

Maps of Remembrance. Space, Belonging and Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe. By Máté Zombory. Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2012. 311 pp.

Máté Zombory's impressive monograph examines maps of remembrance. By using the metaphor of a map of remembrance in the title, Zombory indicates the conceptual and methodological framework of his post-1989 research on Hungarian national identity. The metaphor refers to Appadurai's concept of 'scape' or 'ethnoscape' used for the study of complex cultures, their coexistence, and the characteristic differences of the respective societies.¹ However, in identity research the further consideration of the concept of *lieu de mémoire* introduced by Pierre Nora, which is part of the discussion in this book, has become increasingly unavoidable.² What does this mean exactly? In this regard, these are maps drawn by the memory, specifically emerging identity maps that are bound to people of Hungarian nationality and Hungarian mother tongue whose national belonging became problematic for some reason in the twentieth century.

The author structures the book around three key concepts: nationality, space and remembrance. The theoretical part of the monograph is an interpretation of these concepts. The topic indicated in the title is introduced by three theoretical and three empirical studies. The main purpose of the book is to focus on the relationship between the individual and the nation, as well as to study the national phenomenon and the role of particular states. The author examines and illustrates the spatial practices based on analyses of memory constructions.

The empirical part is mainly a representation of practices of the identity strategies used by the state and the individual. In the case of the first, the author analyzes political speeches, while in the case of the second he examines life stories using the method of oral history. The key question of the book can be summarized as follows: "The question is: what role does the representation of the space in memory play such that it produces national belonging as a natural factor?" (p.8).

1 Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

2 Pierre Nora, "Entre Mémoire et Histoire. La problématique des lieux," in *La République*, ed. Pierre Nora, vol. 1 of *Les lieux de mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), XVI–XLII.

The first chapter of the work, entitled *Nationalism and Spatiality*, concentrates on the spatial representation of nations in Eastern Europe. In this chapter Zombory observes that the world of nations is pervaded by a sort of spatial dynamism which contributes to the formation of national belonging. Zombory offers a reinterpretation of nationalism and revision of the nation's *raison d'être*. As he notes, "attachment to a place is not self-evident or naturally given, consequently the spatialization of (national) culture—including territorialization—is a historical, political and social process" (pp.29–30). The main aim of this chapter is to highlight, alongside the notion of the immobility of the nations, spatial movements whereby the differing problems of homeland and home arise.

In the second theoretical part of the book the author raises the issue of "spatial practices constructing belonging" connected to remembrance (p.50). At the beginning of the chapter, entitled *Between Place and Memory: the Practices of Localization*, Zombory claims that the spatial aspects rarely appear in the memory-discourses. In this section he tries to fill a lacuna. He redefines the problem of belonging. "Briefly, it is by reformulating the contexts of sites and memory according to the problematics of spatial practices" (p.52). Alongside the analyses of memory and space, Zombory presents theories related to the topic, theories that help determine the concept of spatial practices of remembrance. The author specifies this at the end of the chapter: "The spatializing practice of remembrance I examine is narration: I analyze national narratives of the past given as a reaction to spatial challenges" (p.84).³

This turn leads into the first empirical chapter of this work, *The Return to Europe: State Politics of Memory and Hungarian Belonging*. This case study offers an analysis of the Hungarian national localization procedures after 1989. The main issue of the chapter is "how the Hungarian state produced national-spatial belonging after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc" (p.9).

The author dissects the speeches at the commemorations of August 20 between the period of the political change and the accession to the European Union (the period from 1989 to 2004), narratives of the prime ministers and presidents of the Hungarian Republic related to the national history. The first part of the study provides information on the role of East-West differentiation, which is closely connected to the meaning and the significance of Hungary's

3 The author defines the concept of narration as follows: "Narration is a discursive practice which is not identical to text: the utterance has a bodily-material dimension, and the narration localizes not only in time, but also in space" (p.84).

'return to Europe'. In the introductory part of the analysis of the political speeches, Zombory plainly indicates that he is going to present ritual cartographic practices with which "Hungarian state leadership has redrawn the ideological world map that disintegrated with the collapse of the Eastern Bloc" (p.92).

The analysis of the political speeches is important for this reason: "The state localization tracing out the space for national belonging thus produces a map that creates the characteristics of the subject constructed by the commemoration, the nation – in other words, (narration) national identity" (p.93). The succeeding subchapters contain analyses of the speeches held by the official Hungarian state representatives, presidents and prime ministers on state commemorations. Zombory regards these commemorations as political rituals that are localizations, thus they reconstruct national belonging in the bodily-material dimension of past. He refers to these practices of remembrance as the national cartography, illustrating them with examples from the Hungarian state politics of memory after 1989.

The chapter *The Nation as Imaginative Laboratory* is part of the theoretical framework of the book. The author undertakes to investigate the politics of belonging. In this context, he examines the theoretical aspects of identity. Hereafter the question of the subject and the discursive relation of power comes to the fore. The author tries to explore this: "I deal with on one hand the way individual identity strategies can be examined in the context of state normalization [...]" (p.9). The discussion of the theoretical questions is followed by the remarks on the research methodology.

The next section of the work belongs to the empirical part consisting of the study *The Museum of the Self: National-Ethnic Belonging and the Memory of Expulsion*. This section analyzes the life story interviews of people who were directly involved in the forced migrations and expulsions in the twentieth century. In particular, Zombory examines the construction of national-ethnic belonging using the life stories of people of German origin who were resettled or deported to the Soviet Union. The identity strategies in this section are constructed in the context of forced relocation. Through a reconstruction of the relationship created with the past, the flashbacks create a certain 'self-musealization'.

As the author describes it: "The borders of homeland constructed by self-musealization are qualitatively equivalent to the borders of the homeland according to the territorial norm of the nation-state, but the strategic marking out of them invalidates the unquestionable unity of state and nation" (p.286).

The chapter entitled *Hungarian Homelands: National Belonging "Beyond the Border"* analyzes the life stories of Hungarians living in Slovakia. Zombory examines

the interviewees' relationships to the Hungarian state politics of memory with respect to the discourses of existence "beyond the border". In addition, he raises the question, how is it possible for Hungarians to remain Hungarians outside the borders of Hungary? The author notes in connection with the examination of national belonging that in contrast to the previous chapter he analyzes spatial displacements regarding the Trianon Treaty (1920), which was predicated on the enforcement of the territorial norm of the nation-state and was implemented without any mass movement of the population. The author summarizes the main purpose of this chapter: "The field of my examination is delimited by the conflict between Hungarians living outside the borders and the political practices of the Hungarian state in the discourse addressing them" (p.211).

To lay down the basis of the theoretical part he uses Rogers Brubaker's theoretical framework. The author concentrates on the spatial displacement that takes place in "Hungarian–Hungarian relations," giving rise to alternative homes. The participants in these relationships are individuals living in the Hungarian state and outside the Hungarian borders. The context of the analyses is given by Hungary's official diaspora politics between 1989 and 2010. In part of this chapter Zombory writes about the Hungarian state's political practices regarding the Hungarians living outside the borders, as well as individual identity strategies and the localization of the national home.

The seventh chapter is a kind of summary of the work. The author writes about the objectives and conclusions of the book. The title of this part is *State-free Nationalism, Natural National Resistance*. The question of national belonging is joined with the spatial dynamics of nationalism. So the object of the investigation is the nation state's reaction to the spatial displacements that presented a challenge to the concept of national belonging. By maintaining practices of national cartography, the official Hungarian nation-state representatives constructed a natural relationship attached to the inert homeland, portraying the homeland as a permanent, natural entity which must be protected from change.

As the author puts it: "The 'national body' materializing in this discourse is apparently not a political quality, but a natural one" (p.284). This means, furthermore, that anyone who is fashioned by the nation as a foreigner becomes an outcast.

Another important question raised by Zombory is how the outcast finds voice in the national discourse. The author examines two cases in this respect. In the first case, the displacement caused by the territorial norm of the nation-state is linked to the movement of the individual, but in the second it is not:

“The spatial dynamic makes possible the constant construction of national belonging. However the construction of non-nation-state homelands means a cultural form of the national relationship of individual and places that rejects the territorial ideal prescribed as a norm of nationalism, according to which the borders of nation and state must be congruent” (p.286). Thus, localization processes can create ‘alternative national homes’. Zombory thus questions the doctrine of nation-state nationalism. However, he also draws attention to the fact that the territorializing localization processes under examination repeat the territorial norm of the nation-state.⁴

In connection with the natural functioning of national belonging, the examples indicate that national belonging becomes natural through the spatial-material identification of present and past. On the other hand, Zombory implies how the national discourse challenges natural belonging. The author also draws attention to the fact that alongside the “social strength” of the localization practices, one has to face its physical-material nature (pp.288–89).

The most important result of the work is to explore new nationalism, spatial belonging, and the questions of remembrance. Zombory highlights the relationship between these three concepts and presents them as inseparable. Next to the nation’s static nature, he points out its dynamic movement, thereby recasting it according to a new approach. Spatial practices must be made part of the scholarship on nationalism, and in order to further our understanding of these practices, Zombory uses the memory research. He points out that past is reconstructed not only in time, but also in space.

The language of the monograph is the language of the scholar, but the registers and style are exciting and diverse. The great advantage of the monograph is that it approaches the subject from different perspectives. However, Zombory arguably attempts to adopt too many approaches. In my opinion, the processes and examples should be described in more detail and the scope of the examination of national belonging should be also widened. At the same time, in the Hungarian secondary literature Zombory’s book constitutes one of the most nuanced contributions to the new approaches to nationalism and national issues.

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4 After all, these practices construct ethnic homelands within the nation-state territory and national homelands outside the nation-state, which however, in a manner equivalent to the nation-state ideal, are externally delimited in space, homogenized internally, and rooted in the soil (p.287).