

Constructions of Memory: Post-Holocaust Memoir Literature in the Czech Discursive Space

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Abstract

Using the paradigm of social constructivism, the dissertation investigates the negotiation of the past within the dynamics of communicative and cultural memory. It focuses on the discursive space of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, following selected discursive frames, in which the Jewish past is constructed in the Czech discursive space. Since its research focus is an autobiographical literature of Czech post-holocaust Jewish authors as well as the Czech academic field that deals with the Jewish past, the dissertation consists of several intermingling narratives. It analyses the nature of post-holocaust autobiographies, and how they capture the period of the First and Second Republics, the post-war period, the political trials of the 1950s, and the so-called *normalization* period. The narratives of the past emerging from these memoirs are theorized from the perspective of memory studies, and related to the processes of formation of Jewish studies, and to the discourses about the Jewish past in the Czech space. In this regard, the dissertation discusses the following theoretical concepts and issues present in the Czech academic discourse, and related to Jewish and memory studies: conceptualization of identities, relation between nominalist and interpretative historiography, disputes about memory and trauma, and the concepts of textuality and intertextuality. The work's conclusion considers the interrelation between the construction of communicative and cultural memory as a polyphony of diverse cultural and academic narratives.