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Memory, historicity, temporality: hunger and oneiric revelation in island Greece

Focussing on the Aegean island of Chios, the paper explores the ways in which the sovereign debt crisis that has engulfed Greece has not only shaken people’s belief in their government and their future, but is fundamentally reshaping people’s experience of the past and its relation to the present. Focusing on the testimony of an elderly woman who survived the famine of the occupation years as a child, the paper illustrates how local people experience the effects of the crisis on their daily lives, on the existence of their family members and friends, and on the social fabric of their communities. It goes on to analyse how collective memories of earlier periods of political violence that have befallen the island – including the massacres of 1822, the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey of 1922, and the German occupation of WW2 – are brought into play in testimonies about contemporary hardship, highlighting the telescoping effects and the implosion of chronological time triggered by the current crisis.