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A RAPPING WITNESS, STUMBLING STONES AND JEWISH HISTORY: MUSICAL REMEDICATIONS OF MEMORIES FROM THE TIMES OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM

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INTRODUCTION

With the witnesses of the Second World War aging and passing away, we find ourselves in an era commonly referred to as the post-witness era (Popescu and Schult 2015). Now, we increasingly rely on »memorial narratives« (Wlodarski 2015: 2) about the Second World War by secondary witnesses (ibid., see also van Alphen 2006) to shape our understanding. This shift has generated new formats within the realm of memory culture. In addition to literature and film, the emergence of for example graphic novels and online platforms can be observed, in which memories and testimonies of the time of national socialism take center stage. These forms of remembrance highlight the evolving and transforming nature of memory culture.

Popular music contributes to this transformation of memory culture. Examining memories of the Nazi era in hip-hop is particularly relevant, as many hip-hop songs have been negotiating it at latest since the 1980s. For example, the rapper Remedy (later a member of the famous Wu-Tang Clan) wrote a song entitled »Never Again,« which incorporates a sample of a sung Jewish prayer. Other artists, including Masta Killa, ORB, and Advanced Chemistry have also addressed the subject of the Holocaust in their music.

To examine the transformative processes of memories in hip-hop music, I will introduce the theoretical concept of remediation as a framework. Ad-

ditionally, I will provide a brief overview of existing research in the field to give context for my study. I will then explain how I have selected the specific examples, emphasizing the importance of exploring remediations in auditory dimensions, considering hip-hop as a musical medium. Subsequently, I will outline the methods for analyzing remediations. I combine approaches from music and sound analysis with interpretations of lyrics and visuals¹. Presenting my findings, I will categorize the observed remediations into four types. The first category focuses on remediations of memory-related materials, such as Stolpersteine (stumbling stones)² and buildings. The second category examines musical remediations, encompassing transformed versions of motifs in the songs. The third category delves into the remediation of silence, addressing the musical and sonic transformation of silence found in two of the three songs. Finally, the fourth category explores remediations of Holocaust testimonies, featuring a sampled witness interview, family memories, and transformed memories from circulating media, which I will refer to Alison Landsberg's concept of prosthetic memory (2004).

Ultimately, this investigation is driven by the question: How do memories of the NS era transform when they become part of hip-hop songs? In addition to its scholarly contribution, this article also aims to foster a dialogue between memory studies and musicology. It investigates how musicology can enhance the field of memory research by integrating musical elements into considerations and analyses of memory phenomena.

REMIEDIATING MEMORIES IN HIP-HOP? THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The central focus of this article revolves around the concept of remediation, a term coined by David Bolter and Richard Grusin (1999). Remediation refers to »the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms« (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 273). For instance, books can be remediated and transformed into theater plays, and comics can be transformed into films. The »re« in remediation refers to the re-negotiation and hence the alteration of e.g.

1 Some of the analyses were conducted in the context of other research projects (Köhn 2021, 2023). In this article, they will be reexamined against the backdrop of the remediation approach.

2 »Stolpersteine« are brass plates embedded in (among other places) sidewalks, intended to motivate passersby to remember victims of the Nazi era. Throughout the article, a more detailed exploration of the concept will be provided.

content, forms, or narratives during the transfer process into another medium³.

In this article, the term remediation primarily refers to the transformation of content during a shift from one medium to another. However, in certain instances, it also extends to the term's secondary meaning, involving the rectification of issues. One such example to be explored in detail later in the article is the renegotiation of the meaning of Stolpersteine within the realm of hip-hop.

In the field of memory research, English scholar Astrid Erll and literary scholar Ann Rigney (Erll, Rigney 2009) have effectively explored the concept of remediation by focusing on the »diachronic dynamics that underlie new media technology« (Erll 2017: 160). It recognizes that media always refer back to, imitate, critique, and transform their predecessors (ibid.). Erll's approach advocates the understanding of memories as dynamic processes. According to her, memories must be kept alive in discourse to avoid being forgotten (Erll 2011: 12). They must continually traverse from one medium to another (ibid.). In this context, Erll adopts a broader definition of media as mediators and transformers between the individual and collective dimensions of remembering (Erll 2017: 135).

During every instance of media transition, whether between genres or media, memories undergo some form of transformation. The remediation approach aims to uncover how memories change during these transitions. This approach has found wide application in memory research, particularly in exploring memory processes in literature (Erll 2007; Rigney 2004) and film (e.g. Brunow 2016; Erll and Wodianka 2008). In this study, the objective is to investigate the processes of memory re-negotiation when integrated into hip-hop songs.

This research field is continuously expanding with scholars such as Jon Stratton (2016) who explores sampling as a memory practice and considers it a means to construct Jewish culture post-Holocaust. Jarula Wegner (2016) has applied the concept of counter-memory, investigating memory practices as a form of political protest within hip-hop. Similarly, Fatima El-Tayeb (2015) interprets hip-hop practice as a mode of resistance in the Netherlands. Miranda Crowds (2019) understands memories in hip-hop not only as a form of resistance but also as a unifying element between cultures.

Hip-hop has been widely recognized as a powerful medium for the preservation and transmission of memories (cf. Crowds 2019; El-Tayeb 2015;

³ In the realm of pop and rock music, bands such as The Alan Parsons Project, for example, *remediated* poetry by Edgar Allan Poe in a concept album. This phenomenon can be observed e.g. in cover versions or sampling in hip-hop, too.

Köhn 2021; 2023; Wegner 2016). This assertion can be attributed to the history of hip-hop, in which oral storytelling played a crucial role (Burns, Woods, Lafrance 2017; Price-Styles 2015; Rose 2008: ix). Hip-hop has frequently addressed critical political and social issues such as racism, racist violence, and inequality. This connection between hip-hop history, and critical topics underscores its suitability as a medium for memory culture. The connection between hip-hop and historical themes, particularly concerning World War II and the era of National Socialism, is particularly evident in songs such as »Fremd im eigenen Land« by Advanced Chemistry and »Never Again« by Remedy. These songs address social and cultural aspects while they critically engage with historical events and their impact on society. Hip-hop, as a means of disseminating memories with a specific focus on the era of National Socialism, thus is becoming an increasingly important field of research (Crowdus 2019; Köhn 2021; 2023 Schoop 2021; Stratton 2016).

Hip-hop often employs techniques such as sampling, a practice that involves the recombination of musical and sonic elements. Since its early days in the Bronx, New York in the 1970s (Rose 1994), the principle of combination has been central to hip-hop culture. DJs used turntables to merge two vinyl records together (Williams 2015), skillfully mixing sounds from a second turntable into a piece from the first turntable (Katz 2010: 6). Additional sounds, melodies, and vocals were integrated over an extracted drum break, and the result surpasses mere combination. Rolf Grossmann describes it as the »materialization of already utilized reproductions along with their cultural frameworks«⁴ (Grossmann 2015: 216). Consequently, through DJing, new songs are not only created, but the mixed sounds acquire newly negotiated meanings within their cultural contexts.

These processes of renegotiated meanings are crucial to explore in the context of memories of World War II in hip-hop. In this article, I compare three examples: Ben Salomo's song »Identität« (2016, engl.: identity),⁵ in which the German-Israeli rapper based in Berlin delves into his identity and seeks it within Jewish history. The Holocaust plays a central role as a memory of his grandparents' experience as refugees and as a critique of contemporary institutional and governmental memory culture. Another example is Marco Helbig, also known as »Der Reimteufel,« and his hip-hop song »Stolpersteine« (engl.: stumbling stones).⁶ He explores his personal connection to memories of the Nazi era through the medium of stumbling stones in

4 All quotations from German-language literature were translated into English by the author.

5 Salomo (2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RIPWjJrGi1A>.

6 See Helbig (2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYb20N78l2w>.

Leipzig, Germany. Finally, the collaborative song »Edek«⁷ features the Holocaust survivor and witness Janine Webber⁸, the US and UK-based rapper Kapoo, and the young singer Issy Burnham, with the UK National Holocaust Centre and Museum contributing to the production. It tells the story of the witness during the Holocaust by artistically combining samples of Janine Webber's testimony with reflections and political statements against present-day racism.

By examining these examples, I aim to investigate the processes through which memories are re-negotiated within hip-hop songs by *remediating* elements from other media.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES: COMBINING SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, DISCOURSE ANALYSIS, AND MUSIC ANALYSIS

In this analysis, I conducted three semi-structured interviews (Flick 2017: 203 ff.) with the rappers Ben Salomo (2019, pers. comm.) and Marco Helbig (2019, pers. comm.), and the music producer Kevin Pollard (2022, pers. comm.). The transcripts of these interviews were coded with MAXQDA, as well as the lyrics and visual content of the music videos. Drawing on Flick's discourse analysis (2017: 428 ff.), I identified distinct discursive strands within the data. To gain a comprehensive understanding, I conducted music analyses that examine both surface structures (Steinbrecher 2016: 140 ff.) and delve into micro-level aspects (ibid.: 141 ff.) such as motifs and rhythms. Additionally, I employed sound analyses (Augoyard and Torgue 2006) and music production analyses (Tagg 2013: 271 ff.).

As part of the music and sound analyses, the electric guitar was incorporated as a practice-oriented analytical tool to enhance the understanding of the music and its components. This involved transferring—or remediating—specific aspects of the music, including chords, melodies, and sonic details such as bass and echo onto the guitar and its amplified sound. This

7 See Pollard (2018), <https://www.kevinpollard.com/projects/edek/>.

8 Janine Webber was born in 1932 in what was then the Polish city of Lwów (now part of Ukraine) and is of Jewish descent. Because of her Jewish identity, she and her family had to hide from the oppressive rule of the National Socialists. Many of her family members were murdered as victims of Nazi persecution. In 1956, she relocated to London, where she currently resides (<https://www.kevinpollard.com/projects/edek/>, accessed 11 December 2023).

hands-on approach served as a form of musical mimicry, specifically regarding elements such as sounds, musical motifs, and rhythms of the songs. This enables the discernment and articulation of intricate details. The analysis of these details through the lens of the guitar contributes to a nuanced understanding of the musical elements in relation to my overarching research question. This analytical approach resonates with Allan Moore's perspective in »Song Means.« highlighting the potential of the experience of creatively producing sound and music for analyzing the details of melodic and harmonic structures (Moore 2012: 4, see also Tagg 2013: 118). Consequently, musical practice serves as the metaphorical lens through which I perceive and interpret the musical subcomponents analyzed in this article.

Across all three examples, I identified four types of discourses, each showcasing different aspects of remediation. These will serve as the organizational structure of this article:

1. Remediations of physical material: This strand explores how physical materials are transformed and remediated into different media forms, including visuals, texts, and sounds.
2. Remediations of music: Here, I focus on the remediation of music itself, examining how musical elements are reconfigured and transformed within the hip-hop songs.
3. Remediations of silence: This strand delves into the remediation of silence, investigating how different forms of silence are employed and given meaning within hip-hop songs.
4. Remediations of testimonies: In this final strand, I explore how the act of witnessing the Holocaust is remediated within hip-hop and how the artists incorporate and reinterpret testimonies.

REMIEDIATING MEMORIES CONNECTED TO PHYSICAL MATERIAL IN HIP-HOP

The first remediated material I examine are Stolpersteine (engl.: stumbling stones). Stolpersteine as a project has been created by the German artist Gunter Demnig. The idea originated in 1992 (Suganda 2020: 720) and has since been implemented in over 1,200 cities and communities. It started in Germany and was later expanded to other parts of Europe. Stolpersteine are small brass memorial plaques that are embedded in the pavement in front of the former residences of victims of the Nazi regime. They display the names, birth and death dates as well as information about the victims' de-

portations. The project aims to make the individual fates of the victims visible and to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive (ibid.: 722). Each Stolperstein is introduced with the phrase »Hier wohnte ...« (eng.: Here lived ...). Embedded in the sidewalk, these memorials are designed to make pedestrians pause and reflect on the atrocities of the Second World War. By bringing the memory of the Holocaust to the streets where these individuals once lived, Stolpersteine serve as a tangible and moving reminder of the human cost of hatred.

Stolpersteine are remediated in the song »Stolpersteine« on two media levels: in the music video and in the lyrics. The uniqueness of the representations of Stolpersteine in the music video lies in the fact that they are consistently integrated as close-ups which support the readability for viewers. Through these close-ups, the rapper brings the symbolic significance of the Stolpersteine into focus, highlighting the individual suffering and fate of the Holocaust victims. The rapper reinforces this interpretation through his lyrics which emphasize the centrality of human beings as a theme. He aptly raps, »It's about the people and nothing else.« Helbig further reaffirms the symbolic significance of the Stolpersteine by rapping, »They are stones of memories, each bearing a name. A name, a story, no, more than that, more than what once was.« These quotes emphasize that the Stolpersteine are merely not historical relics but connected to the individual stories and memories (c.f. Köhn 2023).

In Suganda's article on Stolpersteine, she emphasizes the focus on remembering individual victims of the Holocaust. This distinct feature sets Stolpersteine apart from memorials that primarily commemorate collectives or groups of victims (Suganda 2020: 721). By centering on the stories of individual lives, Stolpersteine brings a personal dimension to Holocaust remembrance. The fact that the rapper touches the Stolpersteine multiple times in the music video adds another layer of meaning to the representation of Stolpersteine in the music video. By physically touching the plaques, the rapper demonstrates a direct connection to history. This action can be interpreted as an attempt to engage with the individual fates of the Holocaust victims on an emotional and personal level. The rapper himself reinforces this interpretation in an interview, stating, »Sometimes, you feel a bit closer to history when you touch it.« From Helbig's perspective, touching the Stolpersteine establishes a deeper connection with the past and enables an emotional identification (c.f. Köhn 2023).

This haptic approach allows to complement the cognitive dimension of memory culture. Dorota Golańska refers to this as »corporeal material sensing« (Golańska 2020: 80). She observes that people leave the Memorial to

the Murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin with a different affective experience after they have physically interacted with the stones. Going beyond the materiality of the Stolpersteine, the act of touching the Stolpersteine is remediated in the song by Helbig. It evokes a tactile connection with history, deepening the emotional and sensory engagement with the stories and memories they represent. This remediation of material, particularly the act of touching the Stolpersteine plaques, aligns with Aleida Assmann's considerations on the traumatic site: »Sensory concreteness and affective coloring are intended to deepen the purely cognitive understanding of a past event in terms of personal experience, engagement, and appropriation« (2018: 225; c.f. Köhn 2023).

In the music video for Ben Salomo's »Identität,« visual remediations of materials also play a crucial role. The focus is on buildings that hold significant importance within the Jewish history of Berlin. One such building is the Anhalter train station, and its ruins are frequently featured in the video. During the Nazi era, the Anhalter train station in Berlin played a significant role. Originally constructed as one of Berlin's largest and most important train stations, it became a site of deportation during World War II, specifically for Jewish citizens as victims of the Holocaust. From there, countless individuals were transported to concentration camps and extermination sites, where they were subsequently murdered (c.f. Bay 2022: 95; Kliem und Noack 1984). The ruins of the Anhalter train station thus have become a symbol of Nazi persecution, serving as a reminder of the suffering and loss of many lives during that time.

The critical engagement with the building explores the role of memory culture in contemporary society. Salomo, in an interview, raises concerns about the abandoned state of the site, where only a memorial plaque acknowledges the function of the train station during the Nazi era. He finds it inappropriate that a playground was built close to the site (Salomo 2019). His criticism firstly addresses the lack of attention given to knowledge about perpetrators, which are neglected in collective memory and generally not well-known. Secondly, he scrutinizes the practices of institutionalized memory culture, emphasizing that the mere presence of a memorial plaque at this significant location symbolizes the lack of interest of public institutions regarding the history of National Socialism. The ironic observation that a playground has been built nearby, connoting »play and fun,« heavily contrasts with the history of the place and emphasizes his critique of current memory culture.

Both Salomo and Helbig attribute a spatial-connecting function to the materialities involved. In the music video for »Identität,« besides the train

station, further sites of remembrance and memorials are depicted, including the so-called »Flammenwand« (Flame Wall) at the site of a burned-down synagogue and the memorial at the Putlitzbrücke in Berlin. It is a memorial for murdered Jews, located in proximity to the Anhalter train station. Salomo's interview reveals that the music video portrays specific stations of a death march towards the Anhalter train station. The train station served as the final destination of this march before deportation. Similarly, Helbig accomplishes this connection by referencing the Stolpersteine (engl.: stumbling stones) in the city of Leipzig. In the video, he is frequently seen walking, which is accompanied by the lyrics, »Ich schreite sie ab, die Steine der Erinnerung« (eng.: I'm tracing them, the stones of remembrance). Both Salomo and Helbig attribute a spatial and connecting function to the materialities involved.

The practice of walking between Nazi memorial sites in urban spaces in the music videos of Ben Salomo and Helbig unites these two rappers in their endeavor to interconnect sites of remembrance. Through the shared element of walking, a connection is established between different memorial locations, highlighting the significance and presence of the past within urban spaces. The depiction of the urban space as a vast site of remembrance, through the combination of memorials and stumbling stones, allows for these sites to be perceived not in isolation but as part of a larger historic narrative and symbolic network. Drawing on the insights of sociologist Martina Löw, it can be said that in this context, spaces are constructed in a network-like manner by connecting several »social goods« (2018: 43), which are in this case memory relevant objects in the urban space. This approach counters the downplaying of acts of violence as isolated incidents by presenting a cohesive urban space.

Urban space becomes an integral component of political discourse and collective memory. By not merely visiting individual sites of remembrance but traversing the urban space and linking various locations, the rappers underscore the political and historical dimensions of the urban landscape as a »lieux memoire« in the sense of Pierre Nora (2005). They emphasize that political actions during the Nazi era constituted a wide-ranging network, broader than is often discussed in public discourse (c.f. Assmann 2020 [2013]: 211 f.). Incorporating the urban space also highlights the interweaving of the past, present, and future (on the connection of different temporal layers in hip-hop, c.f. Schoop 2021: 8). The rappers demonstrate that history cannot be viewed in isolation but that it is directly connected to the current political situation. By utilizing the urban space as a political terrain, they establish a connection between the past, memory, and current societal challenges

(Beveridge and Koch 2019). The remediation of space thus receives an additional temporal layer through the concept of remediation in hip-hop.

In the song »Edek,« the remediation of material occurs not only in a visual or textual dimension but also on a sonic level. Particularly noteworthy is the role of the sound of knocking on wood. At 1:58 minute mark, a break is initiated, accompanied by the sampled witness's words, »And I heard one day the Gestapo shouting. [...] We hid in a hole under the wardrobe. And my father came running in and said 'The Germans are after me.'« Immediately after, the beat stops, and loudly knocking on wood becomes prominently audible. This sound design creates a distressing atmosphere, symbolizing the Gestapo breaking down the door to murder the family. At the same time, the images depict how Burnham (i.e., the young Webber) is hiding. By incorporating this sound element, the narrative of the witness is intensified, and the listener becomes emotionally involved in the witness's persecution in the past.

This can be connected to what Dorota Golańska referred to as »material sensing,« (Golańska 2020: 80) but in this case, the »physicality of the encounter« (ibid.) is not created with physical material but with sound. The sound of knocking at the door enables an emotional involvement of the listeners in a traumatic situation. Moreover, the sound of knocking on wood is familiar to the listeners. It is a sound they know and associate with specific situations in their everyday lives (cf. LaBelle 2019 [2010]). It actually symbolizes normalcy and security, yet the intrusion of the Gestapo and the associated threat bring about a drastic renegotiation of this sound, creating a tension between familiarity and life-threatening circumstances. With the intrusion of the Gestapo, knocking on wood is connoted with danger. Thus, the »sonic memory sign« (Binas-Preisendörfer 2018: 193) of knocking on wood has become charged with a renegotiated meaning. It represents a striking contrast, when the otherwise innocuous and commonplace sound becomes associated with acts of murder and the witness's trauma.

The remediation of material in hip-hop songs leads to a new discursive negotiation of layers of meaning in all three examples. This remediation allows the rappers to establish a connection between historical reality and the present (c.f. Schoop 2021), reflecting on individual stories, collective memory (Erl 2017: 5), and political implications. Music becomes a medium through which memories of the Nazi era are brought into discourse, combining them with political and critical narratives. This creates a space for solidarity with the victims while also questioning current practices of remembrance and contributing to the integration of memories of the Nazi era into »everyday« contexts.

MUSICAL REMEDIATION: EXPLORING MOTIFS AND SYMBOLIC REFERENCES

In the song *Stolpersteine*, a specific motif is repeated and stands out musically from the rest of the composition. This motif can be understood as a musical remediation of the *Stolpersteine* themselves. It is characterized by several distinct aspects. Firstly, the rapid rap passages and rhythmic elements of the song contrast with long sustained notes, creating a clear distinction and focus on the motif. The motif is furthermore performed by the German artist and activist Suncalina with a high female voice that contrasts with the lower voice of the rapper. The use of classical singing techniques lends the first voice a clear and precise quality, distinguishing it from the distorted second rap voice. Furthermore, the melody of the motif incorporates various option tones, which vary from the chord tones that dominate the rest of the arrangement. Notably, the motif does not begin on the first beat but rather on the third beat, and it extends across bar lines, adding to its placement within the song (c.f. Köhn 2023).

In this interpretation, the motif identified as a sonic sign⁹ (Tagg 2013: 485) represents the *Stolpersteine* as physical symbols remembering individual victims during the National Socialist era (Suganda 2020). The long sustained tones are analogous to the stability and outlasting of the *Stolpersteine*. They can be interpreted as a sonic representation of endurance and resilience, pointing to the ongoing engagement with the consequences of the Nazi era including today's fight against exclusion and marginalization. Furthermore, in terms of the female voice and the classical singing technique, they can be read as a remediation of traditional Jewish music and singing techniques. The clear tones, singing technique, timbre of the voice, and the prolonged notes contain parallels to interpretations of the *Hatikvah*, the Israeli national anthem. This connection creates an additional layer of meaning, highlighting the connection of the motif to Judaism and the State of Israel. It can be read to convey a message of hope, pride, and strength derived from the history of the Jewish people and their pursuit of a secure and free homeland. This remediation serves not only to contextualize (Jewish) victims of the Nazi era within hip-hop, but also to integrate and show solidarity with Jewish culture and history through hip-hop.

⁹ In Tagg's comprehensive »simple sign typology« (ibid.: 485), it can be categorized as a »tactile anaphone« (ibid.: 494) due to its physical and thus tactile nature.

In Salomo's song »Identität,« a recurring motif bears similarities to the soundtrack of the movie »The Pianist.«¹⁰ which contains the Nocturne in C# minor by Frédéric Chopin. The story takes place during World War II and portrays the experiences of Szpilman, a Polish Jewish pianist, as he navigates the brutal realities of the Holocaust and the Warsaw Ghetto. It depicts the hardships, atrocities, and survival of the Jewish community in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Szpilman is depicted as a courageous and resilient character. Despite the cruel circumstances and persecution in the Warsaw Ghetto, he fights for his survival and maintains his passion for music. His story exemplifies the will to survive of many Jewish people during the Holocaust.

Both motifs in the song and the soundtrack¹¹ are played on a piano, creating a connection between them. Notably, the motifs are performed in closely related keys: C minor and C# minor. Both are played with a sense of rubato feel, deviating from strict adherence to the rhythm. In Salomo's song, this stands out as the rest of the instrumentation follows the rhythmic grid more strictly. The melodies of both motifs descend, and they incorporate embellishments such as trills and triplets, adding ornamental elements to the musical phrases (c.f. Köhn 2021). Firstly, this musical remediation serves as a symbolic reference to the film. By incorporating a musical motif reminiscent of the film's soundtrack, Salomo draws parallels between the struggles and resilience portrayed in the film and the themes he addresses in his song. This includes encompassing the resistance against contemporary antisemitism and highlighting the enduring strength of the Jewish people. By remediating the motif, a connection is drawn between the historical context depicted in the film and the present-day struggles against discrimination and hatred discussed in Salomo's song (c.f. Köhn 2021). It underscores the notion that despite time has passed, the political circumstances surrounding antisemitism are not as disparate as one might think. Through this motif, the imperative of the ongoing fight against antisemitism is emphasized, with a resolute commitment to the principle of »Never Again.«

In the song »Edek,« we can observe another instance of musical remediation, this time pertaining to the flow (Kautny 2009) of the Holocaust sur-

10 The film »The Pianist« was directed by filmmaker Roman Polanski. It is important to note that Polanski was sued for the rape of Samantha Gailey (now Samantha Geimer) in 1977 (cf. Mazierska 2023: 211). Two further women made boundary violations public in 2017 and 2019. The mention of the Nocturne by Chopin here is solely for contextualizing the motif, it is not intended to showcase Polanski's work. Neither the artist Ben Salomo nor his music make any reference to Polanski.

11 While some listeners will likely draw a parallel to Chopin, a larger portion of the audience, in my estimation, will associate the music more with the film due to its widespread recognition.

vivor's sampled testimony. Music producer Kevin Pollard draws a comparison between the flow of the Holocaust survivor's storytelling and the timing of jazz musicians. Both can exhibit a »late in delivery« style, characterized by a slightly laid-back interpretation of the rhythm (cf. Rusch, Salley, Stover 2016: 9; for laid-back phrasing see Burkhard 2015: 9). Just as the survivor's delivery is slightly laid-back, jazz musicians often employ a laid-back feel in their performances (Rusch, Salley, Stover 2016: 9).

The blending of Holocaust testimonies and aesthetic elements from jazz in the hip-hop song can be interpreted as a blending of narratives and histories as well. The shared experience of persecution, although to varying degrees, creates a common ground for reflection and understanding. In this case, the rapper's identity as a Black individual (Dumas 2016; Liu, Liu, and Shin 2023: 245), parallels the historical struggles faced by the Jewish community during the Holocaust. The integration of Holocaust testimonies into the hip-hop song, along with the incorporation of aesthetic elements from jazz, creates a connection between the histories of Black individuals, Jews, and jazz musicians who were persecuted and murdered during the time of National Socialism. Through this artistic fusion, the three aspects intertwine and mutually reference each other, highlighting the shared experiences of oppression and resilience. The parallel narratives of persecution and marginalization emphasize the collective struggle against systemic injustice and discrimination (c.f. El-Tayeb 2015; Liu, Liu, and Shin 2023). By bringing these elements together, these remediations serve as a reminder of the interconnectedness of different communities' histories and the ongoing fight against oppression.

REMEDIATING SILENCE IN »EDEK« AND »STOLPERSTEINE«

The songs »Stolpersteine« and »Edek« incorporate remediations of silence, where silence is not simply the absence of sound but rather what becomes audible and how it is connected to the constructed meaning of silence. In the »Stolpersteine« song, at minute 1:56, the beat transitions into a halftime feel, the vocals become calmer, and the drums have a filtered effect, bringing them more to the background.

There are two forms of silence in »Edek«: firstly, during the breaks when the beat comes to a complete halt, only the breathing of the witness is audible, accompanied by a quiet soundscape. Secondly, while the witness re-

mains silent, two other voices speak for her, from her perspective as a child hiding during the war. The rapper Kapoo raps from her perspective, »Jump Daddy jump, try to get away, can you hear them talking while they're breaking down the door.« Also, the young singer Issy Burnham sings from the witness's perspective when she was a child, »Fly daddy fly, touch the sky, I promise that your baby girl will try not to die.« Here, the witness does not speak and hence remains silent. Interestingly, these two parts, where Kapoo and Burnham take up Webbers' perspective as an eight year old girl, stand out significantly from the musical context. The laid-back feel of Kapoo in relation to the beat creates a highly intense musical experience. Burnham provides the only instance in the song where singing occurs. This singing part relies on short, easily singable pentatonic phrases in a call-and-response pattern.

The interplay between silence and musical intensity or catchiness in the song creates a compelling tension. The moments of silence somewhat symbolize what the witness cannot express. In testimonial videos, the non-verbal expressions such as sobs, sighs, pauses, and gestures are often seen as providing insight into the »true« or »deeper« meaning of the testimonies (de Jong 2018: 97; Dolar 2004: 211). They offer glimpses into the witness's trauma, as Steffi de Jong emphasizes when she remarks, »For testimonial videos with Holocaust survivors, these extra-verbal expressions are believed to provide glimpses into the witness's trauma.« (de Jong 2018: 97) Thus, silence in the track is filled by others who speak on her behalf—Kapoo and Burnham—or, more specifically, who rap and sing about the traumatic experiences that the witness herself cannot articulate. This dynamic amplifies the text's emotional impact and reinforces the significance of the unspoken.

In »Edek,« the second form of silence is characterized by sudden breaks in the beat. The breaks are relatively silent, and in some of them, also the meter of the beat stops. The breaks are accompanied by the sounds of breathing, and a quiet ambiance reflects the moments of hiding and fear during the war. The sound of breathing can also be referred to life or survival. Since the track was recorded long after the Holocaust, the witness's breathing can also be read as a symbol for the reflection of surviving the Holocaust. The absence of the survivor's voice during the breaks underscores the unspeakable trauma (Assmann 2018 [2006]) and the weight of the unspoken stories. Read in a more general way, this particular silence also symbolizes the disruption caused by the Holocaust, since it occurs multiple times in the track, but in a highly unpredictable manner. It appears as abrupt breaks, creating a sense of rupture. These breaks can be seen as reflecting the frac-

tures in the witness's life experiences and, more broadly, as sonic representations of fractures in history.

This interpretation can be related to what Amy Wlodarski discusses as the »fractured surface« (2015: 23) in Arnold Schoenberg's Musical Imagination. She describes how the sudden remembrance and transformation of musical ideas give rise to a fragmented texture of memory. Furthermore, she connects this fragmented texture to the violent disruptions and »blackouts« of traumatic unconsciousness (ibid.). Similarly, in the track »Edek«, these unpredictable breaks and moments of silence create a fractured surface that reflects the upheavals and disorientations associated with trauma.

In the song »Stolpersteine,« the third verse is characterized by an alteration of the beat, including a half-time-feel and acoustic filters on the drums. Here, calm vocals with less distortion contribute to a sense of silence compared to the rest of the song (c.f. Köhn 2023). This can be interpreted as a remediation of the moment of silence. The moment of silence is a symbolic gesture observed in many cultures and societies to show respect and commemoration for victims and tragedies. The practice, originating from the first half of the nineteenth century (Ephratt 2015), serves both as an expression of mourning (Lichau 2018: 218) and as a means of constructing collectivity and solidarity with the deceased (Ephratt 2015: 11). By incorporating moments of silence into the song, this tradition is embraced and transformed musically and sonically (c.f. Köhn 2023).

The songs »Stolpersteine« and »Edek« remediate various types of silence to convey the disruption of the Holocaust and reflect untold stories. Through musical parameters, they give voice to untold and traumatized perspectives and amplify emotional impact.

REMIEDIATING WITNESS TESTIMONIES AND HISTORICAL IMAGERY IN »EDEK,« »STOLPERSTEINE,« AND »IDENTITÄT«

In the three songs »Edek,« »Stolpersteine,« and »Identität,« testimonies of the Second World War are remediated in various ways, with some examples being explicit and others implicit. These will be analyzed in the following.

In the song »Edek,« the integration of a witness interview as a testimony serves as a powerful narrative element. This interview was conducted by the music producer Kevin Pollard with the witness Webber in a previous project

(The Forever Project)¹² and took place at a school in class. The structure of the original testimony is preserved and mirrored in the song, affirming the importance of the testimonial structure itself. Through the process of sampling, the testimony is divided into segments and adapted to fit the rhythmic flow (Kautny 2009) of the song's beats. This blending of the spoken word and rap creates a sonic fusion, where the voice of the Holocaust survivor resonates with elements of both speech and hip-hop.

Furthermore, the audio production techniques employed in »Edek« play a crucial role in enhancing the interpretation. The original recording, which took place in a spacious classroom setting, has undergone a transformative process. Artificial reverb is applied to the witness's voice, effectively shrinking the perceived size of the room and creating a sense of intimacy. This deliberate adjustment in reverberation adds depth and emotional connection to the listener's experience, allowing them to immerse themselves in the survivor's story. Additionally, through the application of compression and equalization, subtle sounds such as lip smacks and breaths are accentuated in the mix. By amplifying these previously soft sounds, the listener becomes more attuned to the intricate details of the survivor's voice. In a similar way, Steffi de Jong has explored the concept of intimate sounds. In her study of the three Polish history museums POLIN, the Warsaw Rising Museum, and the Historical Museum of the City of Krakow, she associates intimacy with sounds such as heartbeats and breathing, considering them to represent both intimacy and vitality (de Jong 2018: 96). Considering that the song »Edek« deliberately creates an artificially narrowed space, this space can be linked to the discourse on intimacy in testimonies. The song intensifies this sonic construction of intimacy by deliberately emphasizing the witness's lip smacks and breathing sounds.

The adaptation of the testimony to the rhythm of the hip-hop beat creates contemporary relevance and accessibility, resonating with younger listeners in the »post-witness era« (Popescu and Schult, eds. 2015) but also individuals who may not have the opportunity to visit memorials for various reasons. By presenting the voice of the witness in a musical context that is popular among younger generations (cf. Onanuga 2019: 22), the messages and lessons of the past are conveyed in a way that bridges the gap between past experiences and the social and political challenges we face today (c.f. Schoop 2021). This adaptation can be interpreted as a symbolic dialogue between generations, fostering a connection between the experiences of the past and the social and political challenges of the present.

12 <https://witness.holocaust.org.uk/national-holocaust-centre-and-museum> (accessed 11 December 2023).

In the song »Stolpersteine,« Helbig engages in the remediation of testimonies through circulating images across various media. He presents himself as a witness of deportations, incorporating and remediating circulating memory images within the context of hip-hop. Through his lyrics, he raps about »Bilder aus mir« (engl.: images from the inside of me) and expresses his inability to look at these images. Black and white visuals in the music video depict scenes such as a deportation and last embrace of a woman. Historical clothing is worn, and there are glimpses of Helbig examining photos in an attic. In this representation, Helbig engages with the history of the Holocaust by imaginatively immersing himself in the memories of the victims. Additionally, the presence of suitcases in the video symbolizes the artifacts left behind by the deported and deceased, further shaping the role as an imaginative witness (c.f. Köhn 2023). These self-constructed memories can be referred to as »prosthetic memory« (Landsberg 2004). This means that memories which circulate as media images in literature, museums, film, etc., become one's own memories. By presenting himself as a witness of deportations and incorporating circulating memory images, Helbig blurs the boundaries between his own experiences and those of the victims of the Holocaust.

In the song »Identität,« Salomo intertwines personal witness with heroic imagery from Jewish history (Levy and Sznajder 2007: 106; Köhn 2021: 7), creating a powerful narrative that spans generations. This can be seen as a form of remediation, as Salomo incorporates elements from the past into his music where he combines Jewish historic narratives and family memories. He begins by acknowledging his grandfather's escape from the crematoria, underscoring the harrowing experiences that his own family went through during the Holocaust. With the lyrics, »Mein Großvater konnte vor den Flammen der Todesöfen fliehen« (engl.: My grandfather was able to escape from the flames of the death ovens), Salomo establishes a direct connection to the historical atrocities. However, Salomo's memories and aspirations extend even further back in time, reaching into the realm of ancient history. He also expresses a desire to be like Hannibal, riding on elephants and conquering Rome, drawing upon heroic images from ancient times (Barcélo 1998). By incorporating these grand historical references into the hip-hop song, Salomo intertwines his personal testimony with the larger narrative of Jewish history (c.f. Köhn 2021).

This remediation and, hence, blending of personal and collective narratives serve to emphasize the resilience, strength, and endurance of the Jewish people throughout history (c.f. *ibid.*). It highlights the continuity of struggle and survival, connecting Salomo's own experiences with the larger tapestry

of Jewish identity and heritage. The combination of heroic imagery furthermore serves as a deliberate departure from victim narratives in Holocaust memory culture, as Salomo argues that Judaism is often reduced to a portrayal of victimhood (Salomo 2019, pers. comm.; Levy and Sznajder 2007: 106). By remediating and incorporating heroic figures and their stories, he aims to challenge this limited perspective and shows the strength and resilience of the Jewish people (c.f. Köhn 2021).

This strongly resembles the narratives that existed when the state of Israel was founded. Levy and Sznajder refer to this as a »heroic historical conception« (ibid.) in which the focus was on remembering Jewish victims who had resisted. This conception culminated, for example, in the legally established holiday »National Day of Remembrance of Heroism« from 1953 (ibid.: 107), since when siren signals have been prompted people to pause. Related to this, heroic narratives have been enshrined in the »Law for the Remembrance of the Holocaust and Heroism« (cf. YadVashem.org)¹³. In this sense, Salomo remediates this narrative of heroism by emphasizing that the Jewish identity is not solely defined by victimization but encompasses a heritage of strength and triumph.

CONCLUSION: INTERSECTING MUSICOLOGY AND MEMORY STUDIES WITH THE CONCEPT OF REMEDIATION

In this article, I analysed how memories of the Nazi era are remediated in hip-hop by exploring three songs. Drawing on the concept of remediation as outlined by Astrid Erll (2017), I understand remediation as a framework to trace how memories transform and become intertwined with a set of musical elements. Aiming at contributing to an intersection of musicology and cultural memory studies, I have specifically focused on the media of music and sound with the support of music videos and lyrics.

The remediation of material in the examined hip-hop songs establishes connections between historical reality and the present. The song and video that represent the Stolpersteine project, brings attention to the individual fates of Holocaust victims, emphasizing their stories and memories. The act of touching the plaques adds a tactile dimension, deepening the emotional and sensory engagement with memory culture. In the music video for »Identität,« visual remediations of significant buildings and memorials in Berlin,

¹³ <https://www.yadvashem.org/de/about/law.html> (accessed 8 November 2023).

such as the Anhalter train station, highlight the importance of memory culture and criticize the lack of attention given to historical sites in urban space. Along with the portrayal of urban spaces as sites of remembrance, the interconnection of memorial locations through walking emphasizes the political and historical dimensions of the cityscape. In the song »Edek,« the sonic remediation of knocking on wood intensifies the narrative of witnessing and creates an emotional connection to the traumatic experiences of the past.

The analysis of musical remediations reveals several connections and re-negotiations of meanings. In Helbig's song, a recurring motif serves as a musical remediation of the Stolpersteine but also traditional Jewish music, symbolizing endurance, resilience, and solidarity with Jewish culture. Salomo's song incorporates a motif reminiscent of the soundtrack of the film »The Pianist,« drawing parallels between the struggles depicted in the movie and the themes addressed in the song, emphasizing the ongoing fight against antisemitism. In »Edek,« the blending of Holocaust testimonies and jazz aesthetics within a hip-hop framework establishes a link among the histories of Black individuals, Jews, and jazz musicians. This underscores shared experiences of oppression and resilience. These instances of musical remediation provide artistic representations of historical events, cultural connections, and joint struggles, underscoring the ongoing fight against exclusion, antisemitism, and marginalization.

The songs »Stolpersteine« and »Edek« incorporate remediations of silence, where silence is reimagined as a meaningful auditory experience. In »Stolpersteine,« a moment in the song uses specific musical parameters to sonically symbolize silence. As auditory signifiers, they symbolize the disruption caused by the Holocaust and remediate the minute of silence. In »Edek,« two forms of silence are present. Firstly, breaks in the beat, accompanied by breathing and a quiet ambiance, represent moments of hiding and fear during the war, while the survivor and witness remains silent. She also remains silent in sections, where her perspective is conveyed through the voices of the rapper Kapoo and the young singer Issy Burnham, emphasizing the weight of untold stories due to traumatic experiences. These remediations of silence in the songs create an interplay between expression and the unspoken, amplifying emotional impact and the agency of traumatized victims.

The remediation of testimonies in the songs »Edek,« »Stolpersteine,« and »Identität,« plays a significant role. In »Edek,« the witness interview fuses with the beats, creating a dynamic blend that resonates with hip-hop audiences. »Stolpersteine« utilizes circulating memory images to blur lines between the artist's experiences and those of Holocaust victims. »Identität«

weaves personal witnessing with heroic Jewish history, emphasizing resilience.

Hip-hop as an auditory medium is far from being arranged arbitrarily or from being a neutral container for lyrical content. Instead, it emerges as a politically and historically charged space, where the arrangement and composition of sounds bear significant meaning. Therefore, it is important to recognize the auditory dimension in analyses of memory remediation. By doing so, a deeper understanding of how memories are shaped, mediated, and experienced through sound and music can be achieved; thereby shedding light on the intricate relationship between music and collective memory.

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