



## Master's Thesis Review: Supervisor's Evaluation Form

Student's name: **Barznji Lazha Taha**

Thesis title: **The Aftermath of the Halabja Genocide through its Photographs: Post-Memory and Commemoration**

Name of the supervisor: Maria Alina Asavei

What are the strengths and weaknesses of the thesis? Please give your reasons for the suggested grade in detail below.

1. *Does the author show an understanding of one or more theories, and use theory to generate a hypothesis or to make the problem area more understandable?*

Comments:

The thesis displays a satisfactory degree of understanding of the theories employed (mostly from memory and cultural/visual studies) but the theories are not always fully integrated and do not generate a fully-fledged hypothesis. The discussion about the main theoretical framework remains somewhat purely descriptive. The concept of post-memory and its varieties (Hirsh) are presented accurately in the theoretical chapter and partly in the body of the thesis (in the analysis of the afterlife (post-memory) of the Halabja genocide). The thesis does not elaborate convincingly on theories and complexities of the mnemonic-political practice of commemoration and this lacuna is also reflected in the analysis of the commemorative events presented in the chapters dedicated to data analysis.

2. *Is the research question articulated clearly and properly? Is the research question sufficiently answered in the conclusion?*

Comments:

The two research questions are clearly articulated. However, they are not sufficiently and nuancedly answered in the conclusion and in the body of the thesis. Especially the second research question (the sub-research question) is poorly answered. The question has aimed to address how the photographs of the Halabja Genocide been employed in various forms of cultural production to form and transmit the post-memory of this violent past across generations. Yet, the thesis is quite sketchy in answering this question. There are several cultural productions mentioned as ensuring the transmission of the post-memory of the violent event (poems, cinematic work, and visual art). However, the chapter dedicated to the post-memory of Halabja is rather descriptive and there is not enough analytical engagement with the sources in such a way that the research question to be answered convincingly. Especially disappointing is the section on cinema where there is an inventory of films dedicated to the topic but no (or very slim) analysis and argumentation. It is also unclear how this section is



linked to the photographs of the massacre and how it triggers a memory culture and to what ends.

3. *Is the thesis based on relevant research and literature and does it accurately summarize and integrate the information?*

Comments:

The thesis is generally based on relevant literature (especially concerning memory studies) although it does not cover all the academic literature on the topic as well as the literature on photography. The information is generally accurately summarized but not always convincingly/critically integrated.

4. *What is the quality of the data or the other sources? Are the methods (sampling, data collection and data analysis) appropriate?*

Comments:

The quality of data is fine. The collection of data is appropriate, and I appreciate the effort to find a way to access very scattered visual data.

5. *Are the findings relevant to the research question? Are the conclusions of the thesis based on strong arguments?*

Comments:

The findings are partly relevant to the research question but as already mentioned although relevant they are not sufficient to back up the argument. The conclusions of the thesis are rather generic and do not follow from strong arguments. The general impression is one of vagueness.

6. *Evaluate the progress of the thesis and the innovative and original contribution of the author (e.g., in terms of topic, approach, and/or findings). Was the work regularly consulted?*

Comments:

The thesis deals with an original and under-researched topic, and this is the main strength of this piece of research. Properly argued and analysed the data provided and the claims put forth could contribute to Kurdish studies and cultural/memory studies of genocide. However, in its current form, the thesis is quite descriptive and under-developed (at least in what regards the analysis of the sources, and methodological employment).

The thesis was consulted rather briefly with me and without constancy. For almost one year I did not hear at all from Lazha. Yet, I was informed about the enormous difficulties encountered in researching this topic.



7. *Are there any other strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, which are not included in the previous questions? Please list them if any.*

Comments: -

8. *What topic do you suggest for the discussion in the thesis defence?*

Comments:

1. How is the post-memory of the Halabja Genocide materialized in cultural productions and to what ends?
2. To what extent the actual photographs influence a culture of commemoration?
3. Why there are no considerations about the indexical realism of these photographs? Are these considerations about realism legit when dealing with images of extreme violence?

9. *Declaration that the supervisor has read the result of the originality check in the system: [ x ] Theses [ ] Turnitin [x ] Original (Urkund)*

Supervisor's comment on the originality check result: 21% Overall Similarity Index.

There is no plagiarism in the thesis. Very seldom there is poor paraphrasing

Overall assessment of the thesis:

*(Please, state clearly whether the thesis is or is not recommended for defence and write the main reasons for the recommendation).*

Proposed grade:



(A- excellent, B: very good, C: very good, D: satisfactory, E: sufficient, F: fail)\*

### D – satisfactory

The student has shown some understanding of the subject matter, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently original work. Overall good performance with a number of significant errors

Date: 11 September 2024

Signature:

\* **A (Excellent.** The student has shown excellent performance, originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the subject.), **B (Very Good.** The student understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought. Above the average performance, but with some errors.), **C (Good.** Generally sound work with a number of notable errors.), **D (Satisfactory.** The student has shown some understanding of the subject matter, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently original work. Overall good performance with a number of significant errors.), **E (Sufficient.** Acceptable performance with significant drawbacks. Performance meets the minimum requirements.), **F (Fail.** The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter of the course.)