



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية

ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

**Journal of Language Studies**

Contents available at: <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/JLS>



## Whispers of the Past: Examining the Role of Memory and Ghostly Presence in Nilo Cruz's *Sotto Voce*

Asst. Prof. Maysoon Taher Muhi (PhD)\*

University of Baghdad\College of Education for Women

[maysoon.tahir@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq](mailto:maysoon.tahir@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq)

Received: 28/ 12 / 2024, Accepted: 2/2 /2025, Online Published: 30 /6/ 2025

### Abstract

This paper investigates the role of memory and ghostly presence in the play *Sotto Voce* (2016) by Cuban-American playwright Nilo Cruz. Set against the historical tragedy of the 1939 voyage of the MS St. Louis, a ship that carried Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution only to be denied entry to Cuba, the United States, and Canada, Cruz's play probes into the psychological and emotional consequences of this historical event. *Sotto Voce* explores the individual and shared recollections of its protagonists. It is centred on Bemadette Kahn, an old and reclusive writer haunted by her past. She is faced by Saquiel, a young Cuban-Jewish man who becomes like a reminder of the unforgotten old past. He is determined to reunite her with the memories of her lost lover, a passenger aboard the MS St. Louis. This interaction between the characters and the memories allows Cruz to skillfully intertwine the personal histories of the individuals with the larger historical story, evoking a profound and poignant contemplation on the lasting influence of historical events and demonstrating the layers of cultural memory that inform their experiences. Through the lens of cultural memory, *Sotto Voce* emerges as a profound commentary on how the past continues to resonate in the present, inviting audiences to reflect on their narratives of loss and remembrance and encouraging viewers to contemplate their own experiences of grief and commemoration.

**Keywords:** Cultural Memory; history; Holocaust; Nilo Cruz; *Sotto Voce*

\* Corresponding Author: Asst. Prof. Maysoon Taher Muhi, Email: [maysoon.tahir@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq](mailto:maysoon.tahir@coeduw.uobaghdad.edu.iq)

Affiliation: Baghdad University - Iraq

© This is an open access article under the CC by licenses <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



همسات الماضي: دراسة دور الذاكرة والحضور الشبهي في مسرحية  
نيلو كروز *Sotto Voce*

ا.م.د. ميسون طاهر محي  
جامعة بغداد\كلية التربية للبنات

المستخلص

تستقصي هذه الورقة دور الذاكرة والحضور الشبهي في المسرحية المعنونة *Sotto Voce* (2016) للكاتب المسرحي الكوبي الأمريكي نيلو كروز. تتناول الأحداث خلفية المأساة التاريخية لرحلة السفينة "MS St. Louis" عام 1939، التي حملت لاجئين يهوداً هاربين من الاضطهاد النازي، حيث تم رفض دخولهم إلى كوبا والولايات المتحدة وكندا. تستكشف مسرحية كروز العواقب النفسية والعاطفية لهذا الحدث التاريخي. تركز المسرحية على الذكريات الفردية والمشاركة لشخصياتها الرئيسية، حيث تتمحور حول برناديت خان، كاتبة مسنة ومنعزلة تطاردها ماضيها. تواجه برناديت شاباً كوبياً يهودياً يدعى ساكيليل، الذي يصبح بمثابة تذكير بالماضي القديم الذي لم يُنس. يصر ساكيليل على إعادة توصيلها بذكريات حبيبها المفقود، وهو أحد ركاب السفينة "MS St. Louis". تسمح هذه التفاعلات بين الشخصيات والذكريات لكروز بمهارة دمج التاريخ الشخصي للأفراد مع القصة التاريخية الأكبر، مما يستحضر تأملاً عميقاً ومؤثراً حول التأثير الدائم للأحداث التاريخية، ويظهر طبقات الذاكرة الثقافية التي تشكل تجاربهم. من خلال عدسة الذاكرة الثقافية، تقدم *Sotto Voce* شرحاً عميقاً حول تأثير صدى الماضي في الحاضر، وهي دعوة للجماهير بالتفكير معمقاً في تجاربهم عن فقدان والتذكر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الذاكرة الثقافية؛ الهولوكوست؛ *Sotto Voce*؛ نيلو كروز؛ التاريخ

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"If the sea were to shout, we would all be deaf."  
– Carlos Fuentes, "Destiny and Desire"

The Cuban-American playwright Nilo Cruz (1960- ) is perhaps the most acclaimed living Latino playwright. He was the first Latino to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama with *Anna in the Tropics* 2003. His literary works exemplify the potential for Latinos to establish a significant presence in the arts and embody the realization of the American Dream. One of the distinguishing features of Cruz's writing is his poetic language. Christine Dolen, a theatre critic for the Miami Herald, beautifully described the essence

of Nilo Cruz's artistry, highlighting Cruz's exceptional use of language to express an individual experience tied to specific characters and events and a broader commentary on collective human experiences. She believes that his literary works not only aim to entertain but also ask for consideration of the human condition, making it an essential and significant part of contemporary theatre. She says, "The words of Nilo Cruz waft from a stage like a scented breeze. They sparkle, prickle, and swirl, enveloping those who listen in a specific place and time—and in timeless passions that touch us all." (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/books/culture-magazines/cruz-nilo>).

Furthermore, the critic John Williams and Madeleine Shaner illuminate the simplicity and clarity of Nilo Cruz's language in his plays, their poetic quality, and deep Cuban-American cultural roots. Williams describes Cruz's plays as "imagistic dramatic poems" that address subjects of identity, displacement, and cultural conflict, and they are filled with "rich in myth, symbol and metaphor." While Shaner notices that Cruz's plays are "uncluttered, simplistic, sometimes banal," (<https://www.encyclopedia.com/books/culture-magazines/cruz-nilo>), they effectively uncover profound emotions and themes, creating a rich experience for the audience as they engage with the characters' journeys and the broader context of the narrative.

However, in an interview with The New York Times, Cruz's speech reflects a broader philosophical perspective on individuality and community. His speech stresses that group identity is fundamentally optimistic and encourages a balance where individuals can belong to communities while remaining true to themselves. Cruz elaborates on this perspective: "Ultimately, my plays are about being an individual. Belonging to a particular group, left or right, entails a political loss. When you embrace your whole being and all that you can be in this world, that's the strongest position." Therefore, the effect of cultural memory in establishing identity echoes throughout his plays, inviting audiences to reveal their cultural identities and the intricacies of belonging in a diverse world.

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/27/theater/spring-theater-visions-of-america-what-it-means-to-be-both-cuban-and-american.html>)

In directing *Sotto Voce*, director Daniel Gidron mentioned that Cruz revisits history to understand the present. The tragic history of the MS St. Louis ship that sailed in 1939, which he heard from a friend, led him to think of the bleak future that refugees in modern times face. Moreover, Gidron emphasizes that in this play, Cruz creates a historical parallel between the struggle faced by Jewish refugees in 1939 who were denied entry to Cuba, Canada, and the United States and the current plight of individuals fleeing oppression from countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and various African nations. He criticizes the political climate and the attempts of the candidates to build walls and deport immigrants, illustrating a contemporary fear-driven narrative that marginalizes defenseless people seeking safety. Gidron says:

The tragedy of the rejection of refugees fleeing persecution and extermination has echoes and reverberations with today's plight of refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Africa...When borders

close, when presidential candidates vie with one another about building walls along borders, deporting millions of immigrants, and keeping Muslims out of the country, we realize that, unfortunately, history can repeat itself." <https://shakespeare.org/newsroom/2016/08/shakespeare-company-presents-sotto-voce-by-nilo-cruz/>

Moreover, Gidron highlights the resilience of the human spirit, celebrating our ability to endure pain, find joy, and connect across cultures amid challenges, celebrating human's ability to endure pain, find joy, and connect across cultural and generational divides. He conveys that " *Sotto Voce* is a testament to the positive human ability to endure pain and joy. To connect even when separated physically, to love regardless of age and cultural differences." Hence, Gidron believes that Cruz has presented a moral message by calling for sympathy and concern towards refugees, reminding the audience and all people of their shared humanity and the ethical responsibility to respond effectively to those in need. In the same vein, Annette Miller articulates a strong belief in the transformative power of Art, saying, "Art creates space for empathy and understanding. The characters speak softly in *Sotto Voce*, but the message of the play is loud and clear." (2016) Miller parallels the historical backdrop of the play with present events in 2016, particularly with the treatment of refugees and immigrants in America. He emphasizes the gravity of the situation by characterizing this time as potentially replicating the "darkest chapter in American history" (2016), highlighting the moral obligation to derive lessons from the past. <https://shakespeare.org/newsroom/2016/08/shakespeare-company-presents-sotto-voce-by-nilo-cruz/>

The tragedy of MS St. Louis has been narrated in various forms of media, including literature and film, highlighting the themes of displacement, persecution, and the moral responsibilities of nations to protect vulnerable people. In May 1939, the MS St. Louis left Hamburg, Germany, carrying 937 Jewish refugees seeking asylum from Nazi persecution. Upon arrival in Havana, the Cuban government abolished the landing permits, rejecting the ship entry, which led to the refugees being stranded and in a hazardous situation. Then, some passengers on the St. Louis "cabled President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), asking for refuge. Roosevelt never responded." Therefore, St. Louis was forced to return to Europe after being denied entry to Cuba. In June 1939, the ship stopped in Antwerp, Belgium, where the passengers were ultimately taken in by various countries, including France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the U.K. Yet, many refugees ended up in countries that Nazi Germany soon occupied. The reluctance to accept large numbers of refugees was due to the prevailing attitudes of the time, which were primarily characterized by isolationism and xenophobia, particularly in the United States and other Western nations. ("Voyage of St. Louis", Holocaust Encyclopedia).

The tragedy of the St. Louis incident led to significant changes in international refugee policies. It highlighted the lack of existing frameworks for protecting refugees and encouraged discussions to establish protocols for asylum. This culminated in the signing of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, which presented a complete legal framework determining who would qualify as a refugee and delineating the rights of asylum seekers. Additionally, the incident contributed to the forming of

international organizations devoted to refugee support, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), created in 1950. The UNHCR regulated global efforts to protect refugees and confirm their rights, reflecting the lessons learned from that tragedy. In contemporary discussions on immigration and refugee policies, the tragedy of the St. Louis incident became a poignant reminder of nations' moral responsibilities toward individuals fleeing violence and persecution. ("Voyage of St. Louis", Holocaust Encyclopedia)

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/voyage-of-the-st-louis>

## **2. THEORY OF CULTURAL MEMORY: AN OVERVIEW**

Engaging with the Theoretical Framework of Cultural Memory is essential to fully appreciate the significance of Memory in *Sotto Voce*. Cultural Memory theory was developed by scholars such as Jan Assmann and Maurice Halbwachs. Cultural Memory, often called "collective" or "social" memory, is a multidimensional theory involving various aspects of how groups recollect and interpret their past. This term captures multiple subjects, each contributing to understanding how memories are formed, shared, and preserved within a society and narratives transmitted across generations. Influenced by changing social, political, and cultural contexts, this collective form of memory is seen as a dynamic power that evolves and is reformed over time (Erll, Nünning, 2008, p.2-3).

Halbwachs's work on memory is rooted in French sociology, yet memory studies have been an international and interdisciplinary field since its early days. Halbwachs (1877-1945), the French sociologist, is credited with coining the term "collective memory" to refer to the shared memories of a group that shape its identity and make it unique. He asserts that "collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present" (Halbwachs 1992, p. 34). This concept emphasizes that memory is an individual experience; contemporary events, social contexts, and communal narratives deeply influence it. In his study of the effect of memory in shaping identity, Halbwachs examined the private practices of remembering, such as family memory, which have significantly echoed in the field of oral history. His studies about how families and small groups remember their pasts and the rate of remembering them have influenced approaches to collecting and interpreting oral histories, recognizing the importance of personal narratives in understanding collective experiences.

Halbwachs believes that history is not objective. Instead, it chooses its events to be remembered and recorded by society based on what is considered relevant or necessary for a particular context. He states that "history is a collection of the most notable facts in the memory of man," and books are "selected, combined, and evaluated in accord with necessities and rules" that were then believed to be true (Halbwachs 1992, p.78). So, he emphasizes how memory and history are intertwined, highlighting the significance of critical examination of historical narratives and the awareness of their subjective nature.

In his influential work "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*" (1989), historian Pierre Nora analyses the conflation of memory and history, arguing that the two concepts are different. Nora points out that there has been an "equation of memory and history," suggesting that society often treats them as exchangeable, which he considers problematic. Nora describes memory as an "integrated, dictatorial" force—an active, powerful entity that shapes one's collective identity without self-consciousness.

This type of memory is not static; instead, it is continually "reinvent[ing] tradition, [and] linking the history of its ancestors to the undifferentiated time of heroes, origins, and myth" (Nora, 1989, p.8). It is a living, fluid aspect of society that reflects the ongoing interaction of forgetting and remembering, familiarizing with the needs and values of the community.

Nora (1989) describes history as a more static and fragmented reconstruction of the past. He argues that history is composed of "shifted and sorted historical traces," inferring that it is an interpretation that often has no memory's instantaneity and emotional quality. History attempts to form and make sense of past events, but it can never fully catch the lived experiences and complexities of those events. Nora concludes that "Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative." (p.8)

As Nora notices, the gulf between memory and history has widened in modern times. Modern society increasingly emphasizes individuals' rights and duty to modify their narratives. This is a matter that led to a more noticeable detachment between the ways that communities remember their past and historians document it. He also suggests that "this distance has been stretched to its convulsive limits" (p. 8), suggesting that this tension can lead to conflicts over interpretations of history and the meanings ascribed to cultural memory.

Cultural memory is defined as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" (Cited in Erll, 2008, p. 2). Jan Assmann believes that cultural memory is crucial for preserving a group's sense of identity and continuity through maintaining and reinforcing a group's collective knowledge and ensuring the significance of the shared stories, values, and historical events are passed down through generations. This preservation means "a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity," fostering individuals to connect with their heritage and recognize their place within the community (Assmann 1995, p. 130). It is worth noting that cultural memory is selective and subjective because "no memory can preserve the past." Ultimately, what is remembered is not a comprehensive or correct version of historical events but rather a version reconstructed and reshaped by current contexts and perspectives. This means that cultural memory functions mainly by reconstructing knowledge in relation to contemporary situations where interpreting historical events, figures, and experiences is done through the lens of current values, beliefs, and challenges. This indicates that the dynamic force of the societies' understanding of the past evolves and shifts, reflecting the changing dynamics of culture and identity. Accordingly, due to its adaptability to different circumstances or understandings, collective memory proves its flexibility, making cultural memory relevant and meaningful.

Furthermore, Assmann distinguishes between "communicative memory," which is built on everyday communication and might typically last for about three generations, and "cultural memory," which is more "formalized" and "institutionalized," saving the memory of significant events over a long period. Cultural memory is often rooted in rituals, symbols, and texts intentionally created to support the memory of a specific event or period. This process makes cultural memory influential in maintaining collective identities. (Assmann 1995, p. 129).

Considered one of the most destructive events in human history, the Holocaust has left an ineffaceable mark on collective memory, shaping the identities and narratives of



individuals and communities across the globe. Robert Skloot has aptly stated that the Holocaust has forced individuals to reevaluate their notions of humankind: "More than any other event of our time, the Holocaust has caused entire nations and peoples to revise understandings of themselves by provoking disquieting and continuous inquiries of the most moral kind" (Skloot, 1982, 3). Applying the lens of cultural memory to study Holocaust offers valuable insights into reassessed "the previous humanistic concerns of faith, dignity, religion, heroism, the righteousness of the human spirit, and the respect for death and mourning. Societies remember and interpret this atrocity". (Plunka · 2009, p. 13) Holocaust writing is, therefore, now asked to produce images of a world in which a reality too brutal to conceive exceeds the imaginative vision. In studying the Holocaust, cultural memory plays a multifaceted role. It involves the preservation of survivor testimonies, the construction of memorials and museums, and the depiction of the Holocaust in literature and film; each of these elements sheds light on how the Holocaust is recorded and understood, both within Jewish societies and in the global context.

Nevertheless, the process of "institutionalization" of memory also gives rise to significant inquiries regarding the representation of narratives and the procedures involved in constructing these histories. The deliberation of which elements of the Holocaust to emphasize in monuments, museums, and literature entails choices regarding what to incorporate and what to exclude; therefore, the remembrance and perception of the Holocaust have been transmitted to the subsequent generations. These decisions can indicate broader cultural, political, and social influences, emphasizing the intricate interplay between memory, history, and power. (Plunka 2009, p.15)

The Holocaust functions as a powerful lens through which modernity can examine its critical moral and ethical issues. It challenges the nature of good and evil, the responsibilities of individuals and communities, the role of art in trauma, the difficulties of faith, and the psychological effects of survival. Besides, addressing these themes in literature is vital for understanding not only the Holocaust itself but also its broader consequences for humanity in facing carnages and injustices. Both literature and movies offer easily understandable and captivating methods of educating individuals about the Holocaust, thereby guaranteeing that its teachings are not lost. Nevertheless, the portrayal of the Holocaust in literature and cinema also poses difficulties since these forms of media can occasionally oversimplify or sensationalize the events, resulting in inaccurate or shallow interpretations of the historical events.

Drama is an ideal platform to represent these everlasting human conflicts and dilemmas. Drama can engage audiences on multiple levels—"emotionally, subliminally, and intellectually" (Plunka 2009, p.16). This multifaceted engagement allows the theater to convey complex themes and conflicts in a way that "poetry and fiction" may not achieve as efficiently. One of the central features of theater is its "immediacy," which refers to the direct interaction between actors and the audience, creating a unique atmosphere that enhances the emotional experience. This 'immediacy' promotes a sense of presence and participation that "no other art form can match" (Plunka 2009, p.16). The audience becomes like witnesses of the Holocaust and is asked to test their humanity towards this tragedy and another contemporary similar tragedy. Talking about the drama of the Holocaust, Elinor Fuchs wisely observes, "That rite cannot take place without the participation of the community of spectators as a living witness. In representing the

annihilation of the human community, the theatre offers a certain fragile potentiality for re-creation" (Fuchs, 1987, p.xxii). Therefore, theatre as a form of cultural memory serves not only to remember the victims and the horrors of the Holocaust but also to promote a collective feeling of duty to avert such future crimes and ensure that future generations understand the gravity of this event and its implications for humanity.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Reconstructing the Haunting Past: A Dialogue with Memory in *Sotto Voce***

In *Sotto Voce*, Nilo Cruz skillfully crafts a play that encourages viewers to participate in a conversation with recollection, where the past reverberates profoundly in the protagonists' lives. Their interactions glimpse how the past persistently affects the present, molding identities and relationships. The play delves into relocation and cultural legacy, underscoring the need to maintain remembrance for personal recovery and collective comprehension.

In *Sotto Voce*, Cruz uses a non-linear narrative structure that blends memories and flashbacks. The play's narrative structure is analogous to the processes by which memory—especially following traumatic experiences—emerges in individuals and communities. Memories of historical events, such as migration, displacement, or communal pain, tend not to be retrieved chronologically but in fragments through images, feelings, and dialogue. Cruz's use of flashbacks in *Sotto Voce* gives reality to such a phenomenon whereby memories do not act as stable or orderly records but as fluid entities bursting at any given time into the present. The narrative technique encapsulates the singular dimension of memory and broader cultural mechanisms for recollection and commemoration.

Cruz uses this notion of flashbacks in *Sotto Voce* to reflect the nature of memory, especially themes like trauma, migration, and significant historical events. This structural decision enables Cruz to portray how both memories unfold non-linearly, influenced by each historical event's impact and cultural significance. This disrupted chronological progression echoes the ideas of memory by philosophers such as Pierre Nora and Jan Assmann. Assmann argues that memory involves recalling moments and continuously reshaping the meaning of past and present events influenced by social, historical, and emotional factors (Assmann 1995). By incorporating memories and a non-linear storyline, Cruz's play reflects the ever-changing nature of memory, which is not fixed but constantly reinterpreted through contemporary viewpoints.

The stage direction of the opening scene of *Sotto Voce* is steeped in a profound feeling of haunting nostalgia, as the stage directions create a vivid sensory landscape that elicits the ghostly reverberations of the past. The cries of seagulls and the persistent reverberation of a ship's horn in a port promptly evoke impressions of relocation and migration, thereby establishing the atmosphere for the play's examination of memory and its ethereal impacts. "As the lights begin to dim, we hear the cries of seagulls and the constant sound of a ship's horn in a harbour" (Cruz, 2016, p.16). The dimming lights and the projected depiction of the sea elicit a feeling of complete engagement with a recollection or a vision, establishing the backdrop for the developing play. Within these



initial minutes, Cruz establishes the context for a moving examination of the interaction between memory and ghostly manifestations, encouraging the audience to see the lasting influence of the past on the human condition. These symbols can be considered cultural stores that keep superlatives of human emotions, bearing and retaining the emotional and psychological burden of critical human events. Therefore, they include the most profound sentiments that people are capable of experiencing, like love, sorrow, happiness, or terror. These feelings are frequently universal, surpassing cultural and chronological limitations.

Halbwachs (1992) argues that our social circles and cultural influences shape memory. The fragmented storytelling in *Sotto Voce* through Bemadette's memories of Ariel and Saquiels pursuit of the same story indicates a shared recollection process that goes beyond boundaries and traditions. These flashbacks are not just fragments of Bemadette's past; they represent a communal interaction with memory that transcends personal experiences. Saquiels' role as an investigator looking into the St. Louis tragedy and trying to connect with Bemadette shows how collective memory is passed down and reinterpreted by generations, each adding its emotional and cultural perspectives to historical events.

The recorded narration of Bemadette enhances this atmospheric beginning: " Then, in full darkness, we hear the sound of someone writing on a computer keyboard and the amplified recorded voice of a woman. The sounds become an echo"(Cruz, 2016, p.5). Bemadette describes the voyage of Ariel (her Jewish lover when she was in Germany) and Nina Strauss (his sister), who embarked on the St. Louis ship on May 13, 1939, in search of safety from Germany. The disembodied voice of Bemadette, projected onto the curtain, signifies a ghostly existence that surpasses the limitations of time and space, functioning as a channel to the past.

Her recorded voice aptly registers that historical moment, saying :

(Spoken voice) I wanted to be on the ship with them, but I clenched my toes inside my shoes to keep from running up the gangway as I stood immobile on the dock, drenched in my coat with the desire to leave with Ariel, while the air around me became still. (Cruz, 2016, p.16)

This significant historical allusion emphasizes the play's examination of grief and unmet aspirations, as Bemadette envisions herself wanting to be among them, representing her longing to be a part of history beyond her powers to alter. Her words illustrate a profound emotional immobility, as she remains "immobile on the dock," symbolizing her incapacity to act upon her wishes. The visual representation of her tightly gripping her toes to hinder her movement toward the ship implies an inner struggle between her desire to flee with Ariel and the constraining factors that confine her to her current location.

The arrival of Saquiel, a youthful gentleman adorned in a leather jacket, significantly obscures the demarcation between the past and the present. Saquiel emerges as a ghostly figure in this narrative; upon his phone call, Bemadette first reacts with a state of muteness, declining to recognize him by his name and instead referring to him as Ariel Strauss. This blurring of identities suggests that she wants to experience or regain a

portion of her history through her engagements with him. Their following dialogue centres on the inescapable nature of Saquiel's impending departure, a fact that Bemadette desires to delay or deny. Her lighthearted proposal that he should lie to her to "ease the moment" demonstrates her inclination to evade reality, even if only momentarily, to forestall the anguish of another loss. The following exchange between Bemadette and Saquiel/Ariel underscores her challenge in relinquishing the past and embracing the current moment: " No, you're not Saquiel. That's not the name I gave you. You're Ariel Strauss." (Cruz, 2016, p.17)

Bemadette's insistence that Saquiel "lie" to her to alleviate the anguish caused by his upcoming departure highlights the potency of recollection and the innate human inclination to clutch onto the past, especially when confronted with unavoidable transformation. BEMADETTE: To lie to me. SAQUIEL: If I knew how to lie to you, I would. BEMADETTE: It would help me forget that you're leaving. (Cruz, 2016, p.17). Indeed, Bemadette firmly believes that it is never too late. The concept of "It's never too late. Something is always beginning" (Cruz, 2016, p.17) encapsulates a philosophical perspective that each conclusion holds the possibility of a fresh start. She invites Saquiel to participate in a shared act of imagination, where they can transport themselves to an acquainted, comforting space. "In the end, there's nothing to it. We only have to close our eyes and enter Central Park." (Cruz, 2016, p.18) Nevertheless, her decision to have Saquiel explore Central Park alone while she stays behind indicates her disengagement and embrace of being part of a different era—a history she cannot abandon. This tale's interaction between memory and desire shows the themes of ends and beginnings, emphasizing Bemadette's intricate link with her past and her need for belonging.

In a conversation between Bemadette and Saquiel, they recount their excursion to Central Park and their experience with the ghostly presence of Cuban national hero and poet José Martí, illustrating how history and memory intertwine in their consciousness. Moreover, the reference to the "specter of the poet" (Cruz, 2016, p.18) reflects the fact that individuals such as Martí, Walt Whitman, and Edith Wharton are not only allusions to literature or history; they represent the lasting influence of the past on the current day and highlight the haunting impact of memory and the past on the present. Consequently, the characters' capacity to elicit these spectral appearances through their collective memories is evidence of the potency of the imagination in connecting the past and the present. Comparing themselves to ghosts, Saquiel and Bemadette imply that they inhabit a world controlled by recollections and previous encounters, tormented by a history that hinders their complete incorporation into the current moment or progression into the future.

Saquiel's persistent demand, "I must go. I have to go," reflects the unavoidable nature of their parting and signifies the conclusion of their mutual deception and the fictional realm they have jointly constructed. By contrast, Bemadette's subdued desperation—"Don't go yet! Don't go, Saquiel!" (Cruz, 2016, p.18) exposes her profound dread of being abandoned and losing him, emphasizing her reliance on him as a vital connection to her memories and dreams. The practical worry expressed by Saquiel, "Do you realize that if I don't leave, I might not be allowed to come back?" (Cruz, 2016, p.18) introduces a feeling of immediacy and ambiguity to the scenario, therefore highlighting the fragile nature of their circumstances as well as grounds their emotional exchange in real-world

consequences, adding complexity to their relationship. Bemadette's inclination towards listening to Saquiel's speech rather than reading his letters highlights her need for an instant and close bond since printed correspondence seems far and unchanging compared to his vibrant voice. Saquiel's sudden departure, denoted by the dial tone, indicates the conclusion of their talk, leaving Bemadette in unresolved emotional distress and highlighting her emotional and psychological detachment. Her metacognitive inquiry, "How did I spend these same hours the past years without his voice? How did I get myself into this? How did it begin?" (Cruz, 2016, p.19) implies a profound yearning and a need to comprehend the fundamental reasons behind their bond and the anguish of having to release it. These lines emphasize the significant influence that memory and the lingering presence of the past may exert on the current moment and the difficulty of managing the intricate emotions that emerge from such a connection.

With the use of the flashback technique, Bemadette takes the audience back to a previous discussion that took place one month ago with Saquiel. When Saquiel's telephone rings, the answering machine promptly answers his call. Saquiel's early lines, in which he refers to Bemadette as "Ms. Kahn" and articulates his intention to explain the reason for his visit, set the backdrop for their first encounter. The failure of Bemadette to promptly answer his calls is due to a certain level of detachment or reluctance on her behalf. Even without Bemadette's recognition, Saquiel's unwavering commitment to speaking reveals his resolve to communicate his message. He recounts his extensive efforts in arranging correspondence and documentation about the passengers of the St. Louis ship. Then, he discloses that he has stumbled upon Bemadette's romantic correspondence with Ariel Strauss, a fellow passenger on the same maritime vessel.

The pivotal moment when Bemadette ultimately answers the phone and inquires, "What about Ariel Strauss?" (Cruz, 2016, p.20) signifies a notable change in the relationship between the two characters. Saquiel's tone grows increasingly congenial and welcoming as he conveys his delight at hearing Bemadette's voice. Saquiel clarifies that he possesses the correspondence Bemadette had directed to Ariel Strauss, but they are now in Cuba. Upon Bemadette's inquiry about the reason for his phone call, Saquiel discloses that he is a member of a cohort of former St. Louis passengers organizing a reunion in Miami. He perceives Bemadette's narrative as potentially beneficial to their activities. However, Sahdev Luhar and Dushyant Nimavat (2019) state their belief that "For those who had undergone an unknown life, restoration of memory thus takes place through remembering an imagined past. This process connects the dots of individual cultural memory to recreate a collective past" (p.203).

Furthermore, Marianne Hirsch's concept of memory offers insights into the play's exploration of historical trauma. According to Hirsch (1995), post-memory refers to the link between the generation that comes after a traumatic event and the memories of those who directly witnessed it. This connection is not formed through personal experiences but rather through an engagement with the recollections of others. In the context of the Holocaust, Saquiel engages with Bemadette's troubled history not based on his own lived moments but by immersing himself in her memories and the historical significance she embodies. This aligns with the notion of memory, where inherited narratives of trauma remain vivid and emotionally impactful for individuals who did not directly go through them.

Bemadette's denials, revealing her lack of prior experience as a passenger on St. Louis and her inability to recall Ariel Strauss, establish an intricate and multifaceted connection among the characters, which is deeply influenced by historical events but also has consequences for the current day. By establishing the play framework and the relationships between the characters, these lines lay the foundation for a more profound examination of the themes of memory, displacement, and the enduring influence of the past on the present. Her response that she "lost track of Ariel Strauss" suggests a sense of disconnect or detachment from the past that she struggles to maintain. While Saquiel's reaction, "I understand...", denotes a degree of understanding and acknowledgment of Bemadette's position. Bemadette's first effort to create distance from the case, by asserting that she "can't help [him]" (Cruz, 2016, p.21) is confronted by Saquiel's unwavering demand for her to divulge even a tiny bit of Ariel's history. The conversation underscores the conflict between Bemadette's inclination to progress and Saquiel's pursuit to reveal and safeguard the human narratives underlying the St. Louis disaster. Saquiel's remarks, expressing the belief that "the United States and Cuba should apologize," expose the broader framework of his endeavours, demonstrating a more significant objective of pursuing responsibility and awareness of past wrongs.

Saquiel's reasoning becomes increasingly complex, as he acknowledges having "personal and selfish motives" (Cruz, 2016, p.12) for desiring to meet Bemadette. This recognition introduces an additional level of intricacy to the phenomenon, suggesting the potential involvement of Saquiel himself in this undertaking. Bemadette's ultimate reclamation that she has "tried to forget what happened with St. Louis" (Cruz, 2016, p.12) and her unwillingness to assist Saquiel, resulting in her abrupt termination of the phone, effectively communicates the profound extent of her inner turmoil over this particular part of her history. The stage direction characterizing her as "lost in thought" (Cruz, 2016, p.21) implies a persistent feeling of unresolved feelings and difficulty reconciling the past with the present. Her caretaker or companion Lucila's inquiries about Bemadette's conduct, such as whether she "drew the line in the first place" or "let the line become faint," implies that Bemadette may have enabled Saquiel to exceed her authorized limits. Bemadette admits that she suffers "from agoraphobia" (Cruz, 2016, p.25), her fear of leaving the house, a condition that keeps her physically and emotionally isolated.

However, Bemadette's protective reaction reflects her firm conviction that she has established explicit limits that Saquiel is now ignoring. Bemadette's frustration with the "new generation of students" (Cruz, 2016, p.22) who seek to "deconstruct everything we've written" (Cruz, 2016, p.22) and want more than simply the act of writing itself exemplifies a broader confrontation between different generations. She perceives their need for personal connection and access as an infringement upon her privacy and a fundamental misunderstanding of the essence of her profession. The transition to the email correspondence between Bemadette and Saquiel highlights the geographical separation and absence of face-to-face interaction. The constant efforts made by Saquiel to schedule a meeting are greeted with Bemadette's resolute rejection, as she maintains that the characters in her works represent the sole manifestation of her that he can relate to. She asserts that "who you might want to meet no longer exists" (Cruz, 2016, p.22),

implying her feeling of estrangement or a deliberate attempt to distinguish her public image from her identity.

Bemadette contends with documenting her previous romantic involvement with Ariel Strauss, whom she considers her "first love" and "Jewish lover from Berlin." She asserts that specific experiences are ineffable with language and that transforming them into literature is insufficient to rectify the tragic events that befell Ariel and his sister, Nina. It seems that Bemadette's opinion comes in line with Gene A. Plunka's idea that "The dilemma is whether Holocaust literature can ever truly represent the inhuman suffering experienced by the victims ... without doing injustice to their trauma" (Plunka, 2009, p.12). Accordingly, there might be difficulty in capturing the extent of suffering endured by Holocaust victims in literary forms due to the immense brutality, loss, and dehumanization. However, Saquiel thinks that Bemadette lacks the bravery to directly address these memories and engage in writing about Ariel. Although Bemadette admits to maybe avoiding it, she explicitly states that she does not intend the novel to be a "revenge on life" or too sad. Bemadette's remark about "the malleability of time" (Cruz, 2016, p.33) emphasizes a fundamental subject of the play: the fluidity of time and memory. This concept suggests that her novels, much like her memories and experiences, are not linear but shaped and reshaped by time. This reflects a broader existential perspective, where the past and present are intertwined and continuously influence each other.

Saquiel motivates Bemadette, asserting she is the expert in composing Ariel's narrative. Bemadette requests to resume their talk the next day. Concurrently, the setting transitions to a dance studio, where Lucila and Saquiel are engaged in the rehearsal of the waltz. Bemadette proceeds to recount a written narrative she had initiated, detailing the events of Ariel and Nina Strauss embarking on an ocean ship in 1939, most likely as a means of escape from Nazi Germany. During this recounted incident, Bemadette gestures towards Ariel and Nina, indicating her intention to "rendezvous" with them in Havana and requesting that they correspond with her. Ariel and Nina are enthusiastic about their departure and eagerly await the opportunity to visit Bemadette. The sequence alternates between Bemadette's dialogue with Saquiel and the tale she is starting to compose about Ariel and Nina's evasion from Nazi Germany. The personal significance and challenges of the narrative Bemadette intend to appear to be causing her considerable distress.

Cruz effectively captures the concepts of cultural memory by interweaving speech and stage direction, therefore exposing the influence of the past on the current experiences and identities of the characters. The allusion to Ariel and Nina Strauss embarking on St. Louis in 1939 functions as a potent reminder of the historical atrocities endured by Jewish refugees who escaped Nazi Germany. In stark contrast to the gloomy destiny that awaited many passengers, the "big and luxurious ship" emphasizes the optimism and despair of those searching for refuge. Utilizing the individuals' poetic discourse and dreams for a new existence in Cuba, Cruz elicits a feeling of purity and yearning subtly infused with recognizing their imminent loss. The scene transitions between the past and present, with Lucila and Saquiel making dance moves while assuming the identities of Ariel and Nina.

BEMADETTE (Almost in a whisper): Ariel . . . Nina . . . (Waves to them) I

will meet you in Havana! I will see you in Havana! Write to me!

ARIEL: We'll be waiting for you!

NINA: I'll write to you soon!

BEMADETTE: There were families waving their hands and handkerchiefs as the tugs towed the ship to the open sea. A band was even playing music, and flags were flying in the wind.

NINA: Feel the pure sea air . . . Good-bye, Germany! I see all the things we're leaving behind. But we must close our eyes and say to ourselves that they were never ours . . .

ARIEL: Of course they were. We're German . . . we're German . . . we were born in Germany . . . Why are you saying that? (Cruz, 2016, p.43)

This fluidity exemplifies the notion of cultural memory, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the protagonists' present lives with the past catastrophe of the Holocaust. Bemadette's murmured aspirations of meeting them in Havana emphasize her urgent need to establish a connection with a history she feels strongly connected to despite her role as a passive spectator in this fictional play. The statement made by Nina about shutting their eyes and asserting that the things they are abandoning "were never ours" reveals a profound inner struggle with one's sense of self and place in the world. Although they take pride in their German heritage, the recognition that they must go from their nation illuminates the deep displacement endured by several Jewish families during this era.

This dilemma sheds light on the intricacies of cultural memory, whereby current conditions challenge previous identities. The lighthearted interactions between Ariel and Nina, brimming with aspirations of beauty and liberation in Cuba, juxtapose with the latent strain of their circumstances. The inclination of Nina to frequent beauty shops represents a yearning for a state of normality and the restoration of personal autonomy in a society where they have been marginalized. This exemplifies the innate human inclination to establish a personalized identity and experience happiness, even when confronted with imminent calamity.

Bemadette's recollection of her father's role in purchasing tickets for the siblings and her description of "Night fell, and the moon floated in the water like debris, like the ghost from a sunken ship" (Cruz, 2016, p.44) connect the past with the present. The imagery of ghosts is a metaphor for how the memories of those who suffered continue to linger, haunting the characters' lives and shaping their identities.

Then, an exchange between Bemadette and Saquiel reveals how personal recollections intertwine with collective histories and the struggle to convey them meaningfully. Bemadette's remark that "in the mathematic of age every wrinkle is counted" reflects on the passage of time and how each wrinkle symbolizes a memory or moment in life, underscoring the accumulation of personal history. This notion emphasizes that individual experiences contribute to a broader narrative of collective Memory, which is vital for understanding the human experience. When she suggests that "probably God, to remind us of our end" (Cruz, 2016, p.48), it introduces a theological dimension, tying the act of remembering to mortality and existential reflection, particularly poignant in the context of the Holocaust, where the weight of loss is felt in

recognizing mortality and fragility. Bemadette's assertion that "to babble over scraps of life is to betray the past"(Cruz, 2016, p.48) conveys the challenge of articulating complex memories, reflecting a struggle within cultural memory where sharing traumatic histories can feel inadequate or disrespectful. Saquiel's insistence that "they're part of you! They're a part of who you are!" (Cruz, 2016, p.48) highlights the intrinsic value of memories in creating identity, reinforcing that personal stories significantly contribute to cultural memory. Bemadette's reluctance to share her memories, expressed through "my memories are unconvinced" (Cruz, 2016, p.48), illustrates the internal conflict faced when dealing with trauma, while Saquiel's encouragement to "trust your hands" (Cruz, 2016, p.48) serves as a metaphor for embracing the act of writing and sharing one's story. This dialogue encapsulates the complexities of cultural memory, illustrating the interplay between individual experiences and collective histories as the characters grapple with the burden of remembering, the significance of storytelling, and the challenge of articulating trauma in a way that honors the past. Ultimately, Cruz emphasizes the importance of embracing memories as foundational to identity and the collective human experience, urging the characters—and the audience—to confront and share their histories, no matter how difficult.

In the second act, the debate between Lucila and Saquile about the novels and books Bemadette wrote explores the critical relationship between writing and memory, particularly concerning cultural memory. The claim made by Saquiel that "what's written is meant to be read, and books exist to help us understand ourselves" (Cruz, 2016, p.52) captures a core principle of cultural memory: that literature functions as a tool for navigating the human condition. This corresponds to Pierre Nora's notion of "lieux de mémoire," or places of memory, indicating that books may serve as fundamental references for collective identities and shared historical experiences. Nora suggests that these places exist when memories fade, and individuals or communities consciously try to remember the past to keep it alive. The realization that Lucila rescues the writer's abandoned materials, therefore "all her mistakes," mirrors the need to prioritize the process over achieving perfection.

This emphasizes that cultural memory encompasses refined tales and unfiltered firsthand experiences that influence identities. Bemadette's ambivalence over whether she retained these writings for self-insight or understanding others suggests an intricate interaction between individual and collective memory, demonstrating that interacting with someone else's writing may facilitate self-exploration. Lucila's contemplation of studying "About intimate disaster. Pain" (Cruz, 2016, p.52) highlights the ability of personal pain to find resonance with broader historical events, therefore presenting literature as a platform for the processing of trauma and the promotion of conversations on collective suffering. Saquiel's statement that "manuscripts that have mistakes are worth more than the ones that are polished" (Cruz, 2016, p.53) strengthens the significance of authenticity in cultural memory, questioning traditional ideas of literary achievement and proposing that stories of hardship can unveil profound insights into the human experience. Moreover, Lucila's reluctance around the possible sale of the documents gives rise to ethical concerns over the possession and commercialization of memory, therefore highlighting the conflict between safeguarding memories for



individual awareness and capitalizing on those memories for financial gain. Ultimately, this conversation thoroughly examines writing, Memory, and identity, highlighting the significance of texts as instruments for comprehending oneself and the shared human experience while encouraging contemplation on the intricacies and obligations involved in imparting stories of catastrophe and perseverance.

Later, Saquiel loudly reads part of a manuscript of a novel written by Bemadette, establishing the context for a forthcoming encounter with historical events. The manuscript portrays a story of the youthful Nazi commander, characterized by his "gray-blue eyes" (Cruz, 2016, p.52) which elicits a paradoxical feeling of both familiarity and alienation, therefore representing the dual nature of memory as both individual and communal. Blue lights evoke a somber ambiance, implying the profound impact of a past tragedy throughout the story. Described as "barely nineteen years old" (Cruz, 2016, p.53), the soldier's age criticizes the fatal irony of youth entangled in the machinery of war, implying that he is also a victim of the cultural influences that have molded him. This contrast stimulates contemplation on the tendency of young people to be assigned positions that necessitate them to personify violence, therefore complicating the traditional story of the oppressor and the victimized.

Despite his representation of the enemy, Bemadette's emotions of attraction for the soldier expose the intricacies of human sentiment when confronted with pain. Her speech about an "indescribable, unforeseen—unnamable" (Cruz, 2016, p.54) feeling exemplifies the turbulent essence of desire in the face of catastrophe, a motif that reverberates in cultural memory as it mirrors the capriciousness of human connections after catastrophic occurrences. Amidst her emotional turmoil, she acknowledges the soldier not just as a murderer but also as a fellow human being, therefore illustrating the interconnected destinies of both victims and perpetrators in the context of war. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Jan Assmann on cultural memory, which suggests that memories play a role in establishing one's identity and impacting interpersonal relationships in the face of conflict (Assmann, 2011).

The instance in which she asks him to kill her "the same way that my lover has been extinguished from life" (Cruz, 2016, p.54) emphasizes a profound want for recognition of her anguish—a request for her anguish to be acknowledged within the broader story of grief. This exchange introduces complexity to the concept of agency; she is not only a victim but an engaged participant in this particular instance of conflict. The soldier's following emotional upheaval, in which he articulates a need to get to know her and comprehend her suffering, is a moment of vulnerability that surpasses the limitations of aggressive conflict. His sobs and entreaty for her to "live! Please, live" (Cruz, 2016, p.55) demonstrate a collective human experience confronting the degrading elements of warfare.

In essence, this act demonstrates the complex and delicate phenomenon of cultural memory, where personal encounters with trauma intertwine with shared narratives of violence and bereavement. The emotional turmoil experienced by the soldier leads the spectator to confront the intricacies of identification and empathy, implying that understanding and bonding may arise even in the presence of deep historical pain. This

emphasizes the need for storytelling in safeguarding these memories, as it enables a more profound examination of the human experience among the remnants of conflict.

The soldier's aspiration to be perceived as a man rather than just a "servant of war" emphasizes the inherent human need for acknowledgment, even in the face of immense suffering. This particular instance exemplifies the broader concept of cultural memory, in which individual narratives of suffering and bereavement enhance the shared insight of historical tragedy. The soldier's display of tears and expression of his desire for the protagonist's survival demonstrates the emergence of empathy in unforeseen circumstances, therefore confronting the dehumanizing elements inherent in warfare.

The stage instructions show that "the lights go back to normal" (Cruz, 2016, p.60), which symbolizes a restoration of reality, but the astonished responses of Saquiel and Lucila imply that the psychological effect of this meeting continues to persist. Their presence at the event serves as a testament to the intricate nature of human emotions when confronted with hardship, therefore underscoring the significance of narrative in the process of coping with trauma. This interaction serves as a potent reminder that even after acts of violence, there is still a possibility for recovery. The protagonists' story underscores the need to recognize individuals' shared humanity, especially when faced with the enduring effects of war, and prompts the viewers to contemplate their connection to recollection and compassion. In *Sotto Voce*, Bemadette's recollections of her lover Ariel and their missed future exemplify this act of remembrance. Her memories of the tragic voyage of the MS St. Louis evolve into a lieu de mémoire where personal sorrow intertwines with the collective historical trauma of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. Cruz's use of flashbacks captures this memory element as Bemadette's past is not simply referenced but actively relived, linking her narrative to a shared story of displacement, loss, and grief.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Through an examination of the intricacies of human emotion within the framework of the Holocaust, *Sotto Voce* captivates its audience with cultural memory. Nilo Cruz demonstrates how personal narratives interweave with collective trauma by exploring the dynamics of memory, violence, history, and shared humanity. This compels the audience to confront the enduring imprints of the past. The play emphasizes the need to comprehend individual experiences within the larger world filled with hardship, showing the capacity for empathy and connection even in the face of extensive historical atrocities.

In *Sotto Voce*, memory is not only a personal archive but a dynamic and influential force on the characters. In contemplating her history and engagements with Saquiel, a youthful pupil, Bemadette Kahn, an aged author, personifies this subject. Her existence has been characterized by detachment and seclusion, resulting in her recollections becoming both a comforting and onerous weight. Bemadette begins the piece with a contemplative monologue, her voice captured and projected as she reminisces on the historical journey of St. Louis. The play establishes the foundation for the primary motif of memory, as Bemadette's memories of the past converge with the current moment through the recorded voice and the projected landscape of the ocean. This amalgamation

of historical and contemporary elements emphasizes memory's enduring and sometimes disconcerting existence.

As pointed out by Assmann, Bemadette's recollection of Ariel on the ship highlights that memory is not something we hold onto but rather an active process we engage in. Bemadette's act of remembering Ariel goes beyond passivity; it involves deliberately revisiting a time still carrying emotional weight. Her memories and the flashbacks portraying them indicate how individuals use memory to cope with trauma and how the past continues to shape the present. The scenes in this play are heavily intertwined with the concept of memory and identity because those moments induce a sense of displacement and loss. The recollections of Bemadette about her lover Ariel and how miserable his end turned out to be on the MS St. Louis are not remembered as historical incidents in chronological time but also as emotionally compelling memories that affect her current life. By using flashbacks, the play reveals surviving images of personal identities and remembering culture, linking individual experiences in broader historical accounts. Situating past and present elements together, Cruz demonstrates that cultural memory is an ongoing process and a persuasive determinant in constructing personal and collective identities.

---

Assmann, A. (2008). Canon and archive. In A. Erll, A. Nünning, & S. B. Young (Eds.), *Cultural memory studies: An international and interdisciplinary handbook* (pp. 97-107). de Gruyter.

Assmann, J. (1995). Collective memory and cultural identity. In *Culture, Memory, and the Unconscious*, translated by John Czaplicka, *New German Critique* 65: 125–133

Assmann, J. (2011). Communicative and cultural memory. In *Memory in a Global Age*, ed. P. Meusburger, M. Heffernan, and E. Wunder, 15–27. Springer

Cruz, Nilo. (2016). *Sotto Voce*. Theatre Communications Group, Inc.

Cruz, Nilo. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://faulknersociety.org/nilo-cruz/>

Cruz, Nilo. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.notablebiographies.com/newsmakers2/2004-A-Di/Cruz-Nilo.html>

Erll, A., & Nünning, A. (2006). Concepts and methods for the study of literature and/or cultural memory. In A. Nünning, M. Gymnich, & R. Sommer (Eds.), *Literature and Memory: Theoretical paradigms - genres - functions*. Francke.

Fuchs, Elinor, ed. (1987). *Plays of the Holocaust: An international anthology*. Theatre Communications Group.

Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On collective Memory*. University of Chicago Press.

Hirsch, M. (1995). *Family frames: Photography, narrative, and postmemory*. Harvard University Press.

Luhar, S., & Nimavat, D. (2019). Cultural memory and the shaping of identity. *South Asia Research*, 40(2).

Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations*, 26, 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>

Plunka, G. A. (2009). *Holocaust drama: The theater of atrocity*. Cambridge University Press.

Skloot, R., ed. (1982). *The Theatre of the Holocaust* (Vol. 1). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Spring Theater/Visions of America. (2000, February 27). Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/27/theater/spring-theater-visions-of-america-what-it-means-to-be-both-cuban-and-american.html>

Trouillot, M.-R. (1995). *Silencing the past: Power and the production of history*. Beacon Press.

Vansina, J. (1985). *Oral tradition as history*. University of Wisconsin Press.

Voyage of St. Louis. (n.d.). Holocaust Encyclopedia. Retrieved from <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/voyage-of-the-st-louis>

Zerubavel, E. (1996). Social memories: Steps to a sociology of the past. *History and Memory*, 8(1), 5-38.