s April apology and in which the apology is projected to mark the threshold between two different states, a burdened past and a bright future.

“I am here today to bow to victims. My intention is to pay respect to them […] I am here to send word of apology once again while paying respect to the victims, to voice sorrow, to create an opportunity for the Serbs and the Croats, Serbia and Croatia turn a new page in history, to create opportunities for our children not burdened with the 1990s […] This is why today in Ovcara [sic],


in Vukovar, while bowing to the victims, we think of future, of those who represent us today and we think of those who are yet to be born in our nations […]. Acknowledging crimes, apologizing and regretting create conditions for forgiveness and reconciliation. When our nations become reconciled, a new future will open up. This is why I think that everything that happened between the Serbs and the Croats in the 20th century must be put in a book of past, and this act is an act of creating and writing a new book of future”.\footnote{142}

The declaration by Tadić is suffused with metaphors that try to stipulate that this moment represents the passage from one ‘dark’, ‘burdened’ past to a ‘new future’ a “new page in history”. The Serb President presents thus – quite in the purest sense – the verbal invocation of the “subjunctive” world characteristic for liminal phases. This subjunctive and prospective quality for a better future invoked by the Serb President is echoed by the reaction and declarations made by the Croatian President Josipović: “We will finish this process of reconciliation and Serbia and Croatia will be two friendly, neighbouring [sic] countries”, Josipović said to the journalist on the site.\footnote{143}

3.2.3 Closing

Despite the levelling accounts present in the apology, Boris Tadić’s act of atonement was greeted as a very important step by the Croatian representatives. Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor considered the visit and the declarations made therein to have been an “important moment” for bilateral relations: “With satisfaction I welcome everything that President Tadić said today in Ovčara […] and the fact that President Tadić paid respect to the victims of Croatian defenders and civilians”. Furthermore, she underscored the exceptional importance of the deliverance of part of the documentation: “this is an important moment in the lives of Croatia and Ser-


At the regional level the visit by the Serb President was acclaimed by leading political figures. Zeljko Sabo, mayor of Vukovar said that Tadić’s visit was “very important” for reconciliation and bilateral cooperation. “The fact that the Serb President went to the place of the horrific crimes is of great significance”, said the mayor. The Croatian President underscored the significance of the presidential visit and the apology therein due to the fact that “Vukovar is a symbol of ours, Vukovar is sacred to us”. Thus, the reactions clearly revealed how significant the presentation of the apology in this sacred spatial context was for the addressees of the apology.

Oppositional party leaders of the small right-wing Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) Ruza Tomasić and Pero Kovačević, in contrast, accused the Serb President of “cynicism and impudence”, due to the incompleteness of the documentation handed over within the scope of his visit. According to Tomasić, only 4 out of 25 documents handed over were actually relevant.

Next to this the unofficial character of his visit attracted criticism by members of the HSP. “Tadić is coming to Vukovar unofficially and that is the whole tragedy”, said the local HSP official Petar Macut. Thus, the protagonist’s lack of delivering the apology gesture in his official capacity became an issue for a small fraction of the political class. The visit by the Croatian President in April, in contrast, was performed in the official mode and thus did not provoke any criticism regarding the gesture’s representativeness.

On the societal level, residents of Vukovar and some leading war veterans welcomed the apology but said it could not reverse “the wartime hor-

---


rors of the three-month siege during which hundreds of people lost their lives”. According to Danijel Rehak, the head of an association of Croatian detainees in Serb wartime camps, Tadić’s apology was “correct” and “a nice gesture” but “could not erase what happened”.149

The evening news in Croatia reported extensively on the visit of the Serb President. However, as the video source above demonstrated, the corporal protests by the attendants to the ceremony attained also a significant amount of media reception, spoiling thus the overall positive official reaction that dominated.

Further critique expressed by the media focused on the levelling accounts and the symmetrical apology performances of both representatives. “Some in Croatia oppose Tadić’s visit, saying he should have first admitted that Serbs were aggressors in the war”.150 The analysis of the medial framing of the events reveals that the apologetic gesture of presenting a statement of regret on this symbolic site functioned as a device to change the atmospheric status in the bilateral relations between both countries. “Tadić’s apology in Croatia has brought a certain emotional relief”151 was a common evaluation of the act. Here again we see that ceremonially performed apologies on symbolic sites reverberate on the affective level. By the same token the medial representation of the event also reveals a telling evaluative reference to Willy Brandt’s apology in the 1970s. As a “symbol for repentance and admission of guilt” Brandt’s gesture allowed Germans, Poles and Jews “to open a new chapter of history”. “As the Serb President Boris Tadić crossed the Danube last week in order to bow to Croatian victims of the Serb soldateska and to apologize for war crimes perpetrated by Serbs, it was more than a symbolic gesture: it broke a taboo at the highest level, and represented a change in the relationship between these nations strained by violence and pain”.152


Summing up, the last apology performance demonstrated that Boris Tadić’s acclaimed apology was performed in a bilateral commemoration ceremony on a highly symbolic site that provoked positive reactions in the run up to the enactment. The episode also demonstrated that the apology had a significant dialogical character: both representatives paid mutual tribute to the respective victims through symbolic visits to memorial sites. The overall performance replicated the pattern of the Bosnian visit by the Croatian President in April of the same year. As with the apology performance in Bosnia, media reports underlined the “historic” character of this first-time visit to the site by the highest Serb representative.¹⁵³

Nevertheless, the Vukovar apology also revealed that some criticism was voiced against the apology. This criticism was directed at the private capacity in which the apology was delivered and the levelling figures present in the declaration. Tadić performed his apology in a private function, but it has to be emphasized that the ceremonial wrapping of the visit mimicked that of an official state visit and this provided a certain counterweight to the lack of formal representativeness. With regard to the international context in which this apology unfolded, it has to be mentioned that both parties were involved in the EU adhesion process. The presence of the Dutch ambassador implicitly underscored the international aspect of the apology act. Besides the strategic connotation of the act the reaction on the political as well as on the societal level demonstrated that the apology helped to ameliorate the bilateral relationship. This converges with the cooperative stance that both states have taken in the legal prosecution and conviction of the war criminals involved in the crimes committed at Vukovar and Paulin Dvor and which were partially transferred from the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to the respective national jurisdiction.¹⁵⁴ Thus, the apology for the crimes in Vukovar symbolically sidelined an ongoing rapprochement process on this issue. The following description of the Serb apologies presented to Bosnia and Herzegovina will reveal some major differences from the two successful apologies presented above.

3.3. The Srebrenica Apology

Since the end of the war in Bosnia the memory of Serb war crimes such as the Srebrenica genocide\(^{155}\) overshadowed the post-conflict stabilization process in Bosnia and represented the main impediment to Serbia’s integration into regional institutions such as the European Union. The main contestation remained the long-time inability of the Serbs to capture the main organizers of the ethnic cleansing that occurred during the Bosnian War: the former Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadžić and the General of the Bosnian Serb Army Ratko Mladić, both of whom had been indicted by the ICTY. Apart from this, the main points of contestation between the ethnic groups were the diametrically opposed master narratives that persisted in the post-war period. While the dominant interpretation in Serbia considered the war primarily as a civil war triggered by the secessionist policies of Croatia and Bosnia that victimized the Serb population, the Bosniaks emphasized the systemic character of the Serb policies of ethnic purification that led to crimes such as the genocide in Srebrenica.

The next paragraph will scrutinize the impact of the 2010 parliamentary apology by Serbia. It has to be mentioned here that the 2010 apology was preceded by a plethora of other apologies that had been expressed by representatives in their personal capacity, all of which had failed to exert a transformative power with regard to the memory conflict.\(^{156}\) The 2010 apology represents the most salient apology gesture so far performed by Serbia and was aimed at atoning for the crimes committed in Bosnia and will thus be the object of the following inquiry.

3.3.1 Forefront

In 2005 in the build up to the 10\(^{th}\) anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, a fierce controversy reverberated in Serbia about Serbia’s role during

\(^{155}\) This section uses the ICTY’s terminology, as such the war crimes in Srebrenica are characterized as genocidal in nature (ICTY, 2 August 2001.).

\(^{156}\) For example, the 2003 apology by the President of the Union Svetozar Marović in Belgrade; the 2004 apology by the Serb President Boris Tadić in Sarajevo; the 2004 apology by the President of the Republika Srpska; and Dragan Čavić who stated that the crimes committed in Srebrenica constituted “a black page in the history of the Serb people” (Horelt 2011).
the Bosnian War. The so called “Srebrenica debate” was triggered in June 2005 by the public appearance of a video tape showing executions by Serb militias; this pushed several leading Serb politicians to publically condemn the atrocities (Zveržhanovski 2007). The release of the film material and the controversy that ensued was considered an important step forward in the way the Serbian public reflected on the war crimes in Bosnia as it prohibited any public “categorical denial” that war crimes had been committed in Srebrenica (Obradovic-Wochnik 2009: 64).

In view of the proximity to the 10th anniversary, the US Senate passed the “Srebrenica Resolution – Call for Remembrance” as did the EU Parliament with its equivalent “Srebrenica Resolution”. However, the Serb Parliament failed to pass a similar declaration at the time due to unsolvable disputes regarding the exact wording. Most party leaders “rejected any version that mentioned Srebrenica without citing specific atrocities committed against Serbs”.

In January 2010, in the run up to the 15th anniversary of the genocide, the Serb President Boris Tadić presented a plan to work out an official parliamentary declaration arguing that Serbia would have the “obligation to adopt such a declaration with regard to the ICTY”. In the month before this, Serbia had officially applied for EU membership. The declaration envisaged by Tadić was to follow the example of the Srebrenica Resolution by the EU Parliament, which was adopted on January 12, 2009 and which called on all EU member states to condemn the crime and established the date of July 11th as a “day of commemoration throughout the EU”. In an interview with the newspaper Politika, Tadić declared that it represented a “moral obligation” and would enable Serbia to “lift the anathema lasting

158 Miloš Aligurić, a member of the Prime Minister’s Democratic Party of Serbia stated that “it would be irresponsible… to fail to mention all crimes, because they are equally grave and heinous” and stressed that the Serbs had been “the ‘greatest victims’ of conflicts in former Yugoslavia throughout the 20th century” (Moore, 2005.).
on our people, to protect our national interests and to confirm that there is no collective culpability".  

The negotiations during the elaboration period revolved around the contested questions whether (1) the term “genocide” should be used to characterise the crime and (2) whether the declaration should also address the crimes against the Serbs during the wars in former Yugoslavia. Although the final document solely addressed the victims of the Srebrenica war crime, it circumvented the term ‘genocide’.

3.3.2 Procession

On March 30, 2010, after three months of hard negotiations, the Serb government finally passed a parliamentary declaration that condemned the Srebrenica massacre. After a 13-hour debate, the final declaration condemned the fact that “everything possible” had not been done “to prevent the tragedy” in Srebrenica. The parliamentary declaration was adopted by a close vote of 127 out of 250; 21 MPs voted against the resolution. The first paragraph of the actual declaration stated that:

“The National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia most severely condemns the crime committed against the Bosnian population in Srebrenica in July 1995 in the manner established by the ruling of the International Court of Justice, as well as all the social and political processes and incidents that led to the creation of awareness that the realisation of personal national goals can be reached through the use of armed force and physical violence against members of other nations and religions, extending on the occasion condolences and apologies to the families of the victims that everything possible had not been done to prevent the tragedy”.

The text remained obscurely unspecific and refrained from naming the actors responsible for the crime, hence, it left the ascription of responsibility for the course of events leading to this “tragedy” completely open. Instead, the declaration vaguely condemns “the crime... as well as the social and political process and incidents that led to the creation of awareness” in which the “realisation of personal national goals” and thus “physical violence” became possible. Putting the crimes in an abstract context, the wording of the declaration attributes the crimes to individual actors contradictorily pursuing “personal national goals”. Finally, in paragraph four, the short declaration ends with a request aimed at the other former Yugoslavian states to condemn the crimes perpetrated against Serbs during the war in the same manner.

Regarding its mode of presentation, it has to be highlighted that the apology was solely conveyed in writing. The apology was passed like other parliamentary bills by a majority vote, but was not supported by an official declaration by either the Serb President or the prime minister. In the press conference on the following day the president once again avoided conveying a verbal message of apology towards the victims of the atrocity. Instead, he pointed to the expectations that Serbia would attempt to use the declaration as an attempt to distance itself from the crimes.164 This form of apology presentation is then a ritual of purification, as defined in Chapter II, as it neither enters into immediate nor symbolic interaction with the victims and their representatives during the apology deliverance.

3.3.3 Closing

Despite the vagueness of the declaration and the levelling accounts it conveyed the international community praised the declaration as an “important step forward”. Catherine Ashton, the EU Security and Foreign Policies Chief, said that the EU would “approve the adoption of this resolution”.165 All the international reactions pointed in this direction.

In contrast, the reactions in Bosnia and Herzegovina manifested the deep cleavage that persisted with regard to the genocide in Srebrenica. In a written statement made one day after the declaration had been adopted, the president of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, characterized the declaration as “futile” and “not binding” for the Serb institutions in Bosnia. Furthermore, he deplored the lack of apologies by Croatia for the crimes committed against the Serbs during World War II.\textsuperscript{166}

These divergent Bosniak reactions showed that the explicit avoidance of the term ‘genocide’ as well as the levelling historical accounts inherent in the declaration meant that it did not satisfy expectations. The Bosniak President, Haris Silajdžić, cautiously welcomed the declaration as an “expression of good will”.\textsuperscript{167} However, these reactions remained minor; consequently they were not able to act as counterweights to the general indignation that the declaration had provoked in civil society. During an interview made shortly before the adoption of the resolution, the Vice Mayor of Srebrenica, Čamil Duraković, explained that the levelling accounts and the avoidance of the term genocide “could only have detrimental effects on the political stability” of the region.\textsuperscript{168} After the adoption of the resolution Ilijaz Pilav, a Bosnian deputy in the Republika Srpska Parliament, said that “by failing to use the word genocide, Serbia had once again insulted the victims”. The adopted declaration would represent a “slap in the face of the victims”\textsuperscript{169}. Similarly the Grand Mufti of Bosnia, Mustafa Čerić, who enthusiastically hailed the apology by the Croat President presented in this chapter, castigated “Belgrade” as deceiving “the world with false words and empty gestures”. According to the religious leader the Serb parliament had failed to apologise and should now deliver an unequivocal apology “with no buts”.\textsuperscript{170} Thus, in the eyes of representatives

\textsuperscript{167} Liberation, Belgrade fait les procès de ses années sombres. Reportage, 23 October 2010: 6.
\textsuperscript{168} Interview with Čamil Duraković (Horelt, 18 April 2010).
of the victims the declaration only acknowledged the mere factual occurrence of the crime in Srebrenica but crucially failed to match the expectations on the interpretative level: it failed to denominate the crime as genocide as the ICTY had established (ICTY: Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic) and to unreservedly acknowledge responsibility for the crimes. The rejection by the Serb Parliament of denominating the crimes as genocide and instead minimizing Serbia’s collective responsibility in the final declaration provided a point of entrance for harsh critiques by official as well as non-governmental actors. As Jelena Obradović-Wochnik reports “for Bosnian observers, the essence of the Declaration almost boiled down to – ‘if anything happened, we are sorry’ […] as the Sarajevo weekly Dani put it” (Obradovic-Wochnik 2010).

Bosnian Representatives also pointed to the declaration’s difficult elaboration process; the staunch opposition by conservative parties, and radicals caused “nausea”. On the societal level Hatidza Mehmedović, the president of Mothers of Srebrenica, an NGO dedicated to caring for families of the victims was said to have been “disgusted with the debate in the Serbian parliament” since it gave Serb politicians the opportunity to publicly “play with the numbers of our loved ones and claim that genocide in Srebrenica is our fabrication”. In this regard the very process of the elaboration and subsequent whitewashing of the declaration by opposition parties leading to its adoption had detrimental effects on the symbolic force of the document.

Finally, Bosnian representatives repeatedly denounced the declaration’s strategic character and the minor symbolic value it hence transported. According to the Bosniak MP Beriz Belkic the Serb parliamentary resolution was not a “sign of the true feeling, but rather a pragmatic move and as such it does not mean much to me”.

ers of Srebrenica argued that Serbia only adopted the resolution “out of its own interest, because of its European aspirations”. 174

In summing up the effects of the declaration, it is important to underline the fact that the parliamentary apology was not enough to transform the conflictive relationship but instead manifested the incongruence between both communities with regard to the historical interpretation of the events. In the eyes of leading Bosniak representatives, the Serb declaration failed to use the correct words: it did not explicitly characterize the war crime as genocide. This demonstrates that written apologies are much more prone to analysis on the basis of the historical narrative they portray and are prone to contestation when they are insufficient. Additionally, the reactions to the apology demonstrate that the victimized community, to whom the apology should have spoken to, questioned the real addressees of the apology. This reaction is clear from the public skepticism of several representatives with regard to the authenticity of the act, since they perceived it as an outwardly-oriented externally-driven declaration of contrition aimed at a third party, namely the European Union. This impression converged with the form of the declaration’s unilateral presentation as well as with the explicit statements made by the Serb President in the run up to the declaration.

3.4 The silenced gesture in Srebrenica

The attendance of the Serb President at the central commemoration ceremony of the 15th anniversary of the crimes committed in Srebrenica also falls within the scope of the Serb atonement policies that took place in 2010. The following analysis of the visit by the Serb President to the memorial in Potočari demonstrates that the choreography of the visit neither found symbolic uptake on the recipient side, nor could it be characterized by ceremonial concentration rendering the visit symbolically important.

3.4.1 Forefront

Between the Srebrenica Declaration being issued on March 30, 2010 and his visit to the memorial on July 11, 2010 the Serb President had repeatedly met his Croatian and Bosnian counterparts in order to foster relationships between the Ex-Yugoslav nations in the region. A few days after the adoption of the Srebrenica Declaration by the Serb Parliament a diplomatic scandal menaced to strain anew the relationship between Bosniaks and Serbs. A bilateral meeting within the scope of the opening of a fair in Mostar in Western Bosnia was cancelled after public attacks by Haris Silajdžić, the Bosniak leader, and Chairman of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Presidency, due to the arrest of Ilija Jurisić in Belgrade and the demand that Ejup Ganić be extradited after being arrested at a London airport in March 2010. The Serb authorities alleged that both men had committed war crimes, cases that the ICTY did not pursued due to a lack of evidence. However, in late April 2010, only a few weeks later, the Serb President Tadić concluded the trilateral Istanbul Declaration with his counterpart from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Haris Silajdžic, and Turkey, Abdullah Gül. This declaration was perceived as “historic” by the Bosniak media. Bosniak observers read its completion, the sideling of representatives of the Serb entity in the conclusion of the agreement, and the underscoring of the integrity of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian state and its territory as part of the declaration as a major shift in Serbian policy towards Bosnia-Herzegovina.175 Within the scope of this historic declaration the Serb President announced he would be attending the 15th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre. This announcement was explicitly welcomed during a visit to Belgrade in mid-June by Sulejman Thihić, speaker of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Parliament, and chairman of the SDA, the biggest Muslim party in Bosnia.176 One day before his departure on July 10, Tadić declared that

he was “travelling to Srebrenica [...] wishing to build bridges of friendship and understanding among the nations in the region”.\(^{177}\)

Whereas the President of Serbia issued several public remarks before the commemoration rite that were positively valued by the international as well as Bosniak representatives, the representatives of the Republika Srpska to Bosnia symbolically undermined the preparation of the ceremony by executing counter actions pointing to a fundamentally different evaluation of recent history on the Balkans. The day before the official international gathering at the commemoration site in Potočari, the central cemetery for the victims of the Srebrenica massacre, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) run by the former Serb President and main architect of the ethnic cleansing policies, Radovan Karadžić, who at the time was on trial in The Hague, was awarded a medal of honour by his party, as was the convicted war criminal Momčilo Krajišnik.\(^{178}\) Additionally, interethnic relations in Bosnia had been strained by the public remarks of the President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, who recurrently denied the crimes in Srebrenica constituted genocide, and publicly questioned the validity of the historical facts, and the figure of approximately 8,000 victims, established by an official investigation commission in 2004.\(^{179}\) These memory clashes dominated the immediate run up to the commemoration rite in Srebrenica in 2010.

3.4.2 Procession

On Sunday the July 11, 2010, the Serb President was the first dignitary to arrive at the memorial site in Potočari. As the video material and the media reports demonstrate, his arrival provoked catcalls and provocative

---


\(^{178}\) Süddeutsche Zeitung, Zeichen der Versöhnung. Im bosnischen Srebrenica gedenken Tausende des Massakers vor 15 Jahren – auch Serbiens Präsident Tadic, 12 July 2010: 8.

questions such as “Where is Mladić” by the huge attendant audience. Encircled by bodyguards, the Serb President approached three mothers next to the cemetery, and at the entrance of the warehouse that had housed the former Dutch UN Protection Forces. It was here that in July 1995, the Bosnian Serb Army had executed the male population after separating the men from the women and children. In front of the cameras a widow named Kada Hotic held the Serbian President’s hands and addressed him with the words: “I wish to welcome you, we are receiving you in peace” (Radovanovic 2010b). After this short interaction one woman said that this gesture meant a lot to her while a mother told the press that next time Tadić should “bring Mladić or stay at home”.

Before the start of the memorial service the Serb President laid a wreath at the cenotaph, as did his counterparts from other states afterwards. “Tadić placed a wreath at the memorial complex in Potočari that read ‘To the innocent victims, from Serbian President Boris Tadić’”.

---


The procession was broadcast live within the Bosnian Federation but not on public television in the Republika Srpska, which instead broadcast a repeat of a world championship football match that had already been broadcast the night before. The 15th anniversary provided the occasion for the reburial of the remains of 775 newly identified bodies and thus the commemoration was attended by between 40,000 and 60,000 people.\textsuperscript{183} The memorial service was opened by the chant of Srebrenica Oratorio presented by a young chorus that was followed by a religious ceremony held by the head of the Islamic community in Bosnia, the Grand Mufti Mustafa Cerić. Due to the large number of people attending, the tremendous lack of space at the ritual meant that everyone was forced to huddle up together (see Photogramm 6.4):

“When the procession reached the hill, some 60,000 people splintered into rivulets as relatives sought the exact grave for their loved ones. The sound of dirt pounding against the coffins’ wooden lids echoed over the valley, as one

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}
male and one female announcer solemnly read out the names of the victims being buried. That took 64 minutes”\textsuperscript{184}

*Photogramm 6.4: “Crowded Ceremony in Potočari”*

Several representatives presented speeches as part of this mass procession, although they did not always gain much attention due to the sheer dimen-

sion of the ceremony. The huge presence of international dignitaries at the centre of the memorial site pushed a large number of people attending further out, and “the space outside the center teemed with activity”. The Serb President did not present an address and was only scantily visible in the procession. The media even missed the Serbian President shedding tears during the funeral procession. As such, the overall choreography did not allow the gestures and the emotions expressed by the Serb President to reach the centre stage of the ceremony. Instead, Tadić’s presence constituted more of a minor footnote to the unfolding of the international gathering at the mass funeral ceremony. Tadić’s silent gesture was drowned out by the huddling mass funeral and silenced.

It is noteworthy that the address by the Bosniak representative, Haris Silajdžić, did not mention a single word about the presence of the Serb President Boris Tadić. However, he mentioned the recent parliamentary apology by Serbia, which had “condemned the crime and offered their apology to the victim’s families”, but he also criticized the persistent denial of genocide by representatives of the Serb entity in Bosnia. “[N]owhere in the world, except in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is this genocide denied”.

While the Bosnian representative mentioned in passing the recent apology without evaluating it publicly the Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan delivered a “well composed” speech in which he attributed a “historical quality” to the recent apology endeavours by the Serb representative:

“The Serbian Parliament’s decision taken on Srebrenica is a historic one for a common and peaceful future […] The presence of President Tadić here today is a historic step for a bright future. Just as Srebrenica was a place where human dignity was hurt, it can be a place where human dignity can re-grow and become a place of peace, friendship, and solidarity”.189

By alluding to the encounter between one of the widows and the Serb President during Tadić’s arrival Erdogan said:

“We have seen today that a Bosnian lady shook the hand of Serbian President Boris Tadić despite having lost her husband and two children 15 years ago in the Srebrenica massacre. I have noticed determination and honour in the eyes of this lady but no hatred. I congratulate her for behaviour. This is what is necessary for global peace, more mothers like her”.190

This ‘well composed’ speech performance by the Turkish representative is noteworthy for several reasons. First, the Turkish Prime Minister was not present when the Serb president encountered the widow in public and thus presented a ‘personal notation’ that must have been reported to him. More importantly, in his declaration the Turkish Prime Minister performs a vicarious uptake of the apology gestures made by the Serb President. Thus it was an important third power that tried to publicly sanction the most recent apologies as a “historic step for a bright future”. The uptake was thus accomplished by a third party and not by the addressees of the apology themselves. Even though he may not have spoken as a representative of the Bosniak victims, his speech received acclamation through the applause of the audience, whereas the other speeches by representatives received no reaction at all.191
3.4.3 Closing

The procession demonstrates that the Serb President’s attendance was positively received by third party representatives, who even portrayed his presence as a “historical step for a bright future”. The addressees of the apology gesture, however, did not respond in public either to the speech nor to the gestural acts performed by the Serb representatives. In contrast, the failure to capture the main orchestrator of the crime, the General of the Bosnian Serb Army, Ratko Mladić, at that time significantly undermined the symbolic weight of the Serb President’s attendance. The prominent representative of the Mothers of Srebrenica, Hatidza Mehmedović, said that Tadić “should be ashamed to come to Srebrenica as long as he did not capture the most wanted war criminal”.192

As the speech of the Bosnian representative indicated, one major point that hindered the perception of the Serb endeavours as groundbreaking or authentic was the fact that the symbolic actions initiated and performed by the Serb Parliament and representative Boris Tadić were being crucially undermined by the Bosnian Serb policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina itself. The declaration by Haris Siljadžić deplored the continued denial of the genocidal character of the crime by Serb representatives in Bosnia as an impediment to reconciliation while omitting in his short mentioning of the Srebrenica Declaration that the declaration itself also refrained from acknowledging this line of interpretation.

The following day the President of the Serb entity, Milorad Dodik, reiterated his rejection of the massacre of Srebrenica as genocide during a commemoration rally of Serb nationalists in Bratunac.193 The memorial in Bratunac, 10 kilometres from Srebrenica, pays tribute to the Serb victims of the Bosnian War and the Second World War and has been the location of annual Serb nationalist gatherings on July 12, the day following the annual commemoration of the Srebrenica massacre in Potočari. Thus the re-


gion is still characterized by an ongoing ‘war of memories’ with opposing narratives of victimization competing with each other.

4. Conclusion

This chapter presented three apology deliverances that had different impacts. The first apology, by Ivo Josipović, was perceived as a ‘ground-breaking’ gesture and hailed by leading officials as well as by societal representatives. The second apology assumed the form of an elite-driven ‘historic’ reconciliation rite that was publicly performed by apologizing as well as addressing actors, but that nevertheless faced criticism by societal organizations. The third apology, in contrast, did not use the medium of a staged ceremonial performance to convey the apology message and was dominantly rebuked as insufficient as reactions to the declaration demonstrate.

With regard to the parameters of (a) context, (b) content and (c) actors all three apologies revealed critical features that rendered the apology performance either highly meaningful or insignificant. The first episode demonstrates that the spatial as well as the temporal (a) context of a special parliamentary address coupled with the symbolic visit of the memorial site on the occasion of the 17th anniversary of the crime augmented the symbolic value of the apology deliverance. With regard to the (b) content this empirical chapter demonstrated how the Croatian President performed a significant break vis-à-vis the hitherto dominant official Croatian interpretation of the war and how the visit to the site itself was evaluated as a meaningful act by the addressees. The episode showed how the narrative structure of the apology speech projected the apology as a liminal device standing in between a burdened past and a brighter future; a narrative structure that was explicitly picked up by the co-performing addresses of the apology. This leads finally to the (c) actors involved in this broader celebration of liminality. The performance was staged as a dialogical play bringing together the President of Croatia with religious representatives on the symbolic site. In the category of actors, the conceptual chapter highlighted the possible significance of the institutional capacity in which ritualized apologies are performed. The president issued the apology gesture in his official role that rendered his apology truly collective. Space, time, the dialogical character of the choreography, and the institutional capacity
in which this apology was presented rendered this apology a historic reconciliation event.

The second episode copied several features of the first apology presentation in the contextual dimension of time and space, the content of the speech performance as well as the choreography of a mutual dialogical commemoration rite. However, it did not replicate all the criteria mentioned above. With regard to the question of capacity, the private apology by the Serb President was prone to criticism. However, the ceremonial procession mimicked an official apology performance and as such provided a counterbalance to this problem. This episode also highlighted the significance of an anticipated positive evaluation by the seemingly-involved addressees of the apology gesture. With the presence of the Dutch representatives, the apology also demonstrated the international prospect of the apology act. As the analysis showed, the apology not only represented a rite of passage for bilateral relations between both parties, but was also a well-performed rite aimed at providing entrance into the EU for both parties involved in the performance. Thus, this episode demonstrates that different audiences may be the addressees of such apology performances.

The Serb apologies for Srebrenica, in contrast, failed to redefine the relationship between Serbia and Bosnian Muslims. And this failure is coupled to the lack of three specific aspects: a lack in the content quality of the apology; a lack in the ceremonial proficiency of the apology presentation; and finally a lack of contextual steps underpinning the apology.

With regards to the content of the apology, Bosniaks rebuked the parliamentary declaration due to its failure to acknowledge the systemic nature of the crime as reflected in the non-usage of the word ‘genocide’. The wording of the apology circumvented the acknowledgement of responsibility and thus did not represent a shift in the collective memory of the war. The episode also manifested that the official parliamentary apology had suffered due to characteristics that are own to its mode of presentation. A written authoritative document, which represents the product of several months of public parliamentary negotiation, ignited the politicization of the wording in Serbia and in bilateral relations with the country’s Bosnian counterparts. The elaboration process itself as well as the document made the incongruence manifest that persisted with regard to the meta-narratives of the Bosnian war.

The shortcomings of the written apology also translated into a poor theatrical presentation of the apology. In contrast to other overall successful parliamentary apology presentations in this book (see Chapter III) the Serb
president refrained from physically presenting an atonement gesture based on the elaborated document. The Serb President avoided solemnly addressing the victims of the Serb policies in parliament and instead preferred issuing the apology in a written faceless form. This lack of a concentrated exposition of the apology act and dialogue continued during the commemoration rite that the Serb President assisted. The setting of the central commemoration rite with its huge international attendance and mass funeral did not enable the Serb President to perform the same kind of concentrated silent gestures that were performed in previous episodes. The mise-en-scène did not provide for a focus on the Serb President’s performance, nor did it enable symbolic conversation during the presentation of an atonement act. Instead, it led the ritual performance to become insignificant. Finally, the last episode points to contextual steps that were crucially missing and that undermined the symbolic weight of the visit. The failure to handover the most wanted suspects to the ICTY at that time even rendered the gesture impudent in the eyes of some societal representatives.

“Serbia is doing its best to close the dark book of the 1990s”, Tadić said in October 2010. Neither the apology declaration in March nor the apology gesture in July could symbolically close this dark chapter in the eyes of the addressed groups or symbolically mark a new beginning for the relationship. However, the international acclamation that the apology gestures received demonstrates that the Serb representative performed a successful ritual of purification in the face of an international audience, without transcending the memorial conflict at stake in the view of the direct victims.

---

VII. “Bowing alone”: An analysis of failed Japanese apology presentations

1. Introduction

Japan has issued numerous apologies for Japanese war atrocities perpetrated during World War II in different forms, settings, and through different actors. However, observers have commonly characterized these apologies as “vague”, “ambiguous”, “lukewarm”, “insincere” if not “hypocritical”. Academia has jumped on this issue in analyzing the rhetorical shortcomings of these apologies. In the last few decades a plethora of studies by linguists has been published dedicated to the rhetorical analysis of the inadequate wordings of Japanese apologies in order to demonstrate which linguistic elements rendered these apologies vague and thus infelicitous (Yamazaki 2006; Mok/Tokunaga 2009). This is all the more puzzling considering that the verbal content of some of the apologies presented by Japanese state officials may be regarded as far more comprehensive than those of subsequent successful apologies and statements of regret presented in other cases in this book. Thus, contextual factors must have undermined these speech acts muting their purportedly “magical effects” (Searle 1971).

As this chapter will demonstrate, the failure of Japanese apologies is not only tied to the ambiguous and opaque wording of Japanese apology presentations but also to the failure of Japan to comply with its symbolic engagements emanating from these apology performances. Apologies by Japanese officials have been fundamentally undermined by symbolic actions performed on the domestic level, which crucially lack “post apology engagements” (Wohl et al. 2011) and as such render subsequent apologies void of meaning. These countering policies are tied to the withholding of

195 Michael Marrus has counted a total of 35 Japanese apologies by different representational figures, while Mok and Tokunaga (2005: 79) have listed a total of 15 apologies. All these apologies were issued in regard to different aspects of the Japanese war campaign such as the systematic enslavement for sex of mainly Korean women, euphemistically termed as “comfort women”; American prisoners of war, and other victimized groups.
official Japanese compensation for war crimes, the sanctioning of revisionist school textbooks that minimize or justifying Japanese war crimes, and by public performances by state leaders that uphold heroic and uncritical collective remembrance. This chapter will highlight the way apologies lacking contextual acts supporting the commissive elements that are implicitly called for in preceding apologies fail to convince their respective audiences (Celermajer 2009: 56–57).

This chapter does not contradict the findings of academia that point to the shortcomings of the verbal presentations of Japanese apologies. Rather it complements the insights provided by academia by scrutinizing two Japanese apology presentations according to the ritual analysis chosen in this book. The 2001 apology performance by Junichiro Koizumi in China and Korea will highlight the limits of the force of well performed ceremonial apology gestures on symbolic sites that fail to mark. The analysis of the performance of the Japanese Prime Minister within a “remarkable trip” (Lind 2008: 89) to China and Korea did not advance to a historical turning point in the bilateral relations. As the empirical analysis reveals this failure is tied to missing credible steps that should have adjoined the apology presentation. This failure is also translated into the ceremonial enactment of the apology performance. Koizumi did not have co-performing confederate representatives adjoining him. Even though the Japanese President’s “valuable” gesture was received with appreciation, he acted symbolically alone in a memorial space and it did not receive a public uptake within the ceremonial procession. Similarly, the apologies did not theatrically present the dialogical rite of passage that characterized the successful performances presented in the preceding chapters. Koizumi symbolically bowed alone.

The first section of this chapter presents the dialectical history of apology presentations over the last twenty years in Japan. Therein it offers a short description of the overall successful 1993 “epoch-marking” (Yoshibumi 1999: 247) apology performances of Prime Minister Hosokawa followed by a description of the re-polarization of Japanese atonement policies in subsequent years. The second section then analyses an apology presentation by Junichiro Koizumi in Korea. The analysis reveals that the apology was able to mediate the immediate crisis situation but that the overall performance was perceived as futile and did not match the expectations of the addressees. The addressees of the Japanese apology gestures expected more profound steps.
2. Politicized atonement in the early 1990s

At the beginning of the 1990s Japan was rocked by a “sea change” (Hein/Selden 2000: 17–18) in memory politics. This change was fuelled by several developments on the domestic commemorative field. The death of the wartime emperor, the *tenno* Hirohito, in 1989 placed the question of an apology by his successor, Akihito, on the political agenda after the lukewarm apology presented by his father in Korea in 1984. In 1990, Akihito issued an apology during an official reception at the state visit of the Korean President Roh, however, this was done in an old-fashioned Korean formulation and meant his Korean audience first had to decipher his apology message by reaching “for the dictionaries” (Lind 2008: 84).

In 1991 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pressed for an official acknowledgement and compensation by the Japanese state for victims of the sex enslavement policies during the Second World War after the disclosure of documents chronicling the systematic nature of the enslavement of women for sexual services, the so-called “comfort women” (Barkan 2000: 92–113; Yamazaki 2006: 58). However, the conservative Japanese government maintained its position that these brothels were operating privately at the time and thus could not be the subject of any official and collective apology or liable for compensation.

The failure to grant compensation then dominated the state visit of the Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa Kiichi to South Korea in January 1992. In the build up to the visit the cabinet issued a press release that constituted a governmental apology:

“The Japanese government has expressed deep regret and apologies before concerning the past acts of Japan that caused unbearable suffering for the people of the Korean peninsula, but in this case, we want to again express our sincere apology and regret to those who endured suffering beyond description” (quoted from Yamazaki 2006: 59).

However, issuing this written apology beforehand was not enough to attenuate public protests in Korea during his state visit. “Everywhere he went in Korea, Prime Minister Miyazawa was met with crowds of loud and angry demonstrators objecting to his visit and demanding further apology” (Yamazaki 2006: 60, 62). In a public speech made on January 17, 1992, Miyazawa addressed the South Korean Parliament, the country’s central governing body, in which he reiterated the apologetic words of the written governmental apology. He even surpassed the terminology that had been previously used by defining “our country [Japan]” in his speech as the
“victimizer (kagaisha)” and South Korea as the “victim (higaisha)”. Contrary to common critics of Japanese apologies as being vague and imbued with qualifying figures, these terms were neither vague nor euphemistic. “In labelling Japan clearly as the wrongdoer and Korea as the wronged party, Prime Minister Miyazawa had gone considerably beyond the ‘unfortunate past’ of previous apologies and memoranda” (Yamazaki 2006: 61). Despite the ‘higher quality’ of the verbal substance the apology had little impact.

Miyazawas’ apology was presented in a highly symbolic space: the South Korean Parliament. However, with regard to the audience, the apology was not made in the presence of the actual victims of the policies for which the Japanese representative was apologizing. “Miyazawas’ speech is notable for the absence of victims and/or their representatives” (Yamazaki 2006: 62), writes Jane Yamazaki. The addressed groups were reduced to spectators, not actively involved as part of a receptive audience in the way they were in the cases described in previous chapters.

The official reactions did not openly reject the apology but the foreign ministry pointed out that a “true future-oriented relationship” could only be achieved “when Japan correctly recognizes past history and remorsefully reflects on its deeds” (Lind 2008: 85). Representatives of the victims such as the Korean Women’s Council (an NGO) refuted the apology as “specious” and “deceitful” pointing to the lack of “substantive compensation”, which the Japanese government still refused to pay. “We declare again that we cannot accept an apology unaccompanied by the disclosure of all the barbarities and the willingness to pay compensation” (cited in Yamazaki 2006: 63). That the apology did not change the status of the relationship between the political communities, that it did not represent a turning event in the relation is exemplified by the following words from the council’s declaration: “We sternly admonish Japan that such an attitude, unchanged from the past, desecrates our nation” (italics added, cited in Yamazaki 2006: 63). The headlines in the South Korean press accordingly requested “Compensation, not mere words” (Yamazaki 2006: 62).

Miyazawas’ apology was not the first apology in the bilateral relations between Japan and South Korea, thus the apology further lacked the attribute of novelty. The Japanese apology was embedded in a historical sequence of preceding apologies that had lifted the benchmark for marking apologies in subsequent episodes. What was apparently requested was more than the reiteration of a public apology but the deliverance of accompanying political steps (i.e. compensation) that would undergird the
sincerity of the apology as the reactions demonstrated. It reveals thus the seemingly loss of significance of apologies by reiteration, the inherent ‘blunting of the symbolic instrument’ of apologies by being repeatedly presented.

The relations between Japan and its neighbours seemed to change after the coming to power of the first prime minister for 38 years who did not belong to the conservative Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Prime Minister Hosokawa Morihiro advanced to an “agent of change”\(^\text{196}\) in memorial politics. In his first public apology issued at a press conference in early August he broke with established formulations by framing Japanese conduct during the Second World War as part of a “war of aggression”, however, he presented this evaluation on the basis of personal accounts.\(^\text{197}\)

During the national memorial service for war dead, the central ceremony marking the 48\(^{\text{th}}\) anniversary of the Japanese capitulation, Prime Minister Hosokawa offered another personal apology: “I would like to take this opportunity to express my humble condolences to victims of the war and their families in the neighbouring countries of Asia and around the world”.\(^\text{198}\) Prime Minister Hosokawa delivered a whole battery of apologies in August 1993 as he repeated an apology in his first governmental address on August 23\(^{\text{rd}}\) in the Japanese Parliament but this time refrained from framing the war as a war of aggression. His repeated remarks of contrition received “guarded approval by Asian officials”\(^\text{199}\), but failed to be regarded as groundbreaking due to Hosokawa’s explicit renunciation to grant compensation for Japanese war crimes. In the words of the prime minister, made one day after his address in parliament during a plenary interpellation: “All my remarks were reflections of my perception about the last war, and therefore it is not that I make the remarks with the so-called compensation issue in mind”.\(^\text{200}\)

The most comprehensive and detailed apology was issued by Prime Minister Hosokawa during his two-day official working visit to South Korea


\(^\text{197}\) Yomiuri Shimbun, War speech gets mixed reviews, 17 August 1993: 2.

\(^\text{198}\) The Daily Yomiuri, Hosokawa: No war compensation, 26 August 1993: 1.

\(^\text{199}\) The Nikkei Weekly, Hosokawa’s war apology greeted with guarded approval by Asian officials, 30 August 1993:28.

in November 1993. But this apology only indirectly found its way to the public since it was issued in a “closed session”, during the Saturday evening banquet that was reported to the press\textsuperscript{201}. During the banquet, the Japanese Prime Minister delivered an apology that exceeded former apologies in both detail and clarity:

“Because of our country’s past colonial rule, residents of the Korean peninsula experienced various forms of unbearable pain and grief, including such things as not being allowed to use their own language in school, being forced to change their names to Japanese style names, and the requisitioning... of military comfort women. As the perpetrator... of these actions, from the heart we want to express our deep remorse... and apologize” (quoted from Yamazaki 2006).

Several remarkable verbal features characterized this apology: First, the prime minister detailed the crimes in question in an unprecedented manner during his apology speech. Second, Hosokawa’s remarks unequivocally framed the agent Japan as “the perpetrator of these actions”, and finally and most importantly he persistently spoke in a collective mode by pointing to “our country’s past colonial rule” for which “we want to express our deep remorse”.

With regard to the ritual perspective assumed in this book it was repeatedly pointed out that not only the verbal content of the apology may be of significance but also the manner, the how, or in other words, the form of the apology presentation. This ‘landmark’ apology was in the first place not physically presented publically but was directed towards a highly restricted audience, the assembled delegates of a diplomatic dinner. In this regard it is noteworthy that the following day Hosokawa issued a further apology that was broadcast live in Japan and South Korea in which instead of reiterating the words of the night before, he returned to the accustomed private formulations. In the presence of his South Korean counterpart, Hosokawa issued the following statement in front of the cameras: “From the depth of my heart, I deeply repent and apologize for the unbearable

sufferings the people of the Korean Peninsula underwent during Japan’s colonial rule”.

These apologies by the Japanese Prime Minister received laudatory official reactions that reveal a change in perception by South Korean state officials. His South Korean counterpart, Kim Young Sam, co-constructed a transitory event in hailing the apologies the Japanese Prime Minister had presented the preceding evening during the dinner party: “I was deeply impressed by the prime minister’s frank attitude, which past Japanese prime ministers have not had. We must open a new era”.

Within this press conference, where Korean Prime Minister Kim referred to the apology of the previous day, Kim framed the apology as a reflection of a “new view towards history” by Hosokawa, “who represents a new Japan”. This then made it possible “to proceed without holding onto the past”. The South Korean Foreign Minister even ventured, “the issue of past history is closed” (Yamazaki 2006: 86). As one South Korean media commentator put it: the summit “may well go down in history as the meeting that helped the two countries close the book on the dark past and turn their eyes to the future” (Lind 2008: 84). In sum this apology episode hence revealed an “‘ecdysis’ from the past” as the South Korean media were to emphasize during the following few days, in other words, a transformation of perception.

According to Yamazaki the reduced “sense of ritual and formality” in which the apology unfolded “emphasized the heart-to-heart and dialogic nature of the apology” (Yamazaki 2006: 84). This episode thus demonstrates that the ritual gravitas of ceremonially presented official apologies may restrict the room for manoeuvre for public agents. The sidestepping of formality – Hosokawa reportedly departed from speeches prepared for


him by his foreign ministry\textsuperscript{206} – enabled the Japanese Prime Minister to present an apology that he would not and actually did not issue in full in public. The apology unleashed a positive reaction by the restricted audience of state officials and was thus publicly staged in a dialogical press conference the following day, which consequently advanced to a bilateral reconciliation event. However, it did not bring lasting change to bilateral relations as highlighted below. Thus, this apology implicitly points to the ambiguity of officially presented apologies in ritually charged contexts. The reduced ceremonial frame in which the apology was issued eased the deliverance of a more profound apology, but by the same token hindered the likelihood that the apology would be stored in the collective memory of the participants. That is the reason why the most memorable apology by Japan was issued two years later in the ritually charged context of the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Asia.

On this occasion Murayama’s socialist government pressed for a parliamentary resolution supporting a strong symbolic signal of atonement. Contrary to his intentions, the apology backfired, as by the end of the elaboration process the apology had been watered down in order to gain widespread parliamentary support (Field 1997: 1). As with the Srebrenica Declaration in Serbia, the parliamentary resolution by Japan bypassed a clear assumption of historical responsibility, and this provoked indignation in Asia.

This indignation was further fuelled by the installation of the Asian Women Fund by the Japanese government that collected “sympathy money” as “an expression of atonement on the part of the Japanese people” for the victims of Japanese sex enslavement during the Second World War. This “sympathy money” was rejected by the majority of the victims. Representatives of the ‘comfort women’ deplored the non-official character of the fund as it had collected private contributions but failed to provide compensation in the name of the Japanese state (Lind 2008: 65–66).

During this tormented period, the Japanese socialist Prime Minister Murayama issued a so-called “milestone” apology (Lind 2008: 62) on August 15\textsuperscript{th} – the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the Japanese surrender. An especially convened press conference was held at his home in which Murayama issued his words of regret, and his statement was broadcast live in Japan.

(Yamazaki 2006: 109). Despite this, a closer look at the highly evasive wording of his declaration shows that it did not achieve the same detail and clarity as Hosokawa’s apology; nevertheless, it could have had an impact due to the unprecedented usage of words such as “aggression”, “profound remorse” (tsusetsu na hansei) and “heartfelt apology” (kokoro kara no owabi) (Lind 2008: 62) on such a highly symbolic date.

“During a certain period in the not too distant past, Japan, following a mistaken national policy, advanced along the road to war, only to ensnare the Japanese people in a fateful crisis, and, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. In the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I regard, in a spirit of humility, these irrefutable facts of history, and express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology” (quoted from Yamazaki 2006: 103).

While the apology received high appraisals in western media the responses in China, South Korea, Singapore and that of victim representatives remained “somewhat reserved” (Yamazaki 2006: 108). Representatives of British prisoners of war replied to the apology by saying that “if it was an apology accompanied by reparations, then that would be an end to the matter” (Yamazaki 2006: 108–109). With regard to the parameters that provide the basis of this research, it is important to mention that critics of Murayama’s apology raised suspicions concerning its collective nature due to the personal formulations he used on the one hand, but also due to the situational and contextual frame in which it was presented on the other. The fact that he presented this apology in his own home “rather than at the official ceremony with the Emperor later in the day” underscores the private nature of this apology. This impression was additionally corroborated by the fact that the speech was officially designated as “danwa” (remarks) (Yamazaki 2006: 109).

Hosokawa and Murayama were initially perceived as ‘agents of change’, who nevertheless failed to reverse the image of Japan as an unrepentant actor through their gestures. As this description demonstrated the unfulfilled expectations that observers had projected into the agents were coupled with the failure of the Japanese government to issue a genuinely collective apology and to engage in subsequent steps that would underscore their public apologies such as providing compensation. However, the insufficient advancements on the part of the Japanese representatives between 1993 and 1995 triggered several domestic neo-nationalist backlashes. Leading conservative representatives and LDP members of the
The 2001 Seodaemun Prison Hall apology by Jonichiiro Koizumi

In October 2001 while on visit to South Korea Koizumi presented an apology in a political context in which the relations between Japan and Korea were at their “lowest”.\textsuperscript{207} The relations between Japan and its Asian neighbours had been strained due to several highly controversial moves on the cabinet resumed the practice of worshipping on the symbolic date of the August 15\textsuperscript{th} at the Yasukuni Shrine. This practice represented a break with an implicit agreement to refrain from worshiping publicly at the shrine, which had been established between Japan and its neighbours after the controversial visits to the shrine made by Prime Minister Nakasone up until 1985. The visits to the shrine by Japanese Prime Ministers were politicized due to several elements rendering public homage to the war dead as controversial. The shrine is not only assumed to house the souls of approximately 2.5 million Japanese soldiers who died before 1945, but also honours 14 convicted war criminals, among them leading military commanders such as those responsible for the war crimes in Nanking, China in 1937. Another aspect that renders the memorial space of the Yasukuni Shrine controversial is the adjoining Yushukan museum with its revisionist and affirmative interpretation of Japan’s role during the Second World War (Saaler 2005: 96–97).

Additionally, in 1996 the Society for the Creation of New History Textbooks was founded with the aim of halting what the society perceived as the “masochistic” education in history, and instead developing a form of education that induced “healthy nationalism” (Saaler 2005: 39–40) among Japanese youth. In the year 2000, the Ministry of Education approved a history textbook edited by the society that portrayed a revisionist narrative of the war. This controversy strained Japan’s relationship with its Asian neighbours. Memory frictions were to further dramatically deteriorate with the coming to power of Junichihiro Koizumi in April 2001. This provides the historical background for the 2001 apology by Koizumi in South Korea that will provide the analytical focus of the following section, with regard to its theatrical, ceremonial and symbolic aspects.

domestic commemorative scene made by the Japanese government. Since his inception as prime minister in April 2001 Koizumi had been symbolically nurturing a neo-nationalist image by repeatedly worshipping at the Yasukuni Shrine, and this had raised the suspicions of neighbouring countries. In spring the Koizumi administration had authorized the publication of school textbooks that omitted the darkest aspects of the crimes committed by Japanese troops during the Second World War. The approved junior high school books avoided mentioning the practice of forced sex enslavement, a factor that stirred up protests in South Korea. In addition, public ceremonial practices were fuelling suspicion in neighbouring countries: although explicitly in a private function, Prime Minister Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine on August 13th 2001, on the eve of the Aug. 15 anniversary of Japan’s surrender in World War II. Crediting this broader memorial space by performing symbolic homage to this place especially in a charged ritual time between the 6 and 8th of August, the anniversaries of dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively, and the 15th of August marking the capitulation by the Japanese Emperor (Seaton 2007: 107), renders these commemorative practices in direct symbolic conflict with the more self-reflective postures in relation to the war taken in the international context.

The following analysis will demonstrate that the apology gesture was not preceded by preparing gestures, or so-called ‘appetizers’. Additionally, the ceremonial scope of the apology was characterized by a lack of an immediate public uptake that could have enabled public protests to be sidelined and prevented them from dominantly moulding the reception of the apology in a critical way. Finally, the episode demonstrated that these public performances are complex performances embedded in larger historical processes. Ritual performances of this sort are less likely to be clearly evaluated as failing or convincing but instead receive various responses by official and societal actors who publically evaluate them. The following will demonstrate that some aspects of the performances, such as the symbolic space in which they took place, were explicitly appraised by the addressees, while other aspects such as the vague wording of the apologies attracted negative reactions. The following analysis will highlight these aspects with a focus on the performance presented in South Korea. It will demonstrate that different receptive actors pick up aspects of the apology differently and that this leads to differentiated evaluations. Furthermore, it will also show that even when apologies do not transcend a specific conflictive memory issue, they may alter the course of crisis interactions.

VII. “Bowing alone”: An analysis of failed Japanese apology presentations

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783845261614
Generiert durch IP '54.70.40.11', am 17.03.2021, 20:05:19.
Das Erstellen und Weitergeben von Kopien dieses PDFs ist nicht zulässig.
3.1 The forefront phase

The visit by the Japanese Prime Minister to South Korea was pushed forward by the Japanese administration which was said to be seeking a calming of the soaring bilateral relations between the Republic of South Korea and Japan in the run up to the APEC Summit in October 2001.

The apology by Koizumi in South Korea was not preceded by any appetizer or other symbolic gesture aimed at underscoring an expression of collective repentance in the time before the actual apology. The weeks before the visit saw intensified diplomatic negotiation regarding the exact schedule, agenda and planned stops during the short working visit. After an initial reluctance to meet the Japanese Prime Minister, the South Korean President Kim de Jong acquiesced to host the Japanese guest ahead of the APEC Summit. In exchange, the South Korean side expected an apology by the Japanese Prime Minister and a “‘more progressive’ stance on historical issues” according to official South Korean sources.208 The South Korean side initially recommended a visit to the central memorial dedicated to the country’s independence movement in the southern part of the country, but the plan was dropped due to time restrictions. Both sides agreed to a schedule that envisaged the visit of symbolic places in closer proximity such as the National Cemetery and the Seodaemun Prison History Hall, where up to 40,000 Koreans were incarcerated, tortured and killed during the Japanese occupation. In addition the protocol envisioned bilateral talks at the presidential office and an address at the South Korean Assembly. The former colonial prison was particularly perceived as an appropriately symbolic place to issue a meaningful apology. In the run up to the visit an anonymous state official stated that: “In terms of historical significance, the Seodaemun museum is the most appropriate site for Koizumi’s visit”.209 By the same token the scheduled visit to one of the most significant South Korean realms of memory stirred up contestations by oppositional forces and the protesters on the street who feared the place would be desecrated.

3.2 The procession

On the same day as the scheduled short state visit by Koizumi the Parliament Committee on Diplomacy, Unification and Trade issued a four point resolution in which the body requested an apology by the Japanese Prime Minister for having approved the latest edition of the junior high school textbooks and for his contested visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on August 13. The committee passed the resolution with the attendance of the South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Han Seung-soo.\(^\text{210}\) Koizumi arrived in the morning and was openly contested throughout his seven-hour visit at all of the stations he visited. The press reported that around “100 civic organizations staged scattered rallies and demonstrations throughout Seoul all day to coincide with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s visit”.\(^\text{211}\) Koizumi’s first station was the National Cemetery for the fallen soldiers of the Korean War (1950 to 1953). The Koizumi delegation performed together with its South Korean counterpart a joint, silent procession of commemoration in which Koizumi deposed a wreath and lit incense.


3. The 2001 Seodaemun Prison Hall apology by Jonichiřo Koizumi

Picture 7.1: Koizumi at National Cemetery for the fallen soldiers of the Korean War

The heat of the protests, however, enflamed in relation to the prime minister’s scheduled visit to the Sodaemun Prison Hall memorial. The protests sometimes degenerated into sporadic violent clashes with the police. The media reported that “hundreds of protestors scuffled with police in an attempt to disrupt Koizumi’s tour of a former Imperial occupation prison, the symbol of Japan’s harsh colonial rule from 1910 to 1945”\textsuperscript{212} The protesters used several symbolic techniques aimed at discrediting and symbolizing violent assaults on the Japanese Prime Minister and displayed symbols of Japanese colonialism. The demonstrators threw eggs, burned an effigy of the Japanese Prime Minister as well as puppets with a picture of the Japanese leader on them. The press reported that nearby 200 members of the “Korean Veterans’ Association (KVA) tore down a large placard [with] Koizumi’s face” on it.\textsuperscript{213} One banner, which was written in Japanese, read: “We oppose this shameless visit to the Sodaemun Independence Park”.\textsuperscript{214} Although the partially violent clashes threatened the overall process, no direct clashes between the protesters and the Japanese delegation occurred and the Japanese Prime Minister was able to continue his contested visit to the memorial site. The protests, however, demonstrated the will of a part of the South Korean public to hinder the prime minister entering a symbolic space in order to protect what was perceived as a sanctified place from abuse.

President Koizumi visited the memorial site without being accompanied by South Korea’s highest representatives, but he was escorted through the document centre by District Leader Lee Chung-Kyu, who was in charge of the Sodaemun ward office. Before addressing the press in front of the museum, Koizumi walked through the two-storey museum building and took the time to visit the exhibition of the torture chambers in the basement. According to the South Korean delegation that accompanied him, Chung-Kyu Koizumi listened carefully to his guide’s explanation and “looked

very sincere and sometimes nodded”. Thereafter Koizumi stepped outside and laid a wreath at a monument listing the names of the murdered Korean inmates. There he “twice bowed in front of the monument and observed a moment’s silence with his hands clasped in prayer”.

*Picture 7.2: “Koizumi at the Sodaeum Prison Hall memorial”*

These pictures demonstrate that the performance and the overall symbolic visit by the Japanese Prime Minister was made on a solitary basis. The Japanese Prime Minister was again bowing alone. In comparison to the other cases, the performance was not staged as an apology gesture accomplished within the scope of a bilateral and dyadic reconciliation event, but more as a solitary expression on a site that was symbolically significant to the addressed community.


It is after this corporal performance that Prime Minister Koizumi addressed the public with the following apology:

“I looked around with a feeling of heartfelt apology and sincere repentance about the great pain Koreans suffered due to Japanese colonial rule... It is beyond my imagination the pain Korean people must have felt amid unbearable difficulties such as foreign invasion and the division of their country. In light of these historic relations, we should cooperate with each other not to repeat such painful hardships”.217

As described above, the Japanese Prime Minister issued these words amid harsh protests that threatened to interrupt the overall procedure. Indeed, the address by the Japanese Prime Minister was repeatedly drowned out by the loud protests that came across via the loudspeakers from the demonstrators.218

As the Japanese Prime Minister was the sole actor who addressed the public in this scene, the uptake of the apology was at the discretion of the surrounding audience. As one observer remarked: “The unofficial response came from the nearby park where hundreds of protesters... attempted to blot out Koizumi’s speech by shouting slogans through loudspeakers”.219

After the ceremony at the memorial site the working visit proceeded to a meeting by the prime minister with the South Korean President. Both parties then agreed to install a bilateral forum of historians to address the conflictive points with regard to Japanese school books. The Japanese side also proposed setting up a Japanese working group to create a new memorial site “to pay respect, pay homage, to war victims without giving discomfort to people both in Japan and out of Japan”, as a Japanese official said after the conversation.220 It is noteworthy that the two-hour conversation between the state leaders was not followed by a public press briefing

217 The Korean Herald, Koizumi fail to resolve issues straining Korea-Japan ties, 16 October 2001: 3.
in which both representatives summed up the results of the bilateral discussion or the apology. The uptake of the apology was thus not due to a public declaration by the Korean President Kim De Jong, neither at the memorial site itself, nor during a press briefing after the interlocution with his counterpart. Instead, it occurred via the intermediary of a spokesperson who stated that the Korean President Kim De Jong held the gesture “made at the museum” in “esteem” but pointed out in the same way that this gesture “has to be turned into action”.221

In view of the public tensions that the visit provoked the prime minister cancelled his planned attendance at the Korean National Assembly. The main opposition party, the Grand National Party (GNP), which represented the biggest fraction within the parliament, had officially threatened to boycott the meeting between Koizumi with the parliament leaders and to block the entrance of the Japanese Prime Minister. Therefore the already short “whistle stop” visit by the Japanese Prime Minister found a premature and abrupt end.222

3.3 The closing

All in all, the public evaluation of the apology reveals that the visit and the apology made therein provoked at best “mixed reactions”. As one observer put it, the Japanese Prime Minister delivered a “spectacular show… but the audience was not convinced”.223 While public opinion and the main opposition party castigated the apology as hypocritical and insufficient, some reserved appreciation could be found in declarations by state officials and minor oppositional forces. The closing will shed light on the different aspects that were criticized and those that provided for a positive evaluation on the state and societal level.

The spatial context in which the statement of apology was effectuated was recurrently viewed positively by observers and some political figures. President Kim himself valued the apology made “at the museum” underscoring the context in which the apology took place. A statement issued shortly after the visit by the ruling Millennium Democratic Party also highlighted “Prime Minister Koizumi’s visit to the Sodaemun prison, which is a symbol of Japanese aggression and suppression” and demanded that the memorial site visit “become an opportunity for him to fully understand Korean people’s suffering”.224 As a political commentator put it: “Koizumi could not have picked a more dramatic setting to deliver his apology for Japan’s wartime misdeeds”.225

The official line framed the apology as an “important event” that “will mark a new start for Korea—Japan ties… It is an important event and a sign that Japan is willing to put bilateral ties on a new footing”, as an official from the Foreign Ministry stated.226 However, this positive evaluation was made with an explicit reservation: it pointed to the insufficiency of the apology. “I regard your words highly. I hope you will put them into practice”, Kim said of Koizumi’s remarks according to the spokesperson cited above. Furthermore, the spokesperson reported that Kim had accepted the apology, “but urged Japan to follow Germany’s example by teaching its people about its atrocities during World War II”227. All official reactions demonstrated a reserved appreciation of the Japanese Prime Minister’s apologetic gesture that explicitly placed trust in the apology on the condition that it would be followed up by action in commemorative policies.

In contrast to the benevolent official reaction that appreciated the gesture under conditionality the comments by major opposition parties as

well as by NGO representatives clearly demonstrated the apology’s shortcomings and infelicity. The major oppositional party, the GNP, branded the day of the visit as a “national humiliation day”\textsuperscript{228}, due to the fact that “Japan did not show any sincerity at the summit”\textsuperscript{229}. All major societal groups representing those who were victimised by Japanese conduct during the Second World War, such as representatives of the so-called comfort women, or the Bereaved Family Association considered the apology insufficient and mere “sweet talk”. These commentators deplored the fact that the Japanese delegation had not delivered any substantial declarations that exceeded former apologies. The reiteration of the same wordings set out in previous declarations was an “insult” that should have led to an official rejection of the apology. According to press reports, the director of the South Korean council representing the ‘comfort women’, Yang Mi-gang, “said one sincere step is worth more than hundreds of apologies”, and so emphasized the lack of domestic political action in accordance with the words of regret issued in the bilateral setting.\textsuperscript{230} Such commentators decried the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister as a “deceptive political show”\textsuperscript{231}. All in all they demonstrated that the South Korean public was “quick to pan the performance of the Japanese leader”.\textsuperscript{232}

4. Conclusion

Japanese representatives not only used the wrong words, they also used the wrong ritual occasions and ceremonies to convey their messages of apologies. As the chapter showed, Japanese apologies are verbally charac-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{228} AFP (15 October 2001): \textit{Anti-Japan protests erupt, Korean police on alert to protect Koizumi}, in: http://lexisnexis.decenturl.com/lexisnexis-wirtschaft-anmeldung; accessed: 12 February 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{230} Yonhap news agency (15 October 2001): \textit{South Korean civic groups demand more than apology from Japan}, in: http://lexisnexis.decenturl.com/lexisnexis-wirtschaft-anmeldung; accessed: 14 February 2012.
\end{itemize}
terized by elusive formulations that sideline the acknowledgement of historical responsibility. They are not presented in clear official capacities and are thus rarely perceived as collective apologies.

This chapter also demonstrated that apology performances have a historicity; that they are gauged with regard to former performances. Collective apologies are situated in the contingent historical relationship between collective agents. In Japan a literal ‘apology fatigue’ set in due to the lack of state representatives to present verbal as well as political actions that exceed preceding statements or actions. By confining themselves to the same rhetorical structure and formulation, Japanese apologies remained in the realm of the known. The addressees, however, expected the unexpected. In order to mark, apologies and apology performances need a positive break that exceeds the steps that have previously been taken. Therefore, in 2005 the President of South Korea, Roh Moo-hyun even requested: “We call on Japanese leaders not to make new apologies but to make actions suitable for the apologies made” (Lind 2008: 86). These addressees expected a substantial change in wording and practice. However, the way Japanese representatives presented their apologies only re-instantiated a conflictive relationship and thus did not alter the relationship and did not work as a remedial device. If, as in the case described here, apologies are increasingly regarded as futile, then they also point to the limitations that ceremonially well-performed apologies necessarily encounter. Addressees were not willing to co-perform a rite of passage as long as these broader contextual factors infringed on the relationship, as the last episode demonstrated. This chapter thus demonstrated that the appropriate place does not necessarily suffice in the presentation of meaningful apologies. It also demonstrated that the Japanese apology lacked a symbolic public reception on the South Korean side: Koizumi was literally bowing alone.
VIII. The Power of Rituals of Apologies

What renders state apologies successful? This was the research question underlying this book. We can now answer this question by saying successful apologies are created by powerful rites. And the power of these rites is tied to the ability of the apologizer – in conjunction with the addressees – to activate ‘the extraordinary’ via the symbolic devices of space, time, objects and choreographed performances. The project started from the assumption that the literature of state apologies has several shortcomings: first, the *sui generis* value of apology acts has been predominantly sidelined in the political science literature by embedding apologies as one element among others in broader remedial processes or by considering apologies worthless if they are not backed by costly political actions. In contrast, this book has shed light on the modus of presentation of apologies.

Second, that dominant approaches to analyzing the discursive value of state apologies focus on their linguistic shape. This might be due to the evident fact that most apologies are presented verbally. However, this sole focus on linguistic aspects of speech has denied the literature important insights: The socio-pragmatic aspect of communication. Apology communication is effectuated by a conglomerate of other channels beside the communicative channel of language. Ceremony, body language and symbolic gestures at symbolic sites represent the entourage in which these speech acts are commonly delivered. This led to the third observation that rituals and ceremonial presentations of apologies are constantly devaluated as putatively meaningless social actions. The research question remained: Is this warranted? How do rituals gain their distinctiveness and significance and what renders these rituals hollow? These were the research questions underlying this book.

The aim of this chapter is to provide an answer to the question of how ritualized apologies gain forcefulness. What did the different apology deliverances demonstrate with regard to the question of forceful apology presentations? What did they reveal for broader considerations of the working of ritualistically enacted apologies? The apologies episodes in Poland, Australia, Canada, Russia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Japan showed how state apologies regularly draw on sign-based communication, such as symbolic gestures and objects, and how each of these were different in
VIII. The Power of Rituals of Apologies
	heir local application. It demonstrated that the executions of apologies relied on contingent contextual factors that engendered different felicity effects with regard to the performances presented. This chapter will summarize these empirical findings and re-connect them to the theoretical and conceptual discussion on the power of rituals presented at the outset. The chapter will close the circle of the threefold approach chosen in this book. Drawing first on analytical concepts from performance theory, the research proceeded secondly to the empirical analysis and now returns to a theoretical abstraction of the empirical findings. The chapter is thus structured as follows: (i) the chapter first presents the inductive findings according to the sequential unfolding of state apologies focusing on the elements and techniques characterizing apology performances. The first part of this chapter recasts the inventory of the apology performances. It lays bare the aspects which characterized the apology process in the (a) forefront of the delivery, (b) on the day of the delivery, and (c) during the closing or reception of the procession according to the sequential analysis of apology performances in the case studies. (ii) Based on these findings the chapter proceeds by identifying the interrelated elements implicated in the creation of meaningful apology events in contrast to less transformative ones. The findings in the case studies advised separating according to the micro-contextual level and focusing on the concrete ceremonial performance itself in its in-situ contextual framework on the one hand, and the broader process level, usually conceived as the macro-level in political science on the other. This latter macro-level addresses the historically patterned relationship between the agents in which the apology is embedded.

On the micro level, the level of the immediate interaction, we can dominantly differentiate meaningful from less meaningful apologies taking place in symbolic spaces –meaningful acts need meaningful spaces – by representatives presenting the apology in their official capacity. Further differentiating between meaningful presentations demonstrates that staging apologies in meaningful places needs concentration and conversation. Concentration means performances need to be spotlighted; whereas conversation claims that it is necessary that the addressees of the apology find some sort of symbolic inclusion in the performance to prevent acts becoming lost in dispersion. The findings also demonstrate that within these concentrated and dialogically-shaped processions authenticity is attributed to gestural performances that creatively break with the conventional course of action through unexpected and spontaneous modifications of stereotypical ceremonial practices and interventions at critical junctions during the
processions. These breaks mark eventful performances and aggrandize the overall apology performance into groundbreaking events. Hence they confirm Victor Turner’s conception of liminal performances that are characterized by inherent risks and dynamics and that discourse transformation of strained relationships is coupled with spontaneous verbal and gestural interventions, i.e. the ability of performers to testify some sort of recipe knowledge to cope with critical situations within the procession.

However, the studies also demark the limitations of ceremonialism with regard to the forcefulness of state apologies. Micro-performances, understood as the ceremonial unfolding of apologies, are necessarily entangled into the historically constructed relationship at stake. The analysis of the case studies reveals that performances on the micro-level are crucially moderated in their transformative potentiality due to factors that have to be situated outside of the ritual frame, on a higher level termed the macro-level. This macro-level points beyond the concrete in-situ contextual frame and directs our attention to the politico-historical context with its specific historically-shaped relationship between the parties. Ritualized apologies could thus exert most transformative powers when the presentation of an apology represented a ‘novelty’ in the history of the relationship. ‘Early’ apologies in a chain of apologetic moves faced different evaluative criteria from later ones. The role of this historical path-dependent relationship also radiated into the biographical attributes projected into the representative agents performing the apology. The performances of political actors who crystallized an image of unreflected nationalism faced higher scepticism and reservation than apologizing agents that figuratively symbolized the ‘transformation underway’ of the apologizing collectivity. Specifically the failing apology presentations in Serbia towards the Bosnian victims and Japan revealed how preceding apology attempts had raised the bar with regard to successive apology performances, which translated into an increased attentiveness to the verbal content of the apology. To put it bluntly: whereas ‘first time’ apology presentations could be verbally poor or ambiguous, apologies at latter stages demanded a better quality of verbal content as discussed in the first chapter. The same holds true for the increased salience of lacking compensational steps compared to former apology steps in the relationship. The lack of deliverances vis-à-vis former performances or contradicting domestic mnemonic practices gained salience in the more hardened relationships later on and interfered with the evaluation of latter performances. The temporal path-dependent process hence modified the evaluative criteria applied to apology performances;
VIII. The Power of Rituals of Apologies

this could be a point of interest for further research. It also demonstrated that identifying fixed abstract criteria to evaluate apologies is errant as long as these criteria do not allow for the incorporation of dynamic or contingent processes that are part of the discursively constructed relationship at hand.

Finally (iii) the chapter closes by discussing the political and scientific implications of this study. This book disclosed the symbolic techniques used by agents to stage apologies, not forcibly as part of a strategic or utilitarian approach, but in a way that gets the message across. This book demonstrated that ceremonialism and rituals are not ornamental to substantial politics; they should not be considered a residual category irrelevant in global politics. Political actors act meaningfully through the putative ornament of ceremony.

1. The ceremonial inventory of state apologies

According to Victor Turner public performances are characterized by “a beginning, a sequence of overlapping but isolable phases and an end” (Turner/Schechner 1995: 11). Therefore, all the cases analyzed in the preceding chapters were parcelled in sequences of Forefront – Procession – Closing. The forefront phase concentrated on the concrete preparation of the event, the procession phase comprised of the day of the apology delivery and the closing phase focused on the apology’s reception.

1.1 Forefront

In the forefront phase we could see that several apology presentations were characterized by so called ‘appetizers’ that augmented the suspense and prepared the public in the forefront of the visit and the actual apology performance. These appetizers comprised of political actions seemingly intended to signal reconciliatory motives before the event. The appetizers preparing the grounds for the performance entailed actions like (1) the restitution of stolen objects and sensible documents; (2) political steps underscoring a changed attitude with regard to established interactional patterns as well as (3) an explicit announcement that an apology was to follow.
With regard to sensible cultural goods, several cases entailed handing over sensible documents crucial for the elucidation of the fate of missing victims and of valuable information regarding the historical investigation. This was particularly clear in the cases of Katyn and Vukovar. The forefront preparation to the Serb apology in Vukovar also comprised of a plea to return stolen cultural goods (artworks) within the scope of the state visit. The exchange of cultural goods was not restricted to the state level, since societal initiatives also took part in this preparation period as the exchange of religious icons between orthodox and catholic monasteries demonstrated in the case of Katyn.

With regard to political actions expressing changed attitudes, we encountered the public broadcasting of historical documentaries in the forefront of the apology deliverance. This was presumably intended to demonstrate the intention of critically reworking the past, as in the case of Russia, which broadcasted detailed information and documentaries about the Katyn massacre.

Finally, several cases were characterized by explicit announcements (Australia, Canada, Vukovar) of a future, timetabled deliverance of a public apology.

The appetizers and specifically the announcements initiated a ‘ritual time’, a sequence of symbolic actions in which the apology may be regarded as the climax in the overall liminal procedure. As Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz point out in their discussion of televised political spectacles “the moment of the announcement inaugurates a period which may be compared to the interval between the stadia characterizing the rites of passage”. The announcement breaks the “spiral of silence”, here surrounding the memorial conflict in question, triggering the publicly aired expectations and aspirations of all of the involved parties and advocacy groups, i.e. those acclaiming the announced performance as well as those requesting specific acts to be fulfilled before accepting the apology act. Even though an apology is not being enacted “anticipating the event changes are already produced. The simple fact of announcing triggers a wave of reflexivity” (Dayan/Katz 1995: 173). The case studies revealed that envisioning and publicly announcing apologies in advance creates a preliminary effective transformation of the relation through ‘anticipated reactions’ issued by the addressees of the apology (specifically in Katyn and Vukovar). Announced rituals electrify and transform in advance. As the case studies confirmed “the process of reception” in ritualized interactions is thus extra-temporal, i.e. reactions do not temporally follow the execution of the
ceremony. Like marriages and other types of rituals, agents anticipate and adapt their steps with regard to the upcoming event. Rituals and in this case – the rituals of apology – demonstrated this “anticipatory dimension of the process of reception”. And “this process is activated well in advance of the event itself” (Dayan/Katz 1995: 174). This echoes what Paul Connerton wrote regarding the inherent forcefulness of canonical and formalized speech acts present in rituals: “linkages between the speech acts of different participants are determined in advance; from the speech act of one participant one can predict that of the next” (italics added [M-A. H.], Connerton 2004: 60). Appetizers and anticipated reactions prepared the parties for the climaxing event yet still to come and implicitly incited both parties to act towards each other. Thus the ritual frame had been clasped around both collective parties in advance and entered them into a symbolic public dialogue.

1.2 Procession

After being prepared for the procession the apology process proceeded with the central dramaturgical performance. As described in chapter 2, during this procession phase agents regularly draw on background symbols and the activation of these via the foreground scripts comprising the verbal as well as the non-verbal performances that are executed. The following presents the background symbols that were highlighted as meaningful by the recipients of the apology in the described cases and then turns to specific performance techniques that were used by the agents to express atonement.

1. The space: the deliverances of apology statements that marked a change in the relationship between the parties necessarily ‘took place’ at symbolically important, historical sites. Predominantly, these sites were the locations of historic crimes and the central commemorative sites for the victims. These realms of memory elevated the performances spatially to performances on symbolically exposed grounds. As the Croatian president indicated, the apology presented by his Serb counterpart was “important”, because the site is “sacred for us”. However, as the apology ritual took place in a sacred site, opposing social groups perceived the visit to these sites as ‘tarnishing’ and ‘descralizing’ a mythical space. It remained thus necessary to deploy other techniques and practical knowledge so that the performers could canalize
the affective energies emerging out of the sacred spatial context. Apology episodes that circumvented sites that bear high symbolic significance to the addressed community were unable to activate this symbolic power. The major Japanese apologies were presented within the spatial context of central commemorative sites in Japan itself. The Serb apologies delivered for the crimes in Bosnia also had their dominant spatial frame in their own national parliament. These episodes thus demonstrated that the spatial frame did not allow for cultural extension, the transfer of affective meaning from sacred spatial background to an audience receptive for this spatial symbol. Meaningful apologies need meaningful spaces for the addresses of the apology. The apologies by the Canadian and the Australian representatives were performed within the central political body of the community, the parliament, pointing to a different nature of the rite that we will address later on in this chapter.

2. *The time:* In contrast to the spatial context the temporal context did not exert such a conditional role for the successful deliverance of apologies. Rather, symbolic dates provided the occasion to additionally mark the significance of the apology. They exerted a moderating power enhancing the exposed character of the procession: The procession in Katyn was celebrated on the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre. The visit by Croatian President Ivo Josipović was effectuated exactly on the 17th anniversary of the massacre by Croatian forces in the village of Ahmići. The procession in Vukovar took place on the 50th anniversary of a famous journalist who perished in the massacre being commemorated. Symbolic dates provided the temporal anchors additionally loading the performance with meaning. In contrast to these overall successful performances also non-working apologies used exposed dates to present apology gestures. The Serb apologies for Srebrenica were issued on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the crime. The Japanese apologies were repeatedly presented on the occasion of the Japanese capitulation. In contrast to apologies presented in the context of special dates, the Australian, Canadian, and German apologies were not presented on symbolic dates.

3. *The objects:* By assuming a ritual perspective, it was also possible to open up the angle for the materiality of communication processes. The chapters demonstrated that the actors acted upon symbolic objects, or handed over material objects in apology presentations, deposited or
transferred them to other participants. However, there was not a single object which essentially defined the material basis of the apology. Actors used an array of objects acting upon material objects pertaining to the architectural composition of memorial space itself, e.g. the cenotaphs with other kinds of objects, such as the wreaths that were deposited there. Representatives acted upon and acted with objects. Most interestingly agents acted recurrently with transient objects such as flowers or floral wreaths in order to pay their respect to the victims they were commemorating. These objects materially underscored the transitory quality of the rite, and can be interpreted as symbolic devices reaching out to the honored souls in the afterworld through objects that wither away and suffuse into the ground. These objects intersect thus doubly between the lifeworld and the afterworld on the one hand, and between the giving party and the receptive on the other. Agents activated traditional wreath ceremonies and funeral rites that also utilised other objects, such as lighting votive candles. Not only did the agents act towards and with symbolic material objects, they also acted towards each other with objects that underscored the communal aspect of object communication. The ceremonial unfolding was recurrently characterized by the transfer of symbolic objects between the collective agents partaking to the ceremony. As has been underscored by Marcel Mauss, the act of donation is always coupled with the tying of social relations (Mauss 2007). Even though the restitution of cultural objects in these processions is not completely equivalent to gifts, a comparable function was nevertheless achieved as relations were tied via exchanges made in public and this underscores the dialogical nature of these rites. Not in every ceremony was this transfer performed publicly. In the apology episodes of Vukovar and Katyn sensible documents such as missing lists of disappeared captives were handed over or promised.

So far we have discussed the background symbols pertinent in the procession phase of apology presentations. According to the model presented in the theoretical chapter, the agents in apology processes activated these symbols not only through their presence but also through typified actions performed during the procession. This demonstrates the interrelated nature between the symbolic context and symbolic content of apology presentations.

1. **The physical performances**: Not all apology deliverances were performed physically by representatives. Some of them were issued purely
in written form through declarations by political institutions. Significantly, neither the Japanese war resolution from 1995 nor the Srebrenica resolution by Serbia in 2010 had any positive impact for the victims. All other apologies analyzed in the preceding chapters bore significant corporal performances that were enacted within the procession or in the nearby closing of the procession. These physical performances were enacted within the scope of well-established diplomatic customs in bilateral meetings. The most common physical performance in this regard was laying wreaths, a conventional practice established in international relations. However, this established practice was acted out quite differently in the cases described above and seemed to have significant meaningful modifications within the practice of apology deliveries. From bowing alone, to bowing together in a jointly enacted ceremony, to bowing with subsequent kneeling as in the famous performance by Willy Brandt.

2. **Bowing:** State representatives repeatedly effectuated the corporal movement of bowing. Serb President Boris Tadić laid down a wreath at the central memorial site in Srebrenica on the 15th anniversary of the massacre and bowed his head for a few seconds. The Serb President also bowed his head during the visit to the Ovčara memorial site in Vukovar. The same corporal action was effectuated by Croatian President Ivo Josipović at the Ahmići memorial site. The jointly performed commemoration in Katyn by Putin and Tusk also comprised of the coordinated bowing of heads of both representatives in front of the memorial. But the case studies also revealed bowing gestures occurring in less meaningful spaces for the victims; these corresponded with less felicitous overall performances. The bowing gestures by Junishiro Kuizumi during his state visit to the Korean Seodaemun Prison History Hall – a notorious former prison during Japanese colonial rule – were interpreted as a valuable sign of paying tribute to the victims of Japanese colonial rule.

The bowing performances were the most salient parts within the ritual procedure throughout the cases analyzed, where the protagonists were highly exposed to the cameras and the eyes of the international public. The exposed character of these sequences was additionally underscored by the dramatic techniques: The accompanying intonation of rhythmic drumming by a military band and the stereotypical and formal posture of military guards. These dramaturgical techniques en-
forced the extraordinary character of these performances by using audio-visual contrasts. The accompanying rhythmic drums stopped and marked the minute of silence in which the bowing was performed. A more detailed description of the role of the *mise-en-scène* follows beneath, but it already demonstrates the essential interrelation between the elements mentioned before: The translation of cultural background symbols via scripted and choreographed performances by actors becoming meaningful gestures for an audience. These sequences – in their communicative function – were meant to represent metaphorical communication with the victims. These non-verbal performances fulfilled the “para-semantic function” (Meyer *et al.* 2000: 80) of paying tribute to the victims, and represented or projected an expression of atonement by the bowing representative. In this regard they worked either as “substitutes” for an apology (as in the case of Willy Brandt) or as “amplifying” gestures corroborating the verbal apology that had been issued in its context.233

3. *Kneeling:* The *Kniefall* by Willy Brandt at the memorial site dedicated to the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising represents the most spectacular modification of this established convention. What did the gesture do? As the Brandt case demonstrated, by going down onto his knees – a “symbolic gesture of self denigration” (Stollberg-Rilinger 2004: 501) – a former broken symbolic equilibrium with the victims being addressed was symbolically restored. This single act caused a positive rupture in the conflictive relations and lifted up the relation to a new level. Trust in and the transformation of the “collective body Germany” ensued out of the kneeling act of “the individual innocent body” (Rauer 2006: 276). As the reception by the audience demonstrated ‘he knelt down – and elevated his people’.

Next to corporal performances and *communication* performed towards symbolic objects on symbolic sites the analyzed ceremonies demonstrated

233 Thomas Meyer provides examples that illustrate basic categories of corporal communication: (a) *Substitutive* acts replace the verbal communication such as in the way affirmative nodding replaces saying “yes”; In (b) *amplifications* gestural techniques are used to underscore and illustrate things said, e.g. by using hands in a speech to illustrate the size of an described object; In (c) *modifications* the sense of sentences may be undermined by disharmonizing gestures vis-à-vis things said and (d) *contradictions* address gestures that stand in opposition to the things said (Meyer *et al.* 2000: 80).
repeated occurrences of non-verbal interactions between the participating actors and parts of the audience.

1. **Handshakes:** The procession in Katyn was followed by a handshake between both representatives after Putin’s address in which he deplored the ‘tragedy’ of Katyn. In Vukovar both representatives shook hands directly after the arrival of the Serb delegation and also after the deliverance of the apology by the Serb President. After the apology address in Australia and Canada both representatives shook hands with representatives of the victims. Demonstrative handshakes were constantly present at the arrival but not always performed after the apology deliverance. The Serb case in Bosnia for instance lacked public handshakes between representatives after the deposition of the wreath. As a so-called polysemic corporal gesture, handshakes can have various meanings at the same time. (1) Shaking hands after the apologies had been delivered seemed to corporally seal the act, to sanction positively the act of apologizing. This meaning is all the more conveyed if it is performed with a simultaneous nod and a firm facial expression by the recipient representative (the case of Katyn provides a good example). (2) Through physical contact and focused interaction handshakes manifested a rapprochement of the parties. It corporally represented a symbolic bond between the represented collective parties. The message of rapprochement and reconciliation was further underscored by additional dramatic techniques.

2. **Embracement:** Several apology presentations were flanked by the protagonists publicly embracing. The chapter analyzing the Katyn procession demonstrated the significance of the short “spontaneous” embrace of Tusk by Vladimir Putin that lent authenticity to the overall performance. The practice of embracement was also significantly present at the reception of the victims’ representatives after the apology deliverances in Australia and Canada.

3. **Facial expressions – The display of emotions:** Lastly, this sub-category addresses dramatic techniques that actors use to display their “inner conversion” (Tavuchis 1991: 20). All the bowing gestures were effectuated with firm and serious facial expressions. According to the description by media reports Brandt’s “mouth was trembling” while he was kneeling (Rauer 2006: 274). These facial expressions were regarded to be appropriate to the ceremony and especially in the case of Willy Brandt underscoring the authenticity of the act. However, some
inappropriate facial expressions were recorded that led performances to misfire. The Serb President Tadić shed tears during the central commemorative ceremony in Srebrenica. This act seemed to be at odds with the hitherto failure of the Serb state to handover the leading war criminals who were still at large as the editorial comments on the performance underscored. Other presentations of emotionality, in contrast, had a catalyzing and enforcing effect. The emotionality of the audience in the Australian and Canadian cases was repeatedly fuelled via close-up recordings of weeping participants in the audience. In this regard David Kertzer speaks of the “contagiousness of emotion[s] operating in collective rituals […] where people’s emotions are heavily influenced by the emotions displayed by others around them” (Kertzer 1988: 100).

4. **Speech performances**: Even though this analysis deliberately bypassed the content analysis of the delivered apologies, several tropes and rhetorical figures were predominant in the apologies that worked. (1) The speech of Canadian Prime Minister Harper like that of Kevin Rudd used special rhetorical devices that aimed to increase the forcefulness of the message and some rhetorical figures that put special emphasis on the almost liturgical words of ‘we are sorry’ in their speeches. Repetitive rhetorical figures are commonly known for their forcefulness and are frequently used in religious sermons or biblical texts. Repetitions are techniques used to simplify and condensate the message political actors want to convey (Alexander 2006: 59). Another technique that was recurrently used to prospect change via verbal declarations was the use of temporal binaries and metaphorical speech. In several apologies the metaphors “leaving the past behind”, “turning pages” and “opening of new chapters” were invoked to stress the envisioned transformative quality of the ritual. Furthermore, (2) a salient feature of marking apologies was the ad-lib quality of the presentation enforcing the impression of a less formal and more intrinsic dialogical interaction between the parties (see the cases from Vukovar and Katyn). Finally, (3) actors used local language codes in their speeches to prospect their attachment to the local population they were addressing. The Canadian Prime Minister expressed the words ‘we are sorry’ in three different indigenous languages.
1.3 Marking New Beginnings – Inaugurations

As stated at the outset of this book, rituals are characterized by the creation and manipulation of symbolic objects, as well as acting towards them. As the inductive studies revealed, the inauguration of new spaces and material infrastructures also falls within the category of objects. The Serb delegation arrived on a newly inaugurated ferry line between the two countries holding the name Golubica, which means “dove” in Serbo-Croat. The “dove” thus alluded to the arrival of peace that surrounded the apology performance in this town standing for Croatian martyrdom against violent Serb aggression. This inauguration illustrates very well the nodal point quality of ritual performances in discursively built social relations, which tie different symbols together to an integrated whole by intertextually citing and activating different symbols for the sake of representing renewal, peace and reconciliation of the relationship. The advent of the apology performance saw the apologizing performer arriving via new paths and this path was the path of peace, as the denotation of the symbol “dove” indicated. At the same time, other cases comprised symbolic inaugurations and the conclusion of political accords that envisioned materializing the ephemeral reconciliatory encounter into lasting structures. Within the Katyn procession an orthodox church was inaugurated by both representatives. New spaces and infrastructures were created or their meaning was symbolically modified within the procedures. Not only did apologies envision transforming the relationship between the agents, this transformation also had its correlate in the symbolic transformation of the space.

1.4 The Actors:

The next two rubrics spotlight the findings vis-à-vis the actors involved in the ceremonial unfolding of the apology performances. It starts by describing the characterization of the apologizing protagonists, the performing apologizer, and the effects of presenting apologies in different roles such as presenting them in private or in an official capacity. ‘Acting’ in the apology processes was not confined to the performers alone, and this drew our attention to the audience, which was revealed as being an active co-performing participating entity in apology ceremonies.

1. Role of Protagonists: As stated at the outset of this book, all of the cases comprised of apology presentations made by the highest political
authorities of the respective political entities. Variations occurred vis-à-vis the capacity the role players assumed. The following short recapitulations point to cases where the question of the capacity of the role players was an issue: The Vukovar case demonstrated that the fact that Serb President Boris Tadić came in his private capacity was the point of entrance for criticism aired by oppositional parties within Croatia. Even though the president came in an unofficial function the state visit and especially the deposition of wreath – with the inscription on the ribbon explicitly denominating Tadić as the President of Serbia – at the memorial site in front of the military guard displayed characteristics that are commonly attributed to official state visits. Thus, the ceremonial frame, the staging of the visit conforming to usual state visits, helped to fabricate the impression of an official state visit; it mimed an official apology without being one. On the other hand the fact that the celebration of the “tragedy” in Katyn was performed within the scope of an official state ceremony was highlighted positively by Polish representatives and within the Polish media due to the fact that it contrasted significantly with former unofficial visits by Russian representatives. Thus, assuming an official role underscored the importance and significance of the visit. These findings confirm the importance of the explicit assumption of the representative capacity in the deliverance of collective apologies in order to be forceful. As stated at the outset of this book, the apologizing performers are the central protagonists in apology deliverances, but they act in public, potentially in front of millions of media spectators, participating societal and religious representatives and thus also with and towards this public.

2. The audience: “Audiences may be focused or distracted, attentive or uninterested” (Alexander 2006: 34–35) writes Jeffrey Alexander. The ceremonial performances revealed different varieties of involvement by the audiences during the procession. Some processions were drowned out by the mass involved as the procession at the Srebrenica commemoration ceremony in 2010 demonstrates. The atonement gesture by the Serb president at the commemoration did not receive the same spotlighted attention as occurred in the other episodes described in this book. Meaningful apology presentations seemingly needed the concentration, focus, attentiveness, and active receptiveness of the audience to co-determine the course of events.

One common technique of providing high social attention to the performance was to give it primary media attention. The apology perfor-
1. The ceremonial inventory of state apologies

Performances within the special parliamentary sessions in Australia and Canada were broadcast live and shown on public screens throughout the country. The bilateral commemoration ceremonies in Katyn and Vukovar were also broadcast live to TV spectators in the respective countries. But not only the media broadcasts aggrandized and spotted the event, the audiences that were present also rendered some apologies more meaningful than others. Some specific representative actors in the audience provided weight to an apology through their sheer presence. The cases revealed the involvement of societal representatives such as religious leaders (a), former state representatives (b) and the presence of the representatives of the victims (c) to the procession. Sometimes all three and even other societal celebrities were present. The highly valued apology presentations in Australia and Canada were delivered during special parliamentary sessions in the presence of former state representatives, and victim organizations were also represented in special ranks in the parliament. The Canadian apology in particular demonstrated how the inclusionary spatial setting could exert a form of dialogical closeness between the apologizer and the addressees of the apology. Similarly, apologies on the diplomatic bilateral level were also made in the presence of victim organizations during the ceremonial procedure of the apology delivery.

Several apologies were delivered with the physical presence of former leading political figures of the respective communities. In Katyn the procession included the attendance of former state representatives from both sides. Delivering an apology in front of former state representatives from the apologizing and addressed community provided the ceremony with additional weight, since it attempts to imbue the ceremony with a trans-historical character. The presence of former political figures symbolized a long lineage of collective representatives transporting the image that indeed two nations were entering into dialogue. It underscored the collective dimension of the performance. Prominent former political figures lent the ceremony a time-transcending quality that surpassed the historical contingency in which the apologies unfolded.

3. Several apologies were conducted in front of religious leaders. The performance in Katyn was performed by both state representatives, and with the attendance of the orthodox pope, who was clearly visible in the front row of the audience. By the same token the procedure in
Katyn also contained the inauguration of an orthodox church on the memorial site. During this procession, Tusk and Putin placed the founding symbolic object – a bible – in the shrine. In Bosnia a wreath was deposited in front of the memorial by the Croatian President and the highest religious representative in Bosnia, this was immediately followed by a moment of silence. The mufti stood next to the president and led the religious procedure on the site. In contrast, the ceremony in Srebrenica was also performed by the very same religious leader, however, this time instead of standing next to the atoning Serb representative in front of the memorial, the figure addressed the murdered victims in a funeral speech in the midst of the coffins during a burial ceremony. Representative political, societal, and religious figures thus assumed specific procedural roles within the overall procession. These participants were thus not secluded in a purely receptive role but played an active part in the performance. However, the cases also demonstrated that open contestation and protest could significantly mark the apology delivery.

4. *Audience interventions*: The apology deliverance by Boris Tadić in Vukovar triggered open symbolic contestation by descendants of the victims who demonstratively turned their back on the procession. Even though these contestations were publicly visible they were superseded by the explicit positive uptake of the apology by the Croatian state representatives. In contrast, Tadić’s visit to the central memorial to the victims of genocide in Srebrenica was greeted by the audience with booing. In contrast to the Vukovar ceremony, this was not offset with gestures by the Bosnian representatives to counter such open contestation. The Japanese apology was equally marked by violent protests against the Japanese apology deliverance. The Japanese apology revealed how protesters and victims’ representatives were held outside of the formal ceremonial frame and this upheld the failure of the Japanese apologies to create a dialogical and integrative rite of transition that was dialogically performed with the addressed counterpart. The performances of Japanese representatives never achieved a psychological identification, i.e. the fusion of the performer with the addressed audience, due to the fact that addressed representatives and the addressed audience were constantly separated and were not integrated into the ceremonial procession in which the Japanese apologies unfolded.
That the integration of the victim groups into the formal frame is not an indispensable feature of marking transitory rites is demonstrated by Brandt’s apology. The kneeling performance by Brandt was done in front of the international media with both diplomatic delegations present during the classical bilateral diplomatic custom of laying a wreath at a memorial site.

It is reasonable to infer from the cases described above that unabsorbed *in situ* protests by the victims’ organizations such as those that occurred in Japan and in the case of Srebrenica critically undermine the symbolic weight of the apology. They visibly demonstrate to the broader public the non-accomplishment of tying new symbolic relations via the deliverance of apologies. The apology deliverance “misfires”. Sidelining victim groups leaves the parties symbolically dispersed and underscores the tenacity of contradicting positions, which could not be transcended.

1.5 Closing

The closing phase scrutinized the immediate effects of the apology performance and the potential uptake of the apology by the representatives of the addressees. It changed the analytical perspective from the side of the presenters of apologies to the receptive side of the apology process. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the announcement of visits or apologies recurrently triggers ‘anticipated reactions’ that positively frame the anticipated performance. However the public reception of the apology act publicly sanctioned the quality of the performance as transformative, suspended the transformation, or even renounced its performative quality by pointing out insufficiencies. As demonstrated above the audience was implicated in the production of reconciliatory events, as co-performers in the apology. Audiences and representatives in particular were able to actualize this potentiality most constructively when they were presented with the opportunity to answer the apology dialogue, to comment and evaluate the act right on the spot, by being granted the stage within the ceremony. Most visibly this was respected during the apology ritual in Canada, but several bilateral apology meetings also provided the opportunity for the addressees to work as hermeneutical guides, as the firsts to publicly evaluate the performance. The co-performative function that addressees and representatives may play was clearly exemplified by the representative of the First Nations in Canada who accredited the apology presentation of the
Canadian Prime Minister right at the beginning of his judgment as testifying ‘nothing less than the achievement of the impossible’. Transcending performances received the immediate framing of the apology as “turning points”, “groundbreaking”, “historical” performances by the addressees manifesting the deep structural change that was read into the ceremonial performance. The second chapter conceived liminal periods to be social ‘windows into possible worlds’ in which the subjunctive potentialities of a new era are prospected. This new era is invoked by the performing agents and the direct uptake of the addressee validates this change. We encountered this deeper normative change on several occasions. The Brandt apology clearly achieved this transformative power as exemplified via the immediate and mediate reactions it engendered. The same holds true for the apologies in Australia and Canada, whereas the apology in Australia was less characterized by an explicit response than by a non-verbal acclamation of victim representatives in the ceremonial procession.

Several apology events that achieved this transcending state also reached a form of discursive institutionalization through memorialisation. The Brandt gesture even entered into the global discourse representing the model of appropriate apologies. The apologies in Canada and Australia successfully ‘closed the chapters’ with regard to further requests and were lastingly institutionalized through the introduction of a national annual “day of reconciliation” on the very date of the apology performance. The same holds true for the evolution of the Polish—Russian relationship after the Katyn incident and the institutionalized meeting it engendered.

One salient feature of ceremonially presented apologies was the fact that the addressed representatives never officially rebuked the apology. The ceremonial form seemed to mould the official reactions by addressed representatives in the direction of a benevolent reception. The repercussions of apologies were found in apology episodes that did not match the dialogical ceremonial form discussed above. Open renunciations were found in apology performances that were univocally issued via parliamentary declarations after longer periods of public deliberation in the host country of the apologizing nation. The Japanese and Serb apologies testify to this. The findings highlight the different modes of social communication that are present in ceremonial settings compared with the quotidian context of political life. Apologies presented in ceremonial settings relied to some extent on the operational force that the ceremonial setting itself was able to produce. Staged performances, comprising humble as well as incomplete verbal apologies on symbolic sites evoked the sacred for the
addressees through their ceremonial form of presentation and this sacredness was not to be tarnished by open clashes between the representatives. Thus every apology performance presented in the ceremonial context described above achieved some sort of positive reaction, although they were not necessarily exempted from benevolent criticism. The ceremonial frame thus provided a moulding and moderating force with regard to the style of reactions that were appropriate in these contexts. The findings in the empirical chapters then echo what Paul Connerton attributed with regard to the specific power of ritual interactions actualized in ceremonial settings: In rituals the “liturgy is not propositional statement but sacred action [...] Not the pulpit but the altar is the privileged site. In the pulpit the sacred narrative receives a commentary”; this commentary is sometimes harsh. Connerton continued by stating that “at the altar the substance of the narrative is communicated in physical signs that contain it” (Connerton 2004: 70). Apologies that are less suffused with ceremonial symbols are more prone to open argumentative and criticizing comments, while apologies enwrapped in ceremonial sacredness are rendered partly immune to these kinds of argumentative comments.

2. Conclusion – The significance of symbols all the way down

With regard to the empirical evidence, what can we conclude about the meaningful and correct execution of state apologies? All the factors comprised the respective ‘ingredients’ of the diverse apology presentations; but as single units these factors did not capture the nature of successful apology performances. Rather, the mechanisms underlying successful apologies seemed to resemble a combination of the factors mentioned above. It was the combination and the subtle blend of these elements that rendered some of the ceremonial performances successful.

2.1 Space matters

According to Emile Durkheim the main role of rituals is to order the social world in meaningful parts and less meaningful parts, separating the sacred from the profane (Durkheim 1981). The cases demonstrated that sacred spaces and places radiated through the performances and played a pertinent role for the participants in classifying the apologies as meaningful or
less meaningful deliverances. The empirical analyses corroborated the assumption that the spatial context indispensably mattered for the success of apologies. It is reasonable to infer that the mythical places imbued with symbolic meaning as commemorative sites worked as an amplifying conditional factor rendering performances either important and contested in sacred contexts or less significant and indifferent in profane contexts. The spatial context thus lent gravitas to the deliverance of the apologies especially when apologies were performed on sites meaningful to the addressed victimized community. In this regard the chapters demonstrated that the presence as such of a representative of the ‘perpetrators’ at mystical sites standing symbolically for the victimization of the addressed group exerted performative power.

Furthermore, it is warranted to pinpoint the subtle differences identified regarding the role of the spatial context. The results of the inductive research indicated differences in the significance of the space regarding the targeted group of remedial policies and the nature of the crime. If confronted with historic crimes perpetrated against minority groups like indigenous communities – where the crimes had the character of widespread state racism – the appropriate locus for an apology seemed to be at the legislative centre of the political community. The apologies by Canada and Australia were therefore publicly staged in extraordinary sessions of the respective parliaments. The differences in location compared to the other cases analyzed in the empirical chapters pinpoint a different logic of domestic and interstate apologies. While the former are presented towards victimized minorities in the political centre of the state, the later are performed on symbolic sites such as where the violence being commemorated took place. While domestic apologies gain their weight in the political centre, interstate apologies gain gravitas on lieu de memoires significant to the addressees.

2.2 Time matters

The right timing also played a major role, although it did not exert the same significance on the overall working of apologies as place. Here again, symbolic dates provided the occasion with which to mark transitions. Symbolic dates such as important anniversary dates inherently called for memory issues to be addressed. The dates provided a temporal anchor that the protagonists could use in order to underscore the extraordi-
nary quality of their performance. However, critical to the issue of timing was the question of whose *social-memorial* time should be emphasized. The Japanese cases in particular demonstrated that apologies were predominantly issued on historical dates that were significant for the Japanese collective memory but not necessarily for the collective memory of the victims they were addressing. The protagonists of the Japanese apologies thus simply used the wrong calendar.

But not only the *calendrical* quality played a significant role, also the *processual* timing seemed to count significantly. Even though it is outside of the analytical focus of this study, recipients of apologies recurrently evaluated apologies according to the apologetic moves that preceded the actual performance. A path-dependent quality could be identified in the evaluation of the apology deliverances. Actors evaluated the apologetic moves in reference to the history of exchanges of bilateral apology gestures. Did the apologies go further – in verbal content, or symbolic actions – than previous atonement gestures? The *novelty* and *first time* quality of the act counted. This was demonstrated by Willy Brandt’s apology episodes in Warsaw, Putin’s in Katyn, and Josipović’s apology in Bosnia, where the apologies impacted tremendously as they were ‘first time’ occurrences. The novelty effect also superseded shortcomings in the verbal content of the apologies presented. In contrast, it was more difficult for apologies to match expectations when they were performed during later stages of the bilateral process. This was the case as previous attempts to perform apologies had raised the expectations of what constituted an adequate performance. The Japanese and Serb apologies are cases in point in this regard.

2.3 Mise-en-scène matters

There has to be a match between the backstage choreography and the front stage performance. Rituals are meant to be condensed forms of communication. Rituals of apologies fail if they do not attract the concentration of the audience due to superseding sensational activities. Rituals of apologies comprise a battery of different sensational tools to concentrate and spotlight the attentiveness of audiences and spectators on the performances in which protagonists are engaged. We encountered several depositions of wreaths accompanied by drums and hymns, as well as a military band that abruptly stopped when the protagonists were about to lay down their ob-
jects. The choreography thus activated tools that highlighted audible and visual contrasts to increase the sensual exposition of the corporal acts the protagonists were about to perform. When the *mise-en-scène* did not concentrate on the performance of the leading protagonists, and when the actors were not spotlighted by cameras and other tools the apology gesture lost its centre of gravity.

2.4 Performance matters

All successful apologies were physically performed by representatives. We encountered a variety of verbal and non-verbal performances enacted in these choreographed settings. In this regard gestural performances could substitute verbally-presented apologies or amplify the apology declaration being presented. Gestural performances could also backfire when they were perceived as exaggerated and as not corresponding to actions performed in other fields. Meaningful corporal performances such as kneeling or embracement were interpreted as acts that spontaneously broke with established practices. Authenticity was thus the effect of ‘spontaneous’ modifications of the conventional practices within bilateral commemoration rituals. However, formality was not an impediment to successful apology performances. Analogous to grammar in linguistics, formality structures and orders typified actions within rituals. Stereotypical symbolic actions such as handshakes or bowing gestures were valued positively if the formality of these corporal acts corroborated a dialogical interaction of the parties. The formality of handshakes is an expression of having reached common ground, a common understanding that closes the conflictive memory issue at stake. This broader message was not conveyed in cases where the formality and the overall ceremonial frame of the ritual had failed to bring the parties symbolically together.

2.5 Actors matter

In apology performances actors acted in a staged play. Meaningful apologies were coupled with the (a) political role an actor assumed in the play and the (b) competence that an actor could testify to truthfully fill out his role. With regard to (a), the role we can retain is that apologies with the highest impact were presented by agents performing in their representative
official capacity. The evaluation of (b) the competence, however, was much more difficult. Nevertheless, the chapters demonstrated that the forcefulness of performances by apologizing agents lay in their proficiency to act ‘appropriately’ to the situation at hand and this demanded recipe knowledge comparable to the *phronesis* concept in the Aristotle’s practical philosophy. In successful apologies agents testified their ritual competence through their “body hexis”: the aptness of attitudes regarding the concrete incidence they faced within the procession. They knelt down, “when words were not enough”; they embraced when words of condolences were insufficient. Moreover, appropriateness meant that the apologizing agent could intervene and create the impression of acting in an intrinsically motivated way through interventions that were perceived as spontaneous. They testified of being able to divert instantly from the formal script of ceremonial action and to act in a very human capacity. The sincerity and authenticity of the apologies was derived from these spontaneous gestures towards objects or other participants; this rendered the overall apology performance truthful and authentic. In highly meaningful apology presentations the addressees and the audiences attached naturalness to the performed actions of the apologizing agent, perceiving her gestures as being playfully and fluently acted out as if the performance continued by itself. In contrast, apologies that were not performed as well were perceived as insincere and as being externally-oriented. These are the conclusions with regard to the competence that may be inferred from the highly valued performances by Brandt and the others in the preceding chapters. This last point underscores the essentially corporal nature of state apologies in order to be successful. Apologies need a representational physical face with a body which functions as the medium to transport emotional states of a represented collectivity in apology deliverances (cf. Celermajer 2009: 257–258).

Performative apologies were additionally accomplished in conjunction with the co-performing audience. Rites of apologies are essentially public. The more the public is implicated in and focused by the staging of the apology, the more the apology is able to fulfil its role of presenting and creating a remedial exchange between the collective parties.
As we draw towards the end of this chapter, we are now in the position to sum up the overall argument underpinning this book. Apologies are presented by agents in order to project a changed identity towards addressees. And this projection needs communicative instruments to be comprehended and validated. These instruments are institutionalized social facts that are by essence symbolic. Let us recall that symbols are characterized by conventionalized relations between signifying and the signified referent objects. And these objects assume the form of material objects, places and actions that stand for something. If agents want to apologize, they need to evoke and activate these symbols in a form that is comprehensible and meaningful to the audience to which these projections are intended. Rituals are the *locus classicus* for the evocation of symbols aimed at projecting these identities and negotiating the status of social relations with other parties. This book not only shows how apologizing political actors use ritualized performances in ceremonial settings to encode their messages, but also the kind of encoded practices that are the most meaningful for the addressees decoding these practices. However, in the studies on collective apologies the value of symbolic action has all too often been reduced either to questions of linguistic accuracy or the issue of the delivery of the costly steps of projecting sincere intentions. The literature has predominantly worked with an impoverished concept of symbolic action and neglected the value of ritualized interactions in ceremonial settings. This was the entry point of this book. This book has disclosed the value of ceremonialism in the creation of meaningful and subsequently successful apologies. As the book demonstrates, the ceremonial frame of apologies rendered some apologies as highly meaningful apology events; this runs counter to the common perception among researchers, who reduce the value of rituals and ceremonialism to – at best – a residual category that sidelines substantive political processes. In contrast, this book shows that the critique aired against assumingly inauthentic rituals is misleading and that rituals bear productive potentials that are actualized in apology performances. This book describes how and by which means ceremonially presented apologies are able to create the necessary state in order to have an impact on social rituals. This book also shows that forceful apologies do not necessarily need to respect the linguistic categorical criteria applied in the literature in order to work as norm-transformative social action. Thus, this study calls for a reorientation of the approaches in the study of apolo-
gies in particular and in the study of transitional justice in general to be more sensitive to sign-based interactions that go beyond the spoken word. In order to identify important political factors, this book calls for an approach towards reconciliation processes that is not only based on the analytical dissection of linguistic corpora and focuses on linguistic features, but one that is also sensitive to other “semiotic modalities”. It demonstrates how a broader conception of social communication may provide insights and help identify meaningful social action. But this study did not only demonstrate that rituals have their value, it also substantiated the ways these potentialities are activated. The book thus delivered what is missing in other works devoted to apologies and those which frame the phenomenon as rituals of apologies. It presented the inventory and the features that render apology presentations close to rituals of reconciliation. The book deciphered these means by analyzing different parameters as the activation of background symbols such as the spatial, temporal and material context by political representatives in choreographed verbal and non-verbal performances. The inductive approach chosen in this book demonstrated that meaningful apologies worked as rites of passage that bore the quality of public concentration and were dialogical in nature. The findings thus run counter to the conceptions of apologies as soliloquies or univocally presented speech performances and instead highlight the dialogical nature of successful apology processes.

4. Ritual apologies as global rituals

How far can these findings be generalized? How universal are these findings with regard to successful apology rituals? According to the anthropologist Clifford Geertz and other postmodernist thinkers in the discipline of international relations the hermeneutical excavation of meaning attached to social actions allows at best a generalization within the interpreted case and not across cases. The meaning attached to the different apology performances is always based on contingent processes that do not permit any extrapolation into other cultural contexts due to the uniqueness of every performance and every discursively constructed relationship in which it is embedded. Even though the analyses of the apology presentations in the empirical chapters assumed this micro-perspective and analyzed the workings of apologies in their ceremonial in situ contextual frame and thus were open to the uniqueness of the relationships mediated through these
practices, the findings point to recurrent similarities in the presentation of apologies across the cases. The findings point to similarities in the symbolic categories invoked (e.g. space, typified performances) but also to differences according to their local application. The findings hence testified to the local adaptation of a global normative corset evolving on the global scale. This normative corset was perceived to be the outcome of internationally discussed apology performances that by the same token provide the foundation and codes for future apologies. Perceiving apologies as “a global type of discourse” (Kampf/Löwenheim 2012), as a genre of practice pertaining to an international diplomatic “habitus” (Bourdieu 1980: 88) warrants analyzing the ceremonial unfolding in its global perspective and deducing conclusions on this very global scale.

Which findings can be generalized? Successful apologies are apology events. They are public celebrations of changed relationships. In order to create this transformation collective apologies need a ceremonial frame that constitutes the ‘extraordinary’ of the apology, that aggrandizes the apology performance to meaningful ‘reconciliation events’. This book has demonstrated that this extraordinariness is created by a composition of different elements. The spatial context mattered and crucially provided the symbolic context in which agents performed symbolic gestures that were validated by the co-performing audiences as ‘turning points’. In infelicitous apologies the ceremonial frame did not represent the same kind of dialogical form and provided less public concentration.

One generalization that could be made is the claim that ceremonialism, in its totality and not the single elements that underpin this ceremonial frame, can be perceived as significant to the successful accomplishment of collective apologies. This compositional whole that constitutes the rituals may be built up differently in contingent political contexts. This book demonstrated that meaningful apologies have to be staged. The staging, however, can be accomplished quite differently. The approach and the findings did not make it possible to single out one necessary factor that could be used to differentiate between successful and unsuccessful apologies in a binary manner. Rather the meaningfulness of ceremonial apologies is of a gradual nature. Some ceremonies had a transcendent impact, others improved relations by providing short-term celebrations of reconciliation as anchoring points on which the subsequent relational process could draw.
5. The Limits of ceremonialism

However, the issue of contingency comes crucially back to the fore, when it comes to the ways ceremonial apologies are embedded in the historically shaped structure of interaction in which they unfold. The analytical perspective chosen in this book essentially focused on the micro-level in order to excavate the effects and power exerted by ceremonial presentations and the ways in which these powerful presentations were enacted. Apology gestures that marked were constantly presented with the respect of the characterization identified above. They were sequences of concentrated and spotlighted symbolic interactions between the parties, which either comprised of categorical verbal apologies such as in Chapter 1, or not, as was the case of the gesture by Willy Brandt and some of the other episodes that were analyzed. Ceremonial apologies worked irrespective of the content quality of the speech act. However, some ceremonially well-performed apologies, which took place in meaningful spaces, included the execution of symbolic gestures, and received reserved positive reactions, were confronted by a lack of resonance on the part of the addressees. The micro-perspective taken here pointed to potential shortcomings in concentration and dialogicality within these processions. However, for the sake of the integrity of this study, it has to be pointed out that this lack of uptake was recurrently tied to insufficient wording and the poor deliverance of concrete political steps by the addressees. How should we make sense of these potentially contradicting findings with regard to the argument of this book?

If we take a closer look, we see that this is not actually a contradiction. Rather it defines the limits of the potentialities of ceremonially presented apologies that do not transport so-called complete verbal apologies. Rituals may fail and are not panaceas that ultimately lead to status transformation in every case. Dramatic presentations of collective apologies cannot mediate structural conflictive issues if these issues have not been addressed via the ceremonial procedure. Indeed, rituals of apologies degrade to the ‘hollow’ and ‘glassing over’ strategies that are so often criticized in the literature. Rituals mark when they manage to break with former courses of interaction by symbolically projecting changed attitudes through ceremonial actions. But this demarcation is always tied to the point of departure; to the stadium of the relationship. In the case of Japan the criticized insufficiency of the atonement gesture was not attributed to the gesture as such, but to the lack of adherence to the prospected ideals issued in previ-
ous apologies. Japanese representatives did not fulfil the symbolic promises emanating from former performances, as they performed contradictory domestic rites and failed to come up with steps that might have underscored the validity of their former engagements. They simply failed to deliver. And it was the deliverance of concrete policy measures that stood on the agenda and that constituted the bone of political contestation. The case of Japan demonstrated that there is a path-dependent iteration that creates expectations for subsequent apology presentations. Ceremonial apologies in this book had an impact when they represented a novelty in the course of interaction. The case of Japan and also the Serb apology episodes towards the Bosnian victims demonstrated that ceremonial apologies are rendered void by contracting symbolic steps on other fields. The stadia of the relationships in both cases called for public performances that were expected to go further than they did. Addressees demanded the unequivocal acknowledgement of responsibility for the crimes and substantiated steps to concretize the engagements. Japanese and Serb apologies in Bosnia thus corresponded to rites of purification: apologies that sidelined the demands and expectations of the addressed party. This last point demonstrates that the findings of this study do not stand in contradiction to approaches that underscore the necessity of apologies to clearly acknowledge the collective responsibility for the crimes by presenting corresponding speech performances. Rather the findings complement these convictions and demonstrate how apology performances may have an impact through their sole dramatic staging and without necessarily complying with these criteria. They demark the place where ceremonial non-verbal symbolic actions may have an impact and successfully project a repented community, as well as those cases in which non-verbal performances do not suffice.

Even though not all rites were successful in completely transcending the conflictive memory at stake, these episodes still demonstrated that the joint enactment of rituals had their micro-efficiency even in relationships that were strained by recurrent disputes over the appropriate atonement policy on the bilateral level. Thus this study calls for researchers to be analytical attentive to the micro-efficiency of symbolic action in the study of collective apologies as well as in other domains. Which paths should be followed in the study of collective apologies and scholarship in transitional justice that depart from the conclusions presented here?
6. Implications for further research

This book revealed the value of rituals in the politics of regret. It demonstrated how enacted rites can transform relationships between collective agents in post-conflict situations. As the book demonstrated, the inherent force of rituals and ceremonialism rested in the capability of rituals to reverberate on the affective emotional level triggering and creating changed mutual perceptions of the parties through the enactment of the rites. This inductive study disclosed the settings and the performances that created energizing emotional states between the parties in secluded sequences of symbolic behaviour. In this regard the book laid bare how emotions are sensationaly activated throughout aesthetic behaviour in apology rituals and how these emotions are conducive to the transformation of strained relationships. For further research it might be of particular analytical interest to scrutinize how emotional events such as apology performances further guide the interpretative cognitive schemes of the parties, and to invest more analytical endeavour in evaluating and methodologically grasping the role of emotions in reconciliation processes (Long/Brecke 2003; Ross 2004) as well as in IR (Bleiker/Hutchison 2008; Crawford 2000).

On the theoretical level the book indicates the crucial role audience reception plays in the successful accomplishment of speech acts in general and political performances of apologies in particular. It thus substantiated the general call for greater awareness and reflection of the contextual frame in which speech acts are presented and the reaction they engender on the side of the receptive audience of speech acts (Balzacq 2005; Guzzini 2011). Further research should continue this track by elucidating the potentially co-performing and active involvement of audiences in the completion of speech act communication processes.

With regard to the agents, one further avenue of research may track the role the presentation of apology may play in creating new political authorities and legitimacies for sub-state actors. This reverses the perspective of apologies as indispensably needing the authority of the highest political representatives in order to work to a perspective that scrutinizes how political authorities are created or legitimated through the enactment of apology performances. Analogous to the role of reciprocal acknowledgement by third parties in the secession of sub-national political entities from the national political constituency, apology gestures and acceptances by the addressees may help demark and transform new political agents into legitimized interaction partners. This perspective asks how symbolic gestures
in the domain of reconciliation policies are used in order to create legitimacy, authority and sovereignty for political entities that struggle for representation. The constitutive role of apologies issued by the IRA in Northern Ireland as well as the apology presented by the Montenegrin President Milorad Đukanović to Croatia before the achievement of Montenegrin independence might be of interest in this regard. It further pushes the perspective that apologies as rituals of transformation not only transform the relationship and the status of existing collective agents but provide legitimacy to representations of new collective entities.

This study deliberately sidestepped questions of power relations that loom in the background of collective apologies. The book addressed this issue within the presentation itself, demonstrating how the asymmetries stemming from historical wrongs are symbolically (re-)equilibrated by performances in the procession. The analytical interest rested in the presentation of the apologies themselves and not on whether changed external power relations instigated states to present apologies and addressed groups to accept these apology gestures in the first place. The empirical studies of the apology gestures on the Balkans also indicated that the presence of international diplomats provided the procession with an international aspect; this leads to the question of how the international community and third actors intervene in apology processes. Finally approaches from media studies to the phenomenon of collective apologies may elucidate in more detail the productive power not only of the rituals themselves but also of the media and visual representations of these rites as well.

So far only a few studies have attempted to project concepts stemming from ritual studies into other modes of reworking the past in the transitional justice literature (Goodman 2006; Kelsall 2005). The main bulk of the studies working with the concept of rituals use the term ‘ritual’ to describe re-traditionalized local approaches to societal reconciliation practices in non-western societies (Mac Ginty 2008). Hence, they testify to an anachronistic conception of rituals by romanticizing the concept and juxtaposing rituals with non-rationalized and exotic ways of coping with social conflicts and societal traumas. This book demonstrated that rituals and symbolism inherently suffuse the way western politics unfolds when it comes to terms with the past. Furthermore, rituals are neither external nor ornamental to meaningful political actions, and this applies to both western and non-western apology processions.
IX. Literature


Connolly, William E. (1993): The terms of political discourse, Princeton N.J.


IX. Literature


Field, Norma (1997): War and Apology: Japan, Asia, the Fiftieth, and After, positions 5: 1, 1.


Hollis, Martin/Smith, Steve (2004): Explaining and understanding international relations, Oxford.


Horelt, Michel-André (18 April 2010): Reconciliation in Eastern Bosnia, Srebrenica, Interview with Čamil Duraković.


IX. Literature


Milliken, Jennifer (1999): The Study of Discourse in International Relations, European Journal of International Relations 5: 2, 225–254,
IX. Literature


Pitkin, Hanna Fenichel (1972): The concept of representation, Berkeley.


Reconciliation Australia (2010): The Apology, DVD, [in possession of the Author].


IX. Literature


IX. Literature


IX. Literature


